

# Isoko women celebrate 30th anniversary in UK

By PAUL MICHAEL

United Kingdom branch of Ewheyae Isoko Association of Nigeria (EIAN) has in a grand style marked its 30th anniversary.

It is an association of Isoko women by birth or marriage. The event which had different prominent and beautiful daughters of Isoko in the UK in attendance was held at the London Grand Palladium on

Friday, 22nd July 2022. A branch of EIAN, which was founded in 1982 by 10 women in Lagos, Nigeria, was established in the UK on 1992 by the late Mrs. Cecilia Osifeso. She was one of

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# Anxiety as terrorists plan more attacks on Abuja, Lagos, others

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President-General, Ewheyae Isoko Association of Nigeria (EIAN) Worldwide, Chief (Mrs.) Oroboaveru Josephine Ovuorie (right); President, EIAN, UK Branch, Chief Veronica Onoita (left) and others during ceremonies marking the chapter's 30th anniversary in London.



# Anxiety as terrorists plan more attacks on Abuja, Lagos, others

By **TUNDE JOSHUA** and **PAUL MICHAEL**, Abuja

**T**errorist groups and bandits have concluded plans to attack the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Lagos, Kaduna, Katsina, Kogi and Zamfara States.

Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr. Abubakar Audi, disclosed this in a security alert message signed by DCG Operations, DD Mungadi, to all the commands of the corps in the country.

Meanwhile, there was heavy gunfire at Ministers Hills Dangote Bridge in Abuja yesterday.

Audi said credible intelligence has revealed heightened plots by terrorists to stage coordinated attacks in parts of the country, especially North-west, North Central and Southwest.

According to him, the terrorists will be using assorted weapons like Rocket Propelled Grenade launchers, Anti-Aircraft guns and General Purpose Machine Guns.

Audi ordered state Commands to beef up security in schools, worship centres, and all national assets in preparation to repel any attack by the terrorists.

The message reads: "We have received credible intelligence that Boko-Haram and the ISWAP Terrorist

groups have mobilised fighters and high calibre weapons particularly Rocket propelled Grenade (RPG) launchers, Anti-Aircraft (AA) guns and General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGS) which they intend to deploy for the offensive in Katsina State.

"In another development, two separate bandits groups are plotting coordinated attacks on North-West, North Central and South West (Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Kogi, FCT and Lagos) respectively.

"Consequently the Commandant General has directed you scale up deployment in all strategic places including: Schools, Worship Centres and Critical National Assets in your respective states to checkmate any possible threats by these criminal elements. Please treat as urgent."

There is currently tension in the FCT over plans by terrorists to attack public institutions and facilities, a plot which security sources claim the government was aware of.

Reports said the terrorists laid siege in the area with plans to attack the Nigeria Law School in Bwari Area Council.

The school management reportedly alerted the security forces that terrorists had dropped a letter indicating an imminent attack on it.

Recall that terrorists on Sunday ambushed



CG Audi

troops of 7 Guards Battalion of the Nigerian Army Presidential Guards Brigade in Bwari, Abuja.

The attack left three soldiers wounded while eight were allegedly killed. Two of the slain personnel were said to be officers, including a captain and lieutenant, while the remaining were soldiers.

Atachegbe Rita Samuel, sister of the slain Captain, Samuel Attah, has expressed shock over the killing of the soldiers

In a tweet, the heartbroken sister said, "My pride, my hero, my beloved brother... Hmmm I lack words to express this dream. I can't believe I am typing this. Rest in a very perfect peace. Captain Attah Samuel. God! God! God! Jesus help my family, my age parents. Ah! Only son! Who shall defend us."

The Federal Government College in the Kwali Area Council of Abuja was shut after terrorists attacked

some communities near the school. Other such unity schools have been shut.

Relatedly, a group has said that Nigerians are saddened and depressed by President Muhammadu Buhari's alleged display of unprecedented indifference to their suffering and haplessness in the face of ceaseless attacks by bandits and terrorists across the country.

The President was asked to live up to his billing as a retired military hierarch and act swiftly to save the citizenry who entrusted their safety, security and general wellbeing in him.

The group, Yoruba Global Alliance, said this in a message entitled, "Buhari Must Act Today" signed by High Chief Tola Adeniyi, Chairman of Council, and Dr. Amos Arogundade Akingba, National President.

The leading self-determination organization along with its allies, the

Yoruba Global Congress as well as millions of Yoruba people at home and abroad called on Buhari to take immediate action to redeem his image.

The organisation said the video which has gone viral showing the dastardly treatment being meted out to the remaining abductees of the March 28, 2022 train bombardment along Abuja-Kaduna highway calls for immediate action by any responsible government.

They insisted that the horrendous humiliation, degradation and tortuous inhumanity which has pervaded the country's entire landscape should stop.

The Alliance said: "that some rag-tag jackals in human form could descend to this abysmal fiendish bestiality and inflict punishment by flogging their victims shows to what extent terrorists in Nigeria disregard the government and security agencies in the land.

"What is it that has tied the hands of the security agencies? The entire areas where terrorists are holding sway are located in plains or Savannah grassland where there are no thick bushes or forests. Government has on many occasions admitted they know the locations of these bandits. They know their phone numbers.

They know their leaders.

"It is unfortunate that Nigeria would allow their citizens to wallow in captivity right on Nigerian soil and governments, state and Federal, would be unconcerned and unsympathetic towards their plight.

"We call on Buhari to imagine for a moment if his only son was among those being gleefully flogged or if his beautiful daughters including stooze Malami's 3rd wife were among those being bedraggled and humiliated in full glare of the camera. Atiku, Tinubu, Obi, Kwankwaso and other political shadow-chasers who are begging for people's votes while the same citizenry is going through hell should march to Buhari in Aso Rock and demand an immediate intervention from the President and the Armed Forces he commands as Commander-in-Chief.

"President Buhari can use his executive powers to immediately flush out all the imported terrorists stationed in targets across the country, allow for immediate establishment of state police, stop the nonsensical ideas of RUGA and Water Bill, ban Okada operations throughout the country and perish the ruinous scheme of ethnic cleansing with view to handing over indigenous nationalities ancestral lands to some foreigners. If he can do these few things, his 7-year-old sins will be written off.

"The horrendous humiliation, degradation and tortuous inhumanity which has pervaded the country's entire landscape should stop."

The body reminded Buhari that all those "flatterers, court jesters, sycophants and political jobbers milling round him and deceiving him will not be there with him on the Day of Judgment."

## Isoko women celebrate 30th anniversary in UK

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the ten founding mothers of the Association.

EIAN founding mothers shared a common goal, objective, vision, and value. EIAN, which has grown to be a global association with great impact, is described by many as an association that appreciates the worth of the 'True Isoko Woman' all over the world.

The theme of the 30th anniversary in the UK was 'Celebrating the

True Isoko Woman in the 21st Century'. The subject was carefully discussed and explored by different speakers, who enumerated the values of married women as well as their responsibility in a 21st-century era.

The event was colourful as dignitaries from far and near, UK-based community groups, Special Guests of Honour, leaders of thought, amiable husbands (the Ighelezas of EIAN), invited guests,

and well-wishers, all turned out in style to make the event a memorable one.

Funds were raised for different humanitarian projects that the association will be embarking on.

A member of the association, Oyewo Ekelemu, who spoke after the close of the event said, the journey of EIAN so far has distinguished the association as a beacon of charity to the Isoko people and

humanity.

According to her, it was a beautiful evening for the daughters of Isoko by birth and marriage.

She added: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and this aptly describes the humble beginnings and the story of Ewheya Isoko Association of Nigeria (EIAN), which was planted by the inspiration of ten women 40 years ago in 1982, in Lagos, Nigeria in the comfort

of a friend's front room. EIAN is a registered NGO and has many branches in Nigeria, Canada, USA and here in the UK.

"We will like to use this opportunity to thank all those who graced the occasion and thank God for the journey mercies granted to one and all thus far. God bless you all for your prayers, support, a generous contribution, and the various roles played to make the day a success."





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# DFC commits \$280m in Access Bank financing

United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has signed a commitment letter for \$280 million in financing for Access Bank Plc in Nigeria. DFC's CEO Scott Nathan initialled the deal with Access Bank's Managing Director Roosevelt Ogbonna.

The loan will help address the financing gap for small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and advance financial inclusion in Nigeria, including through the bank's commitment to supporting women-owned and -led businesses.

"DFC's investment in Access Bank demonstrates U.S. support for private sector-led development in Nigeria and throughout West Africa," said Nathan. "The \$280 million loan from DFC will boost financial inclusion in Nigeria and empower women, bolstering the country's economic growth."

"We welcome

U.S. International Development Finance Corporation CEO Scott Nathan to Nigeria," said American Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard. "We look forward to discussing with the public and private sectors how DFC funding can be leveraged to unleash the full economic potential of Nigeria through support to the country's small and medium-sized businesses, financial sector, and climate change-focused enterprises."

"Access Bank is extremely pleased to announce this strategic partnership with DFC to support the multitude of businesses across Nigeria who stand to benefit from greater access to finance, especially in an environment that is in need of stronger economic diversification," said Ogbonna. "We look forward to utilizing the partnership with DFC in driving further economic expansion and inclusion in Nigeria, with a strong focus on non-oil sectors and women businesses."

"We are delighted to have collaborated with Access Bank and



United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) CEO Scott Nathan (left) with Access Bank Plc Managing Director Roosevelt Ogbonna during a ceremony to commemorate the signing of a commitment letter for \$280 million in financing for the Nigerian money market institution in Lagos.

DFC on this significant transaction, which will significantly boost SME corporate activity in Nigeria," said Rizwan Shaikh Citi EMEA Head of Emerging Markets Corporate Bank. "This is yet another milestone stride for Citi as it executes a focused local-economy development strategy based on solid partnerships with key clients and development agencies."

DFC financing for Access Bank will provide needed liquidity given the global economic downturn caused by the

COVID-19 pandemic. The loan is expected to support at least 4,000 new SME loans in Nigeria. In addition, the loan proceeds will be on-lent across more than a dozen sectors in the Nigerian economy, with specific focus on women-owned SMEs, and on loans with longer tenors, which will provide more flexibility to borrowers.

Access is one of the largest banks in Nigeria and has banking subsidiaries throughout Africa. Citibank acted as the coordinator and arranger/co-lender to

help facilitate the loan.

DFC partners with the private sector to finance solutions to the most critical challenges facing the developing world today. We invest across sectors including energy, healthcare, critical infrastructure, and technology. DFC also provides financing for small businesses and women entrepreneurs in order to create jobs in emerging markets. DFC investments adhere to high standards and respect the environment, human rights, and worker rights.

## Rivers, Julius Berger sign contracts

Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, has signed new contracts with the Rivers State Government for the construction of two new flyovers and a new road project in Port Harcourt.

The contract signing ceremony at Government House, Port Harcourt was presided over by Governor Ezenwo Nyesom Wike. Also present at the ceremony was the Deputy Governor of the state, Her Excellency, Dame Dr. Ipalibo Harry Banigo. members of the Rivers State Executive Council and House of Assembly, as well as elders, chiefs, senior civil servants etc.

Wike thanked the leaders of the state for their support to his administration. He also lauded the leading engineering construction company for its standards, reliable project delivery and standout quality.

On his part, the Managing Director of Julius Berger Plc, Engr. Dr. Lars Richter, said that the company had earlier successfully delivered six flyovers, which have been commissioned by the Rivers State Government. He also said three more flyovers are at completion stage. Richter thanked Wike for the trust he has continued to repose in Julius Berger for the construction of major infrastructural development works.

The flyovers, which have a completion period of ten months, will be located at the Rumuokuta and NTA-Choba Road Obia Akpo LGA. A contract was also signed for the dualization of Azikiwe Street, Iloabuchi road in Port Harcourt with a completion period of six months.

Wike called his administration's construction of twelve flyovers among other infrastructures in Rivers State within four years since 2019 a record-breaking feat in the history of Nigeria.

On the team of the Julius Berger managing director to the event were the company's Regional Manager, South east/South south, Engr. Juergen Fischer, South east/South south, Project Coordinator, Chief Sam Ngor, Special Projects Manager, Rimon Marisho, Project Manager, Engr. Terna, Contract Manager, Mrs Efe and the Head, Media Relations Office, Prince Moses Duku.

# Buhari wants Senate to confirm Ariwoola as CJN

By TUNDE JOSHUA, Abuja

Acting Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Olukayode Ariwoola is on the threshold of being confirmed substantive head of the nation's Judiciary. President Muhammadu Buhari has written the Senate asking for his confirmation.

Buhari's request was contained in a letter dated 25th July, 2022, and read by the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, at the start of plenary on Tuesday.

The letter reads, "Pursuant to Section 231(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), I forward for confirmation by the Senate, the appointment of Hon. Justice Olukayode

Ariwoola as the Chief Justice of Nigeria.

"While I hope that the submission will be considered in the usual expeditious manner, please accept, Distinguished Senate President, the assurances of my highest consideration."

Justice Ariwoola's appointment as CJN by President Buhari was sequel to the resignation of former Chief Justice Muhammad Tanko on 27th June, 2022.

Tanko's resignation was against the backdrop of a protest by 14 aggrieved Justices over issues of welfare.

However, the former CJN, in his resignation letter, cited health grounds as reason for his decision.

Also, 19 nominees of Buhari are awaiting Senate confirmation as Resident Electoral

## INEC, CBN chiefs also

Commissioners of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Buhari vide a letter dated 25th July, 2022, read on Tuesday at plenary by Lawan said his request for the confirmation of the nominees was in accordance with the Provisions of Section 154 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

He explained that the nomination of five (5) Resident Electoral Commissioners are for renewal, while the other fourteen (14) are fresh appointments.

The nominees for confirmation include: Ibrahim Abdullahi (Adamawa - Renewal); Obo O. Effanga (Cross River - Renewal); Alh. Umar Ibrahim (Taraba

- Renewal); Dr. Agboke Mutiu Olaleke (Ogun - Renewal); and Prof. Samuel E. Egwu (Kogi - Renewal).

Others are: Onyeka Pauline Ugochi (Imo); Prof. Muhammad Lawal Bashir (Sokoto); Prof. Ayobami Salami (Oyo); Amb. Zango Abdussamadu Abdu (Katsina); Mrs. Queen Elizabeth Agwu (Ebonyi); and Dr. Agundu Oliver Tersoo (Benue).

Also to be confirmed are: Yomere Gabriel Oritsemlebi (Delta); Prof. Yahaya Makarfi Ibrahim (Kaduna); Dr. Nura Ali (Kano); Agu Sylvia Uchenna (Enugu); Ahmed Yushau Garki (FCT); Barr. Hudu Yunusa (Bauchi); Prof. Uzochukwu Ikemefuna Chijioke

(Anambra); and Mohammed B. Nura (Yobe).

In the same vein, Buhari sent for confirmation names of four nominees as Non-Executive Directors of the Board of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

The President, in the letter, explained that the request to confirm the nominees was made in accordance with Section 10(3)(a) of the Central Bank of Nigeria (Establishment) Act 2007.

The nominees for confirmation include: Prof. Mike Idiahi Obadan (South South), Prof. Justitia Odinaka Chukwu Nnabuko (South East), Prof. Ummu Ahmed Jalingo (North East), and Mr. Adeola Adetunji (South West).



## SUMMARY OF THE AUDITED REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

The Board of Directors of NOVA Merchant Bank is pleased to announce the bank's audited results for the period ended December, 31, 2021

The Statement of Financial position, statement of comprehensive income, report of the independent auditor and specific disclosures are published in compliance with the requirements of S.27 of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act. The information disclosed have been extracted from the full financial statements of the bank and cannot be expected to provide as full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the bank as the full financial statements. Copies of the full financial statements can be obtained from the bank's secretariat. In line with Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Circular referenced FPR/DIR/CIR/GEN/01/020, the bank received, processed and resolved four (4) customers complaints during the year (2020: Nil)

## Consolidated &amp; Separate Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 December 2021

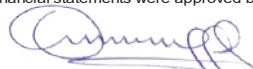
	Group		Bank	
	December 2021 =N=' 000	December 2020 =N=' 000	December 2021 =N=' 000	December 2020 =N=' 000
Interest income calculated using effective interest rate	12,065,011	9,644,250	12,054,334	9,603,920
Interest income on financial assets at FVTPL	-	1,761	-	1,761
Interest expense	(11,875,953)	(7,177,219)	(11,885,626)	(7,181,076)
<b>Net interest income</b>	<b>189,058</b>	<b>2,468,792</b>	<b>168,708</b>	<b>2,424,605</b>
Impairment writeback/(charge) for credit losses	7,104	(72,696)	7,104	(72,696)
Net fee and commission income	827,087	336,597	798,732	320,272
Net gains on financial instruments at fair value through profit or loss	1,486,585	3,013,645	1,496,753	2,959,026
Net foreign exchange gain	2,485,260	369,614	2,483,112	369,614
Other income	170,075	181,968	42,589	5,862
Operating expenses	(3,481,592)	(2,778,249)	(3,332,741)	(2,581,382)
<b>Profit before tax</b>	<b>1,683,575</b>	<b>3,519,670</b>	<b>1,664,258</b>	<b>3,425,301</b>
Income tax	(78,001)	(34,424)	(80,062)	(34,424)
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>1,605,574</b>	<b>3,485,247</b>	<b>1,584,196</b>	<b>3,390,877</b>
<b>Items that may be subsequently reclassified to the income statement:</b>				
Net changes in fair value of financial assets FVOCI	(36,897)	(185,345)	(36,897)	(185,345)
<b>Other comprehensive (loss)/income, net of related tax effects:</b>	<b>(36,897)</b>	<b>(185,345)</b>	<b>(36,897)</b>	<b>(185,345)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>1,568,677</b>	<b>3,299,902</b>	<b>1,547,299</b>	<b>3,205,532</b>
<b>Profit for the year attributable to:</b>				
Owners of Parent	1,605,508	3,485,247	1,584,196	3,390,877
Non-controlling interest	66	-	-	-
<b>Profit for the period</b>	<b>1,605,574</b>	<b>3,485,247</b>	<b>1,584,196</b>	<b>3,390,877</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income attributable to:</b>				
Owners of Parent	1,568,611	3,299,902	1,547,299	3,205,532
Non-controlling interest	66	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>1,568,677</b>	<b>3,299,902</b>	<b>1,547,299</b>	<b>3,205,532</b>

## Consolidated &amp; Separate Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2021

	Group		Bank	
	December 2021 =N=' 000	December 2020 =N=' 000	December 2021 =N=' 000	December 2020 =N=' 000
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Balance with banks	57,186,698	46,983,617	56,107,545	46,822,920
Loans to banks and other financial institutions	-	4,978	-	-
Loans and advances to customers	88,382,235	49,971,622	90,382,235	49,971,622
Investment securities	22,774,177	53,430,722	19,424,091	52,822,843
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	431,167	415,000
Derivative financial assets	3,149,319	3,700,410	3,149,319	3,700,410
Pledged assets	50,016,537	22,071,575	50,016,537	22,071,575
Property and equipment	1,365,086	932,615	1,363,500	931,272
Right-of-use asset	249,054	264,941	249,054	264,941
Intangible assets	579,258	701,100	544,976	672,375
Other assets	20,066,913	3,825,592	20,468,893	4,143,416
Deferred tax assets	448,407	445,006	443,497	443,497
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>244,217,684</b>	<b>182,332,178</b>	<b>242,580,814</b>	<b>182,259,871</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Deposits	116,912,496	89,627,443	116,889,467	89,611,830
Due to Banks	26,813,409	21,713,953	26,813,409	21,713,953
Derivative financial liabilities	3,072,162	3,680,548	3,072,162	3,680,548
Lease liabilities	111,651	96,184	111,651	96,184
Current tax liabilities	80,010	35,356	80,646	34,670
Other liabilities	63,314,509	34,064,139	61,739,140	34,023,634
Debt securities issued	10,253,567	10,259,852	10,361,697	10,333,708
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>220,557,804</b>	<b>159,477,475</b>	<b>219,068,172</b>	<b>159,494,527</b>
<b>SHAREHOLDERS FUND</b>				
Share capital	16,000,000	16,000,000	16,000,000	16,000,000
Statutory reserve	2,486,205	2,010,946	2,486,205	2,010,946
Retained earnings	3,010,297	3,494,146	2,899,625	3,404,787
Fair value reserve	25,291	62,188	25,291	62,188
Regulatory risk reserve	2,101,521	1,287,423	2,101,521	1,287,423
Total equity attributable to owners of the Parent	23,623,314	22,854,703	23,512,642	22,765,344
Non-controlling interest	36,566	-	-	-
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>23,659,880</b>	<b>22,854,703</b>	<b>23,512,642</b>	<b>22,765,344</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS FUND</b>	<b>244,217,684</b>	<b>182,332,178</b>	<b>242,580,814</b>	<b>182,259,871</b>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 6 July 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

  
Daniel Ajoma - Ag. Chief Financial Officer

  
Nath Ude - Managing Director  
FRC/2014/CIBN/0000009331

  
Phillips Oduoza - Chairman  
FRC/2013/CIBN/0000001955

## Report of the independent auditor on the summary consolidated and separate financial statements

To the Members of Nova Merchant Bank Limited

## Report on the summary consolidated and separate financial statements

## Opinion

The summary consolidated and separate financial statements (the "summary financial statements"), which comprise the summary consolidated and separate statements of financial position as at 31 December 2021 and the summary consolidated and separate statements of comprehensive income for the year then ended are derived from the audited consolidated and separate financial statements (the "audited financial statements") of **Nova Merchant Bank Limited ("the Bank")** and its subsidiary companies (together the "Group") for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

## Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Companies and Allied Matters Act, the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act, the Banks and Other Financial Institution Act and other relevant Central Bank of Nigeria circulars applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Group and Bank. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

## The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 8 July 2022. That report also includes the communication of key audit matters. Key audit matters are those matters that, in our professional judgement, were of most significance in our audit of the financial statements of the current period.

## Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

## Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

## Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

In accordance with our full audit report, we confirm that:

- we did not report any exceptions under the sixth schedule of the Companies and Allied Matters Act.
- the Bank has disclosed the information required by the Central Bank of Nigeria circular on insider related credits.
- the Bank did not pay penalties in respect of contraventions of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act and relevant circulars issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria during the year ended 31 December 2021.

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Chartered Accountants  
Lagos, Nigeria  
8 July 2022

Engagement Partner: Patrick Obianwa  
FRC/2013/CAN/0000000880



## 'History will be kind to Buhari over Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, others'

News that the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and the Second Niger Bridge would be completed this year is further proof of President Muhammadu Buhari's desire to leave the country better than he met it in 2015.

In a statement signed by its Chairman Niyi Akinsiju and Secretary Cassidy Madueke, the Buhari Media Organisation (BMO) said that the two signature projects are major achievements that will cement the President's place in history.

"Like all patriots, we were elated to watch the Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola (SAN), on Channels Television's "Politics Today" declaring emphatically that the Second Niger Bridge, which had been used previously as a political campaign gimmick, will be ready for use this December.

"Also interesting is the revelation that only 21 kilometres of the

127km-long Lagos-Ibadan Expressway remain to be completed, with an addendum that the major highway that caters for over 40,000 vehicles a day would also be ready before the end of the year.

"What this means is that the Christmas season will be a good one for people who will have cause to move from Lagos to other parts of the country through the busiest highway in the country, as well as those going to the South-East region.

"We see this as a piece of good news and clear proof of the attention the Buhari administration has been paying to infrastructure development in the country since 2015 even in the face of scarce resources", the statement said.

The group also expressed its conviction that many more road projects would be completed and commissioned as the administration winds down.



President Muhammadu Buhari

"Only the thoroughly biased would be reluctant to give accolades to the government for what it has been doing in the area of road construction and rehabilitation.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the Buhari administration has dared to be creative in its funding arrangement which ranged from Sukuk Bonds to the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF), and only recently, tax credit scheme through which the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation

(NNPC) and other corporate giants took over the reconstruction of a multiple number of highways with a combined length of several thousand kilometres.

"We are convinced that by the terminal date of this administration, there would be more completed projects to showcase to Nigerians as achievements of the All Progressives Congress (APC)-led administration," it stressed.

BMO also reassured Nigerians that Buhari would continue to work in the best interest of all.

## Ekiti APC's guber primary free, fair, INEC tells court

Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, on Tuesday reiterated to the court that the January 27 Ekiti State governorship primary election of the All Progressives Congress, APC, which it monitored was free, fair and credible.

INEC was represented by its Head of Legal Unit, Francis Lawal who stood in court as the commission's prime witness and the only witness called by the defendants.

Lawal told the court that he monitored the primary election of APC in Ekiti North along with two other INEC officials and could attest to the credibility and fairness of the election.

The INEC witness affirmed that he was also in Ado, the state capital later in the evening where he witnessed the chairman of the said primary election committee, Jigawa State Governor Muhammad Badaru declared Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji as the winner with the highest number of votes polled.

It would be recalled that an aspirant at the election,

Kayode Ojo, is challenging the result in court for what he termed "gross irregularities" conducted by people who, though members of the party, were of questionable integrity. This he could not back up with any evidence.

Ojo had earlier said no election was held only to change gear to say that he won based on the number of valid votes, though he did not state whether or not he participated in the election. He only said he bought both the expression of interest and nomination forms.

Ojo also failed to tell the court the number votes he or any other aspirant scored. Neither did he state the number of invalid votes. Rather he said the result had not been released as at the time he was filing the case, and only had to rely on the ones he saw being posted online.

With both the complainant and defendants closing their cases, the court has adjourned sitting till Friday 29, 2022 for the adoption of the final address.

## Epe residents lament lack of access to potable water

By EDU ABADE

Residents of Iragushi and Poka communities in Eredo Local Council Development Area (LCDA) under the Epe division of Lagos State have lamented the severe lack of potable water in the communities.

They decried the malfunctioning of the Epe Mini-Waterworks and closure of the Odoiragushi Waterworks, adding that the waterworks were overgrown with weeds, while the communities suffer severe lack of clean water.

This was revealed by a team of the Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), which visited Odoiragunshi and Poka communities in Eredo LCDA in Epe on July 16, 2022, as part of implementation of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Just City Project on Mobilizing Lagos Communities for Participatory Water Governance.

During the visit which was led by Director of Programmes at CAPPA, Philip Jakpor, Associate Director, Aderonke Ige, Olatunji Buhari and Olalekan Fagbenro, the team used opportunity to obtain first-hand information from residents on the challenges they face in accessing water and the status of the Epe and Odoiragunshi waterworks.

The team also held a town hall meeting in Odoiragunshi during which it explained that to have a proper understanding of the

water challenges in the community, CAPPA had deployed a questionnaire to be filled by residents for proper documentation and advocacy purposes.

Buhari revealed that the outcome of the survey will inform the next line of CAPPA's advocacy and will serve as a tool to engage the government and their representatives in the house of assembly.

Ige, who expressed delight at the large turnout of women for the meeting, said the concerns of the community would be amplified in the media for government to take necessary action.

She informed the gathering that there would be an expanded town hall meeting of the communities later in the year where CAPPA would bring journalists to hear from them directly on the water situation in the communities.

On his part, Jakpor, said that the lack of water adds more burden to women and girls who will have to travel long distances, experiencing risks to get water for cooking, washing, and maintaining proper healthy hygiene.

He then urged the community to express their concerns freely and fill the form correctly as it will be used for advocacy going forward and particularly to ultimately bring the issues to decision makers.

The Residents expressed dismay at the challenges to accessing water, lack of electricity supply and drainages to channel waste water from the community whenever it rained.

They agreed that there was the need to amplify their frustrations in the media to get to the right people in government,

who could reverse the situation in the communities.

As part of its recommendations, CAPPA, therefore, urged the Lagos State government to urgently commence repairs and resuscitation of the Epe Mini Waterworks and the Odoiragunshi Waterworks, as well as reject privatisation and commodification of water.

"The Governor Babajide Sanwo Olu administration should uphold the human right to water, as an obligation of the government representing the people.

"Also, the Group Managing Director (GMD) of the Lagos Water Corporation, Mumuni Badmus, should immediately conduct an on-the-spot assessment of the waterworks and take steps towards rehabilitating them," the group stated.



Group Managing Director (GMD) of the Lagos Water Corporation, Mumuni Badmus



## WHO to roll out malaria vaccine in Africa even as funding dips

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

As the World Health Organization announces the next step in its distribution of the world's first authorised malaria vaccine in three African countries, concerns about its value have come from an unlikely source: the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, arguably the vaccine's biggest backer.

WHO endorsed the vaccine last fall as a "historic" breakthrough in the fight against malaria but the Gates Foundation told The Associated Press (AP) news agency this week it will no longer financially support the shot.

Some scientists say they are mystified by that decision, warning it could leave millions of African children at risk of dying from malaria as well as undermine future efforts to solve intractable problems in public health.

The vaccine, sold by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) as Mosquirix, is about 30-percent effective and requires four doses.

The malaria vaccine has "a much lower efficacy than we would like," Philip Welkhoff, the Gates Foundation's director of malaria programmes, told the AP.

Explaining its decision to end support after spending more than \$200m and several decades getting the vaccine to market, he said the shot is relatively expensive and logistically challenging to deliver.

"If we're trying to save as many lives with our existing funding, that cost-effectiveness

matters," he said.

The Gates Foundation's decision to pivot away from supporting the rollout of the vaccine in Africa was made years ago after detailed deliberations, including whether the foundation's money would be better spent on other malaria vaccines, treatments or production capacity, Welkhoff said.

Some of the resources that might have gone into getting the vaccine to countries have been redirected to buy new insecticidal nets, for example.

"It's not the greatest vaccine in the world, but there are ways of using it that could have a big impact," said Alister Craig, the dean of biological sciences at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

The world is struggling to contain the spike in malaria seen since the coronavirus pandemic disrupted efforts to stop the parasitic disease, which killed more than 620,000 people in 2020 and caused 241 million cases, mainly in children under five in Africa, Craig said.

"It's not like we have a lot of other alternatives," Craig said. "There could be another vaccine approved in about five years, but that's a lot of lives lost if we wait until then," he said, referring to a shot being developed by Oxford University.

BioNTech, creator of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, plans to apply the messenger RNA technology it used for the coronavirus to malaria, but that project is in its infancy.

Another big obstacle is availability; GSK says it can only produce about 15 million

doses per year until 2028. WHO estimates that to protect the 25 million children born in Africa every year, at least 100 million doses every year might be needed.

Although there are plans to transfer the technology to an Indian drugmaker, it will be years before any doses are produced.

"All the money in the world" would not alleviate the vaccine's short-term supply constraints, said Welkhoff, of the Gates Foundation.

He noted that the Gates Foundation continues to support the vaccines alliance Gavi, which is investing nearly \$156m into making the shot initially available in three African countries: Ghana, Kenya and Malawi.

"We're supporting the roll-out via the Gavi funding, but we decided we would not dedicate additional direct funding to extend the supply of the vaccine," Welkhoff said.

On Thursday, WHO and Gavi invited developing countries to apply for funding to pay for the malaria vaccine in their countries.

"If delivered to scale, the vaccine will help to prevent millions of cases of malaria, save tens of thousands of lives and ensure a brighter future for the continent," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's Africa director.

The Gates Foundation's withdrawal of financial support for the malaria vaccine might unnerve others, Dr David Schellenberg of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said.

"There is a risk that this could discourage others who are considering financing the

malaria vaccine or even be a disincentive for people working on other vaccines," he said. He said that combining the vaccine's use with other measures, like distributing drugs during malaria's peak season could dramatically reduce cases and deaths.

"We still see people coming in with four or five episodes of malaria a year," he said. "We don't have a magic bullet, but we could make better use of the tools we do have."

An imperfect distribution of the vaccine would still save lives, Dr Dyann Wirth, an infectious diseases expert at Harvard University, said.

"We would love to have 100 million doses, but that kind of money doesn't exist for malaria," she said. "The 15 million doses we have is still 15 million opportunities to protect children that we didn't previously have."

The Gates Foundation had done its part in bringing the vaccine to market and it is now up to countries, donors and other health organisations to ensure it is used, she said.

The vaccine, even with its imperfections, is eagerly awaited in Malawi.

Dr Michael Kayange of Malawi's health ministry urged everyone in the country to take whatever measures they can to curb malaria. Immunisation itself is insufficient to stop the disease and people should adopt multiple strategies, he said.

"Even just by sleeping under a mosquito net, you have played your role in reducing the malaria burden in the country," he said.

## Nigeria to begin production of hepatitis vaccines

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire, has said that Nigeria would begin the production of hepatitis vaccines to eliminate the scourge of the disease in the country.

According to him, viral hepatitis remains a public health threat, especially hepatitis B and C, which cause chronic infection with attendant morbidity and mortality.

The minister stated this in Abuja, at the flag off of 2022 World Hepatitis Day, with the theme: "Bringing Hepatitis Care Closer To You" he said over 20 million Nigerians are estimated to be infected with Hepatitis B or C due to low awareness of the infection.

He noted that the spread of Hepatitis is similar to HIV, which is fueled by unsafe sexual behaviour and injection practices, unsafe blood transfusion, harmful practices such as sharing of sharp objects for scarification marks, tattoos etc and Mother-to-Child transmission.

He said: "Nigeria plans to be producing vaccines despite the vaccine policy in Nigeria and we're already on track, to work with



Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire,

the private sector to start producing routine vaccines which are called the traditional vaccines.

"We are about to be connected by the end of next month with partners to start working on a new mRNA vaccine collaboration. So

we shall be receiving those who shall be working with research and development of the new generation of vaccines based on mRNA.

"I am proud to note that Nigeria is one of the first counties to have achieved this in a short time. The core pillars identified for attaining the 2030 target include infant vaccination, prevention of mother-to-child intervention, blood and injection safety, harm reduction, diagnosis and treatment. The National Strategic Framework will be formally presented as part of this briefing.

"As a country committed to the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030, the need to create massive public awareness cannot be overemphasized. Together with this, we need to build the capacity of health care providers, expand access to diagnosis and treatment, and improve community engagement as well as political leadership at all levels," he said.

In his remarks, the World Health Organization (WHO), Country Representative, Dr Walter Kazadi Mulombo noted that Nigeria has the highest burdens of viral hepatitis with a national hepatitis B (HBV)

prevalence rate of 8.1%, and a hepatitis C (HCV) prevalence rate is 1.1% among adult aged 15-64 years.

He said that the high cost of treatment and out-of-pocket payment is identified as impediments to treatment access for people that are aware of their status.

According to him, "In recent years, there has been a growing political commitment at country level, by introducing the hepatitis B Birth dose and the pentavalent (DTP-HepB-Hib) vaccine into routine childhood immunization schedule since 2004, Nigeria is contributing to the global achievement of the reduction of hepatitis B infections in children.

"Similarly, since 2005, the country has routinely screened all donated and transfused blood and blood products for HBV and HCV and has institutionalized injection safety and universal precaution since 2007".

He further pledges his commitment to continue the partnership with Nigeria in its effort to ensure that testing and treatment services are available in the communities and accessible to the people who need them.

## NEDC trains youths for waste recycling

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

Mr. Usman Dinshiya, the Taraba State Coordinator North East Development Commission on behalf of the Managing Director/ Chief Executive officer Alhaji. Mohammed Goni Alkali, told the trainees that the exercise was part of the agency's steps to ensure job creation for Nigerian youths through effective waste management.

Dinshiya noted that the best way of dealing with waste, both economically and environmentally, was to create ways for recycling

them for other purposes.

He said training unemployed youths in such regard would create job opportunities and alleviate poverty among youths, which according to him would become employers of labour in the society.

"Waste management is a huge and ever growing industry that has to be analyzed and updated at every point based on the new emergence of threats to technology.

"With government educating the normal people and creating awareness among different sector of the society, setting sufficient budgets and assisting companies and facilities

for planning, research and waste management processes, it can help to relax the issues to an extent if not completely eradicated.

These actions would not only help in protecting our environment, but also help in employment generation and boosting up the economy.

"The fact that waste was not considered a big issue few decades ago, many people had not considered waste management with utmost attention.

"Presently, waste management, is the big issue to sustainable environment. Hence, it is every ones' business without class,

the government and the citizenry alike in effective waste management in line with sustainable development.

"The North East Development Commission in collaboration with emblematic imprints Nigeria Ltd and the support of Taraba State Government is engaging youths in this training so as to create employment and bring about a clean and sustainable environment," the state coordinator expressed.

Earlier, Governor Darius Ishaku, represented by the permanent Secretary, Taraba state ministry of Environment, Jonah Febuins commended the NEDC for the move.



## RCCG donates dialysis centres in two states

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

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), through its charity arm, His Love Foundation, has donated two newly built kidney dialysis centres to public health institutions in Anambra and Enugu states.

The move is part of activities to mark the church's 70 years anniversary, contribute to ameliorating the plight of Nigerians diagnosed with kidney diseases, strengthen healthcare infrastructure across Nigeria.

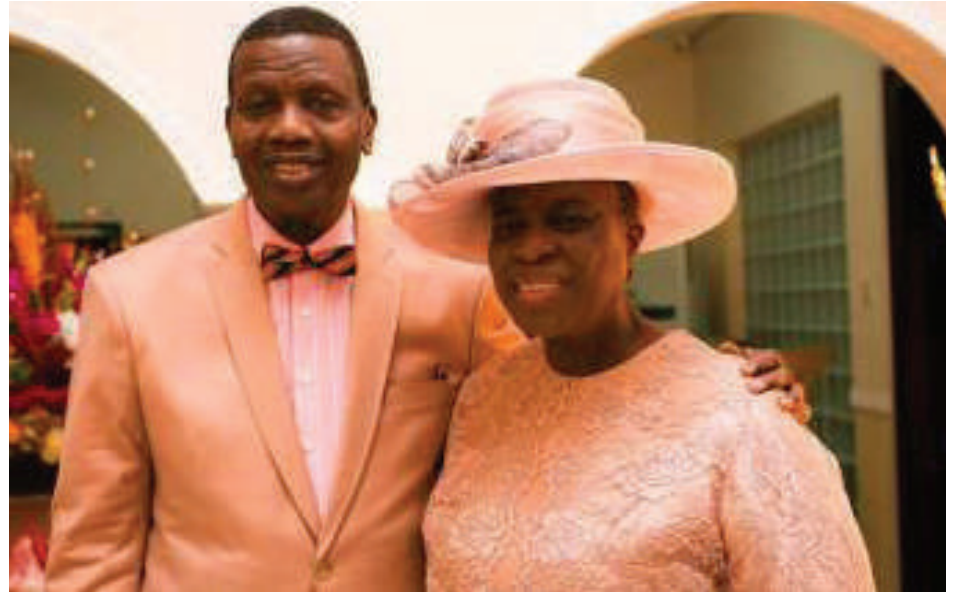
The centres are Enoch and Folu Adeboye Dialysis Centre, Comprehensive Medical Centre, Awkuzu, Anambra State and Enoch and Folu Adeboye Dialysis Centre University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu.

Each of the centres has three units of dialysis machines and a medical water reserve osmosis purification system, while the centre in Enugu has a 30KVA generator.

This brings the total number of donated ultra-modern intensive care centres to 15 across the country.

The Assistant Continental Overseer/ Intercontinental Overseer, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Pastor Idowu, said: "The gesture was aimed at alleviating the sufferings of kidney patients and providing affordable treatment to the less privileged across the South East region of Nigeria and in line with the vision of Adeboye to provide medical intervention to the poor.

"His Love Foundation has worked continuously to improve the well-being of citizens. As a step towards promoting healthcare, we have donated 48 dialysis machines. This will make affordable dialysis treatment available to patients in towns of various districts, closer to their homes. We believe this initiative will offer conveniences of time and cost for patients, as they no longer have to travel to big cities for dialysis."



Pator Enoch and wife Folu Adeboye

## WHO declares global health emergency

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, YENAGOA.

World Health Organization (WHO) declared monkeypox a global public health emergency. The declaration came just one month after the agency determined the severity of the outbreak had not reached an emergency level at the time.

The outbreak quickly spread to at least 75 countries with more than 16,000 cases reported, primarily among men who have sex with men.

The latest WHO announcement came after the second meeting of the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee (EC), which was unable to reach a consensus about the severity of the outbreak. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's director general, overruled the committee by declaring monkeypox a "public health emergency of international concern."

The WHO declaration means the risk of the disease spread requires a coordinated international response.

In a statement, Dr. Tedros said although the risk remains low for the time being, monkeypox presents "a clear risk of further international spread."

Monkeypox a global health concern

The monkeypox virus had been a threat in Africa for many years.

According to Reuters, African scientists had criticized the WHO in June as its committee weighed for the first time whether to declare

the viral zoonosis a public health emergency.

As of June 1, more than 1,400 monkeypox cases were reported by the WHO in Africa alone where at least 72 people have died Trusted Source.

Within two months, the disease quickly spread to more than 16,000 cases in at least 75 countries.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Trusted Source reports that monkeypox cases are occurring outside of Africa in countries that don't normally have monkeypox, including the United States. But most cases occur among men who have sex with men.

Monkeypox cases occurring outside of Africa in countries where the virus is not normally present were first reported in May.

Global health data indicates that monkeypox has infected more than 3,500 individuals in 59 countries where monkeypox is not normally prevalent. So far, the WHO reports Trusted Source that only one individual outside of Africa (excluding Nigeria) has died of the disease.

Dr. Monica Gandhi, MPH, an infectious diseases specialist with the University of California, San Francisco, told Medical News Today that despite the WHO's emergency committee meeting on the rise in monkeypox cases the general public should not be worried.

"Although this outbreak is concerning and relevant communities need to be aware and protected, monkeypox is likely not spreading

very efficiently given the degree of sexual activity worldwide and the relatively low number of cases reported in comparison," Dr. Gandhi said.

Although monkeypox was not elevated to global health emergency status, Dr. Gandhi said the WHO's EC meeting raises awareness of monkeypox — both in the non-endemic outbreak and in endemic regions (West and Central Africa) — in order to protect relevant communities.

How is monkeypox transmitted?

Zoonotic diseases are transmitted by animals to humans, but the person-to-person transmission of monkeypox has led to an increase in cases.

Dr. Gandhi explained that monkeypox circulates in animals in countries in West and Central Africa Trusted Source and can cause outbreaks in those regions commonly.

Although monkeypox is mostly transmitted by men who have sex with other men, it may also be transmitted in other ways, such as by touching a surface or object that was touched by an infected individual, according to the CDC Trusted Source.

"Person-to-person transmission is ongoing and is likely underestimated," Dr. Tedros added in his opening remarks. "In Nigeria, the proportion of women affected is much higher than elsewhere, and it is critical to better understand how the disease is spreading there."

Is monkeypox treatable?

Monkeypox is similar to smallpox, causing fever, muscle aches, and fatigue and leading to rash or lesions on the skin.

Treatments for monkeypox including vaccines are available for high risk communities.

One such treatment is the effective Jynneos vaccine, which is used to treat smallpox. On June 1, the CDC updated its recommendations to indicate that Jynneos is the preferred post-exposure prophylaxis Trusted Source for close contacts of monkeypox cases.

On June 23, the New York City Health Department began recommending the two-dose Jynneos vaccine to high risk groups to help slow the spread of the virus, which had affected 28 New Yorkers since May.

Just two days prior, the U.K. Health Security Agency began recommending the smallpox vaccine Imvanex to high risk males to help control the outbreak.

Responding to current monkeypox outbreak

The WHO's decision to declare monkeypox a global health emergency will shift how public health officials have managed their response to the monkeypox outbreak thus far.

To date, the WHO has declared seven public health emergencies, including COVID-19 and polio.

While monkeypox does not spread as easily as COVID-19, the elevated risk raises concern as the virus continues to spread outside of Africa. Depending on where you live, you may wish to take precautions to protect yourself, though the risk remains low.

## Africa wants concerted efforts to tackle climate change

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, YENAGOA.

Heads of State and Ministers from the East and Horn of Africa will meet in Kampala, Uganda, from 27 to 29 July, to call for a more integrated approach and response to climate change, ahead of the 27th session of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27) that will take place in Egypt from 7-18 November.

The three-day Regional Inter-Ministerial Conference on Migration, Environment and Climate Change seeks to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on human mobility.

After four consecutive failed rainy seasons, the East and Horn of Africa is currently experiencing the worst drought in four decades. Millions of people across the region have

been displaced and are at risk of famine. The drought has already led to multiple deaths in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti.

The increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events resulting from climate change directly forces people to move, negatively impacting livelihoods. These movements create new humanitarian needs and place pressure on resources vital for migrants, displaced persons and host communities, competing for already scarce resources.

It is imperative that the COP27 negotiations include the priorities raised by the 12 African States, including their youth.

"We have all known for years that climate change will force people to move and we see the evidence of this every day," said António Vitorino, Director General of the

International Organization for Migration (IOM). "We can no longer talk about climate change or environmental degradation, without talking about human mobility."

The conference will call for an urgent response to address the impacts of climate change on human mobility across the continent, as well as highlight the adverse implications and the potential opportunities for the future of African sustainable and resilient development.

It is envisaged that the outcome of the conference will be a Declaration that contributes to raising the important topic of human mobility in the context of climate change at COP27, providing States in the region with a powerful platform at which urgent issues can be raised and addressed.

Addressing the media in Uganda's capital,

Kampala, Sam Cheptoris, Uganda's Water and Environment Minister and host of the Conference, said: "The fact that COP27 is organized in the African continent provides a good opportunity for African States to bring their priorities to the global forum including on climate finance, adaptation, loss and damage and migration and displacement."

Beatrice Atim Anywar, the country's State Minister for Environment, says the conference is a timely call to action. "Our coming together is not only a collective expression of the level of prioritization of the East and Horn of Africa States on the impact of climate change on human mobility. It is a call for action, not just for the region and the continent, but for the world, and particularly those who will be engaging in negotiations at COP27."





## APC govt cedes sovereignty to terrorists, PDP alleges

By TUNDE JOSHUA

Pointing to security-threatening incidents in the past two days, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has said the All Progressives Congress (APC) government under President Muhammadu Buhari has unfortunately ceded sovereignty of portions of the country to terrorists.

The attack on military personnel in the National Brigade of Guards leading to the death of unspecified number of soldiers and the horrible sight in the traumatizing video of how victims of the Kaduna/Abuja Train terrorism attack were being dehumanized by their abductors, was decry by the party.

The PDP even became worried by the terrorists threat to attack President Buhari.

It submitted that the terrorists have continue to be emboldened by the failures and obvious complicity of the APC government and concluded that the APC has failed the nation.

The National Publicity Secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Hon. Debo Ologunagba said the party

was deeply saddened, alarmed and distressed by the video of terrorists mercilessly flogging, inflicting grievous bodily harm and threatening to sell into slavery and kill traumatized victims of the train attack who have been held in captivity since March 28, 2022 exactly 120 days today.

"It is indeed heartbreaking to watch fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, helpless children; compatriots and citizens of Nigeria in captivity and being tortured, brutalized, humiliated and crying in pain, agony and anguish just because we have the misfortune of being under the All Progressives Congress (APC) government that have proven to be derelict, irresponsible, unconcerned and completely numb to the pains and sufferings of our citizens.

"The emotional toll of this sad incident on the victims, their families and the entire nation cannot be quantified, particularly on the younger generation who witnessed the humiliation of their parents and breadwinners in such gruesome circumstance.

"This will certainly have a generational consequence on the emotional and psychological makeup of our young

persons with the possibility of losing faith in our nation and the capacity for empathy.

"Indeed, as a Party, our hearts bleed! The APC government has irretrievably failed our nation. Under the APC, Nigeria is fast sliding into a Hobbesian State where Rule of Law, Order and leadership are absent and where cruel, inhumane and insensitive bunch of human beings in government have abandoned our citizens to killers, terrorists and bandits.

"This disquieting video is a heartrending testament of the reported complicity and failure of the APC government to take decisive actions to rescue the victims since the gruesome train attack in which very promising Nigerians including a 29 years old female medical doctor was brutally killed and others taken captive by terrorists since then.

"It is a painful commentary on the continuing mass killing by terrorists in various parts of our country as well as a confirmation of the agony of hundreds of our citizens including students, who are being tortured and executed in countless terrorists' dens enabled by the APC government."

Further harping on what it described failure of the APC government, the PDP

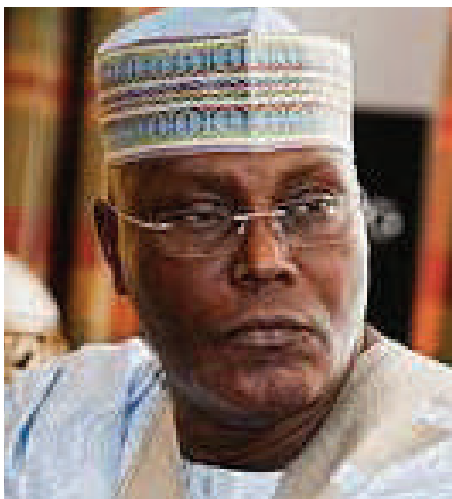
said "between 2020 and 2022 about 18,000 Nigerians have been killed by terrorists who continue to be emboldened by the failures and obvious complicity of the APC and to which the PDP had always drawn attention.

"This is not politics; this is about humanity and leadership, which leadership sadly and unfortunately is missing in our country at this time.

"The PDP is appalled by the lame response by the apparently helpless, clueless and deflated Buhari Presidency, wherein it told an agonizing nation that President Buhari "has done all and even more than what was expected of him as Commander in Chief by way of morale, material and equipment support to the military..."

"This is a direct admission of incapacity and failure by the Buhari Presidency and the APC. At such a time, in other climes, the President directly leads the charge and takes drastic measures to rescue and protect his citizens.

"In time of adversity, the President transmutes into Consoller-in-Chief to give hope and succour to the citizens. Painfully, Nigeria does not have a President who cares and can stand as Consoller-in-Chief to the citizens."



Atiku Abubakar



Samuel Ortom

### Ortom makes U-turn, pledges support for Atiku

Post- presidential primary crisis rocking the People's Democratic Party (PDP) notwithstanding, Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom has pledged his support for the party's presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar.

Ortom, though an ally of the Rivers State governor, Nyeson Wike said he has put behind him rancour occasioned by the selection process of the PDP presidential election and work for Atiku's victory in 2023.

Gov. Samuel Ortom on Monday morning in the full glare of camera at the Expanded Stakeholders Meeting of the PDP in Makurdi vouched his support for Atiku.

He said "I will not contradict Atiku on what he said. He is my candidate and I am behind him.

"Whatever happened in the course of the primaries and the nomination of the Presidential running mate is past and gone.

"PDP is a strong institution and family and we will always settle out matter in-house."

Recall that the Benue State governor played prominent role in the selection

process as chairman of the PDP Zoning Committee, which rather threw open the race against the expectation that the party's presidency will be zoned to the southern part of the country.

Wide criticism greeted the decision of the Ortom's Committee from within and outside the party and the report of the committee was kept unannounced weeks after being submitted to the Iyorchia Ayu- led National Working Committee (NWC).

Governors of the party were divided alongside the candidature of Atiku and Wike at the national convention and Ortom never hide his preference for Wike

He overtly displayed his preference for Wike when occasion came for the choice of PDP vice presidential candidate but Atiku instead shocked bookmakers by announcing Delta State governor, Ifeanyi Okowa as his running mate.

Ortom was very critical of Atiku's choice, insisting that the presidential candidate has not been fair to Wike. He asked Atiku to personally meet with and pacify Wike

### Senate mulls poverty alleviation commission

By TUNDE JOSHUA

Concerned about the increasing level of poverty among Nigerians, the Senate on Tuesday, considered a bill seeking to mitigate it. Establishment of a National Poverty Alleviation Management Commission is being considered.

The bill which seeks to empower the commission to coordinate and regulate all forms of poverty alleviation funds. scaled second reading during plenary.

The National Poverty Alleviation Management Commission bill was sponsored by Senator Kabir Abdullahi Barkiya (APC - Katsina Central).

Leading debate on the general principles of the bill, Barkiya said its passage and assent into law, "will have tremendous and vital impact on the reduction of poverty level, ravaging the majority of citizens in the country."

According to the lawmaker, this includes the poor and their families who find it difficult to feed themselves.

He explained that the proper and efficient management of poverty alleviation funds through sufficient regulation would drastically cut-down on the poverty rate in Nigeria.

"It is imperative to note, that the passage of this bill will effectively and efficiently regulate all forms of funds provided to alleviate poverty in the land, especially to remedy the suffering of our citizens.

"This aforementioned fund could be granted by the government, or international and local donations in order to minimise the high level of hardship that people go through within the country", the lawmaker said.

Senator Christopher Ekpenyong (PDP - Akwa-Ibom North West), while contributing to the debate said the bill is "bi-partisan".

He lamented that resources allocated

for poverty alleviation most times do not get to the poor as a result of mismanagement.

He observed that having a Commission in place as intended by the bill would see to the realisation of the objectives of the federal government in the aspect of poverty reduction.

On his part, Senator Ibrahim Gobir (APC - Sokoto East) recalled that a similar bill was passed under the eighth senate but failed to receive presidential assent.

He, therefore, advised the President to sign the bill into law, adding that putting in place management models to determine the level of impact made through programmes targeted at poverty alleviation would, to a large extent, compliment the bill.

The bill after consideration was referred by the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, to the Committee on Poverty Alleviation for further inputs.

The Committee was given four weeks to report back to the Senate in plenary.



Senator Kabir Abdullahi Barkiya



# Okowa's team tackles Tinubu

All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Alhaji Bola Tinubu, has been urged to discuss issues and not individuals ahead of the 2023 general elections.

Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Governor of Delta, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, made the call while reacting to a statement credited to Tinubu in which he reportedly said his running mate was better than that of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

Ifeajika said the choice of who was the better vice presidential candidate of the major political parties and the party to vote for in the elections remained with Nigerians and not for one individual to try to influence by speaking derogatorily about opponents.

He said that Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, was picked as

running mate by Atiku due to his soaring political profile, contributions to national development and exceptional performance as Delta State Governor in the last seven years.

The CPS pointed out to Tinubu, who he said Governor Okowa had respect for, that maligning the PDP's Vice-Presidential Candidate would not in any way diminish his political pedigree. He reminded Tinubu and his APC-led Federal Government of the need to fulfil their electioneering promises to Nigerians before thinking of re-election in 2023.

"Alhaji Atiku Abubakar had an interview on Arise TV some days ago where he said that Sen. Bola Tinubu approached him to become his running mate of the defunct ACN in 2007, but that he (Atiku) declined the request because he was averse to Muslim-Muslim ticket.

"In response to Atiku's comments, rather than address the issues Atiku Abubakar raised, Sen. Tinubu took a swipe at our governor, saying that his own running mate was better than Alhaji Atiku Abubakar's choice of Senator Okowa.

"We know Senator Bola Tinubu as a good politician and former governor of Lagos State. But we expect him to know that there are other politicians that are towering and are good, patriotic and have tried in their tracks to be statesmen.

"And, Delta Governor and by the grace of God, Vice-Presidential Candidate of PDP, Senator (Dr.) Ifeanyi Okowa, is in this bracket. If Tinubu thinks that he is good, he should not foreclose that there won't be other persons that are good or even better in politics where he thrives.

"It was his choice to pick



Alhaji Bola Tinubu

his own running mate for whatever criteria he had. The same considerations, no doubt, the Presidential Candidate of PDP, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, had in choosing Senator Ifeanyi Okowa over all the other candidates screened," he said.

Stating that politics was not a game of turn-by-turn, but competence, Ifeajika reminded Tinubu that the National Health Act in the country today came from

the effort of Okowa when he was in the Senate, and urged him to check in case he didn't know or may have forgotten.

He added that it was on record that Okowa headed critical committees and sub-committees put in place by the APC-led Federal Government during the COVID-19 pandemic to help in mitigating the challenges posed by the scourge.

The CPS said that unlike Tinubu who had no certificate to show to meet part of the constitutional requirements for contesting election, "Governor Okowa is well educated and owned certificates that are in public domain and verifiable."

"Senator Tinubu has been in the news lately for what we know are not for the good reasons. We are not surprised that he took an unwarranted swipe at the PDP Vice-Presidential Candidate because that is his patent. It's his character to abuse and not discuss.

"We recall that Tinubu had boasted that he made Buhari the President and that it was, therefore, his turn to be the President of Nigeria. In other words, he has been putting people there, but now it is his turn to be.

"Those who follow social media would have seen the mockery that followed that comment.

"He, Tinubu has also been reported to have said that in attaining his ambition of being president, he was going to fight dirty.

"And, in reference to the Presidential Candidate of Labour Party, Mr. Peter Obi, he reportedly said that the man will labour in vain.

"These are the languages Senator Tinubu has come to be identified with. So, we are not surprised that in an attempt to get back at Alhaji Abubakar, who said that Tinubu approached him to be his running mate and he refused, he (Tinubu) took a swipe at an innocent man, Okowa, who is not in direct contest with him.

"We are asking Tinubu to face his contest. He has a joint ticket with whom he has chosen as his running mate just as Atiku has done. So, he should be preoccupied with how to go to the contest and leave the campaign of

calumny.

"He should be discussing issues affecting the general wellbeing of the people, not discussing individuals.

"Dr Okowa, as governor and Vice Presidential candidate of PDP, has his CV in public domain. He has a record and he is a man that is well known. So, a Tinubu's swipe cannot diminish what Okowa has attained.

"Senator Tinubu should confine himself to the contest he has. He has so much around him to deal with, giving the size of baggage that people know that he has.

"In the national turf, apart from being 'the national leader' of APC, as the members say, what we have on Tinubu is that he was a senator for a very short period and a two-term former governor.

"Senator (Dr.) Ifeanyi Okowa was a senator and a two-term governor. So, it is for Nigerians to judge who is a better person in all of these. Who has done well, for not just his state, but the country, adding value.

"Okowa as senator, was behind the birthing of our national health policy currently being enjoyed by Nigerians. So, Nigerians need to assess what Tinubu and Okowa have in public domain and know who is better," he said.

The CPS also said that the presidential ticket of Atiku/Okowa was a big threat to the APC, just as he reminded the party of the devastating woes it has brought to Nigerians since it came into office in 2015.

He pointed out that the Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket of the ruling party at the centre had given Christians a unique opportunity to cast their votes for the PDP, a development, he said, would give room for all Nigerians to be represented at the federal level.

Ifeajika said Delta was home for all tribes because the governor believed in the oneness of the country. He sued for peaceful co-existence in all parts of the country.

He lauded the media for their sustained objective and unbiased reportage of the policies and programmes of the Senator Okowa-led administration in the state, promising to sustain the synergy.

## 'Deji Adeyanju's claim on Peter Obi not true'

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

A journalist of long standing, Mr. Ike Abonyi, has described as untrue claims made by human rights crusader, Deji Adeyanju, on an investment made by the presidential candidate of Labour Party, Peter Obi, with Anambra State money.

Adeyanju had in a series of tweets on Monday claimed that Obi told him that he invested billions of Anambra State money into his family business and was still trying to justify it.

Stressing that Obi is not a saint as people believed stated that the former Anambra governor's decision to invest the state money into his family business is the height of corruption and abuse of office.

However, he said Obi is the best candidate among those who have declared, especially with his cutting of cost theory but was not a saint.

Adeyanju tweeted, "The real reason I stopped supporting Peter Obi was after I met him for a 3hrs meeting at his instance of course & he told me he invested billions of

Anambra State funds into his family business. And the man was even trying to justify it. So many other things he said. SMH!"

"I agree that Peter Obi is the best candidate among those who have declared, especially with his cutting of cost theory, but he's no saint. He's as corrupt as the others. Investing Anambra money into his family business is the height of corruption and abuse of office."

But the journalist on Tuesday faulted Adeyanju. He said he cannot keep mum and allow untruths to thrive.

In a statement debunking what he called false-



Peter Obi

hood, he said: "my friend Deji Adeyanju just tweeted that why he stopped supporting the Labour Party Presidential Candidate, Mr Peter Obi was when he told him that he invested Anambra state money in his family business.

"I was at the meeting Deji had with Obi and was there all through and left with him after about three hours frank discussion of Obi telling his life story in and out of government none of which is new as he had said similar thing repeatedly in the public. I was shocked to my marrow reading from Deji what I did not hear.

"In my shock today July 26, 2022 after reading the post I wrote this to him -'Deji, Did you and Obi meet again or the one I was present. Haba! Deji, am shocked, you are free to support whoever without all these funny blackmails. You didn't even factor my friendship with you'

"On July 9, 2022 after similar negative post on Obi that he can accept appointment from the APC Presidential Candidate, Asiawaju Bola Tinubu, I had again written to

Deji....'My brother, good morning, when did it get to this point. Am still in shock. Obi is not looking for a job a Tinubu will be offering. As my friend even if you no longer believe in Obi project, I encourage you to stay on issues that will enhance your own reputation.

"Deji has not responded to any of my posts to him and has not picked my calls. I had wanted us to resolve it as friends without my coming public by urging him to withdraw his posts because they are not based on facts.

"As a journalist of long standing and as a Christian I don't need to be an Obicentric person to resolve issues that border on facts and falsity. No money was offered during or after the meeting and there was no promise of any to best of knowledge.

"Deji is on record severally to have declared Obi to be the best candidate and had publicly encouraged Obi to leave PDP to seek his ambition on another platform. He is also free to do a U turn in supporting him depending on what appeals to him, but should not base that on what is not true."



## Alleged Diversion of funds: CBN asks court to freeze Meter Providers' accounts

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has approached a court for an order to freeze 157 Bank accounts of Meter Asset Providers (MAPs) for allegedly diverting funds meant for the procurement of prepaid meters.

The apex bank requested commercial banks to restrict the account of 10 companies that received power sector intervention funds under the National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP) for 180 days pending the outcome of its investigation.

The suit was filed at the Federal High Court in Lokoja, Kogi state, on July 20.

According to CBN, the companies involved are Mojec Meter Asset Management Company Limited, Integrated Power Nigeria Limited, Holley Metering Limited, Protogy Global Services Limited, and Turbo Energy Limited.

Others are G Unit Engineering Limited, Koby Global Engineering Services Limited, FLT Energy Systems Limited, Smart Meters Asset Provider Company Limited, and Cresthill

Engineering Limited.

"The Central Bank of Nigeria reviewed the activities of twelve (12) including the defendants herein Meter Asset Providers (MAPs) alleged to have diverted the Central Bank of Nigeria's power sector intervention funds under the National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP)," the apex bank said.

It further stated, "The review was aimed at ascertaining the flow of the funds made available to the MAPs, covering the period between January 1, 2020 to March 15, 2022. The preliminary review revealed that the defendants diverted a substantial portion of the funds for other uses through related entities and individuals/companies connected to the electricity distribution companies (DisCos) and the defunct Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN).

"The diversion of the power sector intervention funds under the National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP) provided by the applicant's banks, has further occasioned grave instability in the power sector and sustained

the estimated billing regime which the federal government is making frantic efforts to make a thing of the past.

"The diversion of the said funds through the bank accounts of the defendants has continually undermined the applicant's bank intervention system of supporting various sectors of the Nigerian economy.

"The diversion of the said funds and sustained instability in the power sector is capable of causing significant economic and financial loss to investors, as well as the entire systems and the Nigerian economy in general, if not curtailed."

It was gathered that on April 3, 2018, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) introduced the MAP regulation to new investors to fast-track the rollout of meters through the engagement of third-party investors.

The DisCos were expected to engage the services of the MAPs within 120 days from the effective date to achieve a three-year metering target prescribed by NERC.

Despite the late start over lack of cooperation

by DisCos as regards engaging licensed firms, the meter asset firms were issued permits to begin the rollout of new meters by May 1, 2019. To boost the new policy, the federal government provided a N37 billion grant for the supply of the meters.

In October 2020, the federal government flagged off the National Mass Metering Programme to close the metering gap in the NESI by December 2021.

Speaking a week after the launch of the programme, Sale Mamman, minister of power, said there would be an installation of at least one million meters for electricity consumers through the mass metering programme by December 2020.

In June, the NERC said it will begin the second phase of the National Mass Metering Programme (NMMP) in August 2022.

However, the latest data from the 2021 third-quarter report of the NERC shows that of the 11,069,200 registered energy customers as of September 2021, only 4,753,027 (42.93%) have been metered.

## ICPC docks High Court's Deputy Registrar for alleged fraud

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has arraigned a Deputy Chief Registrar of the Federal High Court, Port Harcourt, Mrs Nkem Apollonia Mba, for alleged involvement in fraudulent activities.

Mrs Mba was arraigned on a three-count charge before Justice Leteem Nyordee, of the Federal High Court 12, Port Harcourt, for offences bordering on abuse of office and corrupt demand of gratification by a public officer.

A statement by ICPC spokesperson, Mrs

Azuka Ogugua, on Monday said, "one of the counts revealed that the Deputy Chief Registrar received a kickback of N500,000 through her bank account from the purchase of Automotive Gas Oil popularly known as diesel and other products."

When read before her, the defendant, however, argued that the money was her two percent entitlement according to Order 16 of the Admiralty Jurisdiction (Procedure Rule) 2011.

The court heard that her offence contravened Section 10 and 19 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000, and is punishable under relevant sections of the same Act.

The accused pleaded "Not Guilty" when the charge was read to her. Consequently, her counsel, S. Somiari applied for bail praying the court to grant her bail on liberal terms.

The bail application was not opposed by the prosecuting counsel, Dr Agada Akogwu.

In granting the prayers, the trial judge admitted her to bail in the sum of N500,000 with a surety who must have landed property in Port Harcourt.

Justice Nyordee further ruled that the accused must deposit her international passport with the court Registrar.

The case was then adjourned to 26th July for commencement of trial.



Mrs Azuka Ogugua

## EFCC secures conviction of 37 fraudsters in Enugu, arrests 34 suspects in Ibadan

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Enugu Zonal Command of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has secured the conviction of 37 internet fraudsters.

Justice I.M Buba of the Federal High Court sitting in Enugu convicted and sentenced the fraudsters on Tuesday, July 19, 2022, and Thursday, July 22, 2022, the Commission said in a statement shared on its website on Monday.

Those convicted include Uchekwuw Ani, Nnamdi Ugwu, Ikechukwu Emmanuel Ebube, Chijioke Christian, Obaji Charles Imoke, Nwafor Victor Somkenekwuw, Chibuzor Okeke, Samuel Great, Ukandu Benedict, Augustine Akpos Austin, Chinwendu Okoh, Nnamdi Moses Tochukwu, Eze Onyebuchi Hillary, Emmanuel Alex Akwakolam, Chiemerie Samuel, Nwaojeh Emeka, Somtochi Collins Eze and Dike Emmanuel Chidiebere.

Others are Chukwudi Okeke, Enete Ontekachi Gideon, Obeta Ifeanyi, Utoatuonu Osita, Ejiofor Okwuchukwu, Somtochuchukwu Promise Ezeanyagu, Ifeanyi Joseph Ikeh, Azuka Michael, Nnaemeka Ejebu, Edafe menford Odio, Emmanuel Chika Eneanya, Markanthony Emeka Akabuike, Chinemerem David Egwuatu, Arinze Maduka Samuel, Okeke Oluebube, Christian Ifesinachi Okoye, Awanya Jidechukwu, Ugwuagbo Stephen Nnaemeka and Obi Chinedu Edison.

The EFCC prosecuted the convicts on separate one-count charges bordering on criminal impersonation and obtaining money under false pretences

The charge against one of the convicts, Chibuzor Okeke, reads, "That you, Chibuzor Okeke sometime in July 2022 in Ifite Isu, Anambra State within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court impersonated by presenting yourself as Dolores, a Brazilian woman who is a specialist in cryptocurrency investment to one Zafar, a Turkish National on Telegram using your Redmi10s Phone and by so doing did obtain the sum of (\$1,500) One Thousand Five Hundred American Dollars by false pretences and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 22(3)(a)(b) and punishable under Section 22(4) of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention) Act, 2015."

All the convicts pleaded guilty when the charges were read to them.

Following their plea, Justice Buba convicted and sentenced them to one-year imprisonment with an option of N1,000,000 fine each. The court also ordered that their mobile phones be

sold and the proceeds remitted to the Treasury Single Account of the Federal Government.

Meanwhile, 34 internet fraud suspects have been arrested by the operatives of the Ibadan Zonal Command of Commission in Oyo State.

The Commission said 21 of the suspects were arrested Monday, July 25, 2022, in a sting operation at Apete and Ijokodo areas of Ibadan, Oyo state.

The suspects include Paul Uche Obinna, Ola Kareem, Dazumi Hammed Adeiza, Olamilekan Gabriel Ahmed, Olowe Nifemi Michael, Osisi Ikenna Nicholas, Dazumi Abdullahi Razak, Adejuyigbe Abayomi Babatunde, Adesokan Afeez Afolabi, Tobiloba Joshua Adejuyi, Dazumi Azeez Jayeola, Ayegbusi Olamilekan Micheal and Mubarak Salaudeen Opeyemi.

Others are Ibrahim Muhammed Hassan, Salam Ademola Samson, David Sunday Chukwudi, Kolapo Abdulrazak Seyi, Lawal Adesina Sheriff, Faeji Tobiloba Raphael, Bello Ibrahim

Damilola and Abisoye Israel Olamilekan.

According to the EFCC, the remaining 13 suspects were arrested on Friday, July 22, 2022, at Airport Road, Alakia and Ologuneru, Ibadan.

It gave the name of the suspects as Salami Ayo Wisdom, Afeez Sode Gbolahan, Abdulkadiri Ojo Adams, Awe Olabiyi Omotayo, Adeniyi Auwal Tomiwa, Abudu Olamiotan Sunday, Ayomide Adeniyi Surajudeen, Olasunkanmi Quadri Adewale, Oladotun Kunle Tijani, Adekunle Damilare Elijah, Abudu Kayode Donald, Eyinla Temitayo Emmanuel, and Adekunle Imole Ayo.

The Commission recovered exotic cars, laptops, different brands of mobile phones, and several fraudulent documents from the suspects during the operations.

"The suspects will be charged to court as soon as the investigation is completed," EFCC said.

## EFCC arrests Alfa, herbalist in Ekiti, secures conviction of one in Benin

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Operatives of the Lagos Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have arrested two self-acclaimed spiritualists, one Alfa Abiodun Ibrahim and Wale Adifala, who along with one Ifawole Ajibola (aka Baba Kalifa currently on the run), allegedly conspired to defraud an aspiring House of Representatives member in Ekiti State.

The suspects were accused of defrauding their victim of the total sum of N24,071,000 which they claimed were to be used to secure

spiritual help for his political ambition.

They were arrested on July 7, 2022, in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, following a petition against them, alleging that after collecting the said sum, the whole effort came to a dead end.

This was disclosed by the EFCC in a statement on its Facebook page on Tuesday.

"Under interrogation by operatives, Adifala, admitted to collecting the sums of money from their victim, including N2.9 million, which he claimed was used to buy black, brown, and white cows, rams, lavender perfume, and rings among other items, to carry out sacrifices at different times," the Commission said.

The anti-graft agency quoted Adifala to have said, "I also linked up on the matter with Ifawole Ajibola, and we continued with the sacrifices together, until we were arrested by EFCC."

Also, Ibrahim, who was said to have prior contact with the victim, admitted to collecting money at different times from the victim.

According to the EFCC, Ibrahim confessed, "Our own is just to pray and do the necessary sacrifices, which we did, and to leave the rest to God, however, along the line, the zoning for the Reps seat was taken away from Oye-Ekiti to Ikole-Ekiti."



## The attack on Kuje Prison: matters arising

**O**n 5th July, a group of armed men later identified as the Boko Haram breakaway faction of Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) launched a successful attack on a well-secured prison in Kuje, near the nation's capital city, Abuja. The facility is one of Nigeria's most secured correctional installations. According to the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS), at the time of the attack, the jail was guarded by soldiers, policemen, Civil Defence Corps, the State Security Services, and the correctional facility's armed squad. Yet, ISWAP shot its way into the Custodial Centre after overpowering security guards in a well-coordinated assault.

The facility is located less than 50 km from the seat of power in Abuja and over 800 km from ISWAP's comfort zone, Borno State in north-east Nigeria. The operation's planning and coordination must have been massive, which is clearly indicative of the group's strength, sophistication, and determination to spread terror beyond Nigeria's north-east.

The Kuje jail break is not the first by terrorists in Nigeria. In December 2013, the group attacked the Maiduguri Air Force Base, freeing its inmates and destroying five aircraft. In March 2014, the terrorists breached Maiduguri's well-fortified Giwa Army Barracks and freed detainees. These seemingly unconnected events are raising questions as to whether ISWAP has compromised the Nigerian national security architecture. The consequent arrest of two police officers, who allegedly communicated with the terrorists after their escape also suggests that there may have been collusion. If these observations have any substance, what are we to expect in the future?

Independent security monitoring in the Lake Chad Basin shows that since 2019, ISWAP has sought to expand its operations beyond the eight Boko Haram-infested regions of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states in North-east

Nigeria, North and Far North regions in Cameroon, Lac and Hadjer-Lamis regions in Chad, and Diffa Region in Niger. The growth has seen the group establish new cells in Nigeria – Fufore Forest in Adamawa State, Falgore Forest in Kano State, North-west Nigeria, and an unidentified location in Kogi State, north-central Nigeria. Already the results are clear. For the first time since its formation in 2016, ISWAP has carried out attacks in Taraba, Kogi, Kaduna (the train attack among other abductions) and Niger states and Abuja in 2022 alone.

The implication of this expansion is that ISWAP, using these new cells, has significantly reduced the risks and logistical requirements associated with attacks far from its Borno State base. Also, the expansion broadens

the possibility of ISWAP forming alliances with other groups such as Ansaru and the bandits, who are already entrenched in the Northwest and North central of the country. We note with concern that Ansaru, which claims affiliation with Al Qaeda, has apparently reactivated after a period of dormancy, the group is currently openly preaching in local mosques in the Northwest of the country, often clashing with criminal groups. Similarly, many dislodged former Boko Haram combatants have reportedly joined criminal gangs in rural northwest and North-central Nigeria known. The government must urgently work to prevent these violent extremist groups from amalgamating and counter the threat if they do join forces. It is a recipe for complete breakdown of law and order.

On the attack, it should be noted that this is a standard Islamic State recruitment drive. Freed inmates would be compelled to join the group as return to civil society is not possible. The fugitives do not even have the luxury of repenting after joining the group. The senior Boko Haram members released during the prison could be compelled to leverage their leadership skills and popularity in their world to attract and deliver more recruits. The daring attack on a federal government facility so close to the seat of government itself is a recruitment driver, it will be showcased as a major victory and morale booster to embolden the cadre of the terrorists.

In conclusion, the Kuje Correctional Facility attack should be duly investigated, and people found to be derelict in their duties must be held to account. Furthermore, the national counter-terrorism strategy, which is clearly ineffective and was last assessed in 2016, must be reviewed. Every region in the country now faces security threats, and those tasked with protecting Nigerians should be held accountable. Securing the lives and properties of Nigerians is the only panacea to growth and development.



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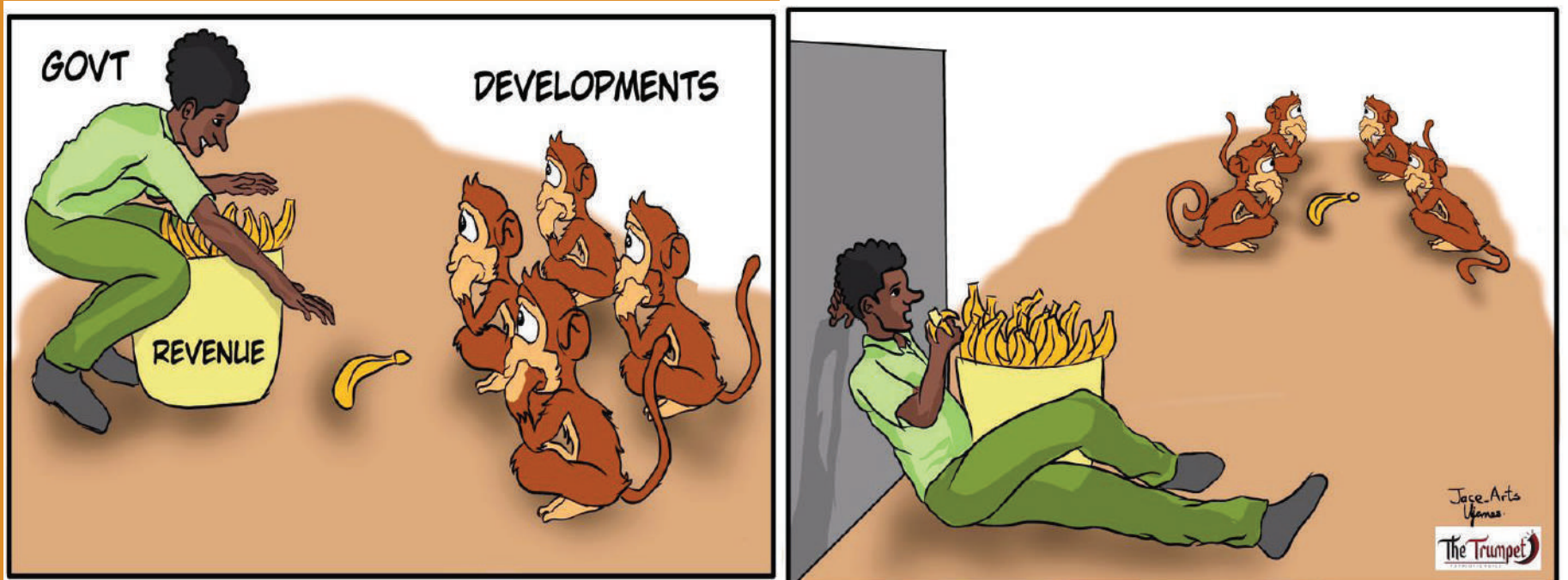
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## The blunder in not having state police (3)

Continued from Monday edition

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.

The Sub-Committee discussed Section 106(4) of the 1963 Constitution which requires the Commissioner of Police of a region to comply with the direction of the Premier of a Region and that in case of disagreement with such direction, the Commissioner may request that the matter be referred to the Prime Minister of the Federation.

It was argued that the recourse directly to the Prime Minister rather than through the intermediary of the Inspector-General of Police undermines his authority as the Inspector-General has the constitutional responsibility for the operational control of the Police. However, it was agreed that it is not proper that any disagreement involving the Governor of a state be passed through the Inspector-General who is a public official.

The issue of possible conflict between the State and Central government on the control of police operations, especially where the state government concerned is from a party which is not a the same as the party in control of the central government was raised. It was thought that this issue is not limited to control of police only and that it is a question of state/

federal relations to be dealt with by the appropriate Sub-Committee".

"There shall be a Police Force for Nigeria, which shall be styled the Nigeria Police Force 2. Subject to the provision of this Constitution, the Nigeria Police Force shall be organized and administered in accordance with such provision as may be made in that behalf by the legislature. 3. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the members of the Nigeria Police Force shall have such powers and duties as may be conferred upon them by any law in force in Nigeria. 4. No police forces other than the Nigeria Police Force shall be established for Nigeria or any part thereof. 5. The Legislature may make provision during emergencies for Police Forces forming part of the armed forces of the Federation, or for protection of harbours, waterways railways and airfields. 6. There shall be an Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police and a Commissioner of Police for each state of the Federation, whose offices shall be offices in the Public Service of the Federation. 7. The Nigeria Police Force shall be under the command of the Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police. 8. The President or such other Minister of the Government of the Federation as may be authorised in that behalf by the President may give to the Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police such directions with respect to the maintaining and securing

of public safety and public order as he may consider necessary and the Inspector-General shall comply with those directions or cause them to be complied with. 9. Subject to (3) above, the Commissioner of Police of a State shall comply with the directions of the Governor of the State or such other Commissioner of the Government of the State as may be authorised in that behalf by the Governor with respect to the maintaining and securing of public safety and public order within the State or cause them to be complied with: Provided that before carrying out any such directions the Commissioner may request that the matter should be referred to the President or such other Commissioner of the Government of the Federation as may be authorised in that behalf by the President for his directions. 10. Subject to (3) and (4) above the Police Command at the local authority area shall comply with the directions of the local

authority of the area with respect to the maintaining and securing of public safety and public order within the local authority area. Provided that before carrying out such directions the local police command may request that the matter should be referred to the Governor of the state or other Commissioner of the State Government as may be authorised in that behalf by the Governor for his directions. 11. There shall be a Nigeria Police Council, which shall consist of: (a) The President (b) State Governors (c) The Inspector-General of Police (d) The Attorney-General of the Federation (e) The Chairman of the Police Service Commission of the Federation.

The Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police shall attend the meetings of the Nigeria Police Council and, save for the purpose of voting, may take part in the proceedings of the Council.

To be continued on Monday

By  
**Eric  
TENIOLA**



## Stethoscope

By

**PHILLIP OAK**



The reasons for this are as logical as their root causes are elaborate. Briefly, when the Soviet Union finally expired at the end of 1991, contracting a geopolitical sphere of dominance that extended over more than a quarter of the world's land mass, into just the Russian Federation, she also lost its Brezhnev Doctrine inspired Warsaw Pact, a defense cooperative of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc communist states existing as a counterfoil to the Western Bloc's NATO.

With the Eastern Bloc states eventually lost to NATO, in spite of initial mutual understanding between the Western Bloc and the USSR that after the end of the cold war NATO's sphere of Influence would not extend an inch eastward (ie towards Russia's border) and with the Warsaw Pact defunct, Russia was eventually left with the sole option of securing its regional defence and security by fortifying its relationship with Ukraine, a diplomatic imperative that had as its sole mechanism precluding Ukraine from becoming an

Achille's heel for NATO's breach of the region's cohesiveness and defensive stability.

But Ukrainians had already come through a lot, including a series of political and socio-economic crises and scandals in the 2000s in which Russia's clandestine involvement kept turning up, and already afire with nationalistic zeal and the need to define their own direction as a sovereign people the vector of popular opinion soon turned away from a pro-Russian to a Russia-averse one. As a result an already tenuous Russo-Ukrainian geopolitical romance came apart violently in 2014 when a popular and bloody revolt demanding the progression of the country's plans to improved economic and diplomatic ties with the rest of Europe resulted in the violent overthrow of the then pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovich. This singular event and its re-direction of Ukraine's economic and defensive destiny not towards Russia but in alignment with the EU became a turning point of Russo-Ukrainian

## Ukraine war: Nigerian opportunity or pitfall (II)

cooperative harmony.

No great regional power stands about silent whilst its sphere of geopolitical influence is breached or threatened. This is so consistent across time and human experience that it can indeed be considered essentially an organic reflex of states. The classic, oft given example of this phenomenon is that of USA's hyper-reaction in 1962 to USSR deploying nuclear missiles for tactical placement in Cuba. The defensive reaction of the Kennedy Administration and the counter-defensive maneuvers of the Nikita Khrushchev administration in Moscow brought the world dangerously close to a full-scale nuclear war.

Russia is no exception in this need for territorial security and this war with Ukraine was, for this same reason as easily avoidable as it is deplorable. All the Western Powers needed to do and still need to do, is to formally agree in clear terms to not allowing Ukraine into any alliance with North Atlantic allies outside of a pact with Russia. This is what is at the heart of Russia's grievance, one which it has repeatedly explained to the world and the West and the ongoing disregard of which was why it defaulted to a posture, which it still maintains, of aggressive resistance to the rightly perceived treachery of a Ukraine-EU cooperative.

From that point in 2014 Russia's displeasure with this situation was quickly manifested in its sponsorship and support

for the seperatist regions in the east and south of Ukraine, and ultimately to the implosion of the multilateral efforts to resolve these long running boundary disputes in the Minsk Protocol and Minsk II agreements. The dissolution of the latter was Russia's stated reason for launching its ongoing Ukrainian invasion.

Russia's position at first glance does seem egregiously unprovoked and illegal. Yet, as exposed above, it is not without moral and historical justification. Indeed moral duty here falls not on Russia but on Ukraine and her western allies and enablers to pursue strategic restraint over inflammatory rhetoric as well as material and tactical compounding of the conflict. It is in the moral apathy of the western powers, whose capitalist appetite for global dominance persistently makes them tone deaf to the grainy realities of human-suffering catastrophes across the world that the fault for this crisis lies. Let no one be deceived. The solution to this crisis, with its leverages held by the EU and the USA via NATO is this: a concerted agreement to deny Ukraine association with Europe outside of any such association based on its regional alliance with Russia ie a regional block cooperative in which any alliance, military or diplomatic, where The West is concerned, is jointly agreed upon by Russia and Ukraine, is all that is needed to end this war.

And it is the maddening refusal of the powers that be to tow this

simple line of reason that is now bringing all of us to the brink of nuclear annihilation.

Unfortunately this looming threat of a nuclear armageddon is not imaginary. Russia is a Nuclear Power State, one of the five in the world (The Russian Federation, the USA, Britain, France and China) and possesses a humongous arsenal of nuclear war heads of which the reported stockpiled and strategic (readily deployable for war) numbers are at par if not more than those of the USA. Russia also operates a policy that allows it to initiate a first strike use of nuclear weapons against its enemies, at any given time, in the face of an existential threat to itself.

The worsening proxy war between Russia and the West/USA in Ukraine therefore brings us the closest we have been since 1962 to the risk of an East-West nuclear confrontation, and once again, in the words of President J F Kennedy, "we are under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest thread." That our world leaders seem to fail to see the severity of this threat and to duly act to mitigate this risk burgles the mind. Any situation that puts the world under the hammer of a nuclear war outcome whose eruption can at anytime be set off "by accident, miscalculation or madness" is as unacceptable as it is irresponsible.

•Oak is a Nigerian-Canadian medical doctor with a passion for socio-developmental issues.



## Experts blame Nigeria's low logistics ranking on poor ports infrastructure

Experts have blamed Nigeria's low ranking in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) squarely on lack of critical infrastructure in the maritime sector.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Analyst Data Services Limited, Dr. Afolabi Olowokere, stated that Nigeria ranked behind Ghana, Togo, South Africa, Egypt, Republic of Benin and Cameroun, having scored a miserable 1.97 per cent.

Olowokere, who stated this at the Nigerian Maritime Law Association (NMLA) breakfast briefing in Lagos, blamed lack of critical infrastructure for the ranking, saying there were several unimplemented regulations and lack of a single window in the nation's ports being designed for imports.

He pointed out that Nigeria's medium-term plan for the maritime sector recognised that the country's seaports were heavily congested sector due to absence of dry ports and multimodal transport infrastructure.

He stressed that the inland waterways are grossly under-utilised with only 3,000 miles of the about 10,000 miles currently navigable, stressing that for Nigeria's ports to become the preferred destination in West and Central Africa, there was the need to improve security and safety in the sector, leverage technology to improve efficiency and ease of business.

Insisting that there was also the need to make the inland waterways serve as an alternative cheap mode of transportation to decongest the seaports and deliver cargoes closer to the hinterland, he recommended automation of port processes, removal of bureaucracy and building of adequate human capacity to achieve a competitive maritime industry.

Also speaking, Political Economist and Management Expert, Patrick Utomi, in his goodwill message, said it would be impossible to access the sea ports across the country, adding that the waterways were not safe for navigation.

He noted that most of the challenges hindering the nation's maritime sector are self-inflicted and urged the Federal Government to provide an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, while also calling lawyers to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

"The opportunities waiting for Nigerian lawyers will be huge in the AfCFTA, because the Nigerian legal system is way ahead of its counterparts. The Nigerian ports have what it takes to be the hub on the continent if given the support it truly deserves," he said.

On his part, former Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Shippers Council, Hassan Bello, said there was a huge gap between the Nigerian maritime law and practice, stating the need for review of the Nigerian Maritime Act to change the nation's maritime narrative.

He advised that infrastructure remained crucial in the country's quest to revolutionise its port processes, while also canvassing a legislative agenda for the sector.

"We should have an African carriage regime to boost intra-African trade, which is currently low. We must invest in data and regulatory agencies have to provide more clarity to attract investments into the industry and we must intensify our legislative agenda for things to be done the right way," he said.

Earlier, President of NMLA, Funke Agbor, said the potential of sector was yet to be fully harnessed, saying the association was concerned about the current state of the country's maritime industry.

# NIMA to tackle marine environment challenges

Stories by **ADAKU WALTER**

Organisers of the Nigerian Maritime Ambassadors (NIMA) reality television show have said that it would tackle issues of marine pollution and other environmental challenges facing the nation's maritime sector.

Speaking at the unveiling of the maiden project, Chief Executive Officer of Platforms Communications Concept, Sylvanus Obasi, said the reality show, which will hold every year, is for talent hunt and discovery aimed at raising creative youngsters, who are passionate about innovating practical solutions to maritime

issues and challenges in Nigeria.

He the winner will partner with relevant maritime government agencies like the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and the Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR), among others, to execute the Cleaner Ocean Campaign (COC) project.

He said the project will focus on regular cleaning of seas, oceans, jetties, beaches and other marine environmental challenges, while also creating awareness in coastal communities on the dangers of marine pollution.

Obasi explained that the first and second runners-up will partner on a project designed to champion the Green Port Concept (GPC) aimed at promoting an eco-friendly ports environment through campaigns for the reduction of noise, emissions and use of fossil fuels at the ports and terminals.

He added that they would also create awareness to encourage planting of trees around the ports and terminals, which would guarantee sustainable eco-friendly maritime work environment.

He also disclosed that N10 million worth of prizes will be won, comprising a car, cash

prizes, endorsement deals, sponsored luxury vacation, as well as other consolation prizes for winners in the award categories.

On eligibility for the contest, Obasi said the show was open to young men and women between 18 and 40 years, adding that contestants must be citizens of Nigeria with a minimum qualification of 'O' Level Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

He, however, solicited sponsorship and collaborations from government agencies, private organisations, businesses and good-spirited individuals to partner with NIMA to achieve its objectives.



Chairman, Bayelsa State chapter of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Bibopre Ndiomu, member, state House of Assembly, Mrs. Ebiuwou Koku-Obiyai, Governor Douye Diri and Acting Chief of Staff, Dr. Peter Akpe, during NLC's solidarity protest with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) at Government House entrance in Yenagoa.

## Lagos to raise wharf landing fees, end illegal roads tolls

Lagos State Government Wharf Landing Fee Collecting Authority has disclosed that it has approached the state House of Assembly for upward review of the charges.

The wharf landing fee is collected on all imported goods coming into the country through the Lagos ports.

Chairman of the agency, Adegboyega Adebayo, gave the hint when executives of the Importers Association of Nigeria (IMAN) led by its National President, Kingsley Chikezie, visited him at the agency's corporate office in Apapa, Lagos.

The Wharf Landing Fees Law No. 5 of 2009 was introduced during former Governor Babatunde Fashola administration to empower the state government to collect fees from goods that land at the Apapa and Tin Can Island ports.

Under the law, various levies, ranging from N300 to N1, 000 were imposed on consignments transported from Lagos ports to other parts of the state and the country.

Adebayo explained that after

collecting the fee, it was shared among the 57 local government areas of the state, adding that the money was paid directly to the state government coffers.

He, however, lamented that after 13 years of collection, the funds are no longer adequate and there is need for an increase, saying: "For 13 years now, we are not supposed to remain on the same amount of N300 to N1000 because the exchange rate to the dollar is no longer the same, the value of the collection is no longer the same. As such, the local government areas are crying and that is why there are touts everywhere on the roads.

"If the chairman of any council tells you that they do not know about the presence of these boys collecting money from vehicles, they are lying, because the money they get now is no longer adequate.

"So, definitely, we need to review the collection, so that the local government receiving N5million can collect N15 million or N20 million, with this, there would be no illegal collections

in the road."

Adebayo also stated that the agency was now working with the Nigerian Shippers Council's Port Standing Task Team (PSTT) to clear the ports access roads of shanties and hoodlums impersonating wharf landing collecting agents, thereby denying the agency of needed revenue.

He also blamed clearing agents for collecting huge amounts from importers as wharf landing fee, adding: "They usually do not pay the fees. But more importantly, our mandate is to collect the wharf landing fee and we believe that with our rapport with IMAN, we will reduce the leakages. As at today, I believe we are not collecting more than 20 per cent of what we should be collecting

"There are a lot of leakages and the money is usually paid by the importers to the clearing agents, but the agents refuse to pay it. I have heard of some clearing agents collecting up to N50,000, as wharf landing fee on a car that is supposed to pay only N300.

"You are critical stakeholders, the

owners of the cargoes, you bear the brunt when your cargoes are impounded, but unfortunately, we have not known this group before now."

Adebayo said the agency is making efforts to digitise collection of the wharf landing fee, such that its collection officers would no longer be seen chasing vehicles on the ports access roads.

Responding, IMAN President, Kingsley Chikezie, said his members were lamenting the wharf landing fee collection and this was one of the reasons for the visit, insisting that IMAN was on a mission to familiarise with the various stakeholders working with importers to achieve seamless operations at the ports.

"We completely support digitisation of the wharf landing fee collection, because we don't need to see people on the road. Everybody is going digital now, as soon as we tidy up the clearing process, we can pay our fees directly. This will increase revenue generation and reduce clumsiness on the roads," he said.





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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
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11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
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	
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## NNPC clarifies purported disengagement of 500 employees

By **EDU ABADE** and **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, Mele Kyari, has clarified reports that the company has concluded plans to sack no fewer than 500 employees a week after the company transformed from a public corporation to a private company.

In a statement issued by Kyari, the NNPC, however, said it was not planning to sack any workers, but that those being referred to were workers, who were due for retirement in the next few months, adding that they were not up to 500, as being speculated.

He, therefore, urged members of the public to ignore the report, describing it as a rumour adding that the story was being propagated to cause panic among the company's employees.

It would be recalled that President Muhammadu Buhari had last week Wednesday, unveiled NNPC from public corporation to a private entity in line with the recently signed

Petroleum Industry Act (PIA).

Reports from sources close to the company said the NNPC sent an email to some of its workers giving them up till the first week of August, 2022 to resign or be sacked adding that the purported disengagement reportedly caused rancour among the company's employees.

The affected workers affected are those close to retirement age for 2022, 2023 and 2024. They have been promised exit packages including 50 per cent payment of their salary until their retirement age. Other benefits offered to the employees are written off on their existing loans obtained from the company," the statement added.

But *The Trumpet* learnt that no fewer than 500 staff members of the company have received emails terminating their appointments, days after President Muhammadu Buhari officially unveiled the new NNPC Limited.

The staff members have also been given conditions to accept the offer and be rewarded, a situation that has created serious tension among employees, just as sources revealed that those affected have already received their letters of termination of

their appointments.

However, some management staff members of the company have rejected the offer, especially general managers and group general managers, but at a town meeting with the affected staff Kyari told them recently: "You may accept the package or reject it, but you are advised to take it."

The affected officials have up till the first week of August to decide otherwise the company may take actions deemed necessary to relieve them of their jobs and the severance package may elude those who refuse to resign.

Some of the general managers and group general managers said to be agitating for continued stay in the company were alleged to have saying that they want to complete their official tenures and retire at 60 years.

Meanwhile, the NNPC has created a portal for the acceptance of the severance package of the exercise and another for the rejection of the offer, whichever any of the affected officials choose, saying the portal will be closed by the first week of August.

Also, while highlighting the dos and don'ts for the new NNPC, as he ushered in a new phase for the 44-year-old



Mele Kyari

company, President Buhari, who earlier set new targets for the company, stressed that it had been repositioned for growth and must, therefore, be expected to deliver greater value.

## Tincan Customs command generates N274.3b revenue in six months

By **EDU ABADE**

Tincan Island Port Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), has collected N274.32 billion revenue for the first half of 2022, showing an increase of N229.32 billion as against the amount collected in the corresponding period of 2021, representing 27.50 per cent increase

Customs Area Controller, Comptroller Adewale A. Stephen Oloyede, who stated this while giving the command's performance report at the half year media briefing, said the command also made impressive achievements in its anti-smuggling operations, which resulted in the seizure of 145kg of Colorado (Indian Hemp) concealed in two units of Ridgeline trucks and two units of Toyota Corolla vehicles, 206,000 pieces of machetes, 640 bales of used clothes, 236,500 pieces of used shoes, 62,500 pieces of new lady's shoes, 1,670,400 pieces of Chloroquine injections.

Others are 1,814,400 pieces of Novalgen injection, 48,850 rolls of cigarettes, 23,800 tins of sodium bromate and baking powder, 3,303 pieces of motor batteries found in three containers falsely declared as three units of Toyota Hiace buses, four units of used Mercedes Benz GL450 2008 model and one unit of used 2011 Toyota 4Runner with the Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N1.30 billion.

He added that while one suspect was arrested in connection with the seizures, a pistol gun, two empty magazines and 300 rounds of live ammunition were handed over to the Directorate of State Services (DSS) for further action.

During the period under review, the Tincan Island Port Command of Nigeria Customs Service,

A review of the activities revealed that the command has recorded an outward throughput in export cargo of 138,246.50 metric tons, representing an increase by 73 per cent from 100,500 metric tons recorded in 2021, with Free On Board (F.O.B) Value of N100.44 billion, representing an increase of 60 per cent from N66.29 billion recorded in 2021.

He acknowledged the of the Customs Intelligence Unit, Valuation unit, Customs Strike Force, Federal Operations Unit (FOU), as well as interventions and excellent relationship with sister regulatory agencies such as NDLEA, NAFDAC, DSS, SON, Nigeria Police and others in making these seizures and detentions.

He also commended the Management of Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) for the seamless collaboration with the command in facilitating the clearance process of export-related cargo at Tincan Island Port Command.

## Zenith bank retains first position 13 years on

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Zenith Bank Plc has again, been named the number one Bank in Nigeria by Tier-1 Capital in the 2022 Top 1000 World Banks Ranking published by The Banker Magazine, thereby



Ebenezer Onyeagwu

retaining the title for the 13th year, with a Tier-1 Capital of \$2.75 billion and emerging as the 460th Bank globally.

The ranking, which was published in the July 2022 edition of The Banker Magazine of the Financial Times Group, United Kingdom, was based on the 2021 global year-end Tier-1 capital of banks.

Its financial performance for the year was underpinned by double-digit growth of 10 per cent in gross earnings, with improved market share in retail and corporate sectors despite a challenging macroeconomic environment aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Responding to the 2022 Top 1000 World Banks Ranking, Group Managing Director/CEO of Zenith Bank Plc, Ebenezer Onyeagwu, said: "This ranking is a testament to our resilience and doggedness as an institution despite economic headwinds and persistent challenging macroeconomic environment.

"Indeed, being ranked

number one bank in Nigeria by Tier-1 Capital for the 13th year in a row, underscores our commitment to sustaining the superior performance we are known for and creating value for our highly esteemed customers."

He commended the Founder and Chairman of Zenith Bank Plc, Jim Ovia, for his guidance and for laying the foundation and building the structures of an enduring and successful financial institution; the board for the outstanding leadership; employees whose drive and commitment sustains the bank's performance; and the customers for their loyalty to the Zenith brand.

Tier 1 Capital describes capital adequacy, which is the core measure of a bank's financial strength from a regulator's point of view. According to the ranking, Tier 1 Capital, as defined by the latest Bank for International Settlements (BIS) guidelines, includes loss-absorbing capital or common stock, disclosed reserves,

retained earnings and minority interests in the equity of subsidiaries that are less than wholly owned.

Zenith Bank's track record of performance has continued to earn the brand several awards, with this latest accolade coming on the heels of several recognitions, including being recognised as the Best Bank from 2020 to 2022 in the Global Finance World's Best Banks Awards; Best Commercial Bank 2021 and 2022 in the World Finance Banking Awards.

It also clinched the Best Corporate Governance Bank in the World Finance Corporate Governance Awards 2022; Best in Corporate Governance 'Financial Services' Africa from 2020 to 2022 by the Ethical Boardroom; Best Commercial Bank and Best Innovation in Retail Banking in the International Banker 2022 Banking Awards; and Bank of the Year (Nigeria) in The Banker's Bank of the Year Awards 2020, among others.

## Value of pension assets rises to N13.88 trillion

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Rising pension industry net assessment value has sustained an unabated reporting increase from the first quarter (Q1) of 2022, as assets value rose in measured low figures.

The National Pensions Commission (PenCom) first quarter 2022 report revealed that the industry net assets value for the quarter increased by 3.38 per cent to N13.88 trillion when compared with N13.42 trillion

as of December 31, 2021.

PenCom's report showed that the growth in Q1 2022 was higher than the growth of N423.65 billion or the 3.26 per cent recorded in Q4 2021.

According to the report, the growth was mainly due to contributions received and market valuation of Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) bonds, as well as quoted equities.

A comparative analysis of the pension industry portfolio for Q4 2021 and Q1 2022 showed that the

value of investments in quoted domestic ordinary shares stood at N944.26 billion or 16.80 per cent of total assets under management, indicating an increase of N2895 billion or 3.16 per cent compared with the N915.31 billion invested in the assets class as of December 31, 2021.

PenCom also indicated that the increase in the value of investments in domestic quoted equities was primarily due to appreciation in the prices of some stocks during the period under

review, as the Nigerian Exchange Limited's pension index further appreciated by 9.95 per cent in Q1 2022.

The report also stated the value of investments in FGN securities decreased by N271.62 billion or 3.10 per cent to N8.50 trillion, as of March 2022 from N8.77 trillion as of December 2021.

It further explained that the decrease in the value of investments in FGN securities was majorly due to matured investments in the classes during the quarter.



## Labour mobilises state chapters in solidarity with ASUU

Following Federal Government's failure to end the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) five months strike, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has commenced its planned protest rallies across the country to force the government to accede to the lecturers' demands.

The protest arose after the Federal Government failed to meet ASUU's demands in agreements reached with government since 2009, which led to the ongoing strike.

The Trumpet learnt that all affiliate unions of NLC were participating in the protest, which began yesterday and expected to end today in all states of the federation.

Also, the Association of Nigeria Aviation Professionals (ANAP) had threatened to shut down the airports across the country, while the National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) in a letter with reference number: NUEE/NS/2022/008 and titled: Nigeria Labour Congress And ASUU Solidarity Protest, dated July 22, 2022, said electricity workers would join the protest to demonstrate against the prolonged closure of tertiary institutions in the country.

General Secretary of NUEE, Comrade Joe Ajero, said: "All members of the union are enjoined to massively mobilise and actively participate in the NLC and ASUU solidarity protest against the continued closure of the nation's universities.

"You are encouraged to work with the leadership of state executive councils of the congress in your various states with a view having a successful outing. Aluta continua!

It would be recalled that ASUU has been at war with the federal government since February 14, 2022 over failure to honour past agreements, which had spanned over a decade.

Responding to the disagreement, which had kept students of most public universities at home for over six months, NLC President, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, told newsmen that the protest would be total in Abuja and all the state councils and that the NLC affiliates have been fully mobilised and charged to fully participate in the demonstration.

Also speaking on the development, the Joint Action Committee of Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Allied and Educational Institutions (NASU) said they fully backed the protest as they have mobilised their members across the country.

## NCDMB applauds Caverton for integrated support services

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Simbi Kesiye Wobote, has commended Caverton Offshore Support Group for its development to a fully integrated offshore services company in sub-Saharan Africa.

Wobote spoke through the General Manager, Project Certification and Authorisation Division (PCAD), Paul Zuhumben, during an inspection visit to the Fabrication Yard at Badore, Ferry Terminal in Aja, Eti-Osa Council of Lagos State.

He expressed delight at the company's achievements, especially in the direction of capacity building to create in-country value and job opportunities for Nigerians also commended Caverton Marine for industry best practices through its certification by the Bureau Veritable, saying that was exactly

the direction the board had always desired.

Wobote listed some of the targets of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD):2021, which are to promote linkages among sectors of the country's economy, as well as stimulate growth and industrial development.

He hinted that the impact of the Act includes leveraging on specialised indigenous skills from the petroleum industry from ancillary sectors of the economy such as shipping operations, boat building and seafaring.

Wobote also commended the company's staff participation in the boat fabrication facility which shows technology transfer, advising the company to go into Research and Development to see how some of its raw materials which are being imported will be sourced in Nigeria to increase in country spend in terms of direct and indirect employment in support of the board's vision



Simbi Kesiye Wobote

such a strategy he, says will help stem unemployment by taking youths off the street and making

them resourceful.

He further noted that the key essence of the marine vessels categorisation scheme was to identify Nigerians with genuine titles to vessels, adding that the scheme had become successful, as over 40 per cent of marine vessels operating in the oil and gas industry were owned by Nigerians.

Speaking, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Caverton Marine Limited, Rotimi Makonjuola, thanked NCDMB for the inspection visit and disclosed that the company was a major beneficiary of the country's local content policy.

He said some of the policies the board had put in place were to encourage Nigerian companies to reach their potential and enable them to compete, not only locally but also internationally, adding that the company was committed to standardisation, just as it had taken quality assurance seriously.

## Court grants industrialist Ukatu bail, fixes hearing of case for October 6

A Federal High Court sitting in Ikoyi, Lagos, has granted an industrialist and Managing Director of Mallinson & Partners, Afamefuna Mallinson Ukatu and second defendant, Sunday Ibekwute bail.

This followed his application for bail filled before the court by his counsel, led by Victor Opara (SAN) challenging Ukatu's continued detention for alleged fake drugs-related offences without charging him to court.

The case has suffered series of adjournments before the last sitting due to the failure of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to

provide the accused persons in court since their arrest and detention in the NDLEA's facilities since April this year.

It took an order of the Federal High Court, sitting in Ikoyi and presided by over Justice P.O. Lifu, to compel the NDLEA to bring the accused persons to court since their arrest in April.

Justice Lifu compelled NDLEA to produce Ukatu and other accused before him in court within two hours on Friday, July 22, 2022.

The leading manufacturer was brought to a Federal High Court, Ikoyi on allegations of importation of Tramadol worth

over N3 billion alongside the co-accused person, Sunday Ibekwute.

On presentation of Ukatu and Ibekwute in court Justice Lifu upheld the accused persons' bail application filled on July 18, 2022 for hearing of the case and granted the duo bail in accordance with their human rights and fixed further hearing of the case October 6, 2022.

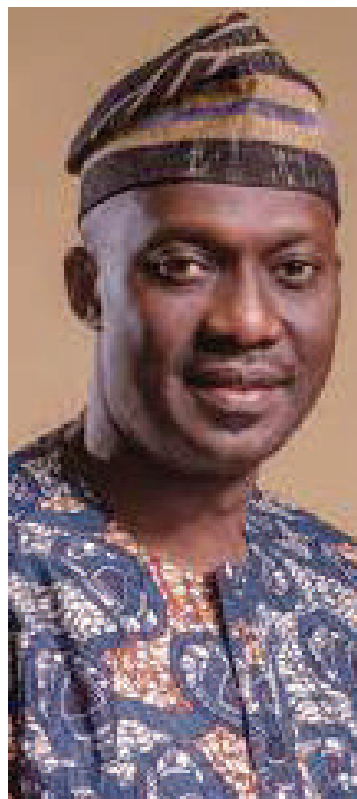
Counsel for Ukatu pleaded with the judge for speedy hearing in order so that the truth would be revealed as soon as possible, just as the trial Justice upheld the two accused persons bail applications, with the condition that both deposit

N100 million with two sureties in like sum.

According to the judge, one of the sureties must be an industrialist, specifically a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) who must be owner of a landed property within the court jurisdiction, while the second surety must be a grade level-15 officer, either in a federal or a Lagos State establishment.

The judge also ordered the defendants to deposit their international passports with the court registry and file an affidavit of dual citizenship, if they hold another that of nationality.

## MAN rejects CBN's monetary policy, says it will hurt manufacturing, economy



Segun Ajayi-Kadir,

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) says the recent increase in the prime lending rate, otherwise known as the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is not manufacturing friendly.

This was disclosed in a statement issued by the Director General of MAN, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, and made available to The Trumpet in Lagos, insisting that the latest increase in MPR rate would worsen the countless binding constraints already limiting the performance of the manufacturing sector.

"This is another level of increase in interest rates on loan-able funds, which will no doubt, upscale the intensity of the crowding out effect on the private sector, as firms will have lesser access to funds in the credit market.

"It will spur upwards review of existing lending rates dependent obligations of manufacturing concerns, which will drive costs northward. It will also intensify demand crunch emanating from

the heavily eroded disposable income of Nigerians, as well as restrict access of households and individuals to cheap funds," the statement reads.

The manufacturers expressed concern that the interest rate hike would lead to rising cost of manufacturing inputs, which will logically translate to higher prices of goods, low sales and huge volume of inventory of unsold products.

"This will further reduce capacity utilisation, deepen the rate of unemployment, incidences of crime and insecurity, as the capacity of banks to support production and economic growth will be heavily constrained.

It will reduce the pace of full recovery of the real sector, make manufacturing performance to remain lackluster and of course lead to learner contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," the statement added.

To mitigate the situation, MAN asked the CBN to relax the stringent conditions for ac-

cessing available it's development funding windows, to improve the flows of long term loans to the manufacturing sector at single digits interest rate.

Going forward, the manufacturers body urged the MPC to ensure that further adjustment of MPR takes into consideration the trend of core inflation rather than basing its decisions on headline and food inflation.

"This will no doubt shield the sector from the backlashes from 14 percent MPR, ramp up production and guarantee sustained growth in the overall best interest of the economy," MAN said.

It will be recalled that the MPC recently decided to deepen its frightening monetary policy stance by increasing MPR from 13 per cent to 14 per cent to check rising inflation in the economy, which recently peaked at 18.6 per cent, ensure relative stability, sustain economic growth in the face of the high-level of uncertainty in the global economy.



## Stakeholders canvass higher exports to boost nation's economy

Stories by **ADAKU WALTER**

Stakeholders have canvassed more concerted efforts to improve Nigeria's export trade with a view to boosting the country's economic performance.

The stakeholders, who attended a one-day sensitisation programme organised by the Ministry of Transportation and the Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC) in Lagos, argued that increasing Nigeria's export trade would help bring the economy out of the woods and current challenges.

Chairperson of the Nigerian Ship Owners Forum (NSOF), Margaret Orakwusi, said without increasing the country's export performance, the naira will continue to depreciate.

She lamented that exporters were not being encouraged, which is why importers and exporters would rather use the ports of

neighbouring countries like Benin Republic and Togo.

Orakwusi advised that there was the need to ensure efficiency in handling export goods as well as the need to facilitate trade to attract investors and grow businesses in the country.

Stressing the need to address massive corruption in the system and encourage competition to attract investment and grow businesses so that the country will not go down economically, she charged ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) of government to be more efficient and support businesses, rather than focus on unhealthy competition for revenue generation.

Also speaking, a maritime lawyer, Emmanuel Nwagbara, charged the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) to dedicate a terminal for exporting Nigerian goods and products, adding that the



Margaret Orakwusi

system would be the beginning of meaningful progress in foreign exchange earnings for the country.

Nwagbara said dedicating a terminal for exports would boost Nigerians' interest in international trade, even as he lamented that export was not receiving the needed boom because of the frustration and restrictions exporters face when moving their cargoes to the ports.

"You hear of perishable foods going bad before they get to the ships, but all of this will be a thing of the past, if we have a terminal expressly dedicated for export business," he said.

On his part, National President of the Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), Lawal Othman, enjoined the shipper's council to make the ports more functional through increased exports.

"We know that for export to take place, we need to make the hinterland from where the cargoes are being generated and how they get to the ports. We need to make those things active and the only way to make them active is through the use of trucks.

"It is in that regard that I would like the NSC to create a forum with a transporter and the source where the cargoes are generated as well as the necessary laws to back it up," he said.

Speaking earlier in his welcome address, Executive Secretary of the NSC, Emmanuel Jime, stressed the need to develop Nigeria's industrial base to balance trade to further boost the economy.

He said globally, West and Central African sub-regions still have the least cargo volumes, adding that one of the reasons for the trade imbalance is the composition of sub-Saharan African trade, which is about six per cent of global trade, adding that about 70 per cent of export cargoes were primary

commodities, while majority of imports were consumer goods.

Jime said the ports have a critical infrastructure that should be competitive to check monopoly and be free for other players to enter and exit for the users to enjoy the benefits of lower prices and efficient service delivery usually associated with competition.

He also noted that an increase in charges in the maritime industry shall henceforth be related to quality service by operators, maintaining that the council's reaffirmation as the economic regulator by the Minister of Transportation, Mu'azu Sambo, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Magdalene Ajani, would not afford unilateral increase of charges by operators.

According to him, the pronouncement will create confidence in the port system by service users for the fact that they know that all charges will be attached to quality service and as such, will engender competitiveness.

"We will now redouble our efforts in the areas where we have already been providing service. It is now clear that no agency or stakeholder can wake up on their whims and go into the market place and decide for themselves what charges to impose on maritime services

"You have to negotiate with the Shippers' Council whether there should be increase or reduction and this will impact the economy positively, because we are talking of competitiveness and to be competitive, the cost of business must be related to the quality of services delivered," he said.

Jime added that the NSC would now carry out its regulatory mandate having been backed up with a pronouncement by the federal government, stressing that it will end inter-agency rivalry and birth a new beginning where the agencies would work together, having their roles well defined.

## Investors shun Nigerian ports due to multiple checkpoints, extortion

- Indigenous truck owners decry double standard in cargo movement
- MACN, other stakeholders to tackle illegal roadblocks

The existence of multiple checkpoints and extortion of truckers is pushing importers and other investors to the ports of neighboring countries, thereby depriving Nigeria of the opportunity to earn revenues from its huge trade potential.

Chairman, Association of Maritime Truck Owners (AMATO), Remi Ogungbemi, stated this at a stakeholders meeting organised by the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN) and the Convention of Business Integrity (CBI) with the theme: Addressing Corruption Issues At Nigeria's Port Corridor in Lagos.

In his presentation titled: The Implication Of Multiple Checkpoints In The Logistics Value Chain, Ogungbemi said the high cost of doing business arising from multiple extortions of truckers in the ports environment was discouraging foreign investors from doing business in the country.

He said multiple checkpoints along the ports corridors had also led to financial losses, as well as bankruptcy of importers and truckers arising from the diversion of containers, cargoes and trucks.

He also pointed out that there was also an increase in prices of imported commodities arising from unauthorised payments at multiple checkpoints and extortion along the ports corridor.

"Artificial barriers along port corridors discourage the growth of local industries that cannot cope

with a high cost of importing and exporting goods out of the country due to outrageous extortions at illegal checkpoints in the ports corridors," he said.

According to him, over 30 illegal checkpoints exist within the Apapa and Tin-Can Island ports corridors, where truckers are compelled to pay between N50,000 and N60,000 per trip to access the ports, in spite of having valid electronic call-up tickets.

He lamented that trucks were being damaged, while truckers were intimidated, harassed, extorted and unnecessarily turned back or delayed from accessing the ports by traffic controllers, security agencies, transport unions and hoodlums at the checkpoints.

Ogungbemi said the multiple checkpoints for extortion along the ports corridors was hindering the movement of trucks carrying goods from the ports, thereby allowing burglars to climb slow-moving trucks to burgle and steal goods from containers and cargoes or hijack truck and cargoes from their drivers.

"The existence of multiple checkpoints in the ports corridor is a cancer eating away the proceeds of truckers and undermining growth and progress of the transport sector in the maritime industry. It is among the reasons why truckers cannot feed well and put their trucks in good conditions.

That is why trucks are looking rickety due to damage activities of traffic enforcement, security agencies, transport unions and local government hoodlums to the extent that the Apapa and Tin-can ports corridors have become a notorious haven of corruption and extortion by state and non-state actors, he said.

Meanwhile, the Committee of Maritime Truck Union and Association (COMTUA), has accused the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), shipping companies and other state actors of double standards at the nation's ports.

President of COMTUA, Adeyinka Aroyewun, alleged that foreign truck owners were being given preferential treatment above indigenous truck owners by the

NCS, shipping companies, traffic agencies and other state actors.

Aroyewun, who stated that officials of the NCS do not stop trucks owned by foreign companies operating in the country, as against indigenous truck owners, who are made to stop at each checkpoint, also lamented that many indigenous truck owners were no longer in business due to the fact that foreigners had taken over their jobs.

Maintaining that despite foreigners taking over their jobs, indigenous truckers have always been the victims of government policies and enforcement agencies, he recommended interim and permanent solutions to address corruption around the port corridors.

He advocated a deliberate expansion and de-centralisation of the ports system, as well as encouragement of continuous development of bonded and lighter terminals, among others, to distribute traffic, use of rail in the evacuation of cargoes and modern technology.

Speaking, Chief Executive Officer of CBI, Soji Apampa, advised truck owners to form an alliance to fight alleged extortions and other corrupt practices by different security agencies in the ports corridor.

Apampa, who enlightened the truck owners on the need to provide facts, figures and verifiable data to help them fight the menace in the industry, revealed that a committee of government agencies in the port, truck unions and associations, security outfits and other relevant agencies would be involved in tackling the issues.

He added that the only way to get the government's attention was to have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on what state and non-state actors were supposed to do to authenticate their demands.

He urged truckers to define the parameter of what was supposed to be the norm, rather than the complaints, adding that figures and statistical data of attacks on truck drivers and motor boys, cargo vandals and extortions should be stated as evidence of their dilemma.



Remi Ogungbemi

## Expert seeks withdrawal of Nigeria Customs Service draft bill

President of the National Council of Managing Director of Licensed Customs Agents (NCMDLCA), Lucky Amiwero, has urged President Muhammadu Buhari and the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, to withdraw the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) draft bill 2022 from the National Assembly.

He argued that the call became pertinent because the draft bill does not reflect the Trade Facilitation Agreement (FTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) initiatives.

He insisted that due to the importance of the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) to the economy as an instrument that assists the Federal Government to formulate proper trade and fiscal policy direction, the draft bill should be withdrawn, reviewed and redrafted to accommodate the shortfalls of the international conventions, treaties and protocol in the draft.

Amiwero, who was also a member of the presidential committee on the review of customs laws, said the 2022 bill, which has the same content as the bill that was rejected by the Federal Government in 2013, was now being represented in the Senate and House of Representatives without being subjected to a stakeholders' public hearing.

He noted that there was the need to subject the draft bill to the Committee of Trade Procedure Experts (CTPE) and major stakeholders to review it in line with international best practices, especially with the expected coming on board of the FTA and AfCFTA, which is not included in the draft bill 2022.

He argued that the conflicting 283 clauses in the NCS bill would hinder trade, fiscal policy, international investment and protection of the international trade community.

Amiwero further stated that the bill had been designed and personalised for the management of NCS based on removal of some powers of the President, as well as total removal of the minister and overriding powers over other government agencies.

"The bill is not for the personnel of the NCS as has been designed, structured and titled, but as an instrument to regulate trade and fiscal policy of the economy by the Federal Government.

"Globally, Customs Act is a trade instrument designed based on international conventions, for universal trade application that is structured such that the President of the country proclaims, designate, declares and initiates policies, while the minister regulates policies; the NCS board gives the direction of policies and the Customs service implements the policies," he stated.





# Obaseki tasks FG on ASUU strike

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki, has implored the Federal Government to, in the interest of Nigerian students, expedite actions to urgently end the five-month-old strike embarked upon by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

He made the call when he received members of the Edo State chapter of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) who were on a peaceful protest at Government House, Benin City.

Obaseki, represented by his Chief of Staff, Hon. Osaigbovo Iyoha, said the lingering deadlock portends danger for the future of students and university education system.

The governor said: "Our universities are on strike to demand quality education for our children. The lecturers did not go on strike because of their interests alone; they are also demanding a better environment for learning.

"It's quite a shame that our children, brothers, and sisters have been at home for about five months since this strike action by the university lecturers commenced.

"Some of these demands today are those that were not met as far back as the 1990s and they are still on the table; it is quite shameful. I want to commend you for this move you made today. The letter has gone round the 36 states' governors and something will be done urgently."

Reassuring the NLC of the governor's



Representative of Edo Governor and Chief of Staff, Hon. Osaigbovo Iyoha, addressing members of the state chapter of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), during a protest at Government House, Benin City, on Tuesday.

support, he further said, "I want to assure you that His Excellency will get this letter today. He is aware that you are here and I know that within the governors, they will ensure that this strike becomes a thing of the past."

Presenting a protest letter to the governor, the state Chairman of NLC, Mr. Odion Olaye, said: "I want you people to know that we are not here to make trouble as the governor is a friend of the union in Edo State. The reason we are here is based

on the national body's message to states. "The universities have been on strike for the past five months, and we are here on a solidarity protest with our affiliate unions. We are here to present a letter to Governor Obaseki."

## Oyo sanctions headteachers over N100 illegal fees, denying students access to exam halls

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Oyo State government has sanctioned some head teachers for collecting illegal fees and denying pupils access to examination halls, during the ongoing Public Primary Schools Unified Examination.

Dr. Nureni Aderemi Adeniran, the executive chairman, Oyo State Universal Basic Education Board (OSUBEB) disclosed this on Monday while monitoring the exams in Ibadan.

He said the head teachers were imposing N100 illegal fees on the pupils thereby denying

pupils yet to pay access to examination halls.

Adeniran said five head teachers of Methodist Basic School, (School 1-5), Gan-gansi were found culpable in the alleged illegal collection of fees, spearheaded by the School-based Management Committee, who chased the pupils home.

He added that the present administration in Oyo state has abolished collection of any development levy in all schools across the state and he was not pleased with the school authority's role in compelling parents to contribute the said fee.

According to the SUBEB boss, some parents

had reported to the Board that head teachers of the school denied their children access to examination hall for failure to pay N100 development levy charged by the school's management and SBMC, through a popular radio station in Ibadan.

Affirming that the Gov Seyi Makinde administration would not fold its arms and allow saboteurs to ridicule its efforts in mandating free education in the state, Adeniran said the ongoing education reforms of the present administration in the state, has yielded huge results that must not be sabotaged.

He therefore directed that the affected head teachers should be given queries to serve as a deterrent to others, who may be collecting such illegal fees and all learners should be allowed to sit for exams without any form of hindrance.

Adeniran however urged teachers in all public schools to adhere strictly to the state government's policies and directives on education.

He said that the monitoring exercise will continue and would also be extended to other zones of the state including Ogbomosho, Oyo, Oke-Ogun and Ibarapa.

## JAMB fixes date for mop-up 2022 UTME examination

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has fixed mop-up Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) on Saturday, 6th August, 2022. It is for candidates who could not participate in the examinations during the period of the exercise for some genuine reasons.

The Board decision was disclosed on Monday in its weekly bulletin saying saying this was in line with JAMB's determination to give equal opportunity to all candidates who are desirous of tertiary education.

JAMB explained that after every UTME exercise, the board reviews various reports from officials in the field and video footage of the examination. The reviews are done by a team of experts, with a view to detecting activities subversive of the examination process.

"It's after all the reports have been collated and considered that the management would take critical decisions as to the necessity or otherwise of a mop-up

examination for affected candidates".

The board said after a thorough analysis of the conduct of the 2022 UTME in 10 centres spread across five states of the federation where examination malpractice was established to have taken place, it became necessary to cancel the results of all the candidates who sat for the examination in the affected 10 centres.

It took cognisance of the fact that some innocent candidates, unfortunately sat for their examination at these centres.

Hence, all candidates who sat for the UTME in the affected centres have been rescheduled for the mop-up UTME.

According to JAMB, candidates who for whatever reasons were absent at those centres are not eligible for the mop-up examination. Other categories of eligible candidates rescheduled for the mop-up UTME are, 142 candidates who could not take the UTME due to fingerprint peculiarities, 28 candidates who could not take the UTME due to technical problems in some centres and

1,799 candidates with BVM failure who were recaptured at the centres.

The Board however stated its commitment to zero tolerance for examination malpractices and would do all within its powers to combat it.

It also affirmed its commitment to conduct credible matriculation examinations in all tertiary institutions in the country, while ensuring the sanctity of its examination process towards sustaining the integrity that the society has come to associate with the Board.

## Gbajabiamila attends US college amidst ASUU strike

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

House of Representatives Speaker Femi Gbajabiamila has returned to class at Harvard University for a leadership course.

He had on Tuesday shared photos of himself in the classroom via his verified Twitter handle.

"Back to class. In a leadership course @

hvard @Kennedy\_school. Forget the number of grey hairs, one is never too old to learn, broaden or sharpen your skills" he tweeted.

Some Nigerians on social media have expressed displeasure over the resumption of the Speaker of lower legislative chamber at a university in the United States of America amidst the lingering strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities.

Academic staff union of university (ASUU)

had on February 14, 2022, began industrial action to press home its demands to the government.

Academic activities in public universities in Nigeria have been shut down for over five months and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) on Tuesday is holding protests across the nation in solidarity with the striking members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities.



# Dealing with worries

By OMONIYI ALLI

There will always be something to worry about, all the time. Truly, life is full of ups and downs, unexpected disappointments and tragedies, and honestly a lot of things that just refuse to go according to our optimistic plans. Anyone who has lived a good number of years on earth would have some experience of this and if we look at it honestly, this might be a legitimate basis for worry and anxiety. And so we find ourselves confronted regularly with the temptation to worry about how things work out; will our plan turn out well? will the good become better or worse? or will the not-so-good things become better or will take a dip into disaster? Whether it's in our relationships, finances, health or any other area of our lives, there are possibilities which are beyond our control. This throws up some legitimate fears which then become the object of our worries. The problem with worry, however, is that it often takes things that are mere negatives possibilities (and have alternative possibilities which are positive) and treats it as if they are inevitable. Worry treats things that could happen and treat them as if they have happened or will certainly happen. This kind of anxiety and unease makes people miserable and sucks the energy out of them. It is dangerous, if left unchecked, because it magnifies negativity in such a way that eventually leads people to act desperate and often times ruin things that could have been better. While legitimate fears and possibilities that may cause us to have some worry and anxiety may come up, we must deal with them in such a way that we overcome such feelings of worry quickly, because it is better to be (reasonably) optimistic than to worry. Here are some important reasons why you must not tolerate worry in Your Life and we must confront worry as it comes up in our lives and not allow it to fester.

## 1. Worry makes our thinking problem-oriented

We don't need worry to size up the problems or negative prospects of a situation; our logical reasoning does that. Worry simply comes to make it our main

or only focus and when our thinking becomes problem-oriented, we may find it hard to come up with prevention or solutions, even though it may be right on the tip of our fingers. Worry causes an imbalance in the mind. In order to be or remain a problem-solver, one cannot live in worry.

## 2. Worry robs us of the ability to live in the present

Worry is mainly about projections; negative projections that may never happen. This makes it a torment that robs people of the ability to enjoy and engage with life in the present. Many relationships suffer badly when one or both parties are prone to worry, as they find it hard to emotionally (and/or physically) present for other parties. Life comes in three phases. The Past, the present and the future. You should be able to reminisce and enjoy the moments of the past. Enjoy the moments of the present as they come and anticipate the moments of the future to come; so that when they do, you can enjoy them. Many people who make a habit of worry may find life and people moving on without them but the worst part is that many times, most of their fears never actualize despite having robbed them of so much. So please don't worry. Stop worrying.

## 3. Worry creates a negative attitude

If a person is worrying, they are ruminating over negative possibilities and eventually it comes up in their speech, their attitude and disposition to life. Nobody wants to be around a negative person. And when you begin to start thinking negative, you tend to loose in a job, a task, or a project before you begin them. You should not allow yourself to develop a negative attitude because you have consistently built up a life of worrying. As a Man, your lady might not tell you but it can drive her away from you. Your children might not tell you but they wouldn't feel free to tell you anything that concerns the, because they know you will worry. Also to women, try and reduce your worrying to the minimum. Don't be 25 or 26 and be looking 50 because you consistently want to worry about something that won't



happen or that has happened or that you think will happen. Life is a gift. Enjoy it.

## 4. Worry can lead to wrong decisions

Many times, worry and anxiety make people make wrong decisions; they run when they shouldn't, they antagonize the wrong people, they give their money to people they shouldn't; the list is endless. It is a great danger to make decisions from a place of worry; it can be really damaging; not only to you, but to your immediate circle. You could hurt people around you due to the fact that you lacked a little bit of patience. It could be your child, your fiancé, your wife, your best friend, who ever. Just try to learn to master the Art of being patient.

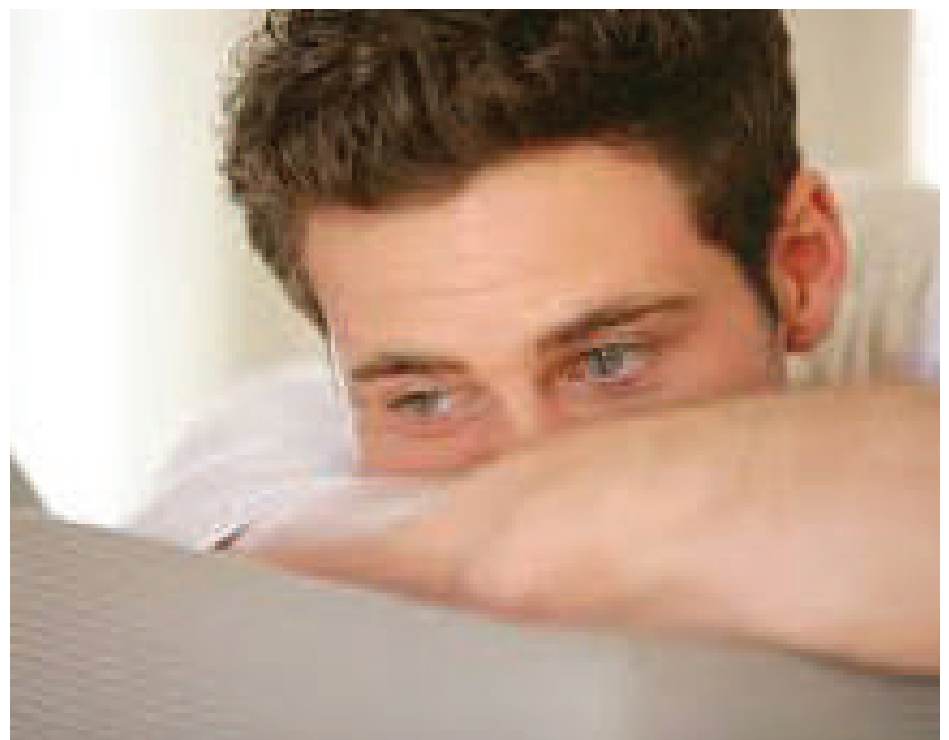
## 5. Worry can lead to controlling behavior

When we allow our fears and insecurities to take over us, the tendency is that we will want to control things in order to prevent what we are afraid of from happening. This is bad for our relationships. Trying to control everything around us often spirals into manipulative and abusive behavior; we may tell lies, threaten people and do other desperate things just because we believe we are trying to prevent bad things

from happening. Nobody in their right mind will stick around such behavior for long. As a parent, worrying can drive you to being over protective of them. You send a guide everywhere you kids go, you lock them inside the house before you go out, and you don't want them to attend a party of go see a friend because you're worried about what will happen. Or as a guy in a relationship, you begin to stalk your lady where ever she goes, on social media. It can drive you crazy without you knowing. You begin having different thoughts of things that would never happen and you develop distrust and your relationship fail and you start blaming her or him, whichever the case maybe.

## 6. Worry affects health and well-being

It's inevitable; the amount of negativity that constant worry supplies will create stress, deplete energy, make people unable to rest and properly take care of themselves. All of this will eventually show up as poor health; physical and mental. Amongst these, you could age quickly; you could get an high blood pressure, an heart attack. So please. Prevention they say, is better than cure.





Wellness

# Super health benefits of Garlic

**G**arlic is a wonderful seasoning to add aroma, taste and nutrition to your dishes. We often recommend using raw chopped or pressed garlic in many of our dishes to take advantage of the benefits derived from garlic. However, if you cannot tolerate raw garlic, you can add chopped garlic to foods while they are cooking. It is best to add it towards the end of the cooking process to retain the maximum amount of flavor and nutrition. Garlic is well known as a natural health remedy that has long been used to treat various ailments. It is extremely easy to source in most countries and can be consumed cooked or fresh. It is most easily included in your food or can be eaten on its own. You don't need to limit yourself to fresh garlic either. Garlic powder or dried garlic flakes are just as effective and super easy to keep in the cupboard for everyday use. It is recommended that adults consume no more than one clove two or three times a day and that children have one quarter to one half a clove, once or twice a day.

*Listed below are super 7 reasons why you should include garlic in your everyday diet.*

### Garlic helps purify blood

Tired of covering up those zits with concealer every morning? It's time to tackle the root cause of acne by purifying your blood from inside to get healthy skin on the outside. Take two cloves of raw garlic with some warm water every day, early in the morning and consume a lot of water the entire day. If you're looking to shed some pounds, squeeze the juice of half a lemon in a glass of Luke warm water and have it with 2 cloves of garlic in the mornings. Garlic will help to cleanse your system and flush out toxins.

### Garlic cures cold and flu

Garlic is going to provide you relief from that stubborn cold and flu (yes, they absolutely love you and never want to leave). Taking 2-3 cloves of raw or cooked garlic a day or sipping some garlic tea (with a touch of honey or ginger to lift up the taste) is not only going to relieve a stuffed nose and cure the cold but also build your immunity against these frequent visitors over time.

According to Dr. Shikha Sharma, Delhi-based Health and Wellness Expert, and founder of Nutri-health says, "One of the earliest uses of garlic was by meat-eaters because it was believed that meat could cause infection which garlic could fight off from the body. More commonly used by laborers who are exposed to infections and disease-friendly



environments till recently, its plethora of health benefits has made white-collar workers also take to it."

She added, "Garlic can be added to hot stews, broths and soups to fight sinusitis, cold and flu. And garlic is best had in its raw state."

### Garlic prevents heart disease

Consuming garlic on a daily basis (in food or raw) helps to lower cholesterol levels because of the anti-oxidant properties of Allicin. It is also immensely beneficial to regulate blood pressure and blood sugar levels. It is essential to remember that the sulphur-containing compound Allicin tends to lose its medicinal properties when garlic is cooked whole. It is imperative to consume garlic raw or semi-cooked to derive any of its benefits.

### Garlic is anti-bacterial, anti-parasitic

Garlic is one of the best kept medicinal treasures of the past era - it has been used as an antibiotic to treat bacterial, fungal and parasitic infec-

tions for the last 7,000 years. Studies suggest diluted garlic extract helps children with tapeworm infections. A garlic-based mouthwash may not sound like fresh, minty breath but a very small quantity of its extracts is sufficient to ward off cavity-causing bacteria.

### Garlic prevents cancer

Several studies have indicated an association between daily consumption of garlic and prevention of stomach and colorectal cancers. It is said to strengthen the immunity of the body against cancer.

### Garlic beautifies your hair, skin

The invigorating properties of garlic protect the skin from the effect of free radicals and slow down the depletion of collagen which leads to loss of elasticity in aging skin. Applied topically, garlic does wonders to skin infected with fungal infections and provides relief from skin ailments like eczema. It is also an effective remedy for fungal infections like athlete's foot and ringworms.

All of us know about the wonders of onion for hair but its brother, garlic is no less of a hero for your thinning mane. Well, its surprise time. Rubbing crushed garlic extract on your scalp or massaging with garlic-infused oil is known to prevent and even reverse hair loss.

### Garlic can be used to remove splinters

Many of garlic's astounding uses were forgotten in the folds of time but users and believers still vouch for the lesser-known benefits. One of them is against stubborn splinters. Place a piece of cut garlic over the splinter cut and cover with a bandage- and voila! Bye-bye splinter.

### Caution

- Asthma patients should not consume garlic as it may have side-effects.
- Garlic should be avoided before surgeries or medical operations.
- Do not consume more than 2-3 garlic cloves in a day without consulting a doctor.





## World champion Amusan remembers how father burnt training gear

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

**W**orld champion in the 100m hurdles, Tobi Amusan, has recounted her ordeal in the hands of her father who prefers to see her take her studies seriously in the early days of her career.

Amusan held the world to a standstill with her record of 12.12s at the recently concluded 2020 Tokyo World Athletics Championships in Oregon.

On her road to stardom, the 25-year-old athlete competed in the 2019 World Athletics Championships and the delayed 2020 Tokyo Olympics, emerging fourth but her determination to excel in the sports spurred her into breaking the world record.

The Nigeria golden star did not win the race by chance as her records dated back to Warri 2013 when she won the silver medal in 200m at African Youth Athletics Championships, Delta State. Following, in 2015, at the African Junior Championships in Addis Ababa, Amusan clinched the gold medal.

Also in 2015 at the All Africa Games, Brazaville, the Ijebu-Ode-born athlete won the gold medal in the 100m hurdles.

The world star excelled in the Commonwealth Games and also in the All Africa Games, winning gold medals in Gold Coast and Rabat, in Australia and Morocco respectively.

Amusan, in her interview with BBC Sports, said her parents, both teachers, wanted her to focus on her studies; especially her dad who was opposed to her dreams and took drastic actions against her the moment he got the hint that she sneaked out to partake in competitions.

"My parents are both teachers, they are strict disciplinarians," Amusan said.

"When you grow up in such a family, they feel you should focus on school. And being a female, they think you are

■ Time may have malfunctioned- Michael Johnson  
■ Former American athletics star accused of racism



going to go astray, lose focus and all of that.

"But because my mum saw what I didn't see [in] myself, she felt she could give me a chance. And she kept telling me not to disappoint her.

"My mum would tell my dad I was going to church while I sneaked to practice or tell him I was going to a school debate while I went to an out-of-state competition. That's where it all started.

"My dad got really mad one time when he found out [I was running]. He burnt all my training gear and told my mum that's the last time he wanted to see me in a stadium," Amusan added.

However, metamorphosing into reality, Amusan has grown from that teenager being constrained from fulfilling her dream to become the world record star, putting Nigeria's name on the echelon of the global athletics map.

"It has not sunk in yet, maybe the magnitude of what just happened will hit me later," she said.

"I go out there and put 100% in every championship and it's just never enough. Every time it's a fourth-place finish.

"Then this time my 100% is not only a gold medal but a world record. Trusting myself just made everything easier. I'm thankful to the man above for keeping me healthy. When God says it's your

time, it's your time," Amusan acknowledged.

Meanwhile, world track legend Michael Johnson has criticised the time recorded by Amusan. In the event, 12 out of the 24 athletes that competed in the semi-finals had their best times in the event.

He opined that for such several athletes to record their best possible times that means the timing system must have malfunctioned.

This comment by the 54-year-old did not go down well as the global community took a swipe at the four-time Olympic gold medalist calling him unprintable names.

"I don't believe 100h (100m hurdles) times are correct," Johnson said in a tweet.

"World record broken by .08! 12 PBs (personal bests) set. 5 National records set. And Cindy Sember's quote after her PB/NR (national record) 'I thought I was running slow!' All athletes looked shocked [sic].

"Heat 2 we were first shown a winning time of 12.53. Few seconds later it shows 12.43. Rounding down by 0.1 is normal. .10 is not," he questioned.

Although Johnson expected to get positive responses for his observation, he got a shocker in his life to the extent he was accused of being a 'Black racist'.

One of the commentators

noted that Johnson, who is a BBC commentator, is on a vindictive mission after the United States 4x400m team were stripped of their Sydney 2000 Olympic gold medal after a member of their quartet conceded violating the anti-doping rule.

"The US 4x400m team that had Michael Johnson was stripped of the Sydney 2000 Olympic gold medal because Antonio Pettigrew confessed that he doped during the competition," the tweet read.

"The Nigerian team was eventually awarded the gold medal. Do you understand his bitterness now?" it added.

However, Johnson quickly responded, lamenting the derogatory comments that followed his opinion.

He said, "The level of 'dumbassery' coming across my feed right now is truly staggering!

"As a commentator, my job is to comment. In questioning the times of 28 athletes (not 1 athlete) by wondering if the timing system malfunctioned.

"I was attacked, accused of racism, and of questioning the talent of an athlete I respect and predicted to win. Unacceptable. I move on," Johnson lamented.

Amusan's feat has brought honour to the family, nation and the black race and has engraved her name in the record book of history.

## Barcelona constrain Chelsea in race for Koude

West London club Chelsea are on the brink of losing out in the race to get the signature of Sevilla defender Jules Koude after Barcelona intensified efforts to sign the Frenchman.

Koude has been on the watchlist of the Blues, who are eager to bolster their defence before the new season kicks off next week.

With Raheem Sterling and Kalidou Koulibaly already signed this summer, Thomas Tuchel still clamours for more players having lost Antonio Rudiger and Andreas Christensen to Real Madrid and Barcelona on free transfers respectively.

Reportedly, the Blues on Friday last week, were already in an advanced stage in negotiations with Los Nervionenses who are holding on 55 million pound for the 23-year-old.

While Sevilla's demand for the centre-back threatened Barcelona's interest initially due to financial constraints, Chelsea were hopeful to wrap up the deal ahead of the Catalans.

However, in a sudden twist of events, reports making the rounds in Spain said that Barcelona have intensified their efforts to overtake Chelsea to sign the player from Sevilla.

According to the reports, Barcelona renewed their interest over the weekend to add

Koude to the squad after securing Robert Lewandowski from Bayern Munich.

Despite the English club being at the forefront of the deal with Sevilla yet to agree to a deal, Barcelona are convinced that they will win the race to bring the player to Camp Nou and have assured the player to wait till they submit their initial offer.

Chelsea are dangling a five-year deal before the player but Barcelona's persistence has allegedly made the English club grow frustrated over the drama.

To complicate matters further, Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel may not be convinced that the club will sign Koude because of the growing concern about his 5ft 10in height which they doubt if he would succeed in the Premier League.

Following the 4-0 defeat by the club in a preseason match on Sunday at Camping World Stadium, Chelsea's manager granted a fearful press conference to lament over their slow activities in the summer transfer market.

The German's frustration will not be unconnected to the club's failure to secure Nathan Aké, Matthijs de Ligt and Raphinha while there has been slow progress in talks with Paris Saint-Germain over France defender Presnel Kimpembe.



## Emir honours Sanusi with emirate title

Secretary General, Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Dr Mohammed Sanusi, has been conferred the title Dan Bauran Gwandu in recognition of his contributions and developmental services for Gwandu Emirate in Kebbi State.

The honour was bestowed on Sanusi by His Royal Highness, the Emir of Gwandu, Major-General Muhammadu Ilyasu Bashar, CFR, mni.

According to the Emir of Gwandu, Sanusi has contributed immensely to the growth of Gwandu and Nigeria likewise which the Emirate deemed necessary to continue to tap from his wealth of knowledge and experience.

Major General Bashar noted that after the conferment, the NFF Secretary-General will be required to deliberate on issues and partake in the emirate's activities, adding that he will

be invited by the emirate council when needed.

According to the NFF Director of Communications, Ademola Olajire, the development was conveyed in a letter addressed to Dr Sanusi on the Emir's behalf by Ibrahim Ahmad Gwandu, Secretary of Gwandu Emirate Council.

The letter read in part: "This honour is accorded to you in recognition and appreciation of your services and contribution

to the development of Gwandu Emirate, Kebbi State and the country in general. The Emirate Council hopes to continue to benefit from your wealth of experience, foresight and wisdom. As a title holder, you are required to actively participate in our activities. Similarly, you will be invited from time to time by His Royal Highness the Emir of Gwandu for consultations as the need arises."

The NFF commented that Sanusi, who already holds the title of Danmasani Wajeke of Wammako town in Sokoto State, served as Director of Competitions of the Nigeria Football Federation before he was appointed the General Secretary in March 2015.

He holds a doctorate degree in sports administration from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is also a FIFA and CAF Match Commissioner.



# MKO National Stadium ready to host international tournaments

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

**F**ederal Government of Nigeria has said the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, is ready to host international matches after undergoing thorough refurbishment.

The Nigerian government said two of the main bowl turf and two of its training pitches are back to international standards.

According to the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, the main bowl turf had been in an ignominious state after the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between his ministry and the Dangote Industries Group.

He said, "The turf of the main bowl had taken a heavy blow after it was rehabilitated through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement of the Federal Ministry of Youth and



Sports Development and the Dangote Industries Group late last year.

"The Ministry's adopted pitch Initiative also ensured that similar rehabilitation works are being carried out on the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos and the Obafemi Awolowo Stadium (formerly called Liberty Stadium) in Ibadan," the Sports Minister recounted.

Recall that the match between the Super Eagles of Nigeria and the Black Stars of Ghana during the FIFA World Cup qualifiers in MKO National Stadium,

Abuja, resorted to Nigeria fans vandalising the stadium facilities following the failure of the Super Eagles to pick the qualifying ticket to Qatar on March 29, 2022.

Aside from that, Dare noted that the state of the pitch when the Super Eagles defeated the Leone Stars of Sierra Leone in AFCON qualifiers was in terrible shape which needed swift intervention.

"The Super Eagles beat Sierra Leone 2-1 in the opening game of their 2023 African Cup of Nations qualifiers in Abuja but the

state of the pitch left so much to be desired," the Sports Minister reacted.

"A visit to the stadium over the weekend reveals the attention to detail by groundsmen who want to deliver a world-class pitch before the next set of International matches of the Super Eagles in September.

"In addition to the revamping of the playing turf, the stadium now has newly installed FIFA-approved technical and players' bench, as well as more effective underground water sprinklers," Dare added.

However, the Sports Minister, in a move to prevent abuse of the facilities in the National Stadium, stated that the stadium is exclusively for the country's national teams.

Sports Minister Sunday Dare has also reiterated that works at the National Stadium, Surulere and Obafemi Awolowo Stadium will continue to be monitored until their turn around is completed

## Chelsea wrestle PSG for Leipzig's Nordi Mukiele

West London club, Chelsea, have joined the race to sign Leipzig defender, Nordi Mukiele, using Timo Werner to convince the German club into accepting their offer.

The move has seen the English club trying to hijack the player from French champions Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), who are already in contact with RB Leipzig.

Santi Aouna in a tweet, said that Chelsea are already in the race to snatch the 24-year-old from PSG.

Prior to PSG's offer to Leipzig for Mukiele, Les Parisiens intended to seek a loan deal for Mukiele but were rebuffed to resort to discussing a permanent deal for the right-back.

The Ligue 1 champions have gone far in negotiations but with the recent push by the Blues for the signature of the former Montpellier player, who grew from the ranks of Paris FC Youth, the Ligue 1 champions may have to intensify their effort to finalise the deal.

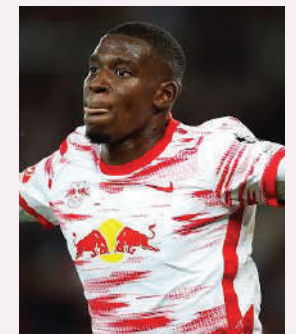
Should PSG complete the deal to bring Mukiele to Parc des Princes, it will signify a return to Ligue 1 for the player, who left four years ago

to the German Bundesliga.

Mukiele made his debut for the France national team in a FIFA World Cup qualifier against Finland in July 2021 for Didier Deschamp but has been outshone by Bayern Munich's defender Benjamin Pavard.

Statistically, the player since he moved to Germany, has made 100 Bundesliga appearances while registering 8 goals coupled with 10 assists.

However, the player has a year left to run in his contract at Red Bull Arena and with Timo Werner clamouring for more playing time, Chelsea believe this is an ample opportunity to use the striker as part of the bargain to get Leipzig who are willing to cash in on the right-back.



## Commonwealth Games 2022: Be good ambassadors, Dare charges Team Nigeria

Youth and Sports Development minister Sunday Dare, has urged Team Nigeria to be good ambassadors at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham as they make over 200 million Nigerians proud.

Dare said they must instil discipline and abstain from anything that will bring the image of the country to disrepute.

In a statement on Friday, before Team Nigeria left for the Commonwealth Games scheduled from July 28 - August 8, 2022, through the Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Lagos and Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja, the Sports Minister warned the athletes to abhor any doping act.

According to him, Nigeria recently got commendations from the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) due to its campaign for zero-tolerance for doping through the increased number of testings for all its athletes. AIU is an anti-doping disciplinary unit of the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF).

"I want to urge you to be disciplined," Dare told the athletes.

The Sports Minister explained that modalities have been put in place to resolve issues or complaints from athletes during the Birmingham event.

"if you have any complaints, the Ministry has outlined how they can be resolved. There are just three



layers for conflict resolution now and by the time you are getting to that third layer, then

you are getting to me," he said. "So as you leave for the Commonwealth Games,

## Cristiano Ronaldo meets Erik ten Hag over future

Manchester United forward Cristiano Ronaldo met the club manager Erik ten Hag on Tuesday to discuss the possibility of leaving Old Trafford to welcome a new challenge.

The player, in a bid to leave the club, abstained from the club's pre-season tour to Australia and Thailand citing family reasons.

He, also, in the pre-season training, refused to come to Carrington, the training base of the club, instead trained in the National Stadium of Portugal.

Chelsea had previously signified interest in the player but backed out early this month while Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid are reportedly gunning for his signature.

While there are ongoing rumours linking the Portuguese

to clubs in Europe and his recent refusal to accept a big-money move to the middle east, Erik ten Hag had previously said the club's highest goalscorer last season is not for sale.

To corroborate Ten Hag's stance on Ronaldo, Dharmesh Sheth, a Sky Sports reporter, stated that Manchester United are opposed to his exit, adding that the club is not looking for a replacement for the goal poacher.

Recently, the United boss said his focus is on his players who are doing well in the pre-season tour.

He claimed they are in good shape, instigating him to further develop them effectively.

Ten Hag, however, insisted that he can not wait for Ronaldo to join the team.

"Concerning is maybe not

remember to be good ambassadors of our dear country and strive to do us proud," Dare added.

Also with the Sports Minister to see off Team Nigeria in Abuja, were the President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), Engineer Habu Gumel, and the Chef de Mission to the Games, Dr Simon Ebojiaye.

Ninety-four athletes and twenty-one officials will be representing Nigeria in nine sports at the 2022 Commonwealth Games starting next week in Birmingham, United Kingdom

the right word. I focus on the players who are there and they are doing well," Ten Hag responded during an interaction with the media.

"They are in good shape and I have further focus on that and develop that.

"I cannot wait for (Ronaldo) to come in and then we will integrate him," he stated.

The Red Devils play Atletico Madrid in Norway on Saturday before their final pre-season game at Old Trafford against Rayo Vallecano on Sunday.

Ten Hag's first game of the 2022-23 season is at Old Trafford to Brighton on Sunday, August 7.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese forward arrived at Carrington training ground alongside his agent Jorge Mendes to discuss his future.

## United targets Milinković-Savić as De Jong's alternative

Manchester United are growing impatient about snapping Barcelona midfielder, Frenkie de Jong, and have identified Lazio's Sergej Milinković-Savić as a replacement for the Dutch.

De Jong, a prime target for the Red Devils has refused to honour a move to Old Trafford despite being assured that the team will be built around him.

Snippets from Spain revealed that the 25-year-old has distanced himself from a move to reunite with coach Erik ten Hag as a result of United's failure to qualify for Champions League football.

Although the 27-year-old Serbian has a contract with Lazio until 2024, the midfielder, who is different in his style of play for being more attacking-minded than the Dutch, has scored 58 goals in 294 appearances for Lazio.

The player joined Lazio from KRC Genk seven years ago to net 48 Serie A goals. Reportedly, the Italian club will not hold back if a club reaches 70 million euros.

If he is sold for that price, the Serbian will become the highest sale by Lazio surpassing Christian Vieri's 46.48 million euro move to Inter Milan in 1999.

Meanwhile, Barcelona President Joan Laporta has reiterated that the club's stand not to allow

him to leave depends on when they have a formal discussion to find out what he truly wants.

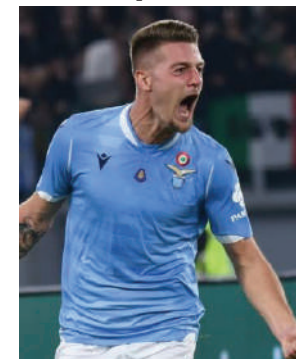
Laporta yesterday, after the Catalans defeated Real Madrid 1-0 in a Clasico in the USA, where the Dutch was a substitute, expressed that De Jong is valuable to the club despite receiving a lot of offers.

He said, "He's our player, we like him a lot.

"We've received some offers but we're not accepting them at the moment, we want to talk to him and find out exactly what he wants," Laporta claimed.

A report from England said that Laporta is not opposed to the move personally with the club consenting to Manchester United's 72 million pound offer for the club.

Erik ten Hag plans to use a 4-3-3 formation system in Manchester United and De Jong or Milinković-Savić would be a perfect blend.





“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

— Leo Tolstoy

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# Oshiomhole, El-Rufai to lead Tinubu's campaign council

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**,  
Abuja

**A** former National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, has been appointed chairman of the presidential campaign council of the party.

According to a newspaper, asource close to the leadership of the party disclosed this and also said that Kaduna State Governor Nasir el-Rufai was appointed Director General of the campaign council.

According to the source, the decision was taken after consultations with President Muhammadu Buhari and the leadership of the party.



Oshiomhole



El-Rufai

## Obi thanks supporters, warns against online parody accounts, impersonation

Labour Party Presidential Candidate Peter Obi has again appreciated his numerous supporters across the country, saying that the journey to rescuing it will be difficult without them. He was notifying the public of the various acts of impersonation against him on the Internet.

In a statement signed by his Special Adviser on Media, Mr. Valentine Obienyem, Obi stated that, of all the social media platforms, he only operates on Twitter at the moment. He said that his Twitter handle remains @PeterObi and tweets from him are marked PO.

Obi explained that the disclosure was imperative to avoid usually dubious characters or the opposition trying to mischievously or criminally exploit the name for other uses. He enjoined all his supporters, and indeed Nigerians to be wary of any social media account showing his name and pictures as not authentically his.

“The OBidients and Mr. Obi's other numerous supporters, and indeed, Nigerians in general, are enjoined to be wary of any such unauthorized social media accounts, specifically on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, which have been opened and are operated in his name.

“While I understand the zeal, enthusiasm and passion of those operating these accounts, I wish to state categorically, that I did not create nor authorise anyone to create and manage such accounts on my behalf,” part of the Statement read.

“In due time, ‘The Obidient Movement’ will open up more communications channels with which we can interact with all Obidients, as we march to take back our nation and reposition it on the path of progress,” he concluded.

# Imo deaf community protests against demolition

By **ATHAN AGBAKWURU**,  
Owerri

Imo State Association of the Deaf, IMSAD, has staged a peaceful demonstration in Owerri, the capital, against what they termed ‘the unwarranted demolition’ of the Deaf Centre by the Environmental Transformation Task Force, ENTRACO.

The aggrieved demonstrators numbering about 100 drawn from the 27 Local Government Areas of the state stormed Government House, Owerri about 09am after staging a march from the association's centre at #101 Wetheral Road, in the state capital.

The group marched through the major roads as part of efforts to draw government and

public attention to the action of ENTRACO, carrying placards with inscriptions such as; ‘We are the most vulnerable group that have been exploited and neglected,’ ‘Please Our Daddy, Senator Uzodinma,’ Executive Governor of Imo State have mercy on us,’ ‘Deaf House is our only hope and home.’ ‘Governor Give us Certificate of Occupancy,’ among others.

Speaking on the protest, the state chairman of IMSAD, Mr Uzoma Edwards and the General Secretary, Mr Sochineme Madu in a statement presented to Government disclosed that ENTRACO Taskforce had on 06th July, 2022 came to the Deaf House to serve them a ‘Vacate Notice’ within 24hrs.

According to

Uzoma, they went to lodge complaint to the ENTRACO office next day but the managing director was not on seat and they notified on senior staff, Mr Uche Timothy who claimed that the office was unaware of the eviction notice.

He regretted that same day, ENTRACO taskforce came with policemen wearing facemasks along with the managing director harassing, threatening, intimidating and assaulting the chairman and his members as they appealed to stop the demolition.

His words, “To our shock, the ENTRACO taskforce came with policemen wearing facemasks with the managing director, threatening, intimidating and assaulting us, Mr Uzoma Edwards,

the President of Imo State Association of the Deaf, members including women while we made appeal to them to stop further demolishing our Deaf House/shops which we painstakingly built in order to assist and alleviate the sufferings of our less privileged members. Our appeals turned into futility as they kept demolishing Deaf House/shops by the use of force.”

The group recalled that the centre was built and allocated to them by the first civilian governor of Imo, Chief Sam Mbakwe and insisted that they would rather die than allow anybody to demolish their house and displace them.

Uzoma therefore requested Governor Hope Uzodinma to restore the existing centre for them as their last hope

for assemblage, worship, meetings, conferences and vocational trainings as well as issue the association a Certificate of Occupancy to forestall further harassment and threat of eviction.

After waiting for about three hours at the gate of Government House, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Barr. Nnamdi Anyaehie addressed the protesters assuring them of government's intervention to ensure they are not displaced.

Anyaehie commended the association for being peaceful when their building was demolished and during the demonstration assuring them that they governor will receive their complaint and address it favourably.