

# Fayemi tasks CAN on charter of demands for politicians

## ■ Muslim-Muslim ticket

Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, has allayed the fears of Christians in the country over the raging issue of Muslim-Muslim ticket of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He said it was not done to undermine their influence or relevance, but simply a calculated political strategy by the party to win the presidential election.

Fayemi stated this in

Ado-Ekiti at the weekend during a courtesy visit by the new executives of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Ekiti State Chapter led by its Chairman, Dr Emmanuel Aribasoye.

He said the choice of a Muslim running mate for the APC candidate was not because there were no competent Christian politicians from the North as being erroneously

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# The Trumpet

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

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# Terrorists kill, abduct many in Katsina, threaten Buhari, El-Rufai → 2



Buhari



El-Rufai



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# Terrorists threaten to abduct, kill Buhari, El-Rufai

By **ALEX OLISE** (Lagos) and **JAMES DANJUMA** (Katsina)

**T**errorists who seized about sixty Abuja-Kaduna train passengers on March 28th have threatened to abduct and kill President Muhammadu Buhari and Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai.

They have also threatened to kill the remaining passengers if the Federal Government fails to meet their demands.

The fresh threat on the life of the President and governor has added a new dimension to the ceaseless terrorist attacks in the country.

The threat has placed

more burden on the security agencies who have been struggling to battle insurgency since 2009 in the Northern parts of the country as well as Southeastern states, where kidnapping and other criminal activities are on the increase.

Meanwhile, other terrorists at the weekend killed three persons and abducted more than 20 persons at Farun Bala community, in Jibia Local Government Area of Katsina State.

The incident occurred at about 12:30 pm when the terrorists riding on motorcycles, stormed the community to rustle their domestic animals.

It was learnt that the terrorists blocked the



**Buhari**

Katsina-Jibia road and stopped all vehicles during the entire period of operation.

It was also gathered that

two of the three people killed, were passengers in one vehicle.

The third victim was said to be a commercial vehicle

driver, operating one of the Katsina State Transport Authority, KTSTA, coaster buses.

The bus with registration number KT 14D-58 KT, was said to have swerved off the road to avoid the barricade used by the terrorists to block it.

More than 20 people from four vehicles were said to have been abducted and whisked away into the forest by the terrorists.

The road is usually busy on Sundays due to a weekly market that operates in Jibia town.

A source from the area said several attempts were made to reach out to security operatives stationed at checkpoints on the road to come and repel the terrorists.

He alleged that the road has at least 20 checkpoints, with one within stone's throw of where the incident took place.

The source lamented that no help came for the villagers and passengers affected, urging government to intensify security measures at communities vulnerable to terrorists' attacks.

Spokesperson for the Katsina State Police Command, SP Gambo Isah, was yet to respond to enquiries regarding the incident as at the time of filing this report.

The Trumpet learnt that Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor, at the weekend directed the military to beef up security across the country to thwart terrorists.

## PDP breaks silence over Delta guber candidate

■ INEC closed portal before notice of substitution, Oborevwoi filed stay of execution – Party's PRO

■ We're asked to wait for final court's ruling – State Chairman ■ Ibori, Uduaghan, other major leaders absent at mega rally

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

Delta State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has finally broken silence over the delisting of its governorship candidate by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from its portal.

The Trumpet in an exclusive report stated that anxiety, confusion and uncertainty have taken over the party in the State as palpable fear of not having a gubernatorial candidate in the 2023 ballot grips party members following unending power tussle cum legal battle between camps of incumbent governor of the state, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa and that of his former political boss and godfather, Chief James Ibori.

INEC had on Friday published the particulars of Governorship and House of Assembly candidates of all political parties in the country for public scrutiny ahead of next year's general election.

However, neither the particulars of current Speaker of the State Assembly and supposed governorship candidate of PDP, Rt Hon Sheriff Oborevwoi, who scored 590 in the party's primary in May, nor those of his arch rival, Olorogun David Edegbie, who came second in the said primary and was subsequently declared the rightful winner after a Federal High Court in Abuja declared Oborevwoi unfit to contest, were uploaded by the electoral body.

The development sent a wave of fear into members of the party in both camps with a source telling The Trumpet that party stalwarts were in a state of dilemma.

In a bid to save the face of the

party and restore confidence of its members, the National Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Debo Ologunagba has said the party duly submitted and uploaded the name of 'Oborevwoi Sheriff Francis Orohedor' as the Delta State Governorship candidate into INEC's portal on before the given deadline.

Ologunagba in a statement on Saturday, said days after the closure of access to the INEC's Portal, the party and INEC received a court order directing the substitution of the name of Oborevwoi with that of Edegbie.

While saying that given the closure on July 15, 2022, the Party was unable to access the Portal to effect the change, Ologunagba stated that Oborevwoi filed a stay of execution at the Appeal Court.

He stressed that the PDP currently has a candidate for the 2023 Governorship election in Delta State and urged members to be resolute and avoid fear.

He said, "The attention of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has been drawn to speculations in a section of the social media that our Party had disobeyed an Order of Court with regards to our Governorship candidate in Delta State and that our Party do not have a candidate for the 2023 Governorship election in the State.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the PDP makes it abundantly clear and states in very precise and categorical term that our Party had not disobeyed any Order of Court and we have a valid Governorship candidate for the Delta State governorship election in 2023.

"However, in the interest

and due information of our teeming supporters and the general public, our Party clarifies as follows;

"In line with the new Electoral Act, submission of names of candidates is no longer physical but by electronic transmission to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Under the electronic process, INEC grants access to its portal to political parties to electronically upload its candidates' information/particulars; which access for governorship candidates closed on Friday, July 15, 2022.

"With reference to Delta State, our Party duly submitted and uploaded the name of Oborevwoi Sheriff Francis Orohedor as the Delta State Governorship candidate of the PDP onto INEC Portal on Friday, July 8, 2022.

"On July 18, 2022, three days after the closure of access to the INEC Portal, our Party and INEC received a Court Order directing the substitution of the name of Oborevwoi Sheriff Francis Orohedor with another name. However, given the closure on July 15, 2022, our Party had no access to the INEC Portal.

"Subsequently, the PDP and INEC were served with Court of Appeal processes comprising; Notice of Appeal, Motion for Stay of Execution and Records of Appeal filed by the candidate whose name was initially uploaded by the Party onto the INEC Portal.

"It is instructive to state that under the INEC guideline, the last day for effecting any change of names of candidates for

the 2023 general election is September 28, 2022.

"For emphasis, the PDP currently has a candidate for the 2023 Governorship election in Delta State. If there be any change drawing from the outcome of the judicial processes, such will be duly and appropriately reflected in compliance with the Order of Court. The PDP as a law-abiding Party has always and will continue to comply with Orders of Court in every matter and situation.

"Our Party therefore urges our members, teeming supporters and the people of Delta State to disregard the speculations and remain focused on the platform of the PDP in their determination to consolidate on the achievements of the Governor of Delta State and our Vice-Presidential Candidate, Sen. Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa.

"The PDP is fully prepared for the 2023 general elections in Delta State as well as across the nation and will emerge victorious at the polls."

In a related development, the State Chairman of the Party, Barr Kingsley Esiso, said INEC asked the PDP to wait for the final outcome of court processes before the personal particulars of the party's governorship will be published.

Esiso, who is loyal member of the Okowa's camp, said the party is ready to stand and defend Oborevwoi's victory. He assured loyalists that the party is doing all within its powers to ensure smile returns to the faces of members.

The State Chairman stated this at the party's mega rally held at the Stadium of the University of Science

and Technology, Ozoro, headquarters of Isoko North Local Government Area on Saturday.

"Few weeks ago, our party conducted one of the freest and fairest governorship primaries in Delta State and in that primaries, a candidate emerge and our party has dutifully submitted the name of that candidate.

"As a responsible and respectable party, having conducted a free, fair and credible election it is our responsibility to stand and defend the outcome of that primaries. As I speak, the issue before the court has nothing to do with the deputy and credibility of that primaries.

"But I want to say because our party is responsible, that it is the constitutional right, and that right is also backed by the electoral act, of anybody, who feel aggrieved to approach the court. We are not against anybody, therefore, approaching the court.

"But we must also know that if you approached the court and the court gives you judgement, the man you took to court also have the constitutional right to appeal the judgement.

"By the action of INEC yesterday, all we have been told, and that is what we stand by, is that PDP Delta should wait for the final outcome of the court process. We have been told by the court, and INEC has re-enforced it, that Deltans should wait patiently for the outcome of the process of the court.

"So by the time the court delivers the final outcome of their enquiries, PDP being a responsible and respectable

party, we are waiting patiently. But I can assure you ladies and gentlemen that God is not asleep. So, I am very convinced that at the end of the day, we will have a course to smile," Esiso stated.

Meanwhile, the crisis rocking the State chapter of the Party has continued to eat deeper into its ranks, with some analysts saying the party has gotten beyond the redemption threshold as long as the 2023 general elections are concerned.

It was observed by The Trumpet that key political leaders led by former governor and godfather of the Edegbie side, Chief James Ibori, were conspicuously absent in the Saturday's mega rally of the party.

Some of the bigwigs not seen at the rally include former governor, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, Barr Kingsley Oturo, Ovuzorie Macaulay, Sen James Manager and Olorogun David Edegbie, among others.

This is a clear indication that the PDP in Delta State is currently a shadow of itself despite the emergence of Okowa as the Vice Presidential candidate of the party.

A top party source who confided in The Trumpet accused Okowa of being driven by excessive greed.

"Okowa wants to cease the enter party in the State without recourse to other major and critical stakeholders. He took the VP slot for himself and still want to singlehandedly produce the next governor and his deputy with outright disregard to our political leader, Ibori. This is politics of exclusion and greed taken too far," he said.





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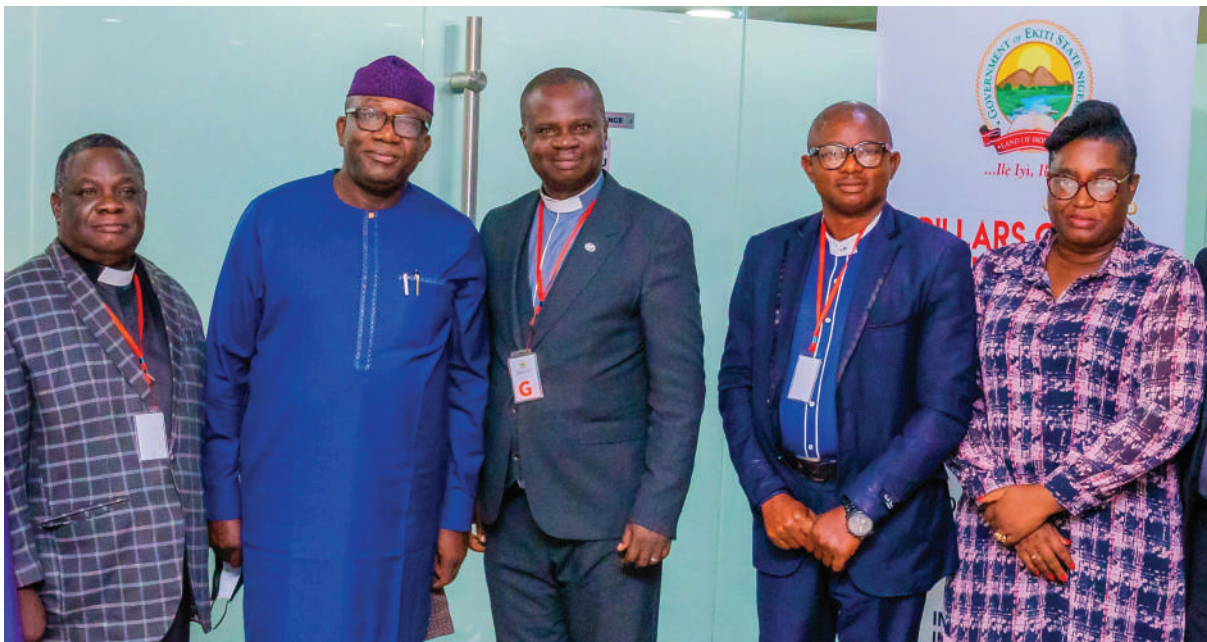


# Fayemi tasks CAN on charter of demands for politicians, Muslim-Muslim ticket

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

peddled in some quarters. He affirmed that there are so many competent Christians in the North and all over Nigeria. He noted that the responsibility of the church where social justice is being preached should include looking at the challenges being faced by Christians and seeking how good governance can address and improve upon them.

He urged Christian leaders to eschew what he called "the theology of disengagement" and embrace politics by converting the current challenge to an opportunity to present a charter of demands to all political candidates based on irreducible minimum conditions acceptable to Christendom. "Many Christians see politics as a dirty game, and for this reason are disengaged from the political process. It's time for us to realize that there are compelling reasons for Christians to participate in politics. In my own opinion, whatever makes us good Christians makes us good citizens." "You raised a matter that is agitating the minds of many Christians particularly Christians who are not in politics but I can tell you that Christians who are in politics are equally concerned about the matter you have raised about the Muslim-Muslim ticket. Not



L-R: Vice Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Ekiti State, Pastor Joseph Olubusoye; Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi; Chairman, CAN, Ekiti State, Rev (Dr) Emmanuel Aribasoye; Secretary, CAN Ekiti State, Evangelist David Fabusuyi; and Director Legal and Public Affairs, CAN Ekiti State, Barrister Oludayo Olorunfemi; during a courtesy visit by the new CAN executives to the Governor in Ado-Ekiti...at the weekend.

so much because of faith but because of fair representation and representation in a multi ethnic, multi religious, multi-cultural setting is always going to be an issue of concern. But I have also had cause to discuss this with our political associates and our fathers in the Lord.

"But where we are now, my plea with Christians is to do that which is expected of us.

Yes, the agitation must continue and on my part as a Christian, I have been talking to both the Presidential candidate and other leaders of the party that we need to take quick steps that we should have taken earlier by approaching the leadership in Christendom and explain the context of the selection that was about to happen. Even if they don't

agree with our choice, they would have seen the sincerity of purpose and understood that the decision was not on ground of competence because we have competent Christians all over Nigeria but on grounds of strategic political moves, which is what we do in politics. We have to look at scenarios and calculate where the votes would come

from, it is a game of numbers.

"I think it is time for Christians to move away from the theology of disengagement - the notion that politics is dirty and that it is not for a child of God. When serious Christians committed to the ideals of social justice and the common good turn away from politics, they open the door for unprincipled opportunists

to take power. Fortunately, not all of us can or will be in elective office. Not all of us have to. What matters is for each of us to find our place in the move to build our nation and be faithful to the demands of that task.

The Christian leadership should use this current challenge as an opportunity to present a charter of demands to all political candidates, especially our party (APC), outlining the irreducible minimum conditions acceptable to Christians in the next political dispensation. A charter of demands that would represent those values you preach to us in church highlighting our concerns, stressing the place of Christendom in the Nigeria project and then placing our demands before the political leaders. I want the Church to organise debates around issues of concerns among all the candidates". He stated.

This, he said, would bring out some advantages for the Christians in the current arrangement, rather than flogging the issue of Muslim-Muslim ticket. "While it is desirable to see one of us on either side of the presidential ticket, I think it is important for us to look beyond the religious profession of the gladiators or even their ethnic or geopolitical origin."

Speaking further, Dr Fayemi commended CAN for its role in promoting peace and harmony both at the state and national levels and urged the association not to relent in its prayer for the peace of the country.

Earlier, Aribasoye had commended the governor's generosity to CAN in Ekiti and his spirit of sportsmanship in stepping down for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the APC Convention, as a welcome development. He, however, said the church was not in any way comfortable with the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the ruling party, describing it as a "cause for concern."

Aribasoye gave kudos to Fayemi administration for his giant strides in the state which included quick response to security challenges which had culminated into frequent arrest of criminal elements in the state, extensive infrastructural and educational development as well as his personal sponsorship of pilgrims to Holy lands.

He also highlighted some of the achievements of the administration to include prompt payment of workers' salaries, construction of International Cargo Airport and peaceful conduct of Governorship election in the state. Dr Aribasoye used the occasion to invite the Governor to the National Convention of CAN taking place at the end of the month.

## Osun victory signposts PDP's rescue mission drive, says Okowa

Delta Governor and Vice-Presidential Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Senator (Dr) Ifeanyi Okowa, said the party's victory in Osun governorship poll was a pointer to its readiness to rescue the country from mal-administration and government insensitivity.

The governor stated this while addressing PDP faithful at a mega rally at Ozoro, on Saturday, and affirmed that PDP remained the only party that could return Nigeria to better days.

He assured that contrary to insinuations in some quarters, PDP was strong, virile and united in the state, adding that what was playing out was democracy-in-action. "I am glad that some of our friends have come to join us in this revolution to rescue Nigeria.

"The victory of our party last week Saturday in Osun is just the beginning of the revolution to rescue Nigeria and to return us to the path of growth.

"In the last seven years, it has not been too well with us as a nation, but we know that God has come to our rescue and it's just for the PDP to take it and run with it; that sign has already started with our victory in Osun.

"Last Saturday, you listened, you watched and you waited for the result

in Osun. We went to the heartland of the APC in Yoruba land to make a statement and to God be the glory.

"They did not give PDP a chance; the APC thought it was a done-deal but God showed His mighty hand and when the results started coming, it was unfortunate for the APC.

"That is just the beginning and I must thank Nigerians who have come to realise that something has gone wrong and that we need rescue and there is only one party that can rescue Nigeria as at today and it is the PDP," the governor said.

He pointed out that PDP was the only party with the most experienced candidate and urged Nigerians to support the party's rescue mission.

According to him, when you look at all the persons they have brought out, you can see the distinction; we need a man who is calm with a lot of experience; somebody who knows what to do from day one.

"And, if you look at it very well, only one man fits the bill and that's why we are talking about the 'Atikulate Revolution'.

"I heard some people saying that PDP is dying in Delta State and I wonder why they are deceiving themselves.

"We are not boasting but on the day of election,

our people will come out and vote and in the next election we are going to win all available seats - from the Assembly to the Presidential.

"In 2019 they got two local government areas but in 2023 we will win the entire 25 local government areas.

"Whatever is going on in the party today is a normal democratic process; so, there is nothing to worry about, no cause for alarm and no cause to fear," he stated.

The governor thanked PDP's presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, for nominating him as his running mate, and assured him that Deltans would support the Atiku-Okowa ticket.

"We thank God that a very experienced presidential candidate Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, picked one of your own as his running mate and we give God the glory.

"When it's time for campaign we will come out to campaign but one thing is that Atiku has done well for the people of South-South, South-East and the people of South-West because we stand for all and he has done well for us.

"2023 is about the youths and women of Nigeria and we cannot continue to suffer and stay hungry. We must definitely move

forward," he stated.

Welcoming party faithful earlier, the state's Chairman of PDP, Chief Kingsley Esiso, said the primary purpose of the rally was to receive defectors from other parties.

He said that Nigerians could no longer tolerate a party that had divided Nigeria along ethnic, religious and regional lines.

"People are hungry and angry, and in the midst of that, APC showed its desperation and insensitivity by coming up with a Muslim-Muslim ticket.

"In Northern Nigeria, Christians constitute no fewer than 40 per cent of the population, yet APC said they couldn't find a Christian to be vice-presidential candidate.

"Nigerians will not answer them, we will wait till 2023 and answer them with our votes using our PVCs.

"Our people have seen with their eyes what Governor Okowa has done in Delta," he said.

On the governorship tussle in the state, Esiso urged party faithful to remain calm, adding that INEC had asked stakeholders to maintain calm until the entire court processes were exhausted.

"As the state Chairman of this great party, it



# Eight n NDLEA net over alleged attempts to smuggle illicit drugs

By PAUL MICHAEL

No fewer than eight suspects have been arrested by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) over attempts to import hundreds of cocaine pellets into Nigeria and export thousands of Tramadol 255mg tablets among other illicit drugs to Europe through Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, NAIA, Abuja; Akanu Ibiam International Airport, AIIA, Enugu, and Murtala Muhammed International Airport, MMIA, Lagos.

NDLEA's Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, who confirmed the arrest on Sunday in a statement said that the suspects include two ladies and six men.

"The streaks of arrests and seizures began on Sunday 17th July when a 52-year-old father of three, Okwo Paul Okechukwu, was arrested upon his arrival from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia via an Ethiopian airline flight at the Abuja airport for ingesting 76 pellets of cocaine.

"During preliminary interview, Okechukwu who hails from Enugu Ezike, Igbo Eze LGA, Enugu state, said he was into selling women's wigs and hair attachment before veering into the drug trade. He has since completed excreting all the 76 wraps of the drug he swallowed while under observation at the Agency's facility in Abuja," Babafemi said.

In the same vein, another father of three, Lawrence Chijioke, 42, was said to have been arrested at the Abuja airport same day in an operational synergy between NDLEA and Nigeria Customs Service at the NAIA.

"Chijioke, who hails from Umuahia in Umuahia LGA, Abia state was arrested during an inward clearance of Ethiopian Airline flight from Addis Ababa with 529 pellets of cocaine weighing 11.70kg concealed in his bag.

"In his statement to anti-narcotic officers, he claimed he was promised N2 million, which he planned to use to boost his business, upon successful delivery of the cocaine consignment in Abuja, Babafemi stated.

Meanwhile, on Saturday 23rd July, operatives arrested 29-year-old Ms Onuorah Caritas Onyinye at the Enugu airport upon arrival on Ethiopian airline flight from Addis Ababa.

Babafemi said a search of her luggage led to the discovery of 2.192kilograms of cocaine concealed in two designers women handbags with false linings.

Attempts by drug traffickers to export different illicit drugs through the NAHCO export shed

at the Lagos airport to Europe and United Arab Emirate were also frustrated by officers and men of the Agency.

"Apart from 24 parcels of Loud, a variant of cannabis, which is largely grown in the United States and Canada, other substances recovered from the cargo include a precursor for methamphetamine, BMK glycidic

acid; tablets of designer drug MDMA and another five parcels of cannabis.

"No fewer than four freight agents were arrested in connection with the seizure. They include: Balogun Adesola Olamilekan; Sulaimon Kaosarat Yetunde; Benjamin Christopher Joel; and Omoniyi Ibukun Abraham.

Also same day, Monday 18th July, the bid by an Italy-bound passenger Tony Osas to export 10,250 tablets of Tramadol 255mg to Europe through the Lagos airport was foiled by NDLEA operatives who intercepted him at gate B departure hall during outward clearance of passengers on a Turkish airline flight to Milan.

During a search of his luggage,

Osas who hails from Ovia South – West Local Government Area of Edo State was found with the illicit substance that weighed 5.70kg concealed inside gari, a local cassava product tucked in his black handbag.

## Edo pledges completion of road projects, seeks residents support

Edo State Government has assured residents that ongoing road construction projects by the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration in different communities will be completed in good time.

The Chairman of the Edo State Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOGPADEC), Pastor Kennedy Osifo gave the assurance while briefing journalists in Benin City.

Osifo said Governor Obaseki is investing in road construction as part of the plans to make Edo great again, ensuring more communities are opened to boost economic activities and guarantee improved livelihoods for Edo people.

Noting that the governor has given marching order for the completion of all ongoing road projects in the state, the EDSOGPADEC chair said, "Obaseki's government is about the empowerment and betterment of the lives of Edo people and is committed to projects and reforms to guarantee a prosperous and progressive Edo where all citizens can realize their fullest potential."

On ongoing road construction projects, Osifo added, "The government has taken deliberate steps to ensure the completion of all road projects in the state in line with the directive of the state governor.

"We are pursuing a holistic road infrastructure programme across Edo to guarantee better livelihoods for our people and have embarked on massive road construction projects across various communities, which are at different levels of completion."

He continued: "For example, in St. Saviors Town to by-pass, we are constructing over 15.33kms of road and have about 4km to complete that road. Work has commenced at Idogbo and as we speak, that project is almost finished. In Ekosodin, road projects have been completed; while work has intensified on Ekiador road, from the Lagos-Benin Express Road down to Akure. There is massive road construction work on the Federal College of Education Road; we have just a few kilometers left to finish that project.

"These and several others that are ongoing in various communities in the state will be completed as the government is committed to ensuring better livelihoods for the people of Edo."



The late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's son, Shehu, at his wedding with sweetheart Yacine in Maiduguri

## Northeast youths to mobilise for Tinubu, Shettima victory

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

A political support group, the Northeast APC Youth Forum has said it would embark on a massive grassroots political campaign in the region and beyond to ensure the victory of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Kashim Shettima, Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2023 general elections.

Chairman of the Forum, Haruna Adamu Sardauna, said this during a press briefing with newsmen at the APC Secretariat in Abuja on Thursday.

Sardauna noted that APC has drastically improved the security situation in the northeast, where people are no longer displaced but enjoying their resettlement in their various communities.

He described the emergence of Shettima as the Vice Presidential candidate of APC as a response to the wishes and agitations of the people of the region, while appreciating the party's leadership for the decision.

The youth leader described Shettima as a "loyal, intelligent, unifier, and a peace-loving grassroots politician endowed with all the qualities of leadership."

According to him, "The emergence of the PDP Presidential Candidate from the Northeast region will never be a threat to us nor be relevant for victory. The APC youths here are united and always ready to promote the Tinubu/Shettima presidential drive."

While appreciating APC stakeholders from North-West and North-Central for their solidarity and continued support for the Northeast region, Sardauna said the northeast youths shall take their "campaigns from house to house, ward to ward and organize a sensitization programme on voters' right and power and why APC should remain relevant for continuity and consolidation and more."

His words, "It could be recalled that on 13th of June, 2022, we organized an International Press Conference here in Abuja, where we agitated for the office of the Vice President to be allocated to the Northeast region and now granted.

"Also, in appreciation and total Gratitude to the prompt response, accepting and considering our demand, we remain indebted to Sen. Bola Ahmed Tinubu the presidential

flag bearer of this great party, and the entire leadership and APC stakeholders.

"The Northeast APC Youth Stakeholders Forum, and the entire leadership, members of the northeast card carriers are totally committed to bringing in all their political arsenals to make sure APC emerges victorious in the forthcoming 2023 general elections, Insha Allah.

"For Northeast to Support APC in 2023 Election is a payback, because APC has drastically improved the security situation of the region, people are no longer displaced but enjoying their resettlement to their various communities, people are enjoying freedom.

"Insha Allah APC will win all electoral positions in the forthcoming general elections with our dear father His Excellency, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the brand-new President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria come 2023.

My address will not be complete without showing our appreciation to the press who have always been partners of progress, especially in the promotion of democracy in our dear country, Nigeria."



# Saraki's committee in fresh move to save PDP at instance of Senate caucus

•Don't misrepresent Atiku's Arise TV interview - Adeniji •I'll speak soon on ex-VP, says Wike

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

The National Reconciliation Committee of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) under immediate past Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki, has been charged to save the opposition political group from the festering post-presidential primary crisis between its candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and the first runner-up, Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State.

Saraki, also one of the aspirants who lost to Atiku at the May 28 special national convention of the PDP held in Abuja is being called upon to salvage the party from imminent irreconcilable division, two months before commencement of presidential campaign ahead of the 2023 election.

The *Trumpet* authoritatively gathered that the fresh drafting of the Reconciliation committee to wade into the lingering crisis between the two party icons was at the instance of the PDP Senate Caucus led by the new Minority Leader, Senator Philip Aduda.

Resolution of the bad blood created between Atiku and Wike after the primary election, topped the agenda at last Wednesday meeting of the Caucus in Abuja.

Concerned that the fallout between the two leaders has already polarized organs of the party, the caucus felt it imperative to draft the Saraki's committee to save PDP from total disintegration.

A source hinted that Aduda at the meeting said "our party cannot afford to go into the 2023 election divided. Something has to be done and it has to be done fast. At this point in time we need the effort of the National Reconciliation Committee under our leader, former Senate President, His Excellency, Dr. Bukola Saraki to reconcile the two prominent members and their supporters."

The Caucus expressed confidence in the Committee, judging by efforts in recent past at reconciling factions in state chapters of PDP. The latest effort was the role played by the Committee in pacifying the former National Secretary of PDP, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola to join hands with the party in Osun State ahead of the July 16 governorship election. The effort resulted in the victory of the PDP and its candidate, Ademola Adeleke at the poll.

A staunch member of the party in Oyo State, Hon. Tunde Suara categorically charged the National Working Committee led by the National Chairman, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu to rise up to its leadership role by taking decisive action to end the crisis.

He told our correspondent that "delay is dangerous. The silence of the NWC on the Atiku/ Wike crisis is no more golden."

The lawmaker who repre-

sented Ibadan North Federal Constituency in the 7th House of Representatives said that reconciliation should start from within the party leadership.

Suara said "except we are deceiving ourselves, this issue is gradually affecting the rank and file of our party with members of the NWC taking sides. There is the need for the NWC to purge itself by closing gaps already created by the Atiku/ Wike misunderstanding.

"We have about two months to start nationwide campaign and we cannot start on the note of crisis. We need the participation of everyone in the party. I think Dr. Ayu and his team need to do more in settling this crisis".

The *Trumpet* recalled that the Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom had advised the former vice-president to personally visit Wike and placate him.

Ortom, an ally of the Rivers State governor has not minced words in saying that Atiku was not fair to Wike by nominating the Delta State governor, Ifeanyi Okowa as his presidential running mate.

Atiku had in his response to the controversy over the choice of his running mate on Arise Television interview on Friday, said he chose who he believed he can work with and who could deliver among the candidates presented to him by the party.

"I didn't reject Wike, I picked who can deliver. Going by history, I had picked an Igbo as running mate in 2007, in 2019. I still picked an Igbo for 2023.

"The committee that presented them was chaired the Governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom. They recommended three people, so I picked one. People should be fair to me and state the facts," said Atiku during the interview.

Defending Atiku, one of the strategists in the Abubakar Atiku Campaign Organisation, Engr. Ezekiel Olajide Adeniji said the presidential candidate should not be misrepresented over his past comments on the fallout of PDP presidential primary and his response on Arise TV.

Engr. Adeniji, a former board chairman of the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) under the Goodluck Jonathan administration said Atiku's response did not in any way despised the person of the Rivers State governor.

"He was just explaining the process that led to his choice of running mate and not trying to run down anybody as being insinuated in some quarters. People do not have to be mischievous.

"Our candidate, His Excellency, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar has displayed that as a party man, the leadership must be involved in the selection process of the vice presidential candidate, hence



Dr. Bukola Saraki

his consultation with the NWC.

"The process produced three options as he explained and he cannot do more than picking just only one of them. He is the candidate who should know better whom he can work with and he has chosen along that guiding principle. I don't think he should be crucified for that."

Asked on why Atiku has been dragging foot in meeting Wine to iron out issues, he denied deliberate delay by Atiku.

Adeniji said "Efforts are going on underneath for a meeting between the two party chieftains. Different personal schedules of both of them has been responsible for what people called delay.

"People should note that as a former vice president of Nigeria, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar is not a minor in politics. He known the consequence of any action taken in politics. He is an humble politician who will never ignore anyone, not to talk of someone line Governor Wike.

"I can tell you that it is people that cried more than the bereaved

who are insinuating crisis where there is none. The two party leaders will meet and very soon I can assure you".

However, one of the immediate past deputy national officers of the PDP has blamed the present leadership of the party under Ayu of complicity in the crisis.

He said the Ayu led NWC is hamstrung in resolving the feud because "they are part of the crisis".

The stakeholder who spoke on condition of anonymity said "I won't want to be mentioned in print because I won't want my intervention to be misrepresented as position of the immediate past leadership of the PDP.

"I can boldly tell you that right from the onset, the national chairman, Iyorchia Ayu knew whom they want as presidential candidate. The primary election was well orchestrated with that symbolic stepping down of Governor Tambuwal but the aftermath was not well managed by the leadership.

"As we speak now, almost every organ of the party is divide with members either for Wike or Atiku. And I think this is not healthy for a party desirous of winning elections in 2023.

"The National Assembly caucus of PDP particularly the House of Representatives is divided. Members loyal to Ndudi Elumelu are pro- Atiku while those who align with Kingsley Chinda are not doubt for Wike. This is an extension of the minority leadership tussle in the House of Representatives in Wike's frantic efforts to install Chinda was frustrated.

"Among our governors, there is a division along the two lines.

A clique led by Benue State governor, Ortom with governors of Oyo, Abia and Enugu are for Wike while the majority led by the chairman of PDP Governors' Forum and governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal are for Atiku. If you notice, the Governors' Forum has been unable to meet for once as a body after the presidential primary.

"Even, the eldership cadre of the stakeholders, the Board of Trustees (BoT) has been paying lip service to intervening in the crisis. Everyone knows the disposition of the BoT chairman, Senator Walid Jibrin to Atiku. He has said it several times that the BoT will meet with Wike but a step towards that has not been taken"

He suggested that there should be internal cleansing among the party organs, should there be meaningful reconciliatory efforts to bring the two camps together.

The party chieftain said "we can't afford to lose Wike and his influence before the 2023 election."

Meanwhile, the Rivers State governor has vowed to break his silence by speaking on the issue very soon.

Wike on Saturday, in a statement by his Special Assistant Media, Kelvin Ebiri, said it has become pertinent for him to speak and reveal to Nigerians all that has transpired in the PDP since the emergence of former Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the presidential candidate of the party.

"On Atiku, I will speak soon and Nigerians will know the actual truth of all that has transpired in the PDP in recent times," the was quoted to have said.

## •SERAP asks Kwankwaso, Obi to declare assets

Civil society group, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, SERAP, has demanded a full declaration of assets from presidential candidates Rabiu Kwankwaso of New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) and Peter Obi of Labour Party (LP).

SERAP wants the duo to emulate the presidential candidate of African Action Congress (AAC), Omoyele Sowore, by publicly declaring their assets.

The rights activism group made the demand in a series of messages on its Twitter handle.

SERAP also wants the two politicians to publicly denounce vote-buying and electoral bribery before and during the 2023 general election.

"Dear @PeterObi, ahead of the February 2023 presidential election, we are again calling on you to show leadership by urgently publishing details of your assets and publicly rejecting vote-buying and electoral

bribery before and during the elections.

"Dear @KwankwasoRM, ahead of the February 2023 presidential election, we are again calling on you to show leadership by

urgently publishing details of your assets and publicly rejecting vote-buying and electoral bribery before and during the elections," messages on SERAP's Twitter handle read.



Peter Obi



Rabiu Kwankwaso



# NGO launches PVC sensitization campaign

By **AHEROKE AMOS OKIOMA,**  
Yenagoa

**N**on governmental organization (NGO), Stand Up for Women Society, has lent its voice towards sensitization and mobilization of the masses on essence of registration and obtaining their permanent voters cards (PVC). Mayor of Yenagoa Local Government, Hon Nimizuo Uroupaye and other stakeholders joined the campaign in a road walk to Swali Ultra Modern Market.

It is part of its contribution towards good governance. SWS embarked on the sensitization and organized a road walk to the Swali Ultra Modern Market to educate traders on the essence of having their PVC that would enable them vote for credible candidates as their votes must count during the next general elections.

The group averred that it is time to stay aloof and watch all kinds of persons getting into government due to voters apathy, at the end when wrong persons get to power, the results have been bad governance and the masses live in squalor and abject poverty.

Speaking during the event, the Mayor of Yenagoa Local Government area, Hon Nimizuo Uroupaye posited that he is in total support of the Stand up for women (SWS) Sensitization Walk on Registration, Collections of PVCs and urge other groups to emulate them.

He also commended the efforts of the Standup for Women Society (SWS) for embarking on sensitization walk on operation show your permanent voters cards (PVC) in Yenagoa and Urged them to take the message to other markets.

The Mayor while commending them said the sensitization walk is a welcome development to Yenagoa local government and indeed BAYELSA state.

Uroupaye made the commendation during a sensitization walk organised by the Standup for Women Society of Nigeria BAYELSA state chapter in mobilizing and educating the masses especially the market women on Registration and Collection of their PVCs for the forthcoming general elections.

According to him, "many times women felt that elections is only for the men, but today this group (SWS) has come out openly to Standup for the women. I supported them because I felt it's a good thing, I always support good things".

"Today a lot of women are doing better than so many men because many women have gotten the orientation that they are not meant for the kitchen alone. So I love the programme which is also is organised by women."

He said so many people don't even go to INEC to register and those that have done some do not bothered to go and collect their voters cards thinking that good leaders is by selection and so they stay away from participating which is not good for our polity.

He also reiterated that his doors are open to collaboration and partnership with any group with genuine intention towards good governance, peace and security in the state.

"In this exercise today, I am the most beneficiary as the Mayor of Yenagoa Local government than other chairmen. So, I joined them to make sure the sensitization walk is successful. I salute their courage and the SWS have to come to stay.

For them coming out to sensitize our people to go and register and collect their PVC is a good thing to BAYELSA and mostly Yenagoa Local government. So many people are just in all the various markets across the state not knowing that having their PVC will make them to vote for good governance that will develop the market and improve on their businesses. So I will continue to support the women for the sensitization activities".

Also speaking, the Head of Voters Education Independent National Electoral Commission, Wilfred Ifogah, applauded the SWS for carrying out the sensitization walk, Saying INEC cannot do it alone.

Ifogah said INEC need more organisation like SWS to join in sensitizing the people especially at the grassroot where their activities will impact directly to the communities especially the women.

"The commission has extended the registration date to the 31st of July this Month and also the working hours of the staff from 9am to 3 pm before to 9am to 5pm to enable everyone that have not registered to do so and for those that have registered to go and collect their permanent voters cards".

In her speech, the convener of the sensitization walk and the chairperson of Standup for Women Society in Nigeria Bayelsa state branch, Liberator Eunice Nnachi, said the essence of the exercise is to ensure women go out and register and collect their PVCs, that will enable them partake during the elections.

"Without your PVCs you will not be able to vote and get good leaders that will lead you. Don't say your vote doesn't count. Your votes will count this time around just like what happened in the just concluded Osun state elections where Peoples vote counts".

"Go and get your PVC so that together we can put end to bad governance and collectively votes for a good leaders that lead us and our children. We are tired of hunger, poverty, killings and other devilish things that have bedevil this country as a result of bad leadership".

On her part, the zonal co-ordinator of South South for Standup for Women Society, Mrs Timinipre Idoko said, the essence of the exercise is to educate the women on the need to get their permanent voters cards.

"We are saying that the women have the right to vote and be

voted for and we should not think because we are women we do not have a role to play in governance. We should come out and get our PVCs so that we can collectively cast our votes for credible candidates that will represent us".

In her solidarity message, the chairman of Gender Response Initiative Team (GRIT) Barr. Dise Ogbise, said the sensitization walk is symbolic because the SWS has made a loud statement by talking to Bayelsans the need for them to come out and register and get their PVCs to elect credible candidates of their choice and correct the erroneous impression that a sitting president or governor cannot be defeated, but sensitization towards obtaining of PVCs, that impression was proven

wrong recently during the Osun governorship election where an incumbent was defeated." The PVCs is the people,s power that enable to vote credible persons into power"

The PVCs is the voice of the people to determine good governance whosoever they want at the local government, state and Federal levels.

"It's also symbolic because other stakeholders also joined in the SWS symbolic walk. We are happy with them because this will create a lot of awareness to the people especially the women. We are happy that in the forthcoming elections, we will have a lot of women that will be coming out to vote".

Also speaking a woman representative of Ohaneze in Bayelsa

state, Ms Ijeoma Ikedozie said she was there to represent the Ohaneze women and inform the women that those that have not registered should go and register and obtain their permanent Voters Cards to enable them vote during the general elections. She said to change the narrative, the efforts of the SWS needs to be complimented and that is why the Ohaneze is involved due to our numerical strength in the market.

The sensitization walk which took -off from Independent National Electoral Commission head office in Yenagoa was terminated at the state popular Swali ultra modern market, popularly known as Swali market where hand bills were distributed throughout the length and breath of the market.



Mayor of YELGA Nimizuo Uroupaye speaking to journalists during SWS sensitization to Swali Market in Bayelsa State

## More pressure mounts on A'lbom gov to drop PDP guber candidate

By **ISAAC JOB, UYO**

Governor Udom Emmanuel has received more pressure to dump Akwa Ibom Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Pastor Umo Eno over alleged certificate forgery case pending at Federal High Court, Uyo, the state capital.

Supporters have requested the party and Emmanuel to substitute Pastor Umo Eno over discrepancies in his O'level certificate and date of birth as judgement from the court may spell doom for PDP in the state.

The Trumpet gathered that the credentials submitted to the PDP screening committee by Eno shows that he was admitted into the University of Uyo in 1998 for his first degree, and bagged a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Public Administration in 2002.

But West African Examination Council (WAEC) results of 1981 and 1983 used to secure admission, revealed that he failed Mathematics (a compulsory subject) in both sittings.

This has generated controversies as Akwa Ibom people query

why the PDP and Governor Udom insist on a candidate with questionable credentials as low as school certificate.

Residents of the state described the scandal as most unfortunate and that for PDP insisting on pastor Umo Eno especially when there are credible persons that befit the office, something must be fishy.

Speaking to The Trumpet in Uyo on Sunday President of PDP Minders Forum (PMF), Mr Idorenyin Umana pointed out that "as a group, we are embarrassed by the ongoing certificate forgery scandal involving the governorship candidate of our party, Mr. Umo Eno. But we are even more concerned with the fact that the scandal has dragged the image of the University of Uyo, into the mud.

"All the evidence in public space points to the fact that Umo Eno's admission into the University of Uyo in 1998 was dubious.

"In Nigeria, every student seeking admission into the University is expected to score a minimum of five credits including Math-

ematics and English in his or her O'level result. But according to Umo Eno's WAEC results, he failed Mathematics in two years he sat for the examination.

He said the University of Uyo cannot be absolved from this scandal as those who were in charge of Umo Eno's admission must come and explain how it happened.

Another resident in the state Effiong Udoma noted that Umo Eno is gasping for breath as far as the controversies and allegations about his certificate forgery and falsification of date of birth were concerned.

He said all the evidence in the public domain indicate danger ahead of Umo Eno's political career and the PDP in the state

He therefore urged governor Udom Emmanuel and the PDP to prevail on pastor Umo Eno to withdraw from the race and allow the party to produce more candidate for 2023 general election in the state.

"PDP should now rely on section 33 of the Electoral Act and substitute its candidate without further delay" he said.



## NACCIMA urges govt to halt rising debts, embrace PPP arrangement

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

**N**igerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) has urged all tiers of government in Nigeria to take urgent steps in addressing increasing public debts and stagnating economic growth in the country.

National President of NACCIMA, John C. Udeagbala, who canvassed the position at the chamber's second quarter media briefing in Lagos, at the weekend, said doing so would project Nigeria as a safe destination for investments.

Udeagbala said: "Since our last media briefing in April 2022, inflation measured on a year-on-year basis has grown from 17.17 per cent as of April 2022 to 18.6 per cent in June 2022. Our economy has now surpassed the 18.7 per cent, being the highest inflation rate ever recorded in March 2021.

"While we welcome the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decision to raise the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) from 13 per cent to 14 per cent, we state that this is majorly an inflation management measure and does not address the major cause of inflation, which is rising food prices occasioned by devaluation of the naira and high cost of energy, which has affected

production and transportation. "Nevertheless, we look forward to continued implementation of CBN's intervention in agriculture, manufacturing, energy, healthcare and export sectors, which will ensure some improvement in food and energy supply," he stated.

On public debts, Udeagbala expressed concern about the nation's rising debt profile, noting that Nigeria foreign debt as of March 2022 stood at \$40 billion, having increased from \$38.4 billion, adding that the domestic debt also rose from N23.7 trillion to N25 trillion within the same period.

He maintained that it was now clear that the current level of debts had become unsustainable, because looking at it from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects by 2026, Nigeria's entire revenues would be used for debts servicing.

He, however, commended the Federal Government on the development of key infrastructure within the country, as this has remained a major challenge to the Nigerian private sector, noting that the pace of infrastructure development was slow in relation to the country's economic needs.

"To match private sector needs towards achieving sustainable economic growth and considering government's fiscal position, we once again propose Public Private



John C. Udeagbala

Partnership (PPP) as a way to achieve this solution.

"Government's sustained collaboration with the private sector on the implementation of Presidential Executive Order 007 of 2019 on Road Infrastructure Development and Refurbishment Investment Tax credit scheme is an example of the success that

can be achieved, using this approach to facilitate infrastructure development in the economy," he stated.

Udeagbala also lamented rising insecurity in the country, describing it as worrisome, adding that it had also massively contributed to the depression of the nation's economy.

## Firm blames TCN for power outage in A'lbom

By **ISAAC JOB**, Uyo

AKwa Ibom's power generating company has blamed Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) for inconsistent electricity distribution in the state.

Speaking with *The Trumpet* in Uyo, the Managing Director of Ibom Power Plant, Engr Meyen Etukudoh, said it generates 191 megawatts which is enough to supply the state but could not distribute because of outdated and old cables linked by the transmission firm.

He remarked: "The only problem of Nigeria is willpower and in Akwa Ibom, it is the willpower of the present government that transformed the power sector.

"Ibom Power has 191 MW installed capacity that can carry the whole of this state without getting power from anywhere if its runs."

Etukudoh who is the Senior Special Assistant to Governor Udom Emmanuel on Power explained that at present, the state generates 153 MW which can guarantee uninterrupted electricity in Akwa Ibom State but only 74 to 78 can be supplied because of operational limitations.

He said electric cable lines from Aba in Abia State to Itu in Akwa Ibom owned by TCN have not been reconducted since it was built in 1978.

"They are 150mm (aluminum conductor) and have not been changed since 1978," he said.

"So, if you put load above 55MW on them now, it will trip-on over current. So, that is not the problem of Akwa Ibom State nor Ibom Power."

Etukudoh disclosed that AKwa Ibom state government has been begging TCN since it is their exclusive responsibility, to come and change the lines but they have not shown up yet.

He listed AKwa Ibom state as first in the power sector when compared to others as it has invested a huge sum to actualize it.

adding that before the end of the tenure of the present administration in the state, there will be a steady power supply across all villages.

He disclosed that Udom Emmanuel has bought over 50 electricity transformers recently and had already given out about 490 to the public.

## Scarcity of aviation fuel hits airlines as AON appeals to passengers

Nigeria's aviation sector is still grappling with the worst shortage of JetA1 oil, popularly known as aviation fuel. Checks by *The Trumpet* at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport (MMIA) showed that most local airlines are unable to operate their scheduled flights due to lack of the product.

Consequently Dana Air, Aero Contractors and Arik Airline are finding it difficult to keep to their flight schedules after selling tickets to their passengers.

Similarly a Lagos-Abuja return ticket, which cost about N60,000

earlier in year now goes for between N120,000 and N140,000 for those who book their flights online, while passengers who buy their flight tickets across the counter pay more, in addition possession of tickets that do not guarantee one chance of flying as sources say there has been high rate of flight cancellations in the last two weeks.

Passengers at the departure halls of the local and international wings were sighted lamenting their plights to fly to their destinations.

In a related development, the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) has alerted members of the public, especially consumers

of air transport services in the country, that the aviation sector has been badly hit by acute scarcity of aviation fuel.

Spokesman of AON, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo stated this in a statement made available to newsmen at the weekend, saying the acute shortage of Jet A1 would lead to major disruptions in scheduled flight operations, which might include cancellation and unnecessary delays in all airports across the country.

"The aviation sector has been hit by a major crisis with the acute scarcity of aviation fuel. For this reason, there will be disruption in scheduled flight operations including cancellation

and unnecessary delays across all airports in the country. This is a foreseen but unintended consequence of the aviation fuel scarcity in the country," the statement reads.

The AON, however, pleaded for the understanding of members of the traveling public to bear with the association as efforts were currently being made to address the development and restore normal flight operations.

"We, therefore, pleaded for understanding of air travelers to bear with us, as efforts are currently being made to address the development and restore normal flight operations," it added.



Obiora Okonkwo

## Naira continues free fall, crashes to N658 per \$1 at parallel market

The Naira fell at the parallel market to N658 to \$1 on Friday, July 22, 2022 amid higher dollar demand, representing a depreciation of N38 or 6.13 per cent from the N620 it traded last week.

Bureau De Change Operators (BDCs) blamed the continued depreciation of the naira on ongoing foreign exchange (FX) supply constraints, even as the traders put the buying price of the dollar at N640 and the selling at a profit margin of N18.

A trader told *The Trumpet* that the unpredictability of the market was responsible for the depreciation, adding that Nigerians also prefer imported products, leading to massive FX demands.

"Our love and preference for imported products is responsible for the massive FX demand. And as long as we prefer imported products to locally produced ones in the country, the naira will continue to fall.

"Also, our politicians are busy mopping up all the foreign currency in the country, so the naira will continue to crash. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is also complicit in the woes that have befallen the naira. Will the management of CBN say they don't know that politicians are mopping up all the foreign currency?"

"For instance, last week, Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, hosted the Rivers United Football

Club players for winning the Nigeria Professional Football League. Did we not see the huge dollar rain there? Why were the players not given the naira equivalent of the money, instead of dollars? The players are based in Nigeria, so why give them dollars instead of the naira equivalent? He asked.

Although the CBN has said the parallel market was not the true reflection of the country's exchange rate, but checks at the parallel market showed that buying price stood at N414.72, while the selling price stood at N415.72 to \$1.

Manufacturers said they were unable to access their FX needs from the banks the CBN

mandated to sell to them, adding that they were asked to queue up for months before they were able to get some fraction of their FX needs, which forced them to evade the parallel market to source dollars for their raw material needs.

"Serious manufacturers don't depend on the banks for their FX needs. One will be made to queue for months before they are attended to. If one asked for \$50,000, he should be glad to get \$20,000, so from where will one get the balance?"

"Therefore, most manufacturers and importers rely on the parallel market for their FX needs, hence the naira has continued to depreciate," a manufacturer said.



## Alleged Misconduct: BoB chair, Olanipekun says he's angry with NBA over Akpata's letter

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Chairman of Body of Benchers (BoB), Chief Wole Olanipekun (SAN), has said that he was angry with the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) over a letter written by President of NBA, Olumide Akpata.

While chatting with news men, Olanipekun said he was yet to understand why a letter written to him requesting that he steps down as Chairman of BoB by Akpata would be circulated on social media without serving him a copy more than 24 hours after same had been released to the public.

Olanipekun, a one-time President of the NBA, accused Akpata of having an ulterior motive behind his action.

"As we talk, I am yet to get a copy of the letter. People have been calling me but I can't react to a document that I have not seen", he stressed.

The letter by Akpata had asked Olanipekun to step down as the BoB Chairman over an allegation of misconduct which affected a female lawyer, Ms Adegunde, a partner at Wole Olanipekun & Co. Chambers.

Recall that Ogunde had sent an email to



Wole Olanipekun

Saipem Contracting Nigeria Ltd soliciting a brief after the Rivers State government preferred charges against the company over allegations of \$130million fraud.

Though the firm of Henry Ajumogobia (SAN) is defending Saipem, Ogunde told the management to consider hiring Olanipekun & Co.

The partner informed the CEO Francesco Caio that Olanipekun has more "influence" with judges across all courts.



Olumide Akpata

"We are aware that another law firm is currently in the matter but you will agree that highly-sensitive and political matters require more influence.

"We are happy to work with the current lawyers to achieve the desired results. Chief Olanipekun SAN, OFR, will significantly switch things in favour of SAIPEM," she wrote.

Ogunde included that Olanipekun chairs the BoB comprising "Supreme Court judges,

presiding justices of the Court of Appeal and chief judges of all state High Courts, including the Rivers State High Court."

In a protest letter, Ajumogobia declared that the action was a breach of mandatory rule, especially the acknowledgement that Saipem had a counsel.

Meanwhile, Ogunde and Olanipekun have apologized to Ajumogobia.

On June 24, Olanipekun in a rejoinder stressed that no one authorized the email by Ogunde.

After the exchanges between the two chambers of Olanipekun and Odein Ajumogobia, a petition sprang.

In the petition with registration number, BB/LPDC/901/2022 to the LPDC, John Aikpokpo-Martins, NBA vice president, said the issue brought shame to the justice system and legal profession.

The petition wants to know whether Wole Olanipekun & Co. "are not liable to be disciplined... seeing that the respondent has the ostensible authority to act as a partner, and indeed acted for and on behalf of the said firm".

While plans were in the pipeline to commence the trial of Ms Ogunde, the NBA President fired a letter to Olanipekun wanting him to step down as BoB Chairman.

Although the letter has been trending on social media for more than 24 hours, Olanipekun said he was yet to be served.

Akpata, in the letter, informed the embattled senior advocate that the NBA had taken the matter to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (LPDC).

The LPDC is a panel under the BoB which Olanipekun, a former NBA President, heads.

Akpata said Olanipekun was in a situation where his continued occupancy of the office would conflict with or influence LPDC processes.

BoB is a professional body concerned with the admission of prospective students into the Nigerian Law School, NLS. Members of the body are called Benchers.

The body also regulates the call of graduates of the NLS to the Nigerian Bar as well as the regulation of the legal profession.

## ICPC hosts 8th RoLAC's stakeholders focal points meeting

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), has hosted the 8th Stakeholders Focal Point meeting on the sustainability of the Rule of Law and Anti-corruption (RoLAC) programmes.

This was disclosed by the spokesperson of the Commission, Mrs Azuka Ogunde in a statement on Saturday

RoLAC Programmes are funded by the European Union (EU) and were launched in 2017 to enhance good governance in Nigeria by strengthening the rule of law, curbing corruption and reducing impunity.

According to Ogunde, RoLAC Component Manager, Emmanuel Uche, while speaking

during the event noted that the meeting was called for participants to exchange ideas on what everyone was doing in the entire programme's objectives.

Uche said, "The value of the meeting is that it helps to improve collaboration and cooperation which is one of the key elements and key goals of the RoLAC project itself.

"This is the 8th of those meetings. The last time we met, we had some little concern as to the need to take a quick look back and see how well the whole purpose and essence of this meeting has worked out. We noticed that there had not been as much consistency particularly in the dramatis personae who represented the different institutions at those meetings.

"There was this concern about how we

have been able to manage institutional memory of what we discussed in the previous meetings, and how are we taking the knowledge of what other partners are doing to inform what our respective agencies are doing collaboratively."

Meanwhile, the Secretary to the Commission, Professor Musa Usman Abubakar, in his welcome remarks commended the stakeholders for their tireless efforts in meeting the set objectives of the programme just as he wished them a fruitful deliberation.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Federal Ministry of Justice, Nigeria Correctional Service, Legal Aid Council, Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR), Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) and a host of other stakeholders.

## SERAP sues INEC over failure to prosecute vote-buyers in Ekiti election

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for "failing to prosecute those suspected of vote-buying and electoral bribery during the recently concluded Ekiti State governorship election."

In the suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/1189/2022 filed last Friday at the Federal High Court, Abuja, SERAP is seeking "an order of mandamus to direct and compel INEC to seek and obtain detailed information about reports of vote-buying by the three leading political parties in the 2022 Ekiti State governorship election."

SERAP is also seeking "an order of mandamus to direct and compel INEC to promptly and effectively prosecute those arrested, and to bring to justice anyone who sponsored, aided and abetted them."

According to SERAP, "Vote buying is a threat to fair and representative elections. Vote buying amounts to undue influence and improper electoral influence.

"Wealthy candidates and their sponsors ought not to be allowed to profit from their

crimes. Arresting and prosecuting vote buyers will end widespread impunity for vote buying ahead of the February 2023 general elections."

The group further stated that vote buying encourages poor governance and weakens citizens' capacity to hold their 'elected officials' accountable for their actions.

It noted that vote buying undermines the ability of INEC to discharge its responsibilities under Section 153 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended), paragraph 15(a) of the third schedule of the Constitution, and the Electoral Act 2022.

"Corruption of the ballot box intrudes on the freedom of Nigerian voters to make up their own minds. Vote buying and other forms of electoral corruption freeze out the less wealthy candidates and parties.

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

According to reports, there was a brazen pattern of vote-buying and electoral bribery

in several polling units during the recently concluded Ekiti governorship election, including bargaining prices for votes and payments made in uncompleted buildings.

The suit filed on behalf of SERAP by its lawyers, Kolawole Oluwadare and Opeyemi Owolabi, read in part: "Vote buying is entirely an act of election malpractice connected with vested interest since an election can be said to be free and fair when it is devoid of vote buying.

"Ending impunity for vote-buying and electoral bribery would contribute to free and fair elections. A corruption-free electoral process is essential for building public confidence in the electoral process, and the credibility and legitimacy of the 2023 elections.

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

"Preventing and combating vote buying and electoral bribery would advance the people's right to vote and to participate in their own government, as well as bolster the ability of INEC to effectively discharge

its constitutional and statutory mandates.

"Many years of allegations of vote-buying and electoral bribery and entrenched impunity of perpetrators have undermined public confidence in the electoral process.

"Prosecuting allegations of vote-buying and electoral bribery would be entirely consistent with the Nigerian Constitution, the Electoral Act, and the country's international human rights anti-corruption obligations.

"Agents of the three dominant political parties in the state, namely All Progressives Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP), were reportedly involved in buying votes across the state, and voters offered as high as N10,000 in exchange for their votes.

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

"Section 145(2) of the Electoral Act provides that, 'a prosecution under this Act shall be undertaken by legal officers of the Commission or any legal practitioner appointed by it.'"

No date has been assigned for the hearing of the suit.



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4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
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9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41	
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	269,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91	
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72	
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84				
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79				
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50				
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79				
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# Osun Governorship Election - a postmortem

On 16th July 2022, the people of Osun State thronged to various polling booths to elect a new Chief Executive for their State. The conduct and outcome of the elections offer significant lessons for the nation. It indeed provided a measuring instrument to gauge the political mood and appetite of the electorate for drastic socio-political change in the country.

The election is perceived by some as the microcosm of the macro dynamism of the Nigerian political space, where henceforth it is competence, record of service and other tangible variables that will decide who wins. The victory of the opposition party is an indicator of the complex nature of the electorate, greater awareness of the average Nigerian voter and perhaps even of the changing dynamics of national election management.

The removal from office of an incumbent from the ruling national party was a major upset. The roles played by national institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies during the elections as well as the role of local media outlets and of course, independent election monitors and the civil society were adjudged as applaudable by the various courts of public opinion in the country. The deployment of technology, which was a serious issue of contention during the 2019 national elections, was also commended as it ensured a marked improvement in voter accreditation, collation of the results of the elections as well as general acceptability of the outcome of the election.

Other significant lessons learnt from the Osun elections, include, the fact that the use of technology in the process has mitigated some human factors that in the past created bottlenecks in our elections process. Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) technology worked efficiently in accrediting voters. The

electronic transfer of results helped INEC to upload the election results in real-time. Nigerians were happy that the malfunctioning rate of the technology was insignificant and hardly impeded the process. If it works in Osun, we expect that it should work in 2023 during the national elections so that the issue of electronic transmission of votes will not rear its head again. INEC kindly note please.

The second lesson is that rigging is becoming unpopular and may gradually belong to history in Nigerian elections. We hope that this will make leaders produced through this process accountable to the electorate. This marks the beginning of true democracy in Nigeria – the supremacy and power of the people through balloting. However, the progress made in

tackling rigging may be undermined by the politics of financial inducement. Thirdly, the poor performance of the incumbent governor is a clear indication that it is not business as usual. It was reported that Governor Adegboyega Oyetola failed to pay gratuities and pensions and sometimes even monthly salaries. The Osun people paid him in kind. Finally, the reach and impact of social media, as a tool for mass mobilisation, was very glaring during the Osun elections.

Financial inducement, which has become the affliction of Nigerian politics, was also present in Osun during the elections but not on the same scale as witnessed earlier in Ekiti State. But this is a practice that must be completely eradicated as we move on. To ensure the progressive growth of democracy in the country, we must do something to eliminate marketing of votes. Voters should vote based on their convictions and understanding of the qualities of the leaders they want. Government, political parties and the Civil Society must embark on an aggressive sensitisation campaign to educate the voters on the dangers of selling their mandate to money bags. It must be pointed to them that the implication could go beyond the moneybag's years in office and may affect even the unborn generations; it could even lead to democratic regression in the short term. We wish to commend the efforts of the government, the national election management mechanism, the security agents and the civil society for ensuring the conduct of a rancour-free elections in Osun State.

We will also not miss the opportunity to remind His Excellency-in-waiting, Senator Ademola Adeleke, the dancing Senator that we have seen him dance and his steps are admirable, but now it is time to for him to sing, perhaps with his nephew, so that the good people of Osun State, including the unpaid pensioners, should also dance to the melody of performance in joyfulness and exultation.



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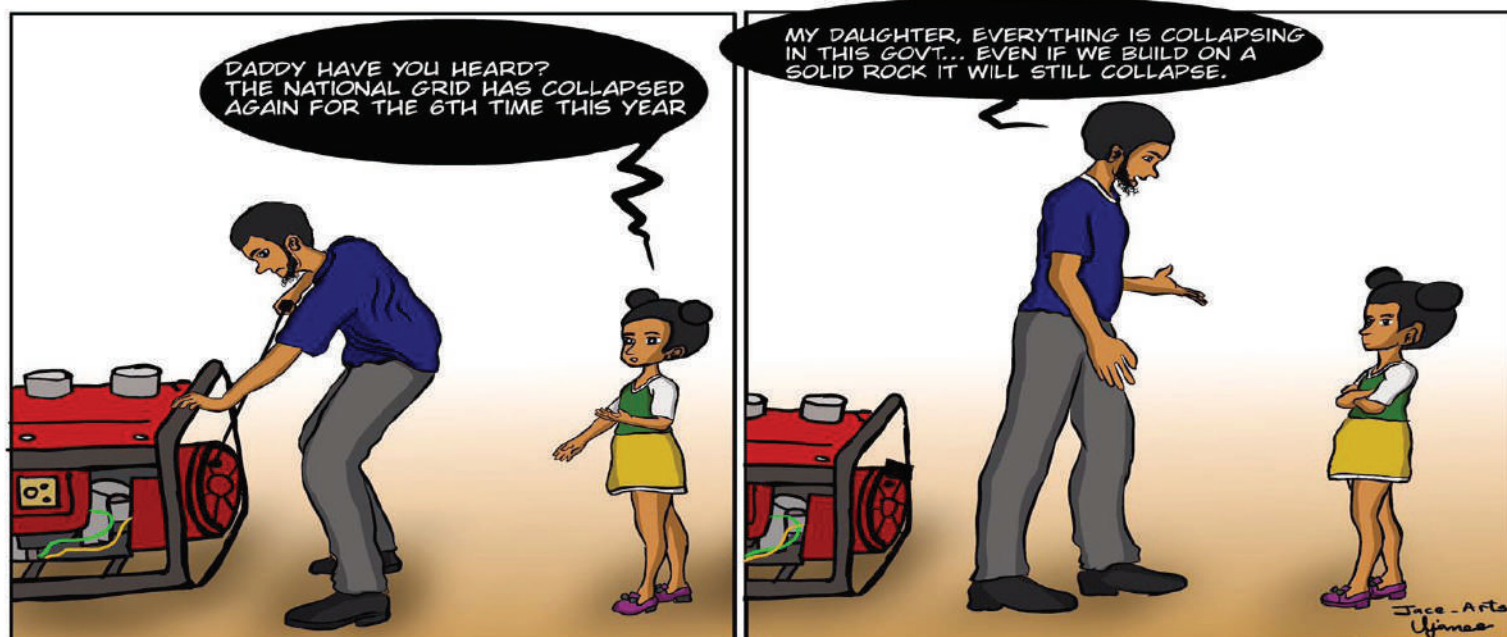
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## The Osun State Governorship Election

The people of the State of Osun (as the government under Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola liked to be called during the turbulent years of the President Jonathan administration) went to the polls last week to elect a governor in an off-cycle election. From the outset, it was clear that the two major political parties were going into the elections internally divided and that this would affect the outcome of the elections. To be sure it did. That is because, egos, big egos, not issues of development or allocation of resources, were involved and the gladiators were not ready to deploy common sense in the fight for victory. In a sense, it was a repeat of the battle over the governorship seat that was fought, won, and lost in 2018. Popular opinion is that Senator Ademola Adeleke won that election though the APC machinery was used to wrest power from him, using the judiciary. Whether this is true or not is no longer important. Or is it?

The very robust dancing Senator Adeleke, barring last minute APC-government magic will soon occupy Government House in Oshogbo! Incumbent Governor Adegboyega Oyetola is yet to congratulate the winner, an indication that there might be a battle ahead. But Oyetola should let sleeping dogs lie and allow the people of Osun enjoy democracy dividends. If as incumbent governor he could not impress the people enough to win outright despite all resources at his disposal, then he is the architect of his misfortune. How could any sensible governor refuse to pay the entitlements of pensioners in four years till the eve of elections? It is callous, inhumane, and repulsive

to natural justice to deny workers their emoluments. It is worse when dealing with retirees! Leaving men and women who have spent their youthful energy in service of the state to languish in their vulnerable age is a curse on any leadership! Already, Senator Adeleke has claimed that 'the reason the state government is owing (sic) salaries and cannot pay pensioners is that a lot of the state's money is taken to Lagos State'. The battle line is drawn – the ubiquitous Lagos Machine has been called out again!

The swift congratulatory message from Mr. President has calmed nerves somewhat, though it may not be the end of the matter. A President ought to be a father to the nation, taking the right steps, saying the right things, and setting the proper examples for the rest of us to follow. Yet, there are worries whether Adeleke's opponent within PDP could upset things in court or whether APC has withdrawn to the war situation room to map out an expulsion strategy!

Former godfathers, new godfathers, and godsons all fought for space and ascendancy before, during and after the elections. The biggest godfather of them all was Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who indeed is the strongest godfather around in the old tradition still showing strength, brain, and some brawn, even if physically feeble. The glee with which netizens celebrated Tinubu's loss is a study in politics of hate speech! But alas, no mortal power lasts forever! One of the mortal combatants, Rauf Aregbesola, did not bother to show up in the state for the elections, having boycotted the mega rally that preceded the

elections. APC bigwigs led by the party's presidential flag bearer invaded the state with cash and physical presence.

The PDP hierarchy was also on the ground led by Alhaji Atiku Abubakar its Presidential candidate for 2023 and some PDP governors. Some aggrieved notables in the PDP family, especially Governor Nyesom Wike were missing in action. INEC itself was prepared having learnt some lessons from the Anambra and Ekiti off cycle elections. Security agencies were effectively on the ground. If reports by election monitors are used to judge the elections, chances of rigging the election were minimal because the security agencies elected to be neutral as they were constitutionally mandated to be. But vote buying by both political parties went on, somewhat coded. Of course, we know that often the federal authorities usually deploy their might to influence election outcome in different ways.

At the close of polling, INEC announced PDP as winner with 403,371 votes as against APC's 375,027 votes. It is instructive that in a state that has a population of 3,416,959, (2006 census), only 403,371 of the 1.95million registered persons voted for the governor. Adeleke won in 17 out of 30 local government areas in the state. With this victory, the dancing governor is set to dance his way into State House Oshogbo. As he will soon find out, democracy is not all about winning elections. It is about ensuring that voters enjoy the dividends of democracy. Indeed, were we in a sane clime, the dismal performance of the Buhari administration would be an eternal baggage for all APC candidates, especially at

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the national level. With the dollar exchanging at N620 and petrol price upped to N185 per litre, APC would be singing its Nunc Dimittis to power at the federal level. Yet we are in an unusual climate.

The PDP victory in Osun should not be attributed to an Atiku magic or a resurgence of PDP power. It is also not an indication that the APC cannot win other elections. The Nigerian political situation is too fluid to fall into one smooth categorization. Some noses have been bloodied in and outside Osun. All those virulent and toxic posts on social media heated up the polity. It was meant to be a fight-to-finish. But sanity prevailed perhaps because for the man in Aso rock, there is nothing personal at stake and he thought it was time he left a legacy, no matter how late in the day. If this will be the pattern of elections to come, then the citizenry would have more faith in the electioneering process.

As for Senator Adeleke, he must know that becoming governor goes beyond showing dancing skills. It is now the turn of the electorate

to dance to his music. The music must be sweet to the feet and ears of Osun people. He must hit the ground running. He must put a credible cabinet in place, men, and women with proven competence whose loyalty will be to the people of Osun, no matter their religious or ethnic affiliations. Good governance must be Number 1 on the State agenda. He could be sent out of Government House in 2027 if all he can do is dance. Already, it has been alleged that he never moved any motion, nor did he sponsor any bill in his years in the Senate. Certainly, he needs all his skills to govern well, especially with a House of Assembly whose members may be loyal to godfathers inside or outside the State of Osun. In all, the interest of the people must be placed above every other interest. That is the only way the people can really say they won the election of July 17 2023! Congratulations Sir, Your Excellency Senator Ademola Adeleke!

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

## The blunder in not having state police (2)

Cont'd from last week Wednesday

By ERIC TENIOLA

Dr. Tajudeen Olawale Ayinla Idris(1940-2018) later served as Commissioner of Education in Lagos State. He was born in Epe in Lagos State. He had his education at the Native Authority School, Epe, 1947-1948, Catholic School, Lekki, 1949-1952, Ansar-Ud-Deen School, Epe, 1953-1954, Ahmadiyya College, Agege, 1955-1959, Northwestern Polytechnic, London, 1961-1962, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 1962-1966, Nigerian Law School, Lagos, 1966-1967, called to the Bar, Lagos, enrolled Solicitor, Supreme Court of Nigeria, 1967; Clerk, office of the Prime Minister, Lagos, 1960; Clerk, Standard Bank of West Africa, 1960-1961, research fellow, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1968-1972, legal officer, Nigerian Oil Corporation, 1972-1976, in private practice, Lagos, 1976-1979, Commissioner for Education, Lagos State, 1979-1983, arrested in January 1984, sentenced to life imprisonment, 1985, sentence reduced to 15 years, 1986; member, Nigeria Bar Association, member, British Bar Association; member, Nigeria Constitution Drafting Committee, 1975-1976, former member, Electoral Law Committee, member, Nigerian Society of International Law, fellow, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, 1968.

Monsignor (Colonel) Pedro Ayodele Martins (1910-2014) was the first Lagosian to be ordained a Catholic priest, first Catholic chaplain for the Nigerian Army, and first director of the Nigerian Army Chaplain Services (Catholic). After military service, he served as vicar-general to the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Olubunmi (as he then was) Okogie.

Monsignor Martins carried out the task with his accustomed fairness.

Born in Lagos in 1910, he was the grandson of a Brazilian slaver. His paternal grandmother was an ethnic Hausa. He grew up in a household that observed Christian and Moslem traditions. This background would seem to explain his approach to his work as a priest, soldier, and public servant, indeed his entire life.

He was religious without being dogmatic or doctrinaire.

Alhaji Mamman Ali Makele was born on August 20, 1940, Agbaja, Kwara State; Education: Secondary School, Okene, 1954-59, King's College, Lagos, 1960-61, University of Ibadan, 1962-65, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh, USA, 1969-70, University of Wisconsin, USA, 1970, University of Kent, Canterbury, 1985-86, University of London, 1986-87; Assistant Executive Officer, Ministry of Establishment, Lagos, January –September, 1962; Assistant Executive Officer, Cabinet Office, Lagos, June – September, 1963; Assistant Executive Officer, Parliament, Lagos, June – September 1964; Assistant Secretary, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Lagos, July –October, 1965; Administrative Officer, University of Lagos, 1965-67; Assistant Registrar/Principal Assistant Registrar, Unilag, 1967-76; Director, Nigerian Ports Authority, 1971-75; Commissioner for Economic Development, Kwara State, 1975-77; member, Constitution Drafting Committee, 1976-77; Deputy Registrar, University of Lagos, 1976-80; Chairman, Leventis Group of Companies Scholarship Committee, 1976-80; Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, Kwara State, 1977-79; Director and Chair man, Chase Merchant Bank Nigeria Limited, 1977-80; Acting Cabinet Minister, Department

of Steel Development, Office of the President of Nigeria, 1980-81; Cabinet Minister for Steel Development, 1981-83; Political Parties: member, defunct Northern Peoples Congress Students' Wing, University of Ibadan, 1963-65; member, National Executive Committee, banned National Party of Nigeria, 1978-83; member, Kwara State Economic Planning Board, 1972-75.

Alhaji Mamman Daura, was born on the 9th November, 1939 in Daura, in the present day Katsina State. He started his education at the Daura Elementary School, 1946-1949, Katsina Middle Secondary School, 1949-1954, Boumemouth College of Technology, England, 1958-1962, Trinity College, University of Dublin, Eire, 1962-1966, 1968; employee, Daura Native Authority, 1955-1958, programme assistant, Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), Kaduna, 1958, deputy secretary, Executive Council of Northern Nigeria, 1967-1968, Senior Assistant Secretary, Political Section, Military Governor's Office, 1969, Editor, New Nigeria, 1969, Managing Director, New Nigerian Newspapers, 1974-1976, member, Board of Directors, News Agency of Nigeria, 1978, later appointed Chairman, Nigeria Television Authority, 1986; member, NBC Committee of Inquiry, 1970-1971, member, Committee of Inquiry, Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria, 1974, member, State Drought Relief Committee, 1974, chairman, North Central State Campaign against Drug Addiction and Allied Evils, 1974, member, Governing Council, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, member, Manufacturer's Association of Nigeria, director, Nigerian Building Society, director, Dunlop Nigeria Industries since 1974, director, Northern Nigeria Investments since January 1974, appointed chairman, Board of Directors, Bank of Credit and Commerce International

(Nigeria)Ltd.

Dr. Obi Wali (27 February 1932 – 26 April 1993) was an intellectual giant compared to his height. Dr Wali would take you on intellectual voyage and you will never be the same again.

The manner of his death is still a shock to me till today. He was violently murdered and dismembered at home in his bedroom by suspected hired assassins on 26 April 1993. Dr Obi Wali was in the league of intellectuals like S.G. Ikoku, Chief Bola Ige, Dr. Ibrahim Tahir, Comrade Ola Oni, Gani Fawehinmi, Kanmi Ishola Osobu, Odia Ofeimun, Dr. Bala Usman, Professor Godini Gabriel Darah (75), Comrade Laoye Sanda, Professor Akin Oyebo, Arthur Nwankwo, Chinua Achebe, Professor Wole Soyinka, Dr. Tai Solarin, Kole Omotosho, Professor Ladipo Adamolekun, Professor Bayo Williams (road to Kigali), Professor Ralph Akinfeleye and a host of others too numerous to mention. They all live, in a world of ideas.

Dr Obi Wali was a member of the Constituent Assembly.

In 1979, he was elected Senator to represent Port Harcourt Senatorial zone of Rivers State. Other Senators elected to represent Rivers state at that time were Senators Fracis Ajie John Allah (Ahoada/Ikwere/Etche), Gbene Cyrus Nwidonane Nunieh (Bonny/Bori), O. Eberewariye(Degema) and Amatari Zuofa(Brass/Sagbama/Yenogoa).

Dr Obi Wali later became the deputy NPP Senate leader to Senator Jaja Anucha Nwachukwu (1 January, 1918- 7 November 1996) from Aba. That was when I became his friend. His intellectual contributions in the Senate, were exceptional. In 2014 the Obi Wali International Conference Centre was opened to the public in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, created and

named in the memory of Obi Wali's political and literary contributions. Till today, the Ikwerre people organize an annual memorial lecture in Obi Wali's honor.

Dr Obi Wali's Committee did not recommend the creation of a State Police. What the committee recommended was "The Sub-Committee in discussing the structure of the police for the country raised the question whether the unified Police system, now in operation, accords with the spirit of federalism. The preponderance of sentiments however was for the continuation of a unified structure.

However, while the Sub-Committee favours the continuation of a unified Police Structure for the country, it believes that a different arrangement from what now obtains should be made in the operation use of the Police. This is because each level of Government, central state and local has responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and each should share in the operational control of the Police commensurate with the level of its responsibilities. The Sub-Committee recommends that the Police force that operates at the local authority area should be under the operational direction of the local authorities, where such local authorities have been entrusted with the responsibility for maintenance of law and order.

Conflicts between the local authority and local police command could be resolved through a system of appeals, the police appealing through the State Command and local authority through the State Ministry of Local Government. It is also suggested that an advisory committee established at the local level could be used in useful discussing issues concerning the local authority/local Police relations.

To be continued next edition



# How Tinubu, Atiku camps reduce contest to brilliance in TV debate

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

Two presidential candidates, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu of All Progressives Congress (APC) and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have been at each other's throat over recent happenings in their parties with their respective camps trading accusations.

At the weekend, both the Tinubu Campaign Organisation and the Atiku Media Office exchanged hot words following Friday's interview granted by the former vice president on an Arise TV programme.

The PDP presidential candidate had during the interview spoke on a number of issues including reactions to his choice of running mate, affairs of the ruling APC, particularly the Tinubu/ Shettima single-faith ticket and other national affairs.

Atiku drew the first blood when he not only castigated the APC over the Muslim/Muslim ticket but disclosed how he had rejected Tinubu's desire to be his running mate in 2007 because of his loath for the 'insensitivity' in a single faith ticket.

The Director, Media & Communication, Tinubu Campaign Organisation (TCO), Bayo Onanuga faulted Atiku on some of his assertions while tutoring him on how not to lie on a public television.

In a swift reaction, head of the Atiku Media Office, Paul Ibe while commending his principal for articulated answers and comportment during the Arise TV interview, challenged Tinubu to take the hot seat of a television interview.

The PDP candidate had during the interview criticised the APC over its preference for a Muslim-Muslim ticket, describing the party as being unfair to followers of other religion in a secular country like Nigeria.

He even supported his opposition to a same faith ticket by disclosing how he denied Tinubu the chance of running with him as vice presidential candidate in 2007.

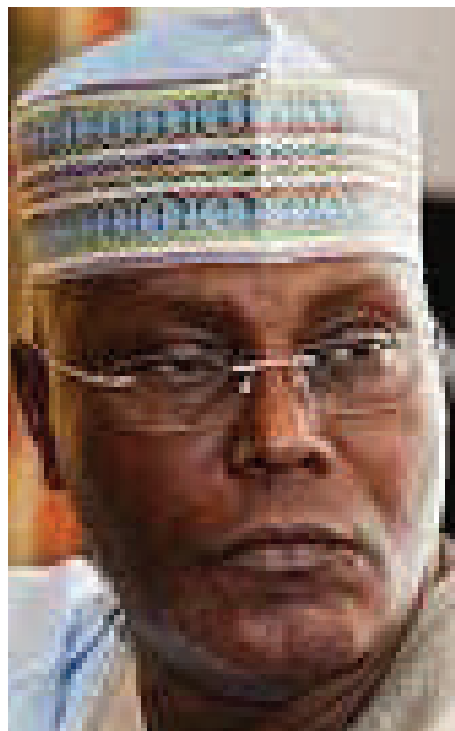
Atiku said "the diversity in the nation was from the APC led government. My fundamental disagreement and departure from Asiwaju politically was in 2007 on the issue of Muslim-Muslim ticket.

"Remember i came out of PDP on the issue of zoning and together with him we formed ACN and i was given a ticket in Lagos and he insisted to be my running mate and i said no, i am not going to have s Muslim-Muslim Ticket. So he switched his support to the late Umaru Yar'adua, that was the departing point.

"And of course, it is also a fact when the President Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (ret'd.) emerged in 2015 in Lagos, i opposed the Muslim-Muslim Ticket and my opposition actually reinforced the decision of the president to pick a Christian running mate. So I have all along opposed that. i don't believe in that. I don't believe is right for a country like Nigeria i am multi-ethnic, multi-religious and there should be balancing of interest."

Slamming Atiku Abubakar for berating Tinubu over his choice of Kashim Shettima as a running mate, the TCO accused Atiku of playing to the gallery on APC's Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket.

Bayo Onanuga on behalf of the TCO said "Atiku ever an expert in not telling the truth also did not come clean over his once-upon a time preference for same-faith ticket. In 1993, after Atiku and Kingibe lost to MKO Abiola in the SDP presidential primary in Jos, Atiku was the choice of the Yar' Adua camp to become Abiola's running mate. Abiola overlooked him and picked the more cerebral diplomat and bureaucrat, Babagana Kingibe. In all the tonnes of biographies written about him, there was no where he said he opposed Shehu Yar' Adua's



**Atiku Abubakar**

support for his candidacy as Abiola's VP. He was not against it, since it favoured him. Now, it is politically convenient and opportunistic for him to oppose Tinubu-Shettima ticket.

Earlier, the media aide to the APC candidate, Tunde Rahman had in a statement also called Atiku a hypocrite.

In the statement, Tinubu was quoted as saying, "Atiku has no business raising the issue of a Muslim-Muslim ticket except as a hypocrite. Perhaps he believes people have forgotten his antics during the 1993 election.

"After he woefully lost his bid to be the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party, what did he do? He canvassed and lobbied harder than anyone to become the running mate to late Chief MKO Abiola. When it benefitted him personally, Atiku did not see anything wrong with Muslim-Muslim ticket. He saw everything right in such a ticket as long as he was on it.

"Now, Atiku criticises my selection as running mate based on religion. He does so because he cannot criticise it on other ground."

The TCO also blasted Atiku for not considering seeking to be President after 8 years of a President Mugamadu Buhari from the northern part of Nigeria as politics of exclusion.

"Probed further, Atiku provided several contradictory answers. In one breath, he said power rotation is not in the constitution. In another breath, he said the PDP has never 'micro zoned any position'. Then he admitted that the party has always rotated power between the North and the South. Atiku's justification as to why he became PDP's presidential candidate, instead of a southerner is a perfect example in ellipsis: "In politics", he said, "we negotiate power through negotiations(Sic)". Whatever that means.

"Ask him to justify why the PDP jettisoned Section 3c of its own constitution which enshrines power rotation between the North and South, Atiku tried to fudge his answer by focussing on Governor Nyesom Wike and his effort to reconcile with him after he, a northerner snatched the presidential ticket that ought to have been taken by a southerner," Onanuga said.

In his response on behalf of Atiku, his media aide, Paul Ibe attempted to tutor the TCO on what power rotation means.

He said "it seems the Tinubu campaign organisation (can a disorganised body be called an organisation?) does not know the meaning



**Bola Tinubu**

of rotation of power and micro zoning. So, we will gladly educate them.

"Rotation of power refers to a constitutional provision where power is zoned between North and South. Micro-zoning refers to a non constitutional idea, where power is zoned not between North and South, but amongst geo-political zones. We hope this cures the political illiteracy of the authors of that document."

Further criticising Atiku, Onanuga stated that "we have watched Alhaji Atiku Abubakar's interview on ARISE Television and were extremely shocked by the many lies and ignorance displayed by the Peoples Democratic Party's presidential candidate.

"In the interview, Alhaji Atiku exposed himself as a man who is not prepared for the job he is applying for and a man who can not be entrusted with our commonwealth. He was flippant in his response to important questions about his record of service and how he made money while serving in Customs. He muddled up facts and exhibited befuddling absence of mind.

"PDP candidate is a law breaker: It was most shocking Atiku admitted that he cheated the system for decades and engaged in gross misconduct as a government worker. As a customs officer at the Idi-Iroko border, Atiku revealed that he ran a commercial taxi service, claiming 'there is no law stopping public officers from doing business in Nigeria". He punched harder, claiming there is no conflict of interest in doing so.

"We found this to be untrue. "Every officer in the civil service is expected to comply with a code of conduct and service rules which bar civil and public servants from engaging in private business while in government employment to the detriment of the service he/she is employed to render to the public. The 1999 constitution further codifies this in Part I, Fifth Schedule, Section of 2 (b).

"It says a public officer shall not, except where he is not employed on full-time basis engage or participate in the management or running of any private business, profession or trade. The rules however allow a public officer to engage in farming," the statement claimed.

This was also faulted by Ibe who said "the Tinubu campaign exposed its gross desperation and vacuousness by citing the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) 1999, to

declare Waziri Atiku Abubakar's stance on engaging in a side business while he was a young custom officer as a breach of the law.

"It is pertinent to educate the Tinubu campaign organisation that Nigeria is not under a military regime and our Constitutions are not retroactive in nature."

Tackling each other over Atiku's comment on national issue, particularly on the economy, TCO faulted Atiku for what it called his poor knowledge of key sectors of the economy:

Onanuga said "we also found it surprising that the PDP presidential candidate does not know the contribution of oil and gas industry to Nigeria's GDP. He claimed the sector represents 20% of our national GDP whereas it is below 10 percent and it is still falling owing to the growth of non-oil sector under the current All Progressives Congress led administration of President Muhammadu Buhari.

"False Data from Egypt: Atiku Abubakar wanted to impress his audience with his supposed knowledge of international affairs. He ended up embarrassing himself with false data he cited from Egypt. We found his claim that Egypt has 2 million police officers on the streets to be untrue. Various sources put the number at about 500,000 for a population of 104 million and not 80 million as falsely claimed by Atiku.

But the Atiku media dismissed this by replying that the Tinubu campaign betrayed either dishonesty or lack of attention to detail by claiming that Atiku Abubakar said oil contributed 20% of Nigeria's GDP.

"That is a lie. What the Waziri said is as follows: "Oil only maybe accounts for about 20% of our GDP".

"The use of the word maybe by the Waziri was in reflection to the different figures given. While the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics states a figure close to 10%, other multilateral organisations have given a much higher figure of between 15-20%. So, while the jury is still out, it is right to qualify the contribution of oil and gas as a maybe," said Paul Ibe.

On the international scene, Onanuga said Atiku exhibited poor knowledge of history when he claimed that Abraham Lincoln, one of America's famous leaders contested the presidency five to six times before he eventually won.

Rather, he said that Lincoln contested U.S.Presidency twice in 1860 and 1864 and won both, before he was assassinated on 15 April, 1865.

The TCO said "the false story about Lincoln's failed presidential bids sprang from his previous failed state and national elections, from his state of Illinois. They were not the same as America's presidential election.

According to historians, Lincoln lost his first election in 1832 for Illinois state legislature. In 1834, he ran again and won.

In 1843 he ran for Congress. He lost. Three years after in 1846, Lincoln ran for Congress again - this time he won and went to Washington. From established history, in 1848, Lincoln ran for re-election to Congress and lost. In 1854, he ran for Senate of the United States. He lost. Lincoln also made another failed bid for U.S. Senate from Illinois in 1858. He lost to Democrat Steven Douglas.

Responding, the Atiku campaign team disagreed with assertion of the TCO on President Lincoln.

Ibe said "we are afraid the poor student of history is the Tinubu campaign disorganisation. Yes, it is true that Lincoln ran for President with his name on the ballot twice. But he ran at other times, and failed to get his name on the ballot."

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# Taming vote buying in Nigeria's electoral process

By MUIZ BANIRE

May I start by apologizing to some of my readers and followers who have accosted me since the Osun State governorship election, which took place on July 16, 2022, demanding to know my position on the electoral outcome and expecting me to express my view on the events leading to it, and who now may feel disappointed that I am not commenting on the subject? I must confess that it is not out of lack of what to say, indeed plenty to say; but for the fact it will be an exercise in futility addressing a set of incorrigible people in the political class, particularly in the ruling party, who are already iron-cast in their ways.

I consider it as an attempt at wasting my precious time, striving to suggest the obvious things known to them over time. Be that as it may, as I watch with amazement the last two gubernatorial elections conducted recently by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, or the Commission) in Ekiti and Osun states, respectively, it is inevitable for me to comment on the electoral process giving birth to the outcomes. Hence, rather than commenting on the outcomes, I have chosen to preoccupy myself with the evaluation of the processes, which I consider a worthwhile engagement towards strengthening the electoral system. Prior to my incursion into the area, permit me to congratulate the Commission as well as the victors in the two gubernatorial elections, Oyebanji and Adeleke.

The Commission has, by those two elections, demonstrated its resolve to engender an electoral process of integrity. Although it is not yet uhuru but, by and large, the Commission has made a substantial leap. The electoral process is becoming impenetrable to politicians and the sanctity of the people's will is rearing its beautiful head. Kudos once again to the electoral umpire.

Certainly, this modest achievement is not unconnected with the improvement in the Electoral Act, the law basically governing the Nigerian electoral system, particularly in the aspect relating to the use of technology in our elections. I recall vividly the controversy trailing the passage of the Electoral Act at the National Assembly, particularly on Section 50 of the Electoral Act, dealing with the electronic transmission of election results from the polling units. It was an obvious fact that members of the National Assembly never wanted the use of electronic transmission of results. All manner of obstacles were strewn on the way to the enactment. At a stage, several adversarial groups were recruited by the National Assembly in opposition to the adoption of the provision on electronic transmission of results. Prominent among these groups was the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) which shamelessly indicted itself in order to please the legislators. The NCC came out to announce its supposed failure in the network coverage of the country, contrary to the position of the telecommunication companies.

I commend the telecommunication companies once again in being patriotic in that regard. You may wish to visit again my column on the subject, which captured the mood of the nation at that material time in enthroning electronic transmission of election results (See my columns in the Daily Sun of July 15, 2021, Electronic transmission of election results, a must"

<https://www.sunnewsonline.com/electronic-transmission-of-election-results-a-must>, July 22, 2021, E-transmission of election results: Senate's show of shame, <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/e-transmission-of-election-results-senates-show-of-shame/> and October 21, 2021, Electronic



transmission of results and power of the people, <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/electronic-transmission-of-results-and-power-of-the-people>). I am sure that, understandably, we all know why the agitation of the legislators against the adoption of electronic transmission was that loud. Manual transmission of election results was a potent tool of manipulation for them in rigging elections. Prior to the introduction of the electronic transmission of election results, our electoral process was riddled with all manner of result manipulations, ranging from alteration, inflation of figures, defacement of results, voiding of ballot papers and outright fictitious entry. It was a useful tool for politicians in their nefarious acts of election rigging. Thank God, ultimately, the will of the people, which was deafening, discomfiting and overwhelming for the legislators, triumphed at the end of the day. Now, with the adoption of the electronic transmission of results, it has become near impossible for politicians to alter the outcome of elections in the collation processes, right from the units to the final collation level. With the new legal framework, neither accreditation nor transmission of election results can now be easily manipulated as before. Gone is the era of the use of incident forms to accredit non-existent voters, or perpetration of voting by proxy through the use of illegally acquired permanent voters' cards (PVCs).

The new Electoral Act sounds the death knell on purchase of voter's cards, or bulk acquisition of voters' cards from compromised officials of the Commission by politicians. With this development, the incidence of illegal purchase of permanent voters' cards, disappearance of permanent voters' cards from the custody of the Commission, or the warehousing of permanent voters' cards are gradually going into extinction. Appropriation of those cards belonging to other people is now meaningless as accreditation can only be done through the biometric system. Thus, it is senseless procuring such cards as they are unusable under the new regime. For those who equally may not know, posting of results that is at variance with the accredited numbers of voters automatically nullifies the results in such units. Again, for the ignorant political party agents who may want to aid the manipulation of results at the unit levels, let me warn you that, by the Electoral Act, jail naturally awaits you upon discovery. So, think twice before embarking on such illegal voyage or assignment on behalf of any political party or candidate, as you are

likely to be eventually abandoned to your fate ultimately. There is certainly no hiding place for you again.

These are but some of the profound innovations in the new Electoral Act that have contributed significantly to the improvement of our electoral process. At a recently conducted roundtable by the United Action for Change, a movement which I am privileged to be leading, an x-ray of all the innovative provisions was made. Space, unfortunately, will not permit me to proceed on the excursion of discussing the entirety of the novelties contained in the Electoral Act but it suffices to say that there is a remarkable improvement. In recent times, it will be noticed that most election petition cases being filed are scarcely ever premised on the election results but on other grounds due to the electronic transmission of results.

This further affirms the robust improvement in the process. Regrettably, as I have several times stated in my writeups, politicians in Nigeria are special breeds, to the extent that they can hardly be regarded as human. They exhibit, in their behaviours, traits of people of the other world. Their acts speak to the Yoruba proverb of "egbinrin ote, bi a se npa 'kan, ni ikan n ru" (the case of a hydra-headed monster that rejuvenates upon every decapitation). As you try to tame their misconducts, they devise new ones. It is in this connection that they have now found great and further love in purchase of votes. In the last two elections alluded to above, buying votes played out significantly. It is now another source of worry to all and sundry, except the politicians. This is a new way of sabotaging the true will of the electorate. The point has been strongly made in the past by me and I am re-echoing it again that I believe it is a deliberate and conscious policy of the political class to subject the populace, particularly the majority of the electorate, to perpetual poverty so that their traumatized psyche will prevent them from being rational in the exercise of their franchise. Rationality in the midst of hunger is ever a challenge. This, consequently, exposes them to the manipulation of the political class. This is yielding fruits to the political class now as the majority of these poor electorate are now responding positively to their entreaties and queuing to sell their votes. Although, by the Electoral Act, it is an offence to sell your votes as, in several sections such as 55, 57, 117, 119, 123, 124, 126, 127 and 128, the Electoral Act criminalizes all the specified acts therein, particularly votes merchandising or influence or threat peddling. However, as

seemingly comprehensive and potent as the provisions may look, the capacity to enforce them seems to be lacking. This, therefore, gives room to a free-for-all trade.

Since there is blockage to blatant rigging in the election process, vote buying is now the viable option. To this end, therefore, we need to interrogate, as a matter of urgency, various means of curtailing these new nefarious acts of electoral sabotage. Basically, the security agents are saddled with this responsibility, but if the truth must be told, how incorruptible are these groups, much less their capacity both in terms of numbers and skills? Certainly, it is not something to be proud of. We may, therefore, in the first instance want to appeal to their conscience as I did in my earlier letter to the security agents (See my column in the Daily Sun of April 28, 2022 "Letter to security agents in respect of Nigeria's elections <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/letter-to-security-agents-in-respect-of-nigerias-elections/>"). We need to plead with them to consider the future of their children and generations yet unborn, even if their own generation has failed them. The security agents live amongst us and they are our relatives, friends and associates. Let us join hands in appealing to them to do the right thing. Beyond this sermon, I believe that intelligence generally must be strengthened, both amongst the security agents and the people as whole.

The sources of this illicit fund used in buying votes are traceable and the root can be exhumed. Through the politicians, we can locate the storage of the fund and the dispensing point. Sanctioning culprits by way of deterrence is important. Our present lackadaisical attitude of prosecuting the violators is unhelpful and tend to be an incentive for the act. We equally need massive campaign in the manner we did for the registration exercise to discourage the act of vote selling and buying. Another potent way of dealing with this scourge is through the prohibition of phone usage at the polling booths. This may appear drastic and unconstitutional but at this stage of our development, I think deviation from whatever right or law impairing the adoption of this measure is necessary. I remember vividly at a point in our electoral history, such ban was placed, albeit for the notorious objective of rigging. Today, as painted above, the objective is to the contrary and targeted at preventing the crime of vote merchandising.

The prohibition will enhance further the quality and integrity of our elections. No voter must be allowed to take his phone again into the polling booths. It is the phone that is usually used as evidence of the discharge of the nefarious obligation. Once that is not allowed again, it becomes difficult for the sponsors and promoters of this unholy act to ascertain the authenticity of the claim of the compromised electorate in order to pay them for products delivered. It is needless to also plead that the political class should be conscientized towards improving the economy and, by extension, the economic condition of the people so that they can cease to be economic parasites and political scavengers.

The combination of all the above crystalizes to confer confidence in the electorate that votes will count, thereby eliminating or reducing voters' apathy. No effort is worth sparing in the journey towards credible elections in the country. It is needless to say that without this, there cannot be emergence of good leaders that will engender good governance in the country.

● Banire is a former Lagos State commissioner and AMCON chief.



## Association wants lab science on priority list of medical professions

By SHARON O. ISAALAH, Head, Science, Technology and Health Desk

Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria (AMLSN), has appealed to the Federal Government to place medical laboratory science on the priority list of medical professions in Nigeria.

The Chairman of AMLSN, Lagos Chapter, Mr Olumide Fadipe, appealed in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Friday in Lagos.

According to Fadipe, the government was yet to recognise medical laboratory science as a distinct profession on its own.

He said that medical laboratory science should not be tied to another cadre of professions like pathology, which is a distinct profession too.

He said that in other countries, medical lab science operates and stands on its own, but what obtains in Nigeria is that medical laboratory scientists report to the pathologists.

He described the situation as "a big challenge" to the operations of medical laboratory science, as "it degrades the profession".

He also urged the federal government to include medical laboratory science on the priority list of medical professions in Nigeria to accord it necessary recognition.

He said, "In this country, the government is yet to recognise that medical laboratory science is a profession on its own.

"The medical laboratory has its core area of specialisation, which is to carry out laboratory investigations on body specimens. The pathology profession too has its area of the job description.

"For medical laboratory science professionals that went to the institutions of learning and obtained the requisite professional training; and you still want them to be reporting to another cadre; it is not done anywhere in the world, only in Nigeria."

He noted that medical lab scientists were not supposed to be reporting to the pathologists but be allowed to operate and stand on their own.

He said, "The truth is that the pathologists are encroaching on the job description of the med lab scientists.

"Yes, we can work together as medical practitioners, even in the same office in

terms of administrative structure; so far each profession limits operation to its area of the job description.

"But not that pathologists will go into the lab to know how the tests are being conducted or try to make the roster for the lab scientists. I'm sure no lab scientist will tolerate that, anywhere in the world."

Fadipe also appealed to the government to make the medical laboratory science profession attractive to the younger ones coming behind.

According to him, most of the younger laboratory scientists have moved to other countries to operate, in search of greener pastures.

"Let the medical laboratory scientists be given the proper recognition and encouragement. Most of us are still working with obsolete and old equipment.

"The import duty on medical equipment should be reduced or even scrap out. "Let the government provide the lab scientists with the latest working equipment, adequate funding, good working environment and remuneration; these are some of the incentives that attract them to other countries," he said.



Olumide Fadipe

## NITDA boss lays out Nigeria's Blockchain adoption strategies

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) remains committed to creating and stimulating the ecosystem for Blockchain technology and indeed Nigerian innovators to thrive.

Kashifu Inuwa, the Director-General of NITDA, reiterated the Agency's stance on emerging technologies during the 2022 Blockchain Developers' Summit held in Abuja.

Speaking passionately on "Blockchain Technology Supports Digital Transformation and will facilitate the Development of Nigeria into a Digital Economy" to the over one thousand five hundred participants, Inuwa enumerated the multiple benefits and prospects of the tech.

The NITDA DG highlighted "trust" as one of the critical components of Blockchain.

"There are a lot of opportunities in Blockchain and it is critical in every business", he noted.

The DG encouraged the participants who were mostly Youth Corp Members to upscale their talents and contribute their quota towards nation building.

"Talent is the human component of technology. When you talk about any innovations, especially Blockchain and emerging technologies, it is about the new solutions one brings onboard; so you need to ask yourself to know which solutions or offerings the industry requires", Inuwa advised.

Inuwa who stressed the fact that anybody can be an innovator or entrepreneur, irrespective of their academic standing, religion, and ethnic group, as innovative ideas cannot be monopolized, averred that the time for Nigerian youths to leverage the growing digital sector to tackle the myriad of challenges facing the nation is now.

"Innovation is beyond invention, it needs to get to the point of commercialization. Until you can pitch your idea to someone to pay for your solutions, the innovation would sadly only be just an idea. So, we are building an ecosystem that will enable you to hatch your ideas from conception to realization", the DG said.

The NITDA Boss also emphasised the need for the participants to have venture capitalists

who would invest in their innovative ideas.

He further noted that although President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration has exhibited a strong political will to continually make the right policies and create an enabling environment for the tech innovation ecosystem to succeed, the Federal Government, however, cannot possibly give out grants or seed funds to everyone at the same time, hence, the need for them to engage with both local and International investors.

Inuwa recalled that in 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari renamed and expanded the mandate of the Ministry to cover the digital economy which has necessitated the new Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy to create value, wealth and prosperity via the digital economy.

The DG again recalled that in the same year, the President unveiled the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) for a Digital Nigeria formulated by the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Pantami.

The policy, he affirmed has eight pillars, one of which is Digital Society and Emerging Technologies; a related subject matter: "All parastatals under the Ministry have keyed into implementing the policy, NITDA inclusive". Inuwa maintained.

On the part of NITDA, the Director-General seized the opportunity to enlighten the crowd that the Agency had developed a Strategic Roadmap and Action Plan (SRAP) in line with the policy, which has seven pillars with three of them, such as Digital Transformation, Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Emerging Technologies directly addressing the theme of the summit.

"We have so many initiatives: Under "Innovation and Entrepreneurship", we established the National Centre for Artificial intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR); The Office of the Nigerian Digital Innovation which works with the ecosystem to help come up with policies that will enable you to thrive in what you do", the DG recounted.

The DG also mention other initiatives, including iHatch, Digital Fabrication Lab, TIE (Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship) Support Scheme which he said identifies people with promising ideas and places them in IT hubs across the country for training as well as helps turn their ideas into realities.

"We developed the blockchain adoption strategy basically to help stimulate the adoption of blockchain in the country and we have identified six initiatives we are going to implement to achieve that; firstly is to establish the Nigerian Blockchain Consortium which

this summit is helping to do that; Secondly, is to strengthen developmental regulation and law; Find focus areas; Promoting Literacy and Blockchain; Digital Innovation Incentivization and the Startup Bill which has passed through the third reading in the National Assembly", Inuwa added.

Inuwa charged the Youth Corps Members to take advantage of the opportunity and start a business before the end of their service year and possibly always ensure to be among the first movers in any digital-related endeavours.

He expressed the hope that participants at the summit which was themed: "Stimulating Blockchain Adoption in Nigeria", organised by BSV-Blockchain at Base University, and powered by NITDA would make relevant contributions to the Adoption Strategies which he said is dynamic and open to new ideas.

Other speakers include the National coordinator, National Centre for Artificial intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR), and Eng. Ya'u Garba and some International Inventors alluded to the promising future that awaits Nigeria upon the successful adoption of the tech.

Meanwhile, the DG also inaugurated the Baze AI/ Blockchain Laboratory in the company of some international innovators.

## Vbank empowers women with tech skills to build future-proof careers

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

In a bid to bridge the gender skills gap in tech, Vbank, a digital financial brand has upskilled over 1,000 women and girls with tech skills across 28 states in Nigeria.

According to a press statement by the brand, the 1,000+ beneficiaries of the maiden edition of the Makeathon initiative participated in a four-month free, capacity-building, digital literacy exercise which began in March 2022 and ended in June 2022.

"These women were equipped with relevant tech skills such as deep tech, digital marketing, data analytics, cybersecurity, product management, software programming, and soft skills," it stated. It also added that the partnership also aims to tackle the scourge of unemployment by bridging the gender skills gap and helping more women embrace technology.

"The Makeathon initiative goes beyond upskilling girls and women between the ages of 18 to 45 years with requisite tech skills, to seeking internship opportunities for them in leading tech organisations in Nigeria and abroad."

Commenting at the graduation ceremony, Gbenga Omolokun, the managing director at VFD Microfinance Bank (VBank), said they were proud of the graduates and how far they have come to be here today.

"It is inspiring to have women with zero tech skills come into the space to learn and showcase their talents. We are committed to this initiative and will continue to do this to help more women achieve their tech goals," Omolokun added

Also, Ayumi Moore, the founder and chief executive officer at Women in Tech Global noted that the women have been equipped with

digital skills they can deploy across sectors.

"We are proud to have contributed to helping 1,000 women gain employable skills they can use to drive the growth of the tech ecosystem," Moore said.

Okosun Elizabeth, one of the beneficiaries of the initiative, said when she got the opportunity to learn software programming; she was super excited because it was a course, and she wanted to learn but couldn't get the opportunity.

"At first, I thought I wouldn't understand the whole magic behind coding but when classes started, coding became a walk in the park. Thank you, Vbank and Women in Tech Nigeria for this wonderful opportunity."

Thus far, more than 10 global tech firms have committed to offering some of the beneficiaries, who graduated last week, internship opportunities to put their skills to the test.



## Nigerian female techies bridging gender gap despite poor funding

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

There are not as many women as men in Nigeria's rapidly growing tech ecosystem. According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), women make up only 22 per cent of the country's total number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) university graduates and not all of them transition into tech.

According to research by the African academy of sciences, multiple factors, including policy issues, institutional barriers and individual challenges, contribute to the existing inequalities and underrepresentation of women in STEM.

Out of the 396 respondents surveyed in the research, 61.1 per cent of women's capabilities influenced them to take up a STEM career, 26 per cent were influenced by their parents, academic preparation 26 per cent, and women role models (24%) contributed to the choices women make to pursue STEM-related careers.

In comparison, 76 per cent of women were attracted to a STEM career because it fits their capability. The need for higher salaries (16.5%) or job security (24.2%) did not seem to feature as the main attractions of STEM.

However, there were qualitative views suggesting remuneration in terms of financial benefits as one reason they were motivated to pursue STEM courses. For instance, there were only five females in Onoriode Dafetta's Industrial Engineering class at the University of Benin. Today, she is a Frontend and Power Platform Developer at Reliance Infosystems. "I think it is more about passion than the course you studied," Miss Dafetta said.

Low remuneration

Women have been described as an integral part of the global tech ecosystem but are constantly excluded by a myriad of factors, including cultural barriers, scarce digital skills, lack of internet access and male-dominated workspaces. Much of this has also been linked to low funding for women in the tech sector.

Between 2013 and 2021, African tech startups received \$12.6 billion in funding, but women-led firms accounted for less than 5 per cent of this, against the 82 per cent cooped by their male counterparts. (82 plus 5 is not 100 – the 13 per cent is for startups that are jointly owned by men and women)

Shola Akinpelu, the cofounder of HerVest, a platform that provides financial services to African women, said women were also subjected to underpaid roles within the tech

ecosystem. Miss Akinpelu, whose firm provides financial inclusion for women, said the global tech industry lost about \$160 trillion annually to this disparity.

She noted that measures had been put in place to improve access for Nigerian women in tech, but said this was set back by the impact of COVID-19.

"Before COVID, we were at 102 years in closing the total gender gap, but now, it stands at 136 years," Miss Akinpelu told participants at a digital conference in Lagos.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked Nigeria 139th out of 156 countries in its 2021 Global Gender Gap Report released in March, dropping 11 places from its position in 2020.

The report noted that only 67.2 per cent of the overall gender gap in sub-Saharan Africa had been closed, leaving a deficit of 32.7 per cent. It noted that at such a slow pace, it would take 121.7 years to close the gender gap.

Out of the 35 countries in the sub-region, Nigeria was ranked just above Chad (148), Mali (149) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (151). With Nigeria's gender gap index at 62.7 per cent, only 49.3 per cent of women are in the workplace, likewise other sectors. For instance, Nigeria has only achieved 4.7 per cent of the political empowerment gender gap as the country has never had a female president. Also, only 13.9 per cent of firms in Nigeria have women as leaders.

Rising above challenges

Despite these challenges, Nigerian women are rising above barriers in the tech space. Temitope Omotolani's FarmCrowdy is digitising Nigeria's agricultural sector, improving food security while helping investors and farmers across the country gain revenue. She is also a co-founder at Crowdyvest, a platform that has raised over \$35 million through savings and investment for multiple businesses.

The only Nigerian woman on the 2019 edition of the Forbes 30 under 30, Tito Ovia, is passionate about improving the quality of health care in Africa with Helium Health, a health care platform used by over 5,000 doctors and 500,000 patients across West Africa.

Secure ID, founded by Kofo Akinkugbe, is a market leader in smart card technology and digital security, fully verified by VISA, Verve and MasterCard. It also owns the only smart card production plant in West Africa.

Dana Kohut, the founder of The Prime View, a platform for sharing experiences about digital innovation and technology from experts in

business and technology, noted in Forbes, 2022 that very few women became 'newsmakers' in the field of technology and journalism.

Women working for technology companies and startups lack visibility and representation in the media, whether it is print, online or television. The Global Media Monitoring report of 2021 noted that only 25 per cent of women were news subjects in different story topics, such as print, television and radio news in science, technology, research, funding, discoveries and development.

Key findings from the report show that 19 per cent of topics speak about gender equality in the African region, which is highest when compared to Asia and the Middle East at 1 per cent.

Empowerment is the way

From Moyinoluwa Adeyemi, a software engineer at Twitter, to Dr Funmi Adeware of MobiHealth, Tope Omotolani of FarmCrowdy, Keturah Ovio of Limestart and Bamboos Yarmo Omorogbe, Nigerian women are changing the status quo and inspiring others to succeed in tech.

Numerous initiatives are also improving access to opportunities for women within the tech ecosystem, including skills training, mentorship and job placements.

Over 1,000 women were trained on digital skills in 2021 by Ingressive for Good. Another 1,000 women will participate in this year's edition, as they aim to gain placements in the region's fast-rising tech industry.

"We want to empower women with the skills they need so they can confidently take up roles in tech. It is not a one-time activity, it is something to which we are committed," Blessing Abeng, cofounder of Ingressive for Good said.

In 2021, over 1,820 women and girls in Lagos were trained in technology programmes by the Women's Technology Empowerment Centre (W.TEC). The centre had previously trained female participants in Nasarawa, Bauchi and Abuja during the pandemic.

They were trained on electronics and renewable energy panel projects. Likewise, hundreds of girls and women in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, have benefitted from the annual all-female tech skills workshop organised by the Roothub, a tech and innovation lab. Participants learn graphics design, UI/UX, content writing and coding.

Another initiative, TechHer, facilitates the economic and political empowerment of women

through technology and information access. It provides a community and opportunities to help women create new connections, network to learn from others and explore careers in tech.

What the government is doing

On its part, the Nigerian government has also shown some commitment to providing women with the necessary skills and tools to participate in the digital economy in line with the national ICT Policy and the Digital Economy Policy and Strategy. This is in line with section 7.4.3 (x) of the ICT policy, which seeks to promote ICT awareness and proficiency in mass and non-formal education, especially for women, children, youth and the physically challenged.

Between 2019 and 2022, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) organised specialised training for 100 women and girls in each of the six geopolitical zones, to close the gender digital divide, promoting job creation and financial inclusion.

"Toward the realisation of these objectives, the NITDA, in our efforts at assessing and addressing ICT skills requirements, will support sustainable economic growth, development strides and develop this unique training programme targeting women," Hadiza Umar, NITDA head of Corporate Affairs, said.

The most recent of these training was a four-day capacity building organised in January 2022, for 60 Women on ICT Technopreneurship in Dutse, Jigawa State, North West, Nigeria.

What next?

As these initiatives and many more strive to create opportunities for women in the tech sector, there have been calls for more female-focused activities and awareness of the importance of computer literacy and acquiring tech skills by more women in society.

"We need to spread the word and educate more women on the numerous opportunities in tech, not just adults but young girls. We need to catch them young and have more girls involved in tech," Stephanie said.

To close the gender gap in Nigeria's tech ecosystem, Miss Defetta believes women need to own and hone their crafts despite challenges or perceived male dominance in tech workspaces. Nevertheless, despite the small gains in technology that women are celebrating, a lot has to be done on the corporate ladder, especially for women of colour.

"No matter your gender, put in the work. Users hardly know the gender of the developer of a website," she said

## Nigeria's female-led AZAPAY innovating way we send, receive money

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

Nigeria's tech eco-system is expanding without let. From real-time payment notification, cardless payment technology, fake bank alert solution, and the lowest rate on transactions, Nigeria's female-led fintech startup, AZAPAY, has introduced an array of innovative ways to help Nigerians seamlessly make and receive payments.

In 2020, software developer and tech celebrity, Jacquelyn (Jackye) Madu, founded AZAPAY after observing a series of challenges relating to processing payments in Nigeria. Top on the list was network downtime, card jamming in ATMs and transaction failure despite account debited.

"Many of us have been in that situation where we try to make payment only for us to be debited yet not reflecting on the other side. And, when we call our banks, they urge us to exercise patience which might have us wait for days or even weeks," Jackye told Ripples Nigeria.

"This singular challenge has left many



stranded and frustrated. At AZAPAY we think this is not right as we feel the pain of our people. During our research, we discovered that the delay is a result of the too many parties involved in the process. And, this, we are set out to resolve," she added.

Who is Jackye Madu?

A web developer by profession, Jackye, who equally doubles as CEO of HotBox Technology,

a software development company, has helped several leading companies and brands build digital products such as websites and mobile applications.

After years of working as a web developer, Jackye transitioned from being a chief technology officer to a chief executive officer, with the launch of AZAPAY in May 2020.

Jackye finds time in between her tough schedules in the tech space to pursue her other passion of modelling for notable brands, with her face dotting some commercials.

Mission

AZAPAY believes there is a need to build a platform that embraces a cardless era where the money in one's account is all that is needed.

"We are building something that will serve Nigerians better. The goal is simple -to help our users perform seamless transactions," Jackye explained.

Milestones

From a simple idea, AZAPAY has seen steady growth over the years, offering users a convenient way to make purchases while providing businesses with the comfort of

accepting transfer payments from their customers.

After an initial launch in May 2020, the Jackye-led team returned to the drawing board in January 2021 to rebuild the platform from scratch, leveraging feedback received from reviewers.

Eleven months later, the improved fintech product was re-launched and went on to acquire an impressive number of users.

Between May and July 2022, its merchant feature, where businesses can accept payment for goods and services via the AZAPAY network, has also attracted some big names such as GIG Logistics, Shoprite, and JARA Stores, amongst others.

"I think AZAPAY has helped us stretch since our launch. We wake up almost every day resolving one issue or the other. Today, it is paying off, and I must appreciate my team of experts who have invested their time and resources to see us come this far.

"Aside from boarding big names as GIG Logistics and Shoprite, we have also closed a solid partnership with Access Bank," she said.





# Survival of Nigerian businesses amid worsening energy crisis

*In the 62 years of Nigeria's independence and 15 administrations, including military juntas and democratic governments after the exit of the British colonial masters, the country has not been able to guarantee stable power supply. Despite the billions of dollars and huge amounts of naira invested in the power sector for 62 years by successive administrations, operators of various business concerns that had depended largely on Automated Gas Oil (AGO) or diesel to power their generators, have lamented that they can no longer afford diesel to enable them to continue operations effectively, JOHNMARK UKOKO writes.*

Nigeria is endowed with all the natural resources that could have been explored to provide stable electricity for the citizens and boost the economy. The country is blessed with a body of rivers and connects with the Atlantic Ocean in several states, which could have been explored to build more dams to generate constant electricity. The country is also blessed with enough of sunshine that could be tapped to generate solar power to adequately meet its energy needs.

The country also boasts of huge coal deposits in Enugu and Kogi states, which some lesser endowed countries use to generate electricity. The Niger Delta region also has huge gas deposits being wasted through constant flares, instead of being converted to generate cleaner energy, while most of the communities in which natural gas is being flared daily, live in perpetual darkness for the past six decades.

Failure of successive administrations to ensure stable electricity supply led businesses in the country to depend largely on one form of private power supply or the other, irrespective of the sizes or financial status, while a few firms that have the wherewithal embrace gas to power their plants, others settle for solar power to run their firms.

While most micro firms embrace petrol to power their various generating set, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have had to rely on diesel to power their generators as alternative source of energy for their operations.

Consequently, findings by researchers in the country a few years ago showed that no business in the country could survive without the provision of generators to power their plants, with public power supply as "standby power source."

The situation has been such that several local and even foreign firms that operated in the country had to either relocate from the country or shut down their firms due to erratic public power supply, while most local firms had to continue running their factories by relying heavily on diesel.

Over the years, most of the firms have been able to assess diesel to runs their firms, but the Russia and Ukraine conflict worsened the situation, as the product became scarce with the attendant increasing prices. The Russia and Ukraine crisis changed the global economy,

especially Nigeria that perpetually relied on diesel and petrol to run their businesses, as the country had continued to find it difficult to provide stable public power supply.

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in March, diesel sold for between N190 and N230 per litre, but shortly after the war began, it sharply rose to between N700 and N900 per litre as of Friday, July 22, 2022.

Findings in Lagos and Ogun states showed that diesel was available in some filling stations and retail outlets, but the high cost of the product had impacted negatively on the quantity sold prior to the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Recently, Director-General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Segun Ajayi-Kadir, alerted Nigerians to the fact that the real sector was on the verge of collapse due to the inability of members of MAN to afford the product.

Ajayi-Kadir said: "Over the years, the manufacturing sector has been battered by similar challenges that have plunged several industries in Nigeria into collapse to the extent that some industrial hubs in parts of the country converted to warehouses for imported goods and event centres.

"Top on the list of changes confronting the sector is high operating cost environment occasioned largely by inadequate electricity supply and the high cost of alternative sources. Excessive regulations, taxes and inadequate electricity supply, lack of foreign exchange for importation of raw materials, spare parts and locally available machinery have culminated in the lackluster performance of the manufacturing sector."

But in spite of the challenges, local manufacturers were still trudging on with their operations, as they regularly push the high cost of operations to the consumers of their products. They also resorted to constant increases in the prices of their products, regular reduction of quantity and in some instances, quality of their products to enable them to remain in business.

The MAN boss lamented that the increase in price of diesel and most recently, the price of petrol, is almost totally crippling the local manufacturing sector, adding that global events have shown that the world has become a village, as the challenges in one country could constitute major constraints to the global economy.

"Often when disruptions occur in any part of the global economy, only countries with



Segun Ajayi-Kadir

functional institutions and strong internal economic mechanism, are able to respond proactively to such external shocks. The current increase in prices of crude oil and other refined petroleum products such as diesel is one of such disruptions occasioned by external shocks that confirm the interconnectedness of global economies.

"No doubt, the recent shortage in supply and over 200 per cent increase in the price of diesel are part of the backlashes from Russia's invasion of Ukraine," he said.

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

"What can we do as a nation to strengthen our economic absorbers from external shocks? Should manufacturing companies already battered by multiple taxes, poor access to foreign exchange and over 200 per cent increase in the price of diesel shut down their operations? Should we fold our arms and allow the economy to slip into the valley of recession again? Is the country prepared to manage the resulting explosive inflation and unemployment rates? He asked.

"In the short-term, the disruption occasioned by the Ukraine and Russia crisis will continue to heavily ruffle the global

energy space and upset supply of petroleum products, thereby causing persistent increases in the price of refined petroleum products, including AGO.

Ajayi-Kadir, who painted a picture of gloom in the country's manufacturing sector, which has been overwhelmed by various challenges, pointed out that trucks and big buses that use diesel for their daily operations are also in pains, as they fill their tanks with huge amounts of money.

A former driver of BRT bus, which has been sold to private transporters, who identified himself simply as Bayo, told The Trumpet that he spends about N180,000 to fill his tank, adding that he fills the tank twice daily which amounts about N360,000 and that the current high cost of AGO was impacting negatively on such trucks.

He said although the union of transporters had doubled fares, he hardly breaks even at the end of each day, saying: "The recent hike in the price of diesel is making our operations very difficult. How does one use over N300,000 to buy diesel alone. One will still pay park charges, pay touts, security guys and street boys the moment one loads or drops passengers at the parks.

"The prices of vehicle spare parts and tyres have also increased, coupled with the bad road networks. At the end of each day, the vehicle owner will be paid, the driver and the conductors hardly go home with any tangible amounts

after operating from morning to evening," he lamented.

He said if the price of AGO continues to soar, it will no doubt, send many companies and large vehicles that transport passengers or goods will be forced to close their operations, insisting that the failure of successive governments to fix the local refineries in Africa's largest crude oil producing country, is one error the country would continue to pay for dearly.

Also, bread makers are currently on a four-day warning strike, which began on Wednesday, July 20, 2022 to draw Federal Government's attention to the plight of the sector and to let the world know that the soaring price of diesel, wheat, flour, sugar and other baking products was unsustainable.

The price of AGO would not have been an issue, if the country could guarantee stable public power supply, as most companies that were now closing their businesses would have managed their operations, even if there was electricity for a certain number of hours daily.

As of the time of writing this analysis, the country had experienced the seventh collapse of the national grid, which was reported on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 and lasted till Thursday, July 21, 2022, a situation that seem to have no solution in sight for now. In such a scenario, businesses and rich Nigerians have no other choice than to rely on diesel to power their operations and their homes.

The MAN urged the Federal Government to urgently address the power challenge, especially the incessant collapse of the national grid, which has been responsible for acute outages in the country, particularly for the manufacturing sector.

"Government should also urgently allow manufacturers and independent petroleum products marketers to start importing diesel from the Republic of Niger and Chad by immediately opening up the land borders in those axis to cushion the effect of the supply gap driven by the high cost of AGO," he stated.

It is sad that while countries like Republic of Niger and Republic of Chad could refine the little crude oil they have, Nigeria was still relying on importation of petroleum products from other countries. As gloomy as the situation looks and the level to which Nigeria has sank, beg the question-will Nigeria ever rise again?



# Senate holds public hearing on amendment of ITF Act, others

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Senate Committee on Industry has commenced the process of amending the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Act and related matters at the National Assembly in Abuja.

Chairman, Senate Committee on Industry, Mukhail Abiru, explained that the ITF Act needed to be amended to reflect current realities of industrial and allied matters.

The proposed amendments are largely aimed at ending significant inadequacies in the Act, which among other things, had led to non-adherence with the requirements of proof of individual and corporate organisations' updated contributions to the fund converted by the Act.

"The amendment seeks to address the challenge of inadequate deference or penalties for forgery of certificates of compliance and other official documents, as well as absence of concise interpretation of some keywords and phrases in the Act. It is also expected to strengthen the ITF capacity to administer, supervise and enforce the government's industrial training reforms.

"At this critical phase in our country's political and socio-economic journey, providing the desired training, skills acquisition and vocational know-how that will create jobs and alleviate poverty has become not only an imperative, but also non-optional," Abiru stated.

Abiru, who acknowledged ITF feat in developing human



Mukhail Abiru

capacity for the public and private sectors of the economy, especially through Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) with the aim of equipping Nigerians with requisite skills for employability and entrepreneurship, argued that digital skills remained essential for survival in the fourth industrial revolution workplace and as such, the fund should accommodate such trainings.

He said: "The world is evolving and so too are the competencies required to walk and thrive in it. The 2020 World Economic Forum (WEF), the future of jobs reports businesses expect 44 per

cent of skills employees need.

"To perform effectively in their roles for effective change by 2025, most employers globally plan to swiftly digitise work processes with a fair number intending to use digital tools to connect employees and bridge divides caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is crucial to the major shift in required skills."

Among other trends, the rise of innovations the like Artificial Intelligence (AI) robotics, the Internet of Things (IOT), cloud computing and in several ways, the COVID-19 pandemic, which

have been driving widespread change in the workplace, had only accelerated the transformation.

"In a matter of years, certain jobs may cease to exist, while several other roles will be redefined and other new occupations will surface and become the norm. The question is whether TVET alone will be enough to address the employment crisis of the present and future.

"Are we developing skill sets aligned with the trends of the emerging workforce and the jobs of the future. The answer is no. it is for this reason that the Fund must also focus on acquisition and development of digital skills. Technology has been changing the landscape of the workforce globally at a rapid pace," he added.

Speaking, Director-General of ITF, Joseph Ari, said the agency sponsored the bill to address the challenges hindering ITF in optimising its operations and deliver on its core mandates and objectives.

Stakeholders at the hearing

urged the Senate to increase the one per cent statutory contribution Nigerian companies mandated to remit funds to the ITF for better efficiency and canvassed review of educational curriculum of educational institutions from the primary school level.

Other stakeholders requested that the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDBM) should be included in the board, while the Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) complained of being sidelined in the representation on the board in spite of being an alternate member.

All the stakeholders supported the bill and asked the Senate to expedite action on the passage of the bill.

Others who attended the hearing are top officials the National Pensions Commission (PENCOM), Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA), the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), NCDMB and the media.

## MAN tasks FG on spiralling inflation

Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), at the weekend, raised concerns over the rising inflation in the country and called on the Federal Government to take bold steps to check the trend, insisting that it arose due to failure of the monetary authorities to address the shortcomings.

In a statement signed and issued by its Director General, Segun Ajayi-Kadir and made available to *The Trumpet*, it maintained that in addition to the familiar triggers of inflation in Nigeria, issues of seasonality, insecurity, food shortages, shortfall in supply of raw materials for production of food products, fertilisers and other items not available locally could cause inflation.

It said the top three drivers of inflation in the period under review were fuel scarcity, rising insecurity, scarcity of foreign exchange and constant depreciation of the naira.

"Nigeria remains a highly import-dependent economy and as such, the exchange rate passes through effect and continues to worsen inflation with the domestic currency depreciating by over 22 per cent in the last 12 months.

"At present, the exchange rate premium has further widened by N194 with the naira trading at about N610 to \$1 at the parallel market and at the official market.

"Inflation rate has assumed an upward swing, which of course signals worsening economic times ahead. For instance, a cursory look at the report revealed that the 18.6 per cent portends a gradual journey towards the 18.72 per cent peak inflation recorded in January 2017.

"Obviously, this is an overwhelming acceleration of inflation rate that should be halted

urgently, especially given the fact that socio-economic activities that trigger inflation are imminent," the statement reads.

The MAN maintained that the implication of the high inflation rate for the manufacturing sector include rising cost of production inputs, which will affect capacity utilisation, inventory and profitability of manufacturing firms, higher Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) and lending interest rates.

These would further restrict access to credit and increase the cost of borrowing for manufacturers, especially those in the Small and Medium Industry (SMI) cadre and upward swing in the value shares for manufacturing concerns on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

"It will also have different implications on the demand for manufactured products leading to poor sales and turnover, lower competitiveness as the high inflation rate further mounts pressure on the already high cost operating environment, which may hinder the prospect of beneficial trade in the region and the African continent.

"MAN strongly believes that high inflation is a major indication of macro-economic inadequacies and failure to take steps to address the contributory factors will further limit economic growth and increase unemployment in the country," the statement added.

MAN, therefore, urged the Federal Government to resolve all foreign exchange challenges confronting the productive sector by making prevailing on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to change its foreign exchange regime that contradicts one of the goals of the National Development Plan (NDP), which seeks to attain quick convergence of exchange rate.

## NPA tasks SON, Customs on creation of export desks in terminals

Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has charged the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) to establish their export desks at the export processing terminals across the country.

Managing Director of NPA, Mohammed Bello-Koko, who stated this recently in Lagos at the 2022 Zenith Bank International trade seminar on non-oil exports with the theme: Unlocking Opportunities In Nigeria Non-oil Export Business, said there should be proper synergy between vessels that come into the country and those that leave the nation's ports.

He said the NPA's truck electronic call-up system to ease the movement of cargoes into the port is functioning well, adding that the authority had created pre-gates where trucks should park before entering the ports.

"We are working with the government to ensure diversification of the economy and we are encouraging non-oil exports. Also, on deploying the electronic call up system, we have licensed no fewer than 10 export processing terminals in the country.

"The terminals are supposed to be at locations whereby one stalk process, package, certify seal and send it directly to the port.

"But, for it to succeed, we

need other government agencies to understand that the port is a maritime ecosystem not only for the NPA, but also other government agencies. And so, for the export processing terminals that were recreated, we expect the NCS and SON to have export desks there for certification," he stated.

Stressing that three of 10 export processing terminals would be activated shortly, Bello-Koko, who noted that barges were also introduced at a cost borne by the exporters thereby making export more expensive, also stressed that the export terminals would reduce the burden in future.

He also advocated the introduction of the National Single Window to ease the movement of cargo in the country, stressing that automation remained crucial to reducing congestion and ensuring speedy processing of import and export documentations.

"In the documentation whether import or export, all starts with the consignee and the form is Form M and this has to do with port destination, loading and discharging.

So, there is the need to have one form that the transaction will be done even in payment. One bulk payment can be made and everybody is paid separately at the same time. This is obtainable in other neighbouring African countries

and I believe we can do it here," he added.

Also speaking, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, noted that the bank had introduced various initiatives and interventions that would harness the opportunities in the non-oil sector to create wealth for the country.

Emefiele pointed out that the apex bank introduced rebate facilities to encourage exporters, bridge gaps by providing funding for capital expenditure, saying: "We have the N500 billion non-oil stimulation facilitation commercial agricultural scheme for agricultural commodities and many others and so, Nigeria should look inwards for economic growth and development."

Earlier in his welcome address, Group Managing Director Zenith Bank, Ebenezer Onyeagwu, said opportunities in the non-oil export was expansive with huge opportunities in its value chain and that the bank was using the seminar to create awareness to boost the country's foreign exchange earnings capacity.

He pointed out that since the inception of the seminar in 2016, it had achieved several results including change in policy implementation, transparent record keeping and enhanced funding, among others.



## Turkey to help NAF against terrorists

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

To strengthen the fight against terrorism, Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Marshal Oladayo Amao, has requested for deeper collaboration and help of Turkey on defence technology in order to enhance operational efficiency.

Amao made the request when he paid a courtesy call on the Commander Turkish Air Force (TurAF), General Hasan Kucukakyuz, during a five-day official visit to Turkey.

According to Commodore Edward Gabkwet, Nigeria Air Force's (NAF's) Director of Public Relations and Information, in a statement at the weekend, Amao and Kucukakyuz emphasised the need for Nigeria and Turkey to share their experiences on the use of unmanned aircraft systems in counterterrorism operations.

According to them, this would enable strategic synergy and enhance proficiency with renewed commitment to wipe out terrorists.

Appreciating Turkish military

experience in counter-terrorism operations, Air Commodore Amao stated that Turkey achieved successes against terrorists due to the usage of the right military equipment.

"Turkey has succeeded in developing a robust defence industrial sector capable of meeting up to a significant percentage of critical requirements of her armed forces and other security agencies," he said.

Amao, therefore, called for greater collaborations with the Turkish Air Force. He appreciated the existing cooperation in training and extension of invitation for NAF personnel participation in some of the TurAF international military exercises.

He requested for more support from the TurAF in the areas of upgrade and modernization of platforms, air defence training, special forces training as well as training slots in information communication technology for NAF personnel.

The Air Marshal noted that the two countries could greatly benefit from military student exchange training programmes as the consideration would enhance critical understanding of both countries' security environments and deepen greater cooperation.

Reiterating the need for strong collaboration in defence technology, the CAS stated that the signing of Defence Industry Cooperation Agreement by both countries offered greater opportunity for the NAF and TurAF to work more closely together.

Kucukakyuz pledged that Turkish Air Force is willing to deepen cooperation with NAF by assisting the latter in any area that could ultimately strengthen its operational capabilities.

He stated that NAF would, henceforth, fully participate in its international military exercises, including ANATOLIA Eagle. The General promised to liaise with the NAF and assist in all areas of military cooperation with other



CAS, Marshal Amao

Services in Turkey as well as defence procurement concerns.

They, therefore, agreed to fashion out modalities that would enable a meeting between officers of the both Air Forces to outline areas of comprehensive cooperation that could be of mutual value to them.

## Customs hands over suspect, N6bn Tramadol to NDLEA

By PAUL MICHAEL

Apapa Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has handed over a suspect and 1x20 ft Container with no 0183241 laden with 81 Cartons of 250mg and 69 Cartons of 225mg of Tramadol to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

The street value of the 81 Cartons of 250mg and 61 Carton of 225mg of Tramadol was estimated to be over N6 billion.

The Customs Area Controller of the Command, Comptroller Malanta Yusuf handed the illicit drugs and the suspect to the Commander of Narcotics, Ameh Inalegwu, Apapa Special Area Command of the NDLEA.

According to Yusuf, the illicit drugs were cleverly concealed in a 20ft Container with Cartons of towels and the point of origin is Pakistan.

"When you look at the magnitude and the way it was packed, with the same style of a towel, you would think, they are all the same, they will never reveal the true content of the manifest, but the eagle eyes of the Nigeria Customs Service will always catch up on them," he assured.

Yusuf said the handing over is to further strengthen the existing relationship between the NCS, the NDLEA and other relevant government agencies operating in the port.

"The fight against illicit drug abuse and trafficking is everyone's business and the Nigeria Customs Service is all out to support the NDLEA in combating this ugly menace decisively," he added.

While receiving the seizures, the NDLEA Commander, Inalegwu said, the fight against illicit drugs is a whole societal approach as everyone is vulnerable

He said, "You may not appreciate what these seizures mean to the Nigerian Society, the legally accepted milligram is 50.

"I want to call on everyone, especially the Press, don't say, you are not involved, you may have a relation, even if you don't have, the one who is under the influence of these drugs could be of harm to you.

"That is why NDLEA is asking of a joint hand approach, a whole society approach. Let all hands be on deck and let's make Nigeria a better Nation."

While thanking Service for the continuous collaboration with the Agency, Inalegwu recalled the handing over of two containers load of Tramadol by the Apapa Comand a month ago and said, it is the 'Apapa Spirit'.

He conveyed the appreciation of the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the NDLEA, Buba Marwa (rtd) to the NCS for the synergy, saying the anti-narcotics agency is ready to project and cooperate with any Security Agencies that will partner with the NDLEA.

## Police nab four cultism suspects in Badagry

By PAUL MICHAEL

Four suspected members of rival Eiye and Aye confraternities have been arrested over their alleged involvement in criminal activities in the Badagry area of the State.

The suspects and their various confraternities were said to have been plaguing Badagry with incessant killings and other nefarious cult-related clashes.

Their activities allegedly made residents apprehensive, thereby prompting different complaints to Police in the area to immediately

arrest the situation by bringing perpetrators to book and restore public confidence.

Police Public Relations Officer of the Lagos State Command, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, who confirmed the arrest in a statement on Saturday said the suspects will be charged to court after the completion of investigation.

Hundeyin named those arrested as "Gbenga Fransisco Olanrenwaju aka Gbengene 'm' aged 40, Asokere Segun aka Seriki 'm' aged 36, Adediran Ibrahim aka Kush 'm' aged 23 and Jimoh Sodiq aka Irawo

'm' aged 27", while saying that the suspects were arrested in various parts of Badagry, Lagos State in an operation that lasted days.

"The arrest of the suspect followed painstaking weeks-long investigation into incessant complaints of cult-related disturbances and killings in Badagry.

"Preliminary investigation reveals that the suspects belong to Eiye and Aiye confraternities. Suspects would be arraigned at the conclusion of a more comprehensive investigation," he said.

Commissioner of Police in

the State, CP Abiodun Alabi, while restating his commitment to ensuring lasting peace in the State, assured residents that the Command will continue to combat cultism and related crimes in the State.

Secret cult related crimes and traffic robbery among other crimes, have been identified to be prevalent in Lagos State. However, the CP in a recent interview with The Trumpet said that he is determined to tackle the menace and bring perpetrators to book.

## NSCDC boss tasks PGCs on guards' welfare, warns against use of arms

● UNIMAID, 18 others get operating licence

By PAUL MICHAEL

Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi, has called on all Private Guard Companies (PGCs) to prioritise the welfare of their workforce as well as offer them the necessary training to aid their efficiency in service delivery.

The CG made the call on Saturday while issuing operating license to new 19 Private Guard Companies including the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) Security Company, DCC Olusola Odumosu, Director of Public Relations said.

It was gathered that though Security Guard Companies usually charge their employers exorbitantly to provide security services, the welfare of guards across the country is at its lowest ebb with many of the personnel earning less than the legitimate minimum wage irrespective of their education qualifications.

While handing over the license, Dr Audi charged the new operators to take welfare of guards seriously, saying such will discourage compromise and connivance with criminal elements.

"The Corps will frown at any company that does not take care of its staff. Operators should be mindful of undercutting to the detriment of the operatives," he said.

He urged them to be prepared to contribute their quota to the fight against insecurity by providing credible intelligence and information to the Corps and other security agencies.

The NSCDC boss stressed that if the battle of insecurity must be won all hands must be on deck to proffer solutions to the security challenges confronting the nation.

He strongly cautioned the PGCs against the use of fire arms, impersonation of security agencies uniforms, ranks and other accoutrements.

According to him, an Act of Parliament empowers the Corps to monitor, supervise, license and train operators of PGC.

Audi warned the PGCs to adhere strictly to the guidelines and conditions of operation and warned against the transfer of operating licenses.

He commended the University of Maiduguri for taking a bold step to register its in-house security company and called on other academic institutions, banks, churches among others to emulate such gesture.

In his remark, National President, Association of License Private Security Practitioners of Nigeria (ALPSPN), who was represented by ALPSPN Vice President, Rev Cannon Mark Aber, tasked members to adhere to the guidelines of operation.

He stressed that the timely renewal of operating licenses and ALPSPN membership is mandatory.

Responding on behalf other operators, Vice Chancellor, University

of Maiduguri, Prof Adamu Umar, thanked the Corps and expressed delight for the approval granted to float Unimaid Security Services.

He explained that, as an institution which operates in Boko Haram ravaged community, the University's management resorted to establishing the outfit to complement the activities of security agencies in terms of patrol, intelligence gathering and report.

While assuring that they will perform their duties with high sense of responsibility and discipline, Prof Umar said the PGC is a child of necessity.

Meanwhile, Odumosu said that the Corps is perfecting plans to clampdown on unlicensed PGCs in the country.

"The Corps plans to clamp down on violators and illegal operators of PGCs across the country. The Corps is to also seal up unlicensed and invalid PGCs in operation," he stated.





## WAFCON top-scorer: Ajibade would have won the award outright- NFF

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

### Spots Mimi Calvin-Onwuka's sterling performance

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) said the Super Falcons forward Rasheedat Ajibade would have won the top-scorer award outright if the Nigeria women's team had qualified for the finals of the Women's African Cup of Nation (WAFCON) in Morocco.

NFF made this known in a congratulatory message to celebrate Ajibade and Mimi Calvin-Onwuka who played the role of Assistant Referee 1 in the finals between Morocco and South Africa.

In a report released by NFF Director of Communications, Ademola Olajire, the NFF Secretary General, Dr Mohammed Sanusi appreciated Ajibade for her goals which helped the Super Falcons secure a World Cup ticket to the 2023 FIFA World Cup finals in Australia and New Zealand.

"We rejoice with Rahseedat Ajibade for her emergence as joint top-scorer of the tournament and we implore her to continue to show



even more prolificity and commitment in the jerseys of club and country," Sanusi said.

"Her three goals surely helped the Super Falcons to win a World Cup ticket. Our team would certainly have been in the Final if not for the incident that led to her expulsion in the semi-final match against the host nation.

"She probably would have won the award outright if she finished the game and played one more match," the NFF Secretary General claimed.

In the same vein, Sanusi also congratulated Mimisen

Calvin-Onwuka, who played the role of Assistant Referee 1 in the final match between Morocco and South Africa on Saturday, saying her stellar performance alongside referee Salima Mukansanga from Rwanda did not go unnoticed by the global football community.

He urged her to continue to develop herself with available top-level courses and programmes to continue her rise to global reckoning.

According to NFF, Ajibade was ejected after 70 minutes of the semi-final against Morocco at the Complexe

Prince Moulay Abdellah, with Nigeria already one woman down, and the Falcons played the next 50 minutes (of regulation and extra time) with only nine players, losing in the ensuing penalty shoot-out.

In the third-place match against Zambia on Friday, a fierce shot by Evarine Suzeni Katongo in the 28th minute struck the upright and bounced on the back of hardworking goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie for the only goal of the match, with the Falcons failing to convert any of a slew of chances they created.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's U20 girls, Falconets have continued their preparations for next month's FIFA U20 Women's World Cup finals scheduled for Costa Rica. The girls, who have been training in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja will depart for a one-week training tour in Barranquilla, Colombia, from where the delegation will fly into San Jose for the finals slated for 10th - 28th August.

## Arsenal 4-0 bashing: Chelsea lack right attitude, laments Tuchel

Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel said the club deserved to lose after they were battered 4-0 by Arsenal in a preseason encounter at the Camping World Stadium in Orlando.

The furious Tuchel said this after the humiliating defeat, adding that the players lacked the right attitude in the course of processing the game.

Comparing the Blues' behaviour on the pitch, Tuchel lamented that the Gunners were more committed, in all ramifications, to win the game.

Indisputably, Arsenal were superb as they dislodged the West Londoners in every section of the last match which drew the curtain on their respective tours in the United States. With Gabriel Jesus opening the spree of goals. Bukayo Saka, Martin Odegaard and Albert Sambi Lokonga also recorded their names on the scoresheet to worsen the mood of grievous Chelsea.

Since the club began their preseason tour in the United States, this is the worst defeat they have recorded, having won Club America 2-1 before sustaining a 5-3 defeat on penalties to Charlotte at Bank of America Stadium in North Carolina.

"We deserved to lose, which is fair enough because we were simply not good enough. We were simply not competitive," Tuchel admitted.

"The worrying part is that the level of commitment physically and mentally for this match was far higher for Arsenal than for us. They played I think what is their strongest line-up and structure that you see now for several weeks. This was the line-up they will try to start for Premier League games," he added.

However, Chelsea's manager expressed that though the squad was not his best, he stressed that the team is far from being prepared for the season.

Tuchel praised Mikel Arteta's side for the qualities they displayed during the game and acknowledged their level of exhaustion and physical commitment.

He said, "It was surely not our strongest line-up. This is a part of an explanation but only a little part and the other part is worrying.

"I cannot guarantee we will be ready in two weeks [for the start of the season]. I saw a team from Arsenal that had an idea of how to play to a level of exhaustion and a level of physical commitment that we could not match, and also a level of mental commitment which we lack because we have a lot of players who think about leaving, are looking for other options, and we have players who left.



to be right. I did everything to prove myself wrong but at the moment I feel that I was right," he continued.

"I look at the last season and parts of the game where we struggled, parts of the season where we struggled, and then we got sanctioned and players left us and some players are trying to leave us, and this is where it is.

"So we had an urgent appeal for quality players, a huge amount of quality players. We got two quality players but we are not competitive like this. Unfortunately, you could see it today," the Chelsea boss reiterated.

Chelsea newbie from Napoli, Kalidou Koulibaly, came in for Thiago Silva in the second half and Tuchel was quick to judge the Senegalese as the best player for the Blues against the Gunners.

## 'Ronaldo is a monster, tormented Atletico Madrid'

Atletico Madrid manager, Diego Simeone, has called Manchester United forward, Cristiano Ronaldo, a monster that tormented his club, Colchoneros.

Simeone said the incredible footballer has always been a deciding factor in many matches.

According to the Atletico boss, who made the statement after reports linked the 37-year-old Portuguese with a move to Estadio Metropolitan, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner has always joined teams that complemented his effort.

Simeone said: "He [Cristiano] is a monster and an extraordinary footballer and he has been decisive wherever he has been.

"Obviously, he has done us

a lot of damage whenever he has played with us. He has a team which accompanies him that is very good, United is a history of world football," added Atletico Madrid boss.

The Portuguese footballer returned to Manchester United last season after spending a total of 12 years in Spain and Italy, Real Madrid and Juventus respectively.

Despite being 37, the player indented his trademark at Old Trafford, netting 24 goals in all competition for Ralf Rangnick last season.

However, things are practically not right for the player this season, who did not join the squad to Thailand and Australia and is yet to announce the date to return to the Carrington training base.

According to reports, the

former Real Madrid forward, who found the back of the net 446 times in 436 games and created 131 assists in the process, abstained from the preseason training over a family issue.

While some quarters believe the reason for his absence is true, others said the player wants to leave Old Trafford in search of Champions League football.

Meanwhile, Colchoneros fans have taken to social media to vent their frustration over reports linking the national team captain of Portugal to the club.

According to them, who are collectively running amok on the media space to dissuade the club from perfecting a deal with Ronaldo, their vexation is based on the player's tie with



their archrival, Real Madrid.

To achieve their aim, the fans are presently using the hashtag 'ContraCR7' which means 'against CR7' on online media platforms to spread their campaign.

## Clasico: Barcelona beat Real Madrid in USA

Barcelona have sent warning signals ahead of the start of the season to European clubs that they are ready for the season.

This message was sent through their archrival Real Madrid in the United States where they won 1-0 at Allegiant Stadium in Nevada.

Despite a warning signal having been sent and delivered successfully, the Calatans were not overwhelmed with the scoreline, believing they could have tormented the last season's Spanish League champions further.

Barcelona newbie from

Leeds United, Raphinha, was spectacular in the Clasico to prove to Xavi Hernandez that he is worth the £55 million that the club spent to seal his deal.

In his stats, the Brazilian who won the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the Clasico, created a stunning goal that gave the Catalans the victory in the 27th minute. If Real Madrid goalkeeper had not been in top form, with a pool of goal-bound saves, Carlo Ancelotti's side would have had a devastating outing.

The Whites were unable to

have the worse side of Barcelona as they were only able to create two chances from Valverde's strike that hit the crossbar and that of Marco Asensio's shot.

However, Barcelona coach, Xavi Hernandez can not be happy enough with his team's display that proves they exuded more thirst for victory. They were composed and stuck to their game plan.

The Catalans' dominance, exerted mostly in the first half, gave coach Ancelotti a task to strengthen his team.

Meanwhile, Thibaut Courtois

displayed his mastery of the goal to stop Robert Lewandowski from recording a goal in the Clasico. As early as 10 minutes, the Pole tested the Whites' shot-stopper with a powerful shot but his effort was thwarted.

The Catalans mounted pressure on the Whites with good ball circulation by all its departments to herald their target for the 2022-23 season.

The Trumpet reports that this match at the Allegiant Stadium is the first Clasico this season and the second in the North American continent.





## Jurgen Klopp not expecting new signings except...

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

Liverpool boss, Jurgen Klopp, said the club have finished their summer transfers except for something unplanned happened.

The German coach, who guided Liverpool to a club double last season, noted on injuries or if a player leaves would warrant any further signing this summer.

Since the transfer window opened, Liverpool injected fresh legs into the squad which included Uruguayan Darwin Nunez, Scottish Calvin Ramsay and Portuguese Fabio Carvalho. In the same vein, African player of the year, Sadio Mane, Takumi Minamoto, Neco Williams and Ben Davies have also switched allegiances from the Reds.

Last season, Klopp had targeted a quadruple finish but fell to Real Madrid at Stade de France in the UEFA Champions League

final while Manchester City edged them out to lift the Premier League trophy.

That the club missed their shot and settled for the Carabao and FA Cups, Klopp conceded that he does not expect the Reds to make too many signings having satisfactorily secured three good players.

He said, "Unless we have injuries or player sales no, we have our squad. Hopefully, there won't be any so Liverpool supporters can focus on other things."

In the summer transfer window, Liverpool are not the only club that have done business to bolster their squad as England archrivals Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Tottenham have all been busy also.

Reacting to the activities of other Premier League title contenders, in the summer window, Klopp admitted that the activities of other clubs have been commendable.

"I cannot say the others have so far made a massive mistake in the transfer market," Klopp said.

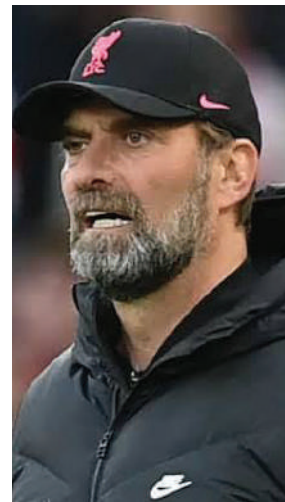
He, however, expressed that Tottenham's signing last season affirmed they took a step in the right direction.

He continued: "It was clear before that Tottenham were going in the right direction last season with their signings. Man City haven't just brought in players, they've given two to Arsenal and one to Chelsea.

"We're in a similar situation where you can't always go with the same team. You need fresh blood and fresh legs. City are in a similar situation to us and we did it in a similar way. In the end, they will all have fantastic football players as we will. It's the question of who makes the most of it.

"Everybody has the same chance. We will try to give it our all. The main target in this league, first and foremost, is always to qualify for the Champions League which is really difficult enough already.

"When you reach that, and then there's still time to



compete for the title, you do that. When you've qualified for it four, or five years in a row people may not appreciate that anymore but it will be a massive fight for the Champions League places.

Liverpool kick-start their campaign for the season with a Community Shield clash with Manchester City, on Saturday at the Wembley Stadium, before travelling to Craven Cottage on August 6 to play Fulham in their Premier League opener.

## How South Africa won historic WAFCON trophy in Morocco

Banyana Banyana of South Africa won their first Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title after they defeated the host nation, Morocco, in Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium on Saturday, July 23, 2022.

The South African team played a barren draw in the first half against the host team that was also eager to clinch the title having reached the first-ever WAFCON final on their home soil.

In the course of processing the match, both teams tackled each other closely while looking for the opportunity to take the lead in the highly competitive clash.

South Africa were the first to take the lead on the resumption of the second half through Hilda Maigaia's 63-minute goal.

The 27-year-old South African who is from a football-loving family and plays for Swedish club Moron BK, got a brace in 8 minutes after, putting the 2018 runners-up in Ghana in a decisive position.

However, Rosella Ayane responded for the Moroccan women in the 80th minute to reduce the deficit but was not sufficient enough to upturn the scoreline as Banyana Banyana courted home the WAFCON trophy

in grand style.

Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium was occupied to capacity by the home supporters to charge their women's team to victory ahead of coach Desiree Ellis' side but that did not derail the determined South African women, who shrugged off the pressure, from getting their desired victory.

According to the results recorded by all the teams in the 12th WAFCON tournament in Morocco, Banyana Banyana were the only side that recorded 100% victory in the competition, winning all matches right from the group stage to the final cracker where they humble the Moroccan women to a 2-1 defeat.

At the conclusion of the tournament, South Africa's shot-stopper, Andile Dlamini, was named the goalkeeper of the tournament while Ghizlane Chebbak of Morocco emerged as the Woman of the competition.

The Trumpet reports that South Africa, according to records, have played a total of 62 WAFCON matches since their first outing in 1995 and statistically won 31 games, drew 8 and lost 23 of the encounters.

## Oregon 22: Nigeria quartet set new African record

The Nigeria quartet of Joy Udo-Gabriel, Favour Ofili, Rosemary Chuckwuma, and Grace Nwokocha has set a new African record in the Women's 4x400m relay at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon.

The record of 42.22s which has been set by Team Nigeria, saw them finish fourth place behind Team USA which won the gold with a fast time of 41.14s, with Jamaica and Germany in second and third positions respectively.

However, the attained stride by the 4x400m female team, provided relief to Team Nigeria after

the quartet of Raymond Ekevwo, Godson Brume, Ashe Favour and Udodi Onwuzurike of the 4x400m male team were unable to proceed to the final after they failed to qualify during the heat.

Before setting the new African record in Oregon, the quartet qualified from the heat stage after an impressive performance on lane 1 to finish third in 42.62s. They finished behind Team USA in the top spot with 41.56s and Team Spain which clocked 42.61s.

Consequently, the Nigeria Team, having concluded their campaign in the World Athletics Championships



in Oregon on Sunday, will certainly improve on their performances in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Recall that the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday

Dare, has assured that the series of competitions Team Nigeria competed in recently, have toughened, strengthened and prepared them for the Commonwealth Games scheduled from July 28 - August 8

## Beach Volleyball: Nigeria team arrive Morocco for African championship

The Nigeria team arrived in Morocco on Sunday to represent the nation in the African National Beach Volleyball Championship in Agadir, Morocco.

The team which comprises 8 players, 4 males and 4 females, left the shores of the country to kickstart their campaign for the title which is scheduled from July 25 - August 2.

According to the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), Obayemi Ogunshina, Simon Hilary, Emenike Ezike and Uchenna Augustine were selected for the male team while the women's team comprises Albertina Francis, Happiness

Wushilang, Esther Mbah and Rafiat Mustapha.

Head coach of the team, Kayode Ajilore is confident that the team will do well after undergoing a series of training within the first quarter of the year, adding that the National Volleyball Tour was an added advantage.

Ajilore, a former national volleyball player, stressed that the team spent two weeks in camp preparing for the tourney in Agadir.

He said, "the team will excel at the African Beach Volleyball Championship." "The boys have been in a closed camp for two weeks; the players

are physically and mentally ready.

"I have confidence in the ability of the team.

"Most of the athletes have been busy from the first quarter of the year and the introduction of the National Beach Volleyball Tour is an addition," Ajilore admitted.

In a statement by Engr Musa Nimrod, President of the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), he opined that much result should not be expected as the team is currently in a building phase.

Nimrod said that the team have the course to prepare well, hoping they will put in their best.

## CAF Award: Oshoala, a walking proof of possibilities, says Pinnick

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and FIFA Council Member, Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick has congratulated Super Falcons' forward Asisat Oshoala on her historic feat of becoming the African Woman Player of the Year for the fifth time, at the CAF Awards ceremony that took place in Rabat, Morocco on Thursday.

Oshoala had a couple of years ago become only the second player to win the award for the fourth time, after compatriot Perpetua Nkwocha.

"The Nigeria Football Federation celebrates Asisat Oshoala for her feat, which is well-deserved, and we urge her to continue to be a role model for both the Nigeria girl-child and the African girl-child," Pinnick said.

"She is a walking proof of what is possible if you pursue your dream with diligence, commitment, resilience and belief in God.

"I want to use her as a point of

contact to encourage our women footballers and the girl-child in Nigeria to work hard and without ceasing their dreams and the goals they set for themselves, and success will always come.

"It is not enough to set goals or admire role models; you have to work assiduously, have temperance and be ready to surmount odds and obstacles to get to your destination," he explained.

Oshoala, who plays for FC Barcelona Femeni in Spain, was the top scorer and best player at the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in Canada in 2014 and has since played at the 2015 and 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup finals. She has also played in and won with Nigeria the Women Africa Cup of Nations in 2014, 2016 and 2018.

At the Awards Ceremony in Rabat on Thursday, Senegalese star forward Sadio Mane, who also won the African Player of the Year diadem in 2019, was crowned the Player of the Year.





# WAFCON22: 'We thought we could compensate Nigerians with third place'

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

Super Falcons defender, Glory Ogbonna, has said the Nigeria senior women's football team wanted to compensate Nigerians with a win against the Copper Queens of Zambia by clinching third place in the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.

The defender, who plays in the Swedish club Umeå IK, lamented over the Super Falcons' inability to secure third place despite targeting to win the trophy and qualifying for next year's FIFA Women's World Cup in New Zealand and Australia.

Nigeria, during the course of their campaign in the 12th edition of WAFCON, lost to fierce continental rival, Banyana Banyana of South Africa in their opening group C game but proceeded to win the remaining two group games against Botswana and Burundi.

The 6-point victories



recorded in the group stage saw the 9 times champion in the African continent, schedule a quarter-final tie where they humbled the Lionesses of Cameroon at Stade Mohammed V through a 56-minute finish by Rasheedat Ajibade.

However, coach Randy Waldrum's side, having reached the semi-final and automatically qualified to represent Nigeria in the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, lost on penalties to the host team, Morocco, after conceding two red

cards resulting in a depleted 9-woman team.

Consequent to the loss, the Super Falcons who were earlier charged to extend their dominance in the continent by winning their 10th WAFCON title in Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium on Saturday, July 23, played the Copper Queens for third place where they lost 1-0 by an own-goal conceded by goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie.

The scenario and how Nigeria lost out on the

competition has been described by Ogbonna as the team was unlucky.

"It was our plan to secure the World Cup ticket and also win the trophy for a record 10th time," Ogbonna recalled.

Furthermore, the defender who represented Nigeria in FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in 2016 and 2018 expressed that the national team tried its best in the tournament but was unhappy with how it turned out.

Ogbonna said, "Like they always say, it is a game of football and anything can happen. We tried our best but we are very disappointed with the overall outcome of our participation in WAFCON, in Morocco.

"We thought we could win the third place match to compensate for not winning the coveted trophy but it didn't turn out like that," the Umeå IK defender lamented.

The Super Falcons' defender was part of the national senior women's team in 2018 where Nigeria won the 9th WAFCON title in Ghana.

## Governor Diri Rewards Victorious Basketball Teams

Directs ministry to construct courts in schools

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has rewarded winners of the 2022 Nestle Milo National Secondary Schools Basketball Championship from the state.

Last month, students of the Bishop Dimeari Grammar School (BDGS), Yenagoa, won in the male category while their counterparts from the St Jude's Girls Secondary School, also in Yenagoa, took the female crown at the championship held in Lagos.

It was the seventh title for the latter in the competition while the BDGS boys won it for the first time.

Both schools also produced the Most Valuable Players of the tournament.

At a reception held inside the Executive Council Chamber of the Government House in Yenagoa on Wednesday, Governor Diri commended the teams for the feat and for making the state proud.

He charged them not to relent in training and that the victory should spur them to achieve greater laurels.

The governor announced a token reward of N100,000 for each of the players and an additional N50,000 each for the Most Valuable Players.

Also rewarded were the management of the schools with N500,000 each while the coach of both teams, Tony Nelson, got N300,000 and one-grade level promotion in the state's sports council while the other coaches got N150,000 each.

Governor Diri also directed the immediate construction of basketball courts in both schools to enable the players to train adequately.

According to him, sports are no longer only a social activity but also a source of livelihood for those who engage in it.

He advised youths in the state to emulate the players by engaging in productive ventures instead of crime.

The Bayelsa helmsman further noted that the feat

achieved by both schools would encourage schools in rural areas to engage in sporting activities.

The governor equally urged other corporate entities to emulate the Milo brand by giving back to society through sponsoring similar events.

He thanked the Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, the Commissioner for Education, Dr Gentle Emelah and his sports counterpart, Daniel Igali, for ensuring a successful outing for the teams.

His words: "You have made your schools and Bayelsa State very proud. Let me on behalf of your government and the good people of Bayelsa say congratulations to all of you.

"It is not an easy feat. Sports are no longer a social activity. It is now a money-spinning activity. You must have heard of the names of big basketball players in America. I am happy that some of our people are already there.

"We also need to grow the game in Bayelsa State. I believe that with your feat, basketball will grow beyond the state capital, Yenagoa. Other secondary school principals should emulate the feat achieved by both schools.

"Let me also use this opportunity to appreciate the sponsors of this competition, the Milo brand. This is what we tell companies and individuals. There must be Corporate Social Responsibility. We call on others to emulate Milo in what they are doing by giving back to society.

"I have been informed that there is no basketball pitch in both schools. The Commissioner for Sports is hereby directed to construct a basketball pitch in BDGS and St Jude's Girl's Secondary School."

While presenting the victorious teams, the Commissioner for Education stated that both teams would represent Nigeria in Serbia in September this year.

## 3SC target continental ticket next season

The Shooting Stars Soccer Club (3SC) of Ibadan have been mandated to target qualification for continental football next season in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL).

The club hope to achieve this by correcting last season's mistakes which resulted in their battle to survive being relegated to the second-tier division.

A statement by the club's executive chairman, Rt. Honourable Babatunde Olaniyan, on Friday at the club's secretariat, Jericho, emphasised that the 3SC will exploit all available means to stem a repeat of last season's disgraceful outing.

Olaniyan in an emergency meeting to appraise the club's performance in the recently concluded NPFL 2021-2022 season, commended the team on behalf of the Governor of Oyo State, His Excellency, Engineer Seyi Makinde, for the show of resilience and determination to fight to pull the club away from the drop zone.

According to the report by the club's media officer, Tosin Omojola, the chairman posited that financial and intellectual challenges almost overwhelmed the club last season.

"On behalf of the Executive Governor, His Excellency, Engineer Seyi Makinde, I want to appreciate the Almighty God, whose divine

intervention came at a time it was needed to rescue the team from going into relegation and also appreciate your efforts and commend your sportsmanship," Olaniyan said.

"The survival of the team was as a result of joint efforts of the players on the field and that of the management outside the field," he conceded.

Last season, 3SC having struggled almost all through their campaign reignited a push for NPFL survival with a 2-1 win against Plateau United and sustained the feat to record a successive five-match unbeaten run.

The chairman, while deliberating on the errors and lapses recorded last season, acknowledged the feat attained by Remo Stars to qualify for the continental tourney despite gaining promotion to the top-tier last season.

Olaniyan said, "The Management has noted all the errors and mistakes committed either advertently or inadvertently in the course of the season and it is my desire to ensure that such mistakes are never repeated. If Remo Stars, who got promoted with us could clinch a continental ticket the same season they got promoted, it simply means Shooting Stars Sports Club could also do it.

"The mandate given to us by His Excellency,



the Executive Governor, is for the team to pick a continental ticket during his time as the Governor of Oyo State and I, as the Chairman of the club, I'm one hundred percent committed to achieving this target," the chairman stated.

However, he expressed that he has studied the operations of the club as well as its structure and concluded that there is a need to improve on certain departments.

He continued: "I studied the operations and running of the club over the years as well as its structure, he has come to realise that there are rooms for improvement.

"The time to begin the repositioning of the club is now if truly we are desirous of achieving the mandate of the Executive Governor and make our people happy.

Olaniyan said, "We have all worked tirelessly during the season, and we deserve a rest and get refreshed before the resumption







## Gunmen kill father, abduct son in Delta Community

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

**T**ension has gripped Orhuwhorun Community in Udu Local Government Area of Delta State as gunmen shot dead a popular building

materials merchant in the area and reportedly abducted his son.

The incident reportedly occurred around Usiefurun Junction at about 9 pm on Saturday, as the attackers numbering about five, stormed the area in a Toyota Sienna,

shot and killed Francis Tefue, the popular trader. Tefue's son, Sam, who was with him during the attack was reportedly abducted by the assailants.

It was gathered that the gunmen shot sporadically into the air during the operation which lasted

about thirty minutes before they eventually drove off towards Usiefurun Road, with the abducted son of the deceased.

It was also gathered that the slain merchant only a few months ago added a Point of Sales (POS) service to his business venture.

Grief-stricken residents of Orhuwhorun Community were left bewildered by the sad news, as many of them were seen discussing the development in hush tones

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the Delta

State Command, DSP Bright Edefe, confirmed the killing.

He, however, said that the son was not kidnapped, saying, "Killed father, yes, but the son was not abducted. They came to rob him, he operates a POS shop."

## Isoko people vow to sustain protests against Agip's neglect

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

Idheze Community in Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State has vowed to continue with their peaceful protest against gross neglect by Nigeria Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC).

The community women had started the protest on Tuesday, July 6, 2022 by barricading the road leading to the oil wells being operated by NAOC, saying until their demands are met, they would not allow the company to have access. After 19 days of being in the bush under the rain and without any meaningful response from NAOC, the people have vowed to continue with the protest and blockage

of the company's access to the oil wells in Idheze Community.

Giving update on the protest, the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of Idheze Community, Mr. Power Okpure, said the attitude of NAOC has vindicated the community which has insisted that the Italian firm is only interested in getting oil and gas without thinking about the development and welfare of the community.

"It is very unfortunate that after 19 days of protest, NAOC has refused to accede to our demands and we are prepared to sustain the agitation which is our right and legal obligation of NAOC. Before we embarked on the protest, we wrote several letters to the company, which they

ignored.

He said that "The Delta State Government invited them twice to discuss our complaints, they failed to honour the invitations. And when we began the protest on July 6, the Delta State Commissioner for Oil and Gas invited us to a meeting with NAOC officials on July 11.

He added that, "At that meeting, the oil company attested to the fact Idheze Community has been a very peaceful host without any history of vandalism or oil theft. But is this how to repay a peaceful community?"

The PRO explained that the community sees the action of NAOC as an oppression and injustice, saying that, "for over 10 years, no infrastructural development in our community, no

employment for our people and we have been neglected in the area of local content."

According to him, instead of putting pressure on NAOC to do the needful, the government is asking us to lift the blockage.

"We consider this as abnormal and oppressive. This is a company that has failed to develop our land and refused to employ our people for over 10 years. Instead of asking the company to listen to us, we are being asked to suspend our protest. This is unfair and we will not lift the blockage until our demands are met," Okpure declared.

The PRO had explained that the operations of NAOC is guided by the provision that every four years, there ought



to be a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with their community.

"The MoU that we signed in 2008 expired in 2011. NAOC refused to sign a new MoU since then. By our calculation, there ought to have been two separate MoUs between when that of 2008 expired and last year when the government introduced the Petroleum

Industrial Act (PIA). We have appealed to NAOC through the Delta State Ministry of Oil and Gas and other agencies but the company has refused to listen to us. Hence, we have decided to carry out the protest and we are saying until they compensate us for the years they did not sign MoU, we will not allow them to operate," he said.

## Pope Francis leaves Rome for Canada apology trip

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Pope Francis left Rome on Sunday for a trip to Canada to apologise for the role of the Roman Catholic Church in residential schools where many indigenous children were abused.

The 85-year-old pope, his entourage and journalists flew out of Rome's Fiumicino airport on an ITA Italian airline plane en route to Edmonton, capital of Alberta.

The week-long trip will include at least five encounters

with native people as Francis makes good on a promise to apologise on their home territory for the Church's role in the state-sanctioned schools, which sought to erase indigenous cultures.

The trip will also be a test of the pontiff health. He had to cancel a trip to Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan in early July because of a knee problem that forced him to use a wheelchair and later a cane.

Earlier this month, Francis gave details of his ailment for the first



time in public, pope said he had suffered a small fracture in the knee when he took a misstep while a ligament was inflamed.

## Ex-mayor killed at varsity graduation

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

A gunman opened fire in a university campus in the Philippine capital region ahead of a graduation ceremony at the weekend.

Three people were killed in the brazen attack, including the former mayor of Lamitan City, Rose Furigay.

The suspect, who was armed with two pistols, was wounded in a shootout with a campus security officer and arrested after a car chase. He is now in custody and being interrogated.

The Ateneo de Manila University in suburban Quezon city university was swiftly put under lockdown and the graduation was also cancelled after the shooting.

Local Quezon City police

chief Remus Medina said the shooting appeared to have been an assassination of the former mayor.

"He looks like he was a determined assassin," Medina said.

Furigay was shot as she was about to attend the graduation of her daughter at the law school of Ateneo de Manila University, one of the country's most prestigious, Medina added.

The two others killed were a campus security officer and an unidentified male, the police said.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo, who was supposed to be a speaker at the ceremony, was advised to turn back en route to the event.

Newly elected President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. promised to have the attack swiftly investigated and those behind

the killings brought to justice. He is scheduled to address a joint session of Congress at the House of Representatives on Monday in Quezon city, where police and other law enforcers had imposed a gun ban and heightened security before the shooting.

"We are shocked and saddened by the events at the Ateneo graduation today," Marcos Jr. said. "We mourn with the bereaved, the wounded and those whose scars from this experience will run deep."

Quezon is part of the Manila capital region, an urban sprawl of 16 cities home to more than 13 million people.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte condemned the attack, he said "This kind of incident has no place in our society and must be condemned to the highest level."