

Amotekun arrests 168 suspected invaders of S'West

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA** (Akure)
Men of the Ondo State chapter of the South West Regional Security Network Agency condemned Amotekun,

have arrested another 168 suspected invaders who were hiding themselves and over 40 motorcycles under cows loaded in two trucks. They were arrested in the Sango area, along Akure-Ado Expressway with dangerous

charms hidden inside bags of rice, The Trumpet gathered. Amotekun a few days ago arrested 151 suspected invaders with items who hid under bags of rice, around Sango, Akure/Ado Road.

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PATRIOTIC VOICE

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Sylva



Gen Irabor

NIGERIA'S ALL GOLD MEDALLISTS

TOBI AMUSAN 100M HURDLES	ESE BRUME LONG JUMP
MERCY GENESIS 50KG WEIGHTLIFTING	BLESSING OBORODUDU WRESTLING [68KG]
ODUNAYO ADEKUNLE WRESTLING [57KG]	RAFIATU FOLASHADE WEIGHTLIFTING [59KG]
ADIJAT OLARINOYE WEIGHTLIFTING [55KG]	ALICE OLUWAFEMIAYO BARBELL POWERLIFTING [75KG]
EUCHARIKA IYIASI F55-57 SHOT PUT	CHIOMA ONYEKWERE DISCUS THROW
GOODNESS NWACHUKWU DISCUS THROW	FAVOUR OFILI ROSEMARY CHUKWUMA GRACE NWOKOCHA TOBI AMUSAN WOMEN'S 4X100M RELAY

Govt declares emergency over oil theft

By **ATHAN AGBAKWURU** (Owerri), **GABRIEL ELOZINO AWODEHA** (Asaba), **CHRIS EZEONOH** (Port Harcourt) and **AHEROKE OKIOMA** (Yenagoa)

emergency because the theft has worsened because most of the theft takes place in the host communities of oil pipelines. As a result, it has become necessary to involve the stakeholders, especially the host communities.

“Due to the seriousness and orchestrated nature of the menace, Nigeria could not take advantage of the opportunities in gas production, because no investor would want to invest where there is incessant insecurity and vandalism of infrastructure.”

Sylva, who appealed to the stakeholders to collaborate in tackling the menace, commended Uzodimma for his efforts in ensuring that Imo remained safe, while safeguarding the state’s economy.

Also speaking, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Lucky Irabor, thanked Uzodimma for supporting the Armed Forces in the fight against rising criminality in the oil-producing areas of the South East region.

Irabor urged the state government, stakeholders and communities to be actively involved in the fight against oil theft and leave the rest for the army and assured the governor that the army was ready for more assistance in the



Diri

fight against banditry and other criminality in the state and entire country.

Responding, Uzodimma, who assured that his administration would sustain its efforts in checking economic sabotage being perpetrated by pipeline vandals, described the consequences of crude theft as very alarming and too much to be tolerated.

He added that the problem did not only result in the reduction of oil revenue for the Federal Government, but also created environmental pollution and other health hazards for the host communities.

He, therefore, called for cooperation among federal

and state governments, NNPC and host communities to effectively fight the scourge, adding that the meeting was part of the nationwide intervention efforts to curb crude oil theft.

Uzodimma commended the NNPC for the 200-bed capacity hospital the company was building at the Imo State University Teaching Hospital, Orlu and appealed to the company to facilitate the project and ensure its timely completion.

Others on the entourage were the Minister of State for Education, Gooduck Opiah, Group Managing Director of NNPC Limited, Mele Kyari, some traditional rulers

and representatives of oil producing communities in the state.

On his part, Governor Douye Diri has assured of Bayelsa State’s collaboration with other stakeholders to tackle oil theft, saying it poses serious threat to the Niger Delta and the entire country.

He stated this at Government House, Yenagoa when the Federal Government delegation led by Sylva visited the state on Monday.

Diri, who noted that oil theft had affected the environment and image of the region negatively, canvassed urgent actions to end the ugly trend in the interest of the region and entire country.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Daniel Alabrah, the governor lamented that oil theft, which also affects government at all levels, has denied the local communities their means of livelihood, stressing that if not stopped or reduced drastically, the implications would be grave.

Recalling how the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) discussed with governors on the issue, Diri stressed the need for collaboration between the states and the Federal Government to tackle the menace and assured that

his administration would play its role to ensure that the menace is tackled effectively.

His words: “The federal and state governments largely depend on oil. So, oil theft does not affect only the federal government. It affects us as a state government and the local governments. We have spoken about this over and over and we will continue to say it.

“We are talking about our environment that has been brazenly polluted through oil bunkering activities. If you go to our communities, you will see oil floating on our rivers, and that has led to the locals not having a means of livelihood. It has led to unknown diseases and sicknesses.

“There is a spiral effect of oil theft that is going on in the Niger Delta and it affects the communities and the people. So, I assure you that we will collaborate to ensure an end to oil theft.

Speaking, Sylva said the team visited the state to seek collaboration with a view to ending oil theft in the Niger Delta, adding that stealing of oil was going on at an alarming rate and should no longer be tolerated given its negative effects on the country’s economy.

Sylva, a former governor of the state, who lamented that production has been badly affected, which is also having negative impact on foreign investments in the country, commended Diri for his willingness to collaborate with the Federal Government to end oil theft.

Also speaking, Irabor said the military has heightened operational engagements to stop criminal activities in the

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Commonwealth Games: Birmingham 2022 medals table

Commonwealth Games

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Australia	67	57	54	178
2	England	57	66	53	176
3	Canada	26	32	34	92
4	India	22	16	23	61
5	New Zealand	20	12	17	49
6	Scotland	13	11	27	51
7	Nigeria	12	9	14	35
8	Wales	8	6	14	28
9	South Africa	7	9	11	27
10	Malaysia	7	8	8	23
11	Northern Ireland	7	7	4	18
12	Jamaica	6	6	3	15

13	Kenya	6	5	10	21
14	Singapore	4	4	4	12
15	Trinidad and Tobago	3	2	1	6
16	Uganda	3	0	2	5
17	Cyprus	2	3	6	11
18	Pakistan	2	3	3	8
19	Samoa	1	4	0	5
20	Barbados	1	1	1	3
=	Cameroon	1	1	1	3
=	Zambia	1	1	1	3
23	Grenada	1	1	0	2
=	The Bahamas	1	1	0	2
25	Bermuda	1	0	1	2
26	British Virgin Islands	1	0	0	1
27	Mauritius	0	3	2	5

28	Ghana	0	2	3	5
29	Fiji	0	2	2	4
30	Mozambique	0	2	1	3
31	Sri Lanka	0	1	3	4
32	Tanzania	0	1	2	3
33	Botswana	0	1	1	2
=	Guernsey	0	1	1	2
35	Dominica	0	1	0	1
=	Papua New Guinea	0	1	0	1
=	St Lucia	0	1	0	1
=	The Gambia	0	1	0	1
39	Namibia	0	0	4	4
40	Malta	0	0	1	1
=	Nauru	0	0	1	1
=	Niue	0	0	1	1

35	Dominica	0	1	0	1
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40	Malta	0	0	1	1
=	Nauru	0	0	1	1
=	Niue	0	0	1	1
=	Vanuatu	0	0	1	1



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Okowa hails Team Nigeria's all-time best performance

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba

Delta State Governor, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, has congratulated Nigerian athletes for their medals haul at the just-concluded 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England.

He particularly extolled World record breaker, Tobi Amusan, for her gold medal in the women's 100m hurdles, where she set a new Commonwealth record, and also led Favour Ofili, Rosemary

Chukwuma and Grace Nwokocha to a historic gold medal in women's 4x100m relay.

Home-girl, Ese Brume, with a gold medal and new Commonwealth record in Long Jump was also a toast of the governor, who expressed great delight at the marvelous performances of other gold medalists - Adijat Olarinoye, Rafiatu Lawal (Weightlifting), Chioma Onyekwere (Discus Throw), Alice Oluwafemiayo (Powerlifting).

Others are Adekuoroye Odunayo, Oborodudu Blessing and Genesis Mercy



Okowa

(Wrestling), and Para-Athletes - Goodness Nwachukwu (Women's Discus) and Eucharia Iyiasi (Women's Shot Put). The athletes took

Team Nigeria's gold medal haul to 12 - the best in the history of Nigeria's participation at the Games.

According to Okowa

in a statement on Tuesday by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, I am quite elated with the sterling performances of the Nigerian athletes at the Commonwealth Games.

He said that the athletes victoriously transited, with the winning spirit, from the World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon, to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The presidential running mate commended the athletes for their patriotism, determination and hard work which propelled

them to the superb outing at the Games, etching Nigeria high in the world's psyche in spite of challenges back home.

"On behalf of the government and people of Delta, I congratulate these great compatriots for making our country proud, and I again, urge every Nigerian to imbibe this winning spirit and attitude in every facet of our livelihood to make Nigeria attain the greatness God has programmed it for, given its endowment in human and natural resources.

"It is only such conquering mentality and patriotic heroism that can engender the much-needed change for a better nation that Nigerians earnestly yearn for.

"Once more, congratulations to Team Nigeria and all participating athletes and coaches for this great honour," he stated.

Commonwealth Games: Birmingham 2022 medals table

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Amotekun arrests 168 suspected invaders of S'West

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Parading the suspects at its headquarters, Alagbaka, Akure, Commander of Ondo Amotekun, Adetunji Adeleye, said the 168 suspected invaders were nabbed by men of the corps who were on stop and search operation around Itaogbolu and Iju Communities in Akure North Local Government Area. Adeleye disclosed that the suspects were from Kano and Jigawa States

and had no obvious mission in Ondo.

He said some of the invaders profilings earlier showed that a majority of them did not have any answer on where they came from. He disclosed that the corps found out that the influx of invaders was continuing. The commander disclosed that if there is nobody to take custody of them in Ondo, they (the suspects) would be sent back to their various states after investigation and

profiling show nothing incriminating on them.

His words: "On Sunday, our stop and search team saw these two trucks. They told them that they were on their way to Ondo State with cows after careful examination, we found out that they carefully concealed about 40 motorcycles with 168 people lying down beneath the motorcycles.

"The upper floor has cows, the middle has motorcycles wrapped

and dismantled and on the lower floor, we have 168 people lying down, such that if you are not careful, you won't observe it."

He stressed that after interrogation on where they were going, why they packed themselves and why they were avoiding people, they said they were coming to Ondo State.

He added: "Upon interrogation none of them have an address of where they are going, nobody invited them and

we are becoming curious about these invasions. I called it invasion because you see over 100 able-bodied men concealing themselves under animals, it shows they are up to negative motives.

"We have commenced profiling but we want to warn citizens of the state to be wary of strangers because nobody knows how many invaders had managed to enter the state. We saw these ones with charms which we are yet to ascertain what their mission is.

"The motorcycle owners confessed that none of the bikes had papers and of course, they photocopied some papers.

"You can see one engine number in 30 motorcycles which clearly shows that they were forged documents. We will find out how they got the motorcycles and also find out their mission in the state. If they don't have any credible thing to do in the state, we will send them back."

I don't derive my impetus to serve from PDP, says Wike

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**, Port Harcourt

Governor Nyesom Ezenwo Wike has said that his developmental strides in Rivers State should not be ascribed to the fact that he is a member of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP).

He stated this at the inauguration of the dualized Ogbunuabali-Eastern Bypass Road that was performed by a former governor of Sokoto State, Senator Aliyu Wamakko on Tuesday.

The governor stated that it was wrong for people to think that leadership is a function of political party, when it is actually about the mindset of the individual.

"Leadership is not about party, leadership is about individual. Party is only a vehicle to actualize your ambition, to be able to tell your people I have this capacity, I have this quality to render services to you. If you

take me away today from PDP to another party, I will still perform. So, it is not because I'm in PDP that I'm performing.

"It is because I have that passion for my people. It is because I have the commitment to serve my people. Take me to YPP, allow me to become whatever I will become there, I will perform. Take me to any party, I will perform. So, it is not party that makes you to perform."

Governor Wike stated that his undying love, passion and commitment to render effective service to Rivers people have sufficiently differentiated him from other politicians.

He said while others had used the economic hardship as excuse not to render leadership and service to their people, he found a more rewarding way to sustain the delivery of projects in Rivers.

The governor stated that he had

remained a consistent politician, not playing double game and urged Rivers people to be happy that they have a governor who will always defend the State.

He thanked the people of Ogbunuabali for their cooperation while the project lasted even if they had initially rejected it.

He used the occasion to lift the ban on youths activities in Ogbunuabali community and announced the release of N2 billion he promised the community.

Inaugurating the Ogbunuabali-Eastern Bypass Road, former governor of Sokoto State, Senator Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko noted with delight the leadership capacity that governor Wike has demonstrated in serving Rivers people.

Senator Wamakko said any well meaning government should serve to satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of the governed, stressing that Wike has done adequately well for his people.



Gov. Nyesom Wike



Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa

Delta community protests over abandoned road project

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

Residents of Onicha village in Ubulu-Uku town, Aniocha South Local Council of Delta State, have embarked on a peaceful protest over the deplorable state of Onicha-Uku/Onicha-Ugbo Road. They urged the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to re-open investigation on the alleged misappropriation of N245 million, released for the rehabilitation of the road.

The road, which links them to Abuja, Lagos and Asaba was awarded in 2015. The community also called on the State Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the World Bank to come to their rescue before erosion sweeps the entire community away. The present state of the road, according to

the placard-bearing protesters, has brought untold hardship, after the state and federal governments have abandoned them to their fate. They had to resort to unsustainable self help efforts.

Secretary of the community, Osaji Ephraim Iwebunor, who read the content of a save-our-soul letter, alleged deceit on the part of officials of the NDDC, who he said pretended to be working on the road only to disappear sooner or later.

He said: "In 2019, some persons came to parade themselves as workers who came on instructions of the Senator representing Delta North, Peter Nwaoboshi, who incidentally was representing us in the NDDC Senate Committee at the time. The workers came with their tools, including bulldozers and other equipment. Few days after loitering around,

the workers disappeared with their tools.

"We later found out that the so-called workers appeared in our community to give impression to the EFCC team visiting Delta State at the time to investigate some NDDC abandoned projects, that work was in progress.

"Regrettably as you can see, the only access road to our community, which is like express road to other communities, especially Onicha-Ugbo, in Aniocha North, Edo State, even Delta State capital, Asaba, is in a very deplorable condition. We have been totally cut off from other communities, even in the same town, Ubulu-Uku.

"It is no longer news that our elderly, the sick, non courageous, weaklings and our children can not attempt to access the road, as passing through is like walking through the valley of death."

Why Edo raised minimum wage, by Obaseki

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki has said the increment of the state's minimum wage from N30,000 to N40,000 as well as payment of the harmonized pension to retirees was to provide succour to workers and pensioners who are overburdened with the weight of the harsh economic realities in the country.

Obaseki, who stated this while addressing journalists in Benin City, said the state government remains committed to the welfare of workers and will sustain policies and programmes to ensure that the workers are adequately empowered to deliver quality service to Edo people.

Governor Obaseki had on 2022 Workers Day announced the payment of harmonized

pension to retirees in the state after 21 years, as well as the increment of the minimum wage in the state from N30,000 to N40,000.

The governor said, "I want to assure workers in the state that, as a government, we feel their pains. We know that things are tough and wish we had more resources as a state government for our people.

"The N40, 000 minimum wage we introduced was because of the pain our people are facing."

He added, "This was not when dollar was N700; it was when the dollar was still N400. So, you can imagine how the hardship of workers has progressed or is progressing.

"As a government, we will join you to do everything possible to make sure that we get those who are in charge and those who are responsible for managing this country at the national level to stop this pain."

Hailing workers in the state for their continuous support to the government, Obaseki said, "We have enjoyed tremendous goodwill from Edo workers. It is on record that no strike or protest has been embarked by any of the unions against our administration, except it is politically motivated. I am not sure that there is any government outside this state that boasts of such records."

"This has been made possible by all Edo workers because of the trust they built with us and by the grace of God, we will not betray that trust," the governor reassured.



Gov. Godwin Obaseki

New twist on East-West Road repair

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**, Port Harcourt

Even as the 10 kilometer Eleme junction to Trailer Park stretch of the East-West road has badly deteriorated following return of the rains, the repair program enunciated by the federal government remains hazy.

Following agitation by stakeholders within the Eleme-Ogoni axis who are regular users of the road which culminated in the blockage of the road in protest for about one week in 2021, the federal government through the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs had moved to repair the road and commissioned Reynolds Construction Company, (RCC) as contractors to take up the project.

But after a while that the RCC mobilized to site, the company pulled out unceremoniously.

However, the then Minister of Niger Delta Ministry, Senator Godswill Akpabio later said that the magnitude of the project which cost he put at about N85 billion was too heavy for the ministry to carry, explaining that the Federal Ministry of Works had taken over the project and listed it to be funded from the Federal Infrastructure Development Fund Program.

But last Friday, the Managing Director of Nigeria Ports Authority, (NPA), Mohammed Bello Koko said that NPA was interfacing with the new minister of Niger Delta ministry, Umanah Okon Umanah with a view to exploring ways to fix the road from Oil Mill to Trailer Park.

Bello Koko who disclosed this in an interactive forum with stakeholders of Onne Port at the port complex conference hall assured that government would do everything possible to ensure that the Ease of Doing Business policy of the federal government impact positively on the operations at the port.

The MD's attention had been drawn to the deplorable state of the road by one of the stakeholders at the meeting who urged the NPA authority to drive the repair of the road since it is the main gateway to the port and impacting very negatively on the business of stakeholders at the port.

If the revelation by the MD that he was interfacing with the new minister of Niger Delta ministry for the repair of the road is to be taken seriously as it should, then what becomes of the take-over of the road by the Federal ministry of Works which

had also acknowledged that it would be funded from the Infrastructure Development program?

Is it the case of inter agency rivalry or duplication of functions to get some private pockets well padded? Some analysts have been alleging that the same portion of the East-West Road has become a piece of cake for some unscrupulous government officials.

Almost every year, one form of patchwork or the other takes place on the road, sometimes by companies that can hardly boast of modern tools for a road of such importance to the socio-economic well being of the nation.

Now the question begging for answers is at what point was the take-over by the ministry of works reversed, and has the Niger Delta ministry suddenly become so buoyant that it can now afford a whopping N85 billion needed to put the road into shape which it had earlier said it could not afford? Or was Akpabio being economical with the truth about the ministry not having the financial muscle to do the road?

Analysts are also wondering whether this is another befuddling rigmarole by the Buhari administration to keep passing the buck until it exits power next year.

The stories surrounding the road repair are strange as they are heart breaking. One of the stories making the rounds currently is that the arrow heads of the agitation last year who caused the road to be blocked for one week have been 'settled' to abandon the struggle.

This may not be far from the truth if the body language and reaction of some of the dramatis personae now are anything to go by. When the action (road block) was on, one would say from the seeming uncompromising stance of the people that nothing could make them yield to any lure of the lucre, more so given the hardship people go through daily on the road.

What is baffling also is that the Executive Chairman of Eleme Local Government Council, Chief Obarilormate Ollor who championed the struggle by providing logistics for the protesters throughout the duration of the protest has suddenly gone dumb and dodging interviews. He would not respond to calls nor react to whatsapp messages where the reasons for the calls were explicitly stated for him to even say something without any physical contact.

With the passion the



Sen. Godswill Akpabio

chairman spoke last year about the hardship people, particularly his subjects in the local government area go through on the road, one would think and believe that he would not hesitate to remobilize the protesters to occupy the road once again as he had hinted then.

Hear the chairman, "Immediately I was sworn in as chairman, I made a press conference where I complained bitterly of what has been happening, even before I was sworn in as chairman where there have been series of protests against the Federal Government by our people, youth groups, different political groups, women organizations so many times for the past 10 years concerning this road and its deplorable state.

"All of you know that what we have on this road is completely reprehensible. So what happened was that I had to give a 14 day

ultimatum to the Federal Government. The 14 days expired on the 2nd of July, 2021. After that, we gave another 2 weeks of grace and the youths kept prevailing on me to shut down the entire stretch of this road.

"I had no option than to allow that action take place last Monday, 25th of July, 2021. A lot of persons have died, business owners have lost their businesses, containers and trucks have collapsed, investment is threatened in our LGA which is supposed to be an investment destination. So the action pleased all those who are investors. We have been here for 7 days." That was excerpts from the chairman's speech while announcing the suspension of the road blockade last year following assurances by federal government through then minister of Niger Delta, Senator Godswill Akpabio that the

road would be constructed

Apparently enraged by the failure of government to fulfill the pledge to commence work on the road, the chairman at a meeting with critical stakeholders in the transportation sector early this year informed them that another action on the road was imminent and gave till end of February for FG to commence construction work on the road or face the wrath of the people.

"We cannot watch our people suffer continuously as a result of the insincerity and irresponsibility of the Federal Government and its agencies. It is very clear that as we get closer to the election period, the Federal Government would shift attention from infrastructural development and focus on campaigns. Therefore they have to fix the road as they promised before election or nobody will have access to that road", the council chairman threatened.

This is August and in September campaigns would commence to confirm the fears of the chairman that the campaign and electioneering would overshadow every other program of government. Yet not even a whimper can be heard from him again.

On the aspect of the youths, hear Legborsi Yamaabana, President Ogoni Youths Federation, (OYF) who was one of the arrow head of the protest. "The Ogoni axis of the East West road is the only link to the Port Harcourt Refining Company, Indorama Petrochemicals, Nigerian Ports Authority Onne, Oil and Gas Free Zone Onne and about 300 multinational companies.

"Despite the aforesaid, and the huge economic value

of the road, the Federal Government has refused to fix it, thereby inflicting hardship on our people and commuters. We have suffered for too long. Enough is enough! History is on our side; God is on our side," he bellowed while justifying the protest and why the youths blocked the road.

Amidst all the red eyed threats, one year after, the condition of the road has degenerated with most commuters abandoning the road and seeking recourse through community roads adjacent to the dilapidated road. All the people and groups who threatened fire and brimstone if the road was not done have strangely kept mute, suggesting that there might have been some 'oiling' of palm to take the pressure off the government.

But the reality is that the anguish on the road has gone out of hand as commuters are now forced to abandon the vehicles they boarded and trek long distances to escape the frustrating, long labyrinthine traffic jams that have become a daily feature on the road particularly near the Indorama junction and going beyond the archaic bridge linking Eleme-Ogoni axis to the port Harcourt city.

"You can imagine what would be the fate of anyone being rushed to the hospital on medical emergency with this kind of situation on this road. Wouldn't the person die here?, one the persons trapped on the road was heard asking a colleague seated with him in a car.

As it appears, everyone seems to have resigned to fate, wishing and hoping that government will graciously turn its eyes to the all important road and do the needful. Will they?

NYSC to partner financial institutions for loans to business-inclined corps members

By **ISAAC JOB**, Uyo

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is moving to empower its members. Therefore, it has restated its commitment to partner with financial institutions and provide start-up loans for corps members interested in venturing into business.

Speaking in Uyo on Tuesday during the closing ceremony of 2022 batch "B" stream 2 orientation, the Director General of NYSC Brig Gen Mohammad Fadah commended corps members for their commitment to the entrepreneurial training conducted in camp under the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship

Development (SAED) programme.

Fadah, represented by State Coordinator, Mrs Chinyere Ekwe, said that the effort would boost self-reliance and encourage corps members to contribute immensely to the economy.

Fadah encouraged corp members to build on the skills acquired by availing themselves of post-camp training opportunities to be self-employed.

"On our part, we are liaising with financial institutions and other stakeholders with a view to providing start-up loans to enable you to actualise your business dreams.

"I wish to assure you

that management will continue to explore avenues for optimising the impact of the programme," Fadah said.

The DG warned corps members against using social media to promote hatred, advising that they should rather the platform to promote unity, peace, and prosperity of the nation.

He admonished corps members to be security conscious at all times and urged employers to accept and make the necessary provisions for the corps members' welfare.

"I also call on other stakeholders, including state and local government authorities, as well

as traditional rulers to give the necessary encouragement to the youth corps members," he said.



Mohammad Fadah

Ogun govt advocates exclusive breastfeeding for babies

In a bid to promote exclusive breastfeeding practice, Ogun State Government has urged employers of labour to create a baby-friendly working environment that will encourage nursing mothers in their respective organisations, to ensure stronger

immunity in children.

Commissioner for Health, Dr Tomi Coker said this in Abeokuta, while speaking with newsmen on the 2022 World Breastfeeding Week with the theme; "Step Up For Breastfeeding, Educate and Teach", saying the practice

of exclusive breastfeeding would provide numerous health benefits for mother and child, as well as the society at large.

Coker added that corporate organisations should provide mini creches and common rooms where nursing mothers could breastfeed their babies appropriately, in order not to deprive children of the nutritional benefits of breast milk and to ensure better performance among working mothers.

"I would implore employers of labour to

create a baby-friendly working environment and have common rooms where nursing mothers can breastfeed their children", she said.

The Commissioner emphasised other derivable benefits of breastfeeding to include; better vision, lower rate of mortality in children, readily available antibodies and substances that naturally soothe infants, as women also enjoy faster weight loss, lower risk of postpartum depression, and better positive mood.



Dr Tomi Coker

Akeredolu confirms arrest of Owo church attackers

By Friday Omosola, Akure

Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has confirmed the arrest of five among the attackers of St. Francis Catholic Church in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State.

He confirmed the arrest shortly after the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Lucky Irabor announced it in Abuja.

He further disclosed that the owner of the house where the attackers stayed before the June 5 attack in Owo has also been arrested. Akeredolu who disclosed this in Akure noted that his government did not spare a moment in trailing the terrorists since the horrendous attacks on innocent worshippers at the St. Francis Catholic Church, Owaluwa, Owo, Owo Local Government Area.

He called on leaders of the Ebira Community in the state to warn their young ones not to copy the bad venture of kidnapping. The Chairman of the Southern Governors Forum, said recent reports from victims of kidnap in the state have established that some Ebira indigenes are now involved in the unwholesome act. He noted that the Ebiras have lived together with the people of the state peacefully for several decades, adding that they have always been supportive and hardworking. He said:

"Now that the military has announced it, I can tell you that five of them have been arrested now. They are still on the trail of the rest. The home where they lodged in Owo and the person that accommodated them before the attack, has also been arrested.

"We did not spare a moment. I am happy that the Chief of Defence Staff has announced it. We have known for a while but we needed not to come out with it because more works are still ongoing. I can confirm that this arrest has been made. And they are still on the trail of some of them. I want to use this medium to urge our brothers to concentrate on their farming trade. It will be unfortunate to know that the Ebiras in our midst are now involved in the kidnapping. We are appealing to them not to copy bad things. The traders selling by the roadside should not become informants. We are not fighting them.

"We have seen their numbers, they supported and voted for us during elections. I will call their leaders and talk to them. Our brothers who were kidnapped on their way to Ikare, talk to them. They were taken to Ebira farmsteads. For me, we have lived together for too long for this to happen. I am ready to make any effort to ensure that the conviviality that we have enjoyed continues. But we are begging their leaders to urge them not to copy bad things. They are in our midst, we are surrounded by them. The issue of security is key and it's dynamic," Governor Akeredolu noted.

He maintained that aside from the recent recruitment and training of new Amotekun personnel, 20 hunters and local vigilantes would be trained by the Amotekun corps in each of the eighteen local government areas in the state to strengthen security in the state.



Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, Mele Kyari (left), Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Lucky Irabor, during a visit of Federal Government's delegation to Government House, Yenagoa

Bad policies kill 50 manufacturing firms in seven years

Investments in the manufacturing sector has reduced by 56 per cent in seven years, while 50 firms have shut down since 2017 due bad government policies and economic headwinds.

Data compiled and released by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) showed that Surest Foam Limited, Mufex, Framan Industries, MZM Continental, Nipol Industries, Moak Industries and Stone Industries and others are among manufacturing firms that have closed operations

in the last five years.

Investments by those still surviving have decreased from N489.44 billion in 2016 to N217.22 billion in 2021, the data further revealed.

Chairman Qualitek Industries, a major player in the aluminum and steel sector, Oluyinka Kufile, said:

"How many companies in our sector are still in operation? Wempco has shut down, WAHUM is struggling and the rest are just there bidding time. When we come for meetings, we will not be more than 11

companies."

Kufile blamed the development on a combination of bad government policies, arguing that Nigeria was yet to understand its true direction towards economic diversification.

The economy witnessed two recessions between 2016 and 2021, one caused by foreign exchange (forex) problems and the other by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic and financial analysts say federal and state governments have responded poorly to the economic challenges in

the country.

Insecurity has worsened in the five years, while forex crisis have increased, with the naira depreciating as much as 54 per cent from N197 to the dollar to N425 in the official market and over N700 at the parallel market over the period.

The situation has been further exacerbated by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government focus on revenue collection and do not bother to ease business for 41.5 million micro, small, medium businesses and other larger enterprises.



Gov. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu



University Education: The chickens have come home to roost

By PROF EYITOE OGUNMODEDE

President Muhammadu Buhari recently gave a 2-weeks ultimatum, which has since expired, for the negotiating parties to resolve the Federal Government-ASUU imbroglio. Some of us who had been in the educational sector long enough and had witnessed the aberrations knew it was a tall order and more fittingly, an impossible condition. This is not because the matter cannot be resolved in less than two weeks but because it was clearly discernible that the parties involved and other stakeholders in university education have not been telling ourselves the bitter truth. The closest to uprightness was the statement by the Honourable Minister of Labour that the Federal Government does not have the funds to meet its obligations in the agreement signed with the Unions, and that the country is broke. How else can one explain a 2009 agreement that is still begging for implementation in 2022? What is the assurance that a follow-up agreement in 2022 will be implemented before another 13 years (2035), if the prevailing conditions remain unaltered?

I struggled within me in deciding whether to send my modest suggestions covertly to the major parties involved or put it in the public domain. I have however come to the conclusion that it will serve greater public good with the latter approach since virtually all Nigerians are stakeholders. The unwary public has the right to know what is responsible for this seemingly intractable challenge, the ultimate solution and what should be their role in resolving the issues. It is embarrassing that the current ASUU strike which began on 14th February, 2022 has again been "rolled over" for another 4 weeks. Other staff Unions on our campuses (SSANU, NASU and NAAT) have not fared better. The last ASUU strike in 2020 lasted for nine months and from all indications, the current strike may last longer. Must we continue this way? Is incessant strike the solution to the decadence in the educational system? Have the strikes been effective or of any overall benefit to the stakeholders? The answer to all these questions is ambiguous and clearly dependent on the side to which the individual belongs.

ASUU embarked on the current strike to press home its demands for; the renegotiation of the ASUU/FGN 2009 agreement, deployment of UTAS to replace IPPIS, release of the reports of Visitation panels to federal universities, funding for revitalization of public universities, earned academic allowances, poor funding of State Universities and promotion arrears. I have not been privileged to read the Nimi Briggs Report but snippets in the newspapers and other information outlets indicate that a major part of the report is increment in salary. Nigerian lecturers are now the poorest paid in Africa and it is obvious that such a system can never retain the best. We know from the Minister of Labour, Employment and Productivity, Dr. Chris Ngige, that the Nimi Briggs Committee proposed "109 to 185 per cent increase in the University wage structure", and that "the Federal Government will incur an additional N560 billion as salaries alone". The Minister has opined that negotiating with ASUU without simultaneously doing so with other university-based unions only delays the strike as it would not achieve a quick resolution of the issues. The Minister at several fora has also declared that Nigeria is broke (saying the obvious!) and that the Federal Government does not have the funds to meet its obligations in the agreement signed



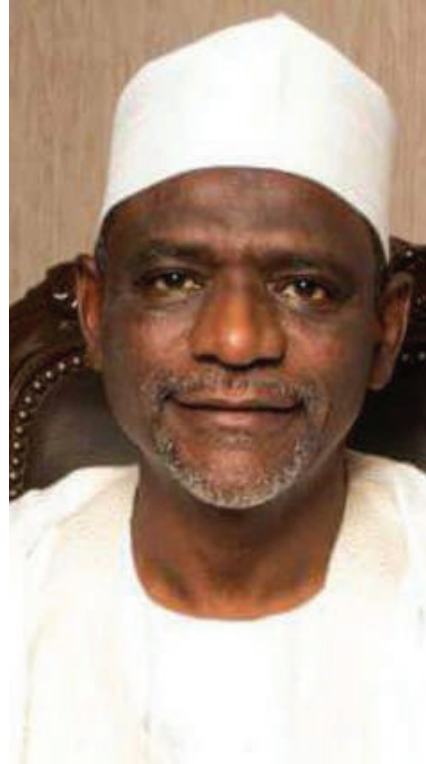
President Muhammadu Buhari

with the Unions. He has therefore called for renegotiation of the terms of the Agreement with ASUU, in the effort to end the ongoing strike by University staff.

If we continue this way, the negotiations are unlikely to record any significant achievement.

Emeritus Professor Nimi Briggs (Pro-Chancellor, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo), chairing the current negotiating Panel and other members of the panel are reputable and highly revered individuals with very deep insight of university education. They have over the years proven their devotion and total commitment to the growth and development of higher education in the country. However, the fact remains that they have to work within the ambit of their terms of reference. The Committee inaugurated on March 7, 2022 had three months to conclude the renegotiation of the 2009 FGN/ASUU agreement and, as expected, it submitted its report on schedule. However, the efforts of the 7-member renegotiating team now appear to be inadequate in resolving the present impasse, reopening our universities and keeping our campuses functional. It will be necessary to know the suggestions proffered by the Renegotiating Committee on how the Federal Government would source the funds to meet the proposed salary increase.

Another major grouse of ASUU and the other staff Unions with the Federal Government is the introduction of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). The IPPIS is domiciled in the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF). The IPPIS project, which commenced in 2007, centralises the payment of salaries and wages directly to the bank accounts of all federal government employees in Nigeria. It is one of the major issues that led to the 9-month strike by the ASUU in 2020, and the follow-up industrial actions by SSANU and NASU early in 2021. The challenges of IPPIS are enormous for all stakeholders and especially for the Universities. Due to the peculiarities of the Universities, there are major challenges with the use of IPPIS. Most of these are, to all extent and purposes, human problems. The scheme has become an albatross bedeviling the tertiary education system in the country, and further undermining the autonomy earlier enjoyed by the Universities. Interestingly,



Adamu-Adamu

while the Unions are agitating, University administrators are lukewarm about the use of IPPIS because it has shifted the heat and agitations on salaries and wages from the campuses to Abuja. Instead of ASUU insisting on the use of University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS), and the Joint Action Committee of the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) marketing the University Peculiar Payroll Payment System (U3PS), relocating and shedding the control of IPPIS for Federal Universities to the National Universities Commission (NUC) will be a fair compromise. My opinion!

The peculiarities of the University system (such as sabbatical leave, appointment of expatriate staff and other practices necessary to internationalize and make a university world-class can then be continuously built into the IPPIS software domiciled in NUC. It could ideally be referred to as IPPIS-U. I do not expect ASUU to agree with this suggestion just as I also would not expect the Federal Government to concur. This is because ASUU is known to fight "until the last man" for a just cause and on the part of the Federal Government, egos of those who have maintained the "IPPIS or nothing" stance may be bruised. However, for the sake of the system and to bring some stability to our universities it appears to me to be the best solution and gladiators must at this point sheath their swords. The unending expectation of a positive outcome from the integrity test by the National Information Technology and Development Agency (NITDA) for both UTAS and U3PS should be a source of worry to all Nigerians. We have had enough of IPPIS politics! No software, no matter how robust, would eliminate the negative factors identified with IPPIS, particularly if some of the operators are attuned to selfish and dishonest pursuits, and offenders are not severely and promptly punished. The very best financial accountability software in the world can always be compromised but such occurrences are minimized where and when there are active deterrents. It is time for the stakeholders in the education sector to now come to "reason together" and stop acting in silos and fiefdoms. Government must declare an emergency in the

education sector and all critical stakeholders must now dialogue, and come to amicable and reasonable solution. Truth be told, this is not the time for negotiations spanning months, it smirks of insincerity or failure to grasp the enormity of the problem. While not ignoring the letter and spirit of the Trade Dispute Act on resolution of industrial actions, I will propose that the Government conveys an expanded assembly of critical stakeholders, and not just the Ministries and the Unions, to deliberate and take critical decisions that will move the education sector forward, and ensure that our students, who have been at home for five months, resume immediately. The meeting should have representatives of; the core Ministries (Education, Labour, Finance, and Science and Technology), the staff Unions (ASUU, SSANU, NASU and NAAT), the students, National Salaries and Wages Commission, Head of Service of the Federation, Accountant-General of the Federation, and the Tertiary Education Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives. The Federal Ministry of Education/National Universities Commission should coordinate the meetings which ideally should be chaired by the Minister of Education. If discussions at such a forum is open and sincere, it will be possible to chart a new course for University education in the country and forestall any future strikes and closure of our higher institutions. We all know the truth but, we must now allow the truth to set us free.

A quick background information on the current financial contribution of students in our Federal Universities will shed some light on the insincerity pervading the system. Allow me to use Obafemi Awolowo University as an example. The students still pay N90, with N2,500 maintenance fees, per session for accommodation even in situations where the session extends beyond 12 months. The N90 is the same amount I paid as a student in the same University in the 1970s. The cost of the receipt issued for the payment is probably more than the amount paid and it would have been more "economical" for the university if offered free! The charging of "fees" is not supported by the Federal Government but in OAU, undergraduate student pay "Departmental charges" of N5,000 per session for Arts, N10,000 for Sciences, Social Sciences, Technology and Law, and N15,000 for Medicine and other courses in the Health Sciences. These charges were fixed over 20 years ago and the uproar that followed has ensured that it remained the same.

OAU with a student population of about 25,000 runs an annual Personnel budget of approximately N10 billion. This in essence means N400,000 per student per session will double the personnel budget. Of course, it will be ridiculous to expect that all students must pay the same amount of fees. It may mean payments of between N200,000 and N600,000 per student per session depending on the course. This is nowhere near the N900,000 to N3,000,000 per session that students pay in most private universities today. Students would be charged based on the standard staff-student ratio and the number of lectures per course, with a standard fee fixed for each lecture. A personal experience would suffice. I was in a University in South Africa, as Visiting Professor, in 2002 and the Department could not deliver a lecture because it fell on a Public holiday that was never envisaged. It was the last week of formal lectures, just before the examinations, and the department had to negotiate with the students to find a suitable time.



2023: Obi, the paradigm we need to deal with in APC - Etta

Mr. Hillard Ntufam Etta, a chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and former National Vice Chairman (South/ South) of the party in a media chat in Abuja talks about recent happenings in his party and previews the chances of leading candidates in the 2023 election. He concludes that the APC should not take a political phenomenon, Mr. Peter Obi, candidate of the Labour Party for granted. **TUNDE JOSHUA** brings excerpts.



Peter Obi



Hillard Ntufam Etta

With the composition of a national campaign council, the APC no doubt is readily in high mood to traverse the length and breadth of the country to canvass for vote for your candidate, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. What are the chances of APC winning the presidential election in 2023?

It will be a disaster of monumental proportion if Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu will not be the next President. We don't have any apprehension that we will not win. We are waiting for campaign to start in September and election in February and by the grace of God, we shall be witnesses to the swearing on of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the 16th President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. We know our work is cut out for us. We know it is not going to be a walk into the park. We know we gave new paradigm that we must deal with. We have new issues in Nigeria that we must deal with in order to see the emerging Nigeria, where citizens will have opportunities to call out leaders and question them and make them accountable. This is the Nigeria we have dreamt of and that Nigeria is berthing and we will all make sure the berthing of the new Nigeria becomes a reality.

You are so convincingly of victory for your candidate, do you not see other candidates, Atiku Abubakar of PDP and Peter Obi of Labour Party as threat?

Atiku is an old customer. We have

dealt with him before and we are going to deal with him again. We know his tricks, he cannot come with new tricks. We are going to deal with him politically. Obi on the other hand is the paradigm we need to deal with. APC as a party is happy to have Obi as a candidate. Obi is going to eat up the PDP votes in South South and South East, leaving APC and Labour Party to contend for votes in South South and South East. Obi is popular in the metropolitan Abuja, metropolitan Lagos, but in the rural areas of Nigeria, people in Zungeru or in Zanko Kataf, ask them about Obi, most of them will mistaken him for a spare parts trader. The truth is Obi is a phenomenon in the South South, South East, metropolitan Abuja, Lagos on Facebook, Instagram and U-tube.

Your party has been receiving backlash on the choice of Senator Kashim Shettima as vice presidential candidate. What do you have to say on the Muslim - Muslim ticket?.

I am a Pastor's son. I had known

“

The PDP had their primary first and a Fulani Muslim became their candidate, why did CAN not speak against the ticket, but it has now found it's voice the moment APC selected Senator Kashim Shettima as the party's Vice Presidential candidate.

”

that religion has no place in politics.

Christians have superintendent over the country more than Muslims. From 1999 till date. Presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan had 16 years and by the expiration of President Buhari, Muslims would have done 10 years. We have a problem of under-development, we have a problem of accessibility to opportunities that people take for granted in other climes. All these have nothing to do with the pulpit or the mosque. We need to find Nigerians who can do the job for us and we better concentrate on them (leaders) to provide those variables that will catapult Nigeria to greater heights. This must be the concern of every progressive. If in 1993, Nigerians come together and voted for Muslim-Muslim, 30 years after, some people are quarrelling with the same scenario. Are we progressing as a nation? What we are now celebrating is progressive. What we celebrated 30 years ago is what some people are fighting against now. I watched the television interview of Atiku Abubakar and I share the pains

of the youths. When I watched a leader speak to issue that are very important in such a cavalier manner, a manner that you question in his leadership qualities. The youths are angry and they have the right to be so. Unfortunately they have been looking for a hero and they have found that in Peter Obi. It is sad that Peter Obi is the antithesis of what the youth are looking for.

But the Christians Association of Nigeria (CAN) has drawn a sort of battle line with APC asking it's members to reject same faith ticket. Are you not worried?.

CAN is the religious wing of the PDP it has been so established. We have reason to say so, because the sitting Vice President, a Pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and CAN did not support him in 2019, even when he was on the ballot in 2015, they did not support him. Before the Muslim Muslim ticket issue, leaders in the Southern part agreed that the presidency should come to the region, whether APC or PDP. The PDP had their primary first and a Fulani Muslim became their candidate, why did CAN not speak against the ticket, but it has now found it's voice the moment APC selected Senator Kashim Shettima as the party's Vice Presidential candidate. Before Shettima, we had one Alhaji Masari on the ticket, CAN did not bother but now why the noise of Shettima?

With Shettima we have locked North East. We want to win the election and with Shettima we are winning.

Senator Adeola dabbles into Ogun APC crisis, says Amosun can't play God

- *Wants former governor sanctioned for anti-party activities*
- *APC on the verge of losing Ogun if crisis not resolve - Hon. Azeez*

By TUNDE JOSHUA

Achieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Hon. Niyi Azeez has tasked stakeholders in the Ogun State chapter of the party not to fold their arms and watch the party goes into flames.

His plea was predicated on the dangerous dimension the crisis in Ogun APC is taking.

Former governor of Ogun State and serving senator, Ibikunle Amosun opened a can of worms during a recent interview saying the election that brought in the incumbent governor, Dapo Abiodun was rigged.

Amosun was quoted to have said at the 50th Anniversary of Abeokuta Club that the 2019 election that saw the emergence of Prince Dapo Abiodun as Ogun State governor was rigged and he is going to work against Prince Abiodun's re-election in 2023.

Enraged criticism greeted Amosun's claims and the State chapter of APC berated him for being ungrateful to the party on which platform he currently serve as a senator.

Worsening the already charged atmosphere in Ogun APC is the side taken by Senator Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as 'Yayi'.

He said the former governor is taking his lucky too far and warned him not to play God because he may soon go into political extinction.

Though presently representing Lagos West senatorial district, Senator Adeola is holding the APC ticket for Ogun West ahead of the 2023 election.

Reacting to the present predicament of the party in the state, Adeola said in a statement made available to newsmen said Amosun can not play God in Ogun State politics and need to be sanctioned for anti-party activities.

Senator Adeola said Amosun is a personality imbued with a sense of over bloated ego of messianic proportion in Ogun state politics.

He described him as a supposed APC member with a record of serial anti-party and anti-people tendencies aping to play God in the affairs of Ogun State

Adeola said "as a stakeholder in APC, Ogun State and the administration of Prince

Abiodun, and by God's grace and the will of the people, the senatorial candidate of Ogun West senatorial district for the 2023 election, I state with all emphasis that Senator Amosun shamefully dropped the ball in his assertion that the 2019 electoral victory of Prince Abiodun was rigged even after the said election was judicially validated right up to the highest court of the land.

"For the avoidance of doubt and to cudgel the memory of Senator Amosun and his political minions, the victory of Prince Abiodun in 2019 has its origin in the revolt of the majority of the people of Ogun State against Senator Amosun's lopsided oligarchic reign in Ogun State over a period of 8 years and his undemocratic, odious and obviously politically greedy attempt to impose all electoral candidates in Ogun 2019 from the state to the federal level with his cronies to the exclusion of all tendencies in Ogun State APC..

"The revolt of the people of Ogun State to this attempt to play God by a mere mortal was what saw to the surprise emergence of Prince Abiodun as the arrow head of a democratic struggle fully supported by genuine democrats in Ogun State.

"Our party, APC, saw through the anti-democratic tendencies of their then governor and rightly threw their weight behind the people of Ogun State with Prince Abiodun emerging as the governor with a majority votes against Senator Amosun's acolyte, Hon Adekunle Akinlade foisted on misguided APC members in the race under another party, Allied Peoples Movement, APM

"The people of Ogun State were fully aware that the desperation of Senator Amosun to install a successor was informed by the booby trap of a "Kemi Adeosun" removal from office set for Hon. Akinlade should he emerge as governor which would see him impeached with his shady dossier should he refuse to be a mere stooge of the then departing Senator Amosun.

"By a majority votes of 241,670 for Prince Abiodun and 222, 253 for APM's Hon. Akinlade, a difference of over 19,000 votes, the Ogun State people rejected Senator Amosun and his

imposition and the mandate was subsequently validated by our judiciary. So, it is regrettable nonsense that a man of the status of Senator Amosun will publicly say such a free and fair election validated by our judiciary was rigged. I challenge him to name those he alleged came to him to apologize for rigging.

"To the glory of God, Prince Abiodun has discharged and is discharging his role as governor creditably to all sections of the state in contrast to the sectional administration of Amosun in Ogun State. He is dutifully completing projects abandoned by Senator Amosun while starting the completing new ones across the three senatorial districts of the state.

"In the 2023 election, all genuine APC members and indeed appreciative Ogun State people enjoying infrastructure projects and other dividends of good governance of Prince Abiodun will fully support the re-election of Prince Abiodun and put Senator Amosun to shame once again in his glaring anti-party activities."

Senator Adeola alerted the National Working Committee of APC to what he called the patently anti party activities of Senator Amosun in Ogun State and to henceforth be wary of his moves and suggestion on any matter.

He said as it is, Amosun is already plotting a repeat APM against his party APC in the days towards 2023. But genuine APC members are solidly behind Prince Abiodun as our Governor and will support his re-election in 2023.

Recall that the Ogun State chapter of APC faulted Amosun over uncomplimentary statements against Governor Dapo Abiodun.

The party said the immediate past governor must obviously be suffering "political amnesia and out-of-office loneliness", to have uttered statements considered to be anti-party.

On behalf of the party, the state Publicity Secretary, Tunde Oladunjoye, last weekend in Abeokuta said the comment reportedly credited to Amosun that the incumbent governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, did not win the 2019 governorship election was rather unfortunate

He described the ex-governor's claim as "an after-lunch belching of a man suffering

from political amnesia and loneliness."

Okadunjoye's statement reads: "The attention of our party has been drawn to a statement reportedly credited to the immediate past governor of Ogun State and the Chief Promoter of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM), His Excellency, Senator Ibikunle Amosun.

"The quoted statement was not only an insult to the psyche of the people of Ogun State, but also a sad indication that the former governor is yet to purge himself of extreme arrogance and intolerance that were his trademarks, which earned him suspension from our party, even as a sitting governor.

"The APC, therefore, calls on the general public, and particularly our esteemed members, to pity and pray for the former governor as he obviously suffers from political amnesia, loneliness and absolute lack of touch with reality.

"There is absolute no truth in the specious utterance of the former governor who is obviously still sulking from the electoral defeat of his surrogate party in 2019. Our party and candidate not only won fair and square, the victory of Prince Dapo Abiodun was also attested to by his co-contestants, many of whom later joined APC and are still in APC.

"Never in the history of governorship elections in Ogun State have candidates of other parties so instantaneously congratulated and visited the Governor-elect, as it happened in the case of Governor Dapo Abiodun, whose Iperu country home hosted candidates and leaders of other parties, including late Prince Buruji Kashamu, Otunba Rotimi Pasada, Mr. Gboyega Nasiru Isiaka (GNI), and Otunba Gbenga Daniel, among others.

"It is on record that many of the then opposition figures like former Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Alhaja Salmat Badru, the deputy governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mr. Rueben Abati, GNI and others served in the Economic Transition Committee chaired by Mr. Tunde Lemo, which was set up by Prince Dapo Abiodun immediately after the elections.

Continue online at www.thetrumpet.ng

Delta PDP: Protesters storm PDP national secretariat, back Sheriff's guber candidacy

- *Pass vote of confidence on Ayu led NWC*
- *We'll look into your grievances, NPS assures protesters*

By TUNDE JOSHUA

While the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) await the Appeal Court ruling on the choice of its governorship candidate in Delta State, a group Ijaw Mandate Group on Tuesday declared support for Rt. Hon. Sherrif Oborewvori.

The group described the other claimant to the party's ticket, David Edevbie as an impostor and demanded that he should be expelled from the party.

Members of the the Ijaw Mandate Group, occupied the entrance to the party's national headquarters, Wadata Plaza, chanting solidarity songs for both Oborewvori and the PDP national chairman, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu.

National Coordinator of the Ijaw Mandate Group in conjunction with other groups such as the Delta Political Vanguard and Delta Political Watchdogs, Andaye Dagidi, who addressed the Representatives of the party officials said they are concerned about the unity of PDP in Delta State.

He debunked the rumour of division in Delta PDP, said the party is united under the

leadership of the state governor, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa.

He said members in Delta State applauded the leadership quality of the national chairman, Dr. Ayu and the National Working Committee (NWC).

Dagidi said the Ayu leadership has "rejuvenated the party and the efforts yielded results in winning majority seats at the FCT Area Council election and the recently conducted

Osun governorship election.

He said "PDP in Delta under Governor Okowa came to declare our support for our governorship election, Rt. Jon. Sheriff Oborewvori.

"He is a long serving lawmaker who has contributed immensely to the political developments of the state and has helped the state government to stabilize the state.

"He can further stabilize the legacy to be

left behind by Governor Okowa.

"He won the election outrightly but it is unfortunate that David Edevbie and his people could try to take the party to ransom."

The group urged the NWC not to swayed by antics of those that want to destabilize the party in Delta State.

The Ijaw Mandate accused Edevbie and his supporters of working against the interest of PDP. "They want PDP to lose in Delta", he added.

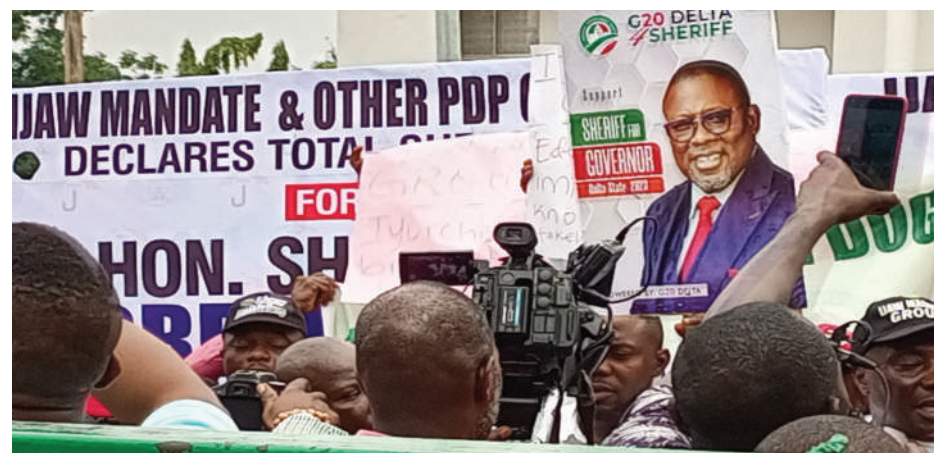
Receiving the protest letter from the protesters on behalf of the PDP executive, National Publicity Secretary, Hon. Debo Ologunagba lauded the group for taking the path of peace.

He also thanked them for expressing confidence in the leadership of the party.

He assured them that the rescue mission of the PDP being led by Ayu is on course and cannot be detailed.

The NPS said "in consistence with the policy of the PDP, the party leadership will look into their demand and respond in due course.

He added "PDP want to reject APC and the only way we can achieve that is to be united".



EFCC arraigns three over alleged N44.5m fraud in Sokoto

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Tuesday said its Sokoto Zonal Command has arraigned the duo of Yahaya Abdulrahman and Mohammad Iiyasu alongside their company, Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society, before Justice Mohammed Mohammed of the Sokoto State High Court on a three count charge bordering on criminal conspiracy, issuance of a dud cheque in the sum of N4,859,000.00 and obtaining by false pretence.

EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, who disclosed this in a statement said suspects are alleged to have fraudulently induced the petitioner to supply 1,651 bags of rice to their company at the cost of N27,000.00 per bag, totaling N44,577,000.00 and jointly issued cheques of N14,359,000.00 in the name of the petitioner, which was returned unpaid due to insufficient funds standing to the credit of the drawer.

According to Uwujaren, count one reads, "That you, Yahaya Abdulrahman while being the Chairman of Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Mohammad Iiyasu while being a Director and Vice Chairman of Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society and Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society sometime in November 2020 at Sokoto within the Judicial Division of the High Court of Justice, Sokoto State did conspire among yourselves to commit an illegal act to wit: Criminal Breach of Trust and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 59(a) of the Sokoto State Penal Code Law, 2019 and punishable under Section 60(2) of the same Law."



Abdulrasheed Bawa

He further disclosed that count two reads, "That you, Yahaya Abdulrahman while being the Chairman of Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Mohammad Iiyasu while being a Director and Vice Chairman of Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society and Azzumee Multipurpose Cooperative Society sometime in March 2021 at Sokoto within the Judicial Division of the High Court of Justice, Sokoto State with the knowledge that you have insufficient funds in your account issued to one IMUDAN Ventures a Stanbic IBTC Bank cheque number 00000061 dated 5th March 2021 for the sum of N4,859,000.00 (Four Million Eight Hundred and Fifty-nine Thousand Naira) which said cheque when presented was dishonored due to insufficient funds in your account and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 1(1) (a) of the Dishonored Cheques (Offences) Act, CAP

D11, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and punishable under Section 1(1) (b) of the same Act."

All the defendants pleaded not guilty to the three-count charge. Consequently, the prosecution counsel, S.H Sa'ad prayed the Court to allow the hearing to commence as two witnesses were in Court, ready to testify. However, the defence counsel, Y.Y Bazawa urged the court to grant his clients bail.

Justice Mohammed granted the defendants bail in the sum of N5,000,000, 00 and one surety each in like sum.

According to the Judge, the sureties must be residents of the Sokoto metropolis and own landed property in the city. Also, the sureties are to deposit a passport photograph each with the registrar of the Court.

The Judge adjourned the matter till 26th September 2022 for trial

EFCC arrests 29 alleged internet fraudsters, secures conviction of 11 in Ibadan

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has said its operatives in the Ibadan Zonal Command have arrested no fewer than 29 suspected internet fraudsters in a sting operation at Omi-Adio area of Ibadan, Oyo State.

Wilson Uwujaren, the spokesperson for the Commission, said in a statement on Tuesday that the suspects were arrested on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, noting that items such as mobile phones, laptops, two motorbikes, one i-watch, video games, and jewelry were recovered from them.

He said, "Operatives of the Ibadan Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, arrested twenty-nine (29) internet fraud suspects in a sting operation at Omi-Adio area of Ibadan, Oyo State.

"The suspects are Abdullahi Kehinde Tawab, Ayomide Alase Abiodun, Hassan Larla Olamilekan, Makinde Adebawale Saheed, Tofunmi Oyebade Segun, Rotimi Gbadamosi Ayomide, Igbamidun Joshua Olamiposi, Gbadamosi Samson Tobiloba, Qodir Ayoola Babalola, Frank Obi Ogechukwu, Olawale Abowaba Joshua, Dauda Kareem Oladayo, Hamed Dauda Akanji, Yusuf Akorede Abiodun and Haruna Adedoyin Kayode.

"Others include Yusuf Lawale Raji, Adejare Ayuba Olamide, Owolabi Gbadamosi Moses, Victor Salami Gbenga, Abdullahi Teslim Taiwo, Oluwaseun Abowaba Samuel, Alase Ayodele Philip, Oduola Kunmi Ireola, Ajayi Olumide Olamilekan, Opeyemi Samuel Enitan, Yusuf Ayobami Qudus, Atanda Jamiu Olamide, Ibrahim Bashit Alade, and Ilori Peter Oladapo.

"Items recovered from them include mobile phones, laptops, two motor-bikes, one i-watch, video games, and jewelry."

Uwujaren added that the suspects would be arraigned in court as soon as the investigations are concluded.

Meanwhile, the Ibadan Zonal Command of the EFCC, on August 3 and 4, 2022 secured the conviction of eleven (11) cyber criminals on separate charges of fraudulent impersonation before Justices Olusola Adetujoye and Bayo Taiwo of the Oyo State High Court sitting in Ibadan.

The offences are contrary to Section 419 and 484 of the Criminal Code Law Cap 38, Law of Oyo State, 2000.

According to Uwujaren, Justice Adetujoye convicted and sentenced the fraudsters, Fatai Musbau Opeyemi, Ayodele Olumide Sunday, Oribolawa Idris Abiodun, Abdulahi Malek Olaniyi, Onigbinde Rasaq Oyindamola and Emmanuel Victor Mayowa to various jail terms; while Justice Taiwo convicted Moses Oyowevotu Oghenaire, Awwal Babatunde Arekemase, Adewale Ayomipo Owolabi, Yusuf David Olamide and Atitade Hassan Ajao.

The defendant pleaded "guilty" to the charges filed against them by the EFCC, leading to their conviction and sentencing.

"Justice Adetujoye sentenced Oyindamola and Abiodun to six months community service each; Mayowa who was convicted on a two-count charge bagged three months jail term while Opeyemi, Sunday, and Olaniyi were sentenced to three months community service each.

"Furthermore, Justice Taiwo sentenced Oghenaire, Arekemase, Owolabi, Olamide, and Ajao to six months of community service each," Uwujaren said.

According to him, the court also ordered that the convicts retribute their victims and forfeit all items recovered from them to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Court convicts internet fraudster in Lagos

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos has convicted and sentenced an internet fraudster, Yusuf Adetokunbo, for offence bordering on possession of documents containing false pretence.

The Lagos Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured the conviction on August 8, 2022.

Adetokunbo was arraigned by the anti-graft agency on a one-count charge on July 22, 2022. The charge was on possession of documents containing false pretences contrary to Section 320 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.

According to a statement by the EFCC

spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, on Tuesday, the convict was accused of involvement in fraudulent chats with the intention to defraud unsuspecting members of the public.

"That you, Yusuf Olawale Adetokunbo on or about the 29th April, 2022 at Lagos, within the Ikeja jurisdiction of this Honourable Court with the intent to defraud had in your possession a bundle of fraudulent chats containing false pretence in your Google voice app and email with the name phamhoangcungnai30@gmail.com which pretence you knew or ought to know to be false," the court read.

Adetokunbo pleaded "guilty" to the charge when it was read to him.

Consequently, the EFCC prosecuting counsel, Nnaemeka Omewa, thereafter gave a review of the facts.

Omewa further tendered in evidence the fraudulent documents printed from his iPhone X and iPhone 6+, as well as a draft of N200,000 issued as restitution by the defendant.

There was no objection by the defence counsel, Kayode Oyedele, and they were admitted as Exhibit A and B.

"We urge the court to convict the defendant as charged and to forfeit to the Federal Government the items recovered from him," Omewa told the court.

In his ruling, Justice Taiwo convicted Adetokunbo as charged and sentenced him to six months at a Custodial Centre, with an option of N150,000 fine. Items recovered from him were also ordered forfeited to the Federal Government.

EFCC busts suspected fraudsters hideout in Lokoja, nabs 18

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The operatives of the Ilorin Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have busted a hideout of suspected internet fraudsters popularly known as 'Yahoo-Yahoo' in Lokoja, the capital city of Kogi State, arresting 18 suspects.

The spokesperson for the Commission, Wilson Uwujaren made the disclosure in a press statement on Tuesday, saying the move is part of the efforts of EFCC to curb the rising tide of internet-related fraud.

According to Uwujaren, the operatives of the Ilorin Zonal Command of the Commission had in June 2022 arrested 19 suspected fraudsters at different raids in Lokoja.

He said, "As part of efforts by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, to

curb the rising wave of internet-related fraud otherwise known as 'Yahoo-Yahoo', the Ilorin Zonal Command of the Commission has again extended its dragnet to Kogi State leading to the arrest of 18 suspected 'Yahoo-Yahoo Boys' in Lokoja, the state capital.

"This is the second such operation in the State within the last two months. Operatives of the Ilorin Zonal Command of the EFCC, had in June 2022 arrested 19 suspected fraudsters at different locations in Lokoja.

"The latest arrest, which was made on Wednesday, August 3, 2022 followed actionable intelligence received by the Commission.

"Among the suspects are two siblings - Bala Caleb Abdulkarim and Ayuba Bala. Others are Adebayo Olubunmi, Yusuf Salawu, Victor Yakubu, Victor Udeh, Abutu Francis, Moses

Akeji, Aiyegbe ThankGod, Eniola Adeniji, Abraham Ayodele, Julius Omowale, Samuel Onojah, Saka Usman Ojo, Isaac Emmanuel, Yusuf Mohammed, Ibrahim Musa and Omaonu Ojochenemi Victor.

"Preliminary investigations have shown that the suspects operate as a syndicate to scam unsuspecting victims."

Uwujaren further disclosed that incriminating items like exotic cars, phones, and laptops were found in the possession of the suspects.

"The suspected 'Yahoo-Yahoo Boys', had incriminating items in their possession including five different brands of exotic cars, phones, and laptops. They have volunteered statements to the Commission and will be charged to court upon the conclusion of the ongoing investigations," he added.

Tobi Amusan at World Athletics Championships: good news for Nigeria

The spirit of bleakness which had enveloped our dear country in recent times was lifted somewhat two weeks ago when Tobi Amusan set not one but TWO new world records in the women's 100metres hurdles at the 2022 World Athletics Championship held in Oregon, USA. She set the first record in the semi-finals, finishing the race in 12.12 seconds; only to break that record and set a new one in the finals when she finished in an incredible 12.06 seconds, bringing home the gold. But for Amusan, Nigeria would have returned home from the competitions with nothing to show. Amusan won us the gold and allowed us to return home in glory, our heads high that our own had won.

These are not the only achievements attributed to our prodigy. She is the first Nigerian athlete to win a Diamond League Trophy; this was in 2021. She was a Silver Medalist at the 2013 African Youth Championship in Warri. In 2014, she won silver at the African Youth Games in Botswana and gold a year later in Ethiopia at the Under-20 Championships. She had a breakthrough victory at the All-Africa Games in Brazzaville, Congo and in 2016 was awarded a scholarship to the University of Texas at El-Paso.

Tobi Amusan's feat is a refreshing piece of good news for Nigerians in these bleak times. It is heartwarming, in a country bedeviled by insecurity, poverty and every bad thing in between, to have something to celebrate. And not only is her achievement worth celebrating but her life as well, which is a story of grit, hard work and determination – a true inspiration.

Tobi, a remarkable young woman from Ijebu Ode was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Her parents were both teachers

who took education seriously. Her father, in particular, was skeptical of her involvement in sports, fearing that it may lead her nowhere. But Tobi's heart was in sports and was not to be deterred. With her mother's encouragement, Tobi fought her way to where she is today.

Her journey to success was not without its disappointments. She consistently came fourth in her races, the winners' podium eluding her grasp; but she never lost faith in herself. Indeed, in 2016 she wrote in a post: "Unknown now, but soon I will be UNFORGETTABLE ... I will persist until I SUCCEED ..." and, just the night before her record shattering performances, she wrote "Incoming record holder". Tobi's attitude is

an example of what a strong belief in oneself and one's abilities can do in a person's life. Despite her failure to win in previous races, she never accepted defeat. She continued to believe in herself and she continued to push hard. Her tenacity is remarkable. The result is her smashing success at the Championship. This is indeed the spirit of true champions!

In an interview, Amusan disclosed that her career really took off after she got the scholarship in Texas. This is the story of many a Nigerian athlete, getting better opportunities and training abroad. This is unfortunate. The Nigerian Sports Ministry needs to step up to its responsibilities. Nigerian youths have proved time and again that they have everything it takes to succeed if only their country was willing to give them a chance and the necessary support. It is disheartening that a beacon like Amusan will be allowed to feel that another country gave her a better chance than her own. This is a big shame on the Sports Ministry and on the Nigerian government. So many promising young sportsmen and women are out there fighting hard on our dilapidated sports fields and stadia, needing only the smallest push to emerge as stars on the world stage but we keep allowing this promise to slide between our fingers. Brazil made its name in football, why can't we in other sports and athletics?

But we must not give up. We at The Trumpet call on Nigerian youths to take Amusan's story as an inspiration, not only in sports but in everything they do. She is an example of how hard work, determination and a strong sense of self-worth can take one anywhere in the world and help to achieve one's dreams. We congratulate Tobi Amusan. Nigeria is proud of this daughter who has lifted our heads and lightened our hearts with a spark of good, uplifting news in these troubling and troubled times.



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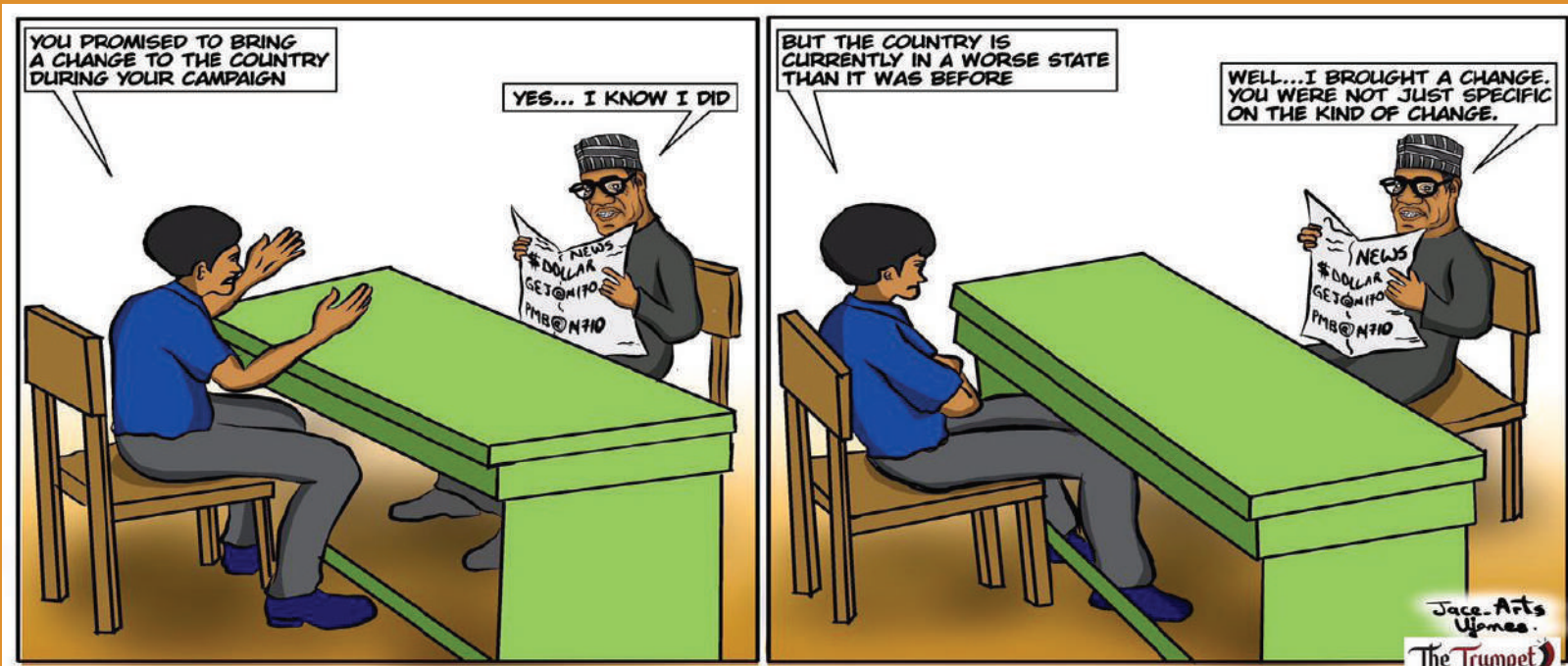
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Exposed: The real Peter Obi

Today, I am possessed by the spirit of exposure. Without let or hindrance, resistance or disputation, I surrender to the service of my fatherland to expose, perhaps in the process, educate the foolish and enrich the wise, nothing more. While exposing, I didn't consult the Ifa oracle or Delphic oracle, both Yoruba and Greek prognostic divination essences famed for revelation. Exposure, that act of revealing the unknown, invades my conscious mind. It goes beyond the paralyzing mental hypnosis suffered by victims of religious ecstasy. I am fully aware and awake, with no hallucination, reverie, or phantasmal anecdote. I have no choice in the matter, therefore I must expose. Exposure is different from prophecy, the alter ego of prediction. While exposure reveals what exists but is not known, prophecy reveals what does not exist, therefore not known. Today, I am not predicting anything. Every presidential aspirant must be exposed, nothing hidden. No guesswork. No half-truths.

My determination to expose the real, undiluted, factual, identity of Mr Peter Obi inheres from the tumultuous effect his persona is currently having on the Nigerian political horizon. Interestingly, the emergence of one man in our country's political maturation is causing a tsunami across the length and breadth of the land. In my commitment to unravel Peter Obi, I have engaged the remote and immediate peculiarities of his identity, his historical existentialities, and the subliminal ethos that foreground his groundswell among Nigerians at home and abroad. Also, my objective is to steer the wheel of our contemporary political discourse away from obtuse, unreasonable circles to

centres of rational, objective thinking. Nigeria is on the cusp of collapse due largely to the mistakes of 2015 when we collectively plunged into a semblance of Hades for failure to expose what needed to be exposed. Peter Obi's exposure? Here we go.


First Exposure: His full name is Peter Gregory Obi and his nickname is 'Okwute'. He has a clear, real, and honest identity. There should be no contention or controversy about the identity of the potential next president of Nigeria. 'Okwute' in Igbo language means rock. The muse reminds me of the connection between the Biblical Peter and rock. Recall that the Master told the Biblical Peter, "upon this rock will I build my house and the gates of hellfire will not prevail against it". Today, we have a potential president of Nigeria whose real and nickname are subsumed in that divine declaration by the Master. Peter 'Okwute' Gregory Obi's identity draws on celestial and terrestrial possibilities which explain the wildfire his emergence in the political scene is provoking. Surely, the gates of religion, ethnicity and other nebulous metaphors that represent hellfire will not prevail against his name. Remember, his name is Peter Gregory Obi. No questions. No stolen identity. Identity denominates human existence therefore a fake identity presupposes a fraudulent personality. Peter 'Okwute' Gregory Obi is his name. He does not have any other name. Go and verify.

Second Exposure: Mr Peter Obi was born in 1961 and he is from Aniocha Local Government Area in Anambra State. No controversy. That is his origin. Did you know that? He has an identifiable genealogy and definite origin. Any political office aspirant with an indeterminate

origin is a disgrace to the political process and unbridled insolence on the electorate. Peter Obi's origin is well known. His origin is not an object of infinite conjecture. He did not migrate to Anambra from any of the neighbouring states or countries. The next president of Nigeria must have a specific origin known to all Nigerians. Hiding one's identity is criminal, therefore morally disqualifies anyone from any political office in the land much less the presidential seat. Peter Obi is from Aniocha Local Government Area in Anambra State. Go and verify.

Exposure Three: Did you know that Peter Gregory Obi is arguably the only former governor in Nigeria that does not collect a kobo as pension from his state Anambra? Go and verify. Some past governors have impoverished their states by appropriating the exchequer and collecting almost 70% of the Internally Generating Revenue. Such states have the potential to be like Dubai or even better but because their former governors, cronies, and family members have the states in their pockets, the states wallow in inadequacy, leveraging on the average, not aware of their vibrant potential. Peter Obi's wife does not control any part of Anambra State. His only daughter does not control any market in Anambra State. His only son does not own properties in Anambra State. Peter Obi does not have thugs all around the State as a murderous arm of violence and civil menace. A man that does not collect a pension from his state as a former governor is not greedy.

Exposure Four: Are you aware that Peter Gregory Obi is healthy, fit, and agile? Now you know. He can engage in physical exercise and do thirty to fifty push-ups in a few



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minutes. He can jump on the treadmill in a jiffy and remain there for a long time. Did you know that in 2022, he plays football, table tennis, and lawn tennis? He does not have any known medical history which will impair his official function as the president of Nigeria. Given Nigeria's experience under the current administration, the country does not need a septuagenarian, sickly, frail, and senile president. According to Suyi Ayodele in his Tuesday FLATOUT column in the Daily Tribune "a town which makes the invalid its king does not prosper because the health of the king determines the prosperity of the town". Nigeria is sick, therefore requires a fit, proper, agile, and healthy president to fully take charge of our collective affairs. Peter Gregory Obi is healthy and rearing to go. Kindly go and verify.

Exposure Five: Peter Obi attended Christ The King College Onitsha Anambra State. Afterwards, he was admitted to the University of Nigeria Nsukka in 1980 to study Philosophy, the acclaimed parent discipline. He graduated in 1984. Some lost souls are peddling the propaganda that he spent twelve years at UNN studying Philosophy. Well, Obi graduated from UNN in 1984 at the age of twenty-

three. If he spent twelve years studying Philosophy at UNN, that means he was admitted to the university in 1972 at the tender age of eleven. These greasy-brained detractors will stop at nothing to merchandise falsehood of impudent dimension. Anyway, he attended Lagos Business School, Harvard Business School, London School of Economics, Columbia Business School and the International Institute of Management Development. Go and verify. No controversy.

As Nigerians feverishly trudge towards the 2023 election to save the country from imminent collapse, all the presidential hopefuls must be exposed and critically scrutinized. We must also remember that our present condition is the end-product of an odious conspiracy in 2015 by a few people with vaunting, inordinate, self-serving objectives. We cannot succumb to ennui at the most critical moment of our corporate existence and allow the ruling potentate to further imperil our existence. We must ask the basic questions about all the candidates, their identity must be exposed, health profile, education history, and place of origin. I have exposed the Labour Party candidate. Expose APC and PDP candidates honestly and straight to the point.

By
Eric TENIOLA



Cont'd from Monday edition

General Muhammed did the same for his staff made up of Ambassador O. Esan from Ilesha who later became a Minister, Taiwo Ojo, Bisi Ogunniyi, Gbolade Osinowo, Tunde Olushile, Chief Mrs J.O. Ayo, Inua Baba, Ambassador W.O. Baiye, Mrs G.M. Shasore, Bodunde Adeyanju and others.

Of all the departments in the office of the Secretary of the Government of the Federation, the most guarded and protected are the office of the special services office and THE CABINET secretariat. The special services office deals mainly with special assignments. That office has produced eminent civil servants like Alhaji Baba Gana Kingigbe, Mr Buka Usman, Dr Hakeem Baba Ahmed and many others. As for the cabinet secretariat, there you will get hardcore civil servants.

When we refer to the office of the Secretary to the government of the Federation as the heartbeat of government, we are referring to the CABINET secretariat and that is why the Secretary to the Government of the Federation is the Secretary to the National Council

of States, the Secretary to the Federal Executive Council, Secretary to the Defence Council and Secretary to so many panels and commissions. The CABINET secretariat stores all the vital documents of the nation from 1914 till date. The Head of Service does not just post anyone to the CABINET secretariat. Any one posted there must have gone through a lot surveillance and security checks. The staff of THE CABINET secretariat keeps secrets and guard jealously the secrets of government.

From 1996 to 2007, top officials that have served in that CABINET secretariat included Dr Kaigama, Chief Olusegun Ogunkua (Baba Ijo), Funsho Osobukola, Venerable Peter Olukayode Okuromade, Babangida Aliyu, Mr Akin Arikawe, Ambassador Joe Keshi, who was Nigeria's Consul General in Atlanta and others. In the lame Duck era of President Obasanjo, Ambassador Joe Keshi was the Permanent Secretary and it was a busy period for him and his staff.

In the coming weeks and months, the CABINET Secretariat will become centre of activities to entertain memos from various Ministers and heads of government agencies. The question now is what will President Buhari do

The era of lame duck is here (3)

in the era of his lame duck Presidency. In the third Schedule of the Constitution, Section B states that The Council of State shall comprise the following persons- the President, who shall be the Chairman; the Vice-President, who shall be the Deputy Chairman; all former Presidents of the Federation and all former Heads of the Government of the Federation; all former Chief Justices of Nigeria; the President of the Senate; the Speaker of the House of Representatives; all the Governors of the States of the Federation; and the Attorney-General of the Federation.

The Council shall have power to- advise the President in the exercise of his powers with respect to the- national population census and compilation, publication and keeping of records and other information concerning the same, prerogative of mercy, award of national honours, the Independent National Electoral Commission (including the appointment of members of that Commission), the National Judicial Council (including the appointment of the members, other than ex officio members of that Council), and the National Population Commission (including the appointment of members of that Commission); and advise the President whenever requested to do so on the maintenance of public order within the Federation or any part thereof and on such other matters as the President may direct.

Between January 20, 2019 and April 21 this year, the National Council of State did not hold any meeting. When the Council met on April 21, the Council pardoned 159 persons. Till date, the gazette on the pardon of the affected persons had not been released. Since President Buhari got to power on May 29, 2015, no Nigerian has been given National Honours.

The last time such honours were bestowed on distinguished Nigerians was on September 10, 2012 by the then President Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR. Does that mean no Nigerian deserved to be honoured President Buhari? If we are to go by the provisions of the Constitution, giving out National Honours and the prerogative of pardon, is obligatory.

For a start President Buhari has no choice but to support the Presidential flag bearer of his party, Chief Bola Tinubu. He must support him with all the means at his disposal or else it will be assumed that he never wanted him all along. It will be dangerous for President Buhari to allow the political opponents of his party to win the presidency. Even with his lame duck Presidency, he can, if he wishes ensure the victory of the Presidential flag bearer of his party.

Shell has shut down all land facilities in the Eastern Niger delta (Bayelsa and Rivers) for about 12 weeks now. And there is no plan to restart them. There is no point. You are pumping over 200,000 barrels of crude into the pipelines and receiving only 3,000 barrels at Bonny terminal. The rest are stolen along the way, illegal bunkering. Shell is just marking time, waiting to dispose all their onshore assets. They are not worth the trouble anymore.

The Federal Government's borrowing from the Central Bank of Nigeria has jumped to N23trillion.

The amount as it currently stands is a 2,701 per cent increase under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari when compared to N648.26 billion it stood as of June 2015 a month after coming to power.

The Federal Government takes loans from CBN through the Ways and Means Advances facility used to finance the government in periods of

temporary budget shortfalls subject to limits imposed by section 38 of the CBN Act, 2007.

Breakdown of CBN data published on its website shows in 2021 alone the government turned to the apex bank for a loan of N4.34 trillion to push its total debt to N17.45 trillion. Another N704 billion was borrowed in January 2022. A breakdown from CBN data shows that as at the end of 2015, CBN loan to the government stood at N856.33 billion before increasing to N2.23 trillion in December 2016.

The amount grew by N1.08 trillion in 2017 to N3.31 trillion. It rose further by N2.1 trillion in 2018 to N5.41 trillion. Government borrowing from the CBN surged by 61.18 per cent (N3.31tn) to N8.72 trillion at the end of 2019. Borrowings hit N13.11 trillion in 2020 after FG collected another N4.9 trillion to plug its fiscal financing gap.

As of now, the economy is getting worse and worse daily. It is clear that the economic strategy of President Buhari is not working. The issue of the failed Economy is affecting all Nigerians as of today. Every home in this country is feeling the pinch.

History will be unkind to him if he fails to act on the economy. He came to the scene seven years ago that he will do something about the economy and look at where are now.

In the past, when there is a security lapse, it is customary of President Muhammadu Buhari to summon his service Chiefs to the Villa. He is yet to the same on the economy. The situation of Nigeria economy is much worse than the security challenges we are now facing. He does not need to hand over a dead economy to his successor. That will not be a befitting legacy.

Concluded

Owo church attack: Chief of Defence Staff confirms arrest of terrorists

By PAUL MICHAEL,
Defence Editor, Abuja

Terrorists that attacked a Catholic Church during service in Owo, Ondo State, a few months ago have been arrested.

The Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor, revealed this during a meeting with editors and media executives in Abuja on Tuesday.

Recall that some gunmen had stormed St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State, killing no fewer than 40 worshippers and injuring several others on 5th June,

2022.

The Federal Government, however, said the Islamic States of West Africa Province terrorists were behind the attack.

Irabor said the suspects would be paraded after an investigation had been concluded into the matter.

"Within the last time we met, we have recorded remarkable achievement. Let me bring it to your notice that within the same period, there have been ignoble actions of men of the underworld that have impinged on our collective well-being, namely the unfortunate train attack, the attack on Kuje correctional centre as well as what has

been reported in the past the attack on the presidential convoy.

"Also, the Owo incident which was intended to bring men and women of the armed forces to present them in a form and shape that make it look as if the nation is on a siege. We have arrested those behind the dastardly act in Owo.

"It was my intention to present them to the public, but because of the investigation still going on, I had to change my mind. I would like to say that in due course, the world will see them and others who are behind other daring attacks in the country," he said.



Gen Irabor

Former governors Dariye, Nyame freed from prison

By PAUL MICHAEL,
Defence Editor, Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command of the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) has released two former governors, Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame, as well as three others from custodial centres.

Public Relations Officer of the Command, Chukwuedo Humphrey, Monday, disclosed this to Journalists in Abuja.

According to Humphrey, the letter of their release was sent to the command by the Presidential Prerogative of Mercy Committee on Monday.

He said that the two former governors were pardoned on ill health and age grounds and were released immediately, but did not disclose the names of the three others

"We have no right to hold them further as soon as we have the letter of clemency from the presidency.

"If we do, it will be against their fundamental human rights.

"They have left the facility today. We got the warrant of release today and have done the needful.

"Dariye and Nyame were in Kuje custodial centre while the three others were in Suleja custodial centre," he said.

Recall that the ex-governors were among the 159 prisoners pardoned by the Council of State during a meeting presided over by President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja on April 14.

Jolly Nyame, 66, ex-governor of Taraba from 1999 to 2007, was serving a 12-year jail term at the Kuje prison over misappropriation of funds while he was in office.

In a similar manner, Joshua Dariye, 64, who governed Plateau between 1999 and 2007, was also jailed for corruption during his time as governor.

Lagos police arrest suspected fraudster over 'money-in-boot' scam

By PAUL MICHAEL,
Defence Editor, Abuja

Operatives of the Ipakodo division of the Lagos State Police Command have arrested a suspected fraudster, who defrauds unsuspecting passengers through a scam technique called 'money-in-the-boot'.

Police Public Relations Officer of the Command, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, who disclosed this in a statement

on Monday said the suspect was arrested on Friday 29, 2022 along Ipakodo road after one of his victims raised an alarm.

Hundeyin identified the suspect as Emmanuel Rolland, a 34-year-old male.

According to the police spokesperson, the suspect confessed to having joined the illicit trade in January and was earlier arrested on his sixth outing.

He assured the public that

other members of the gang and others involved in such fraudulent activities are being hunted by the police in the State.

Hundeyin said, "Officers of Ipakodo division of the Lagos State Police Command have arrested one Emmanuel Rolland 'm' aged 34 for duping unsuspecting passengers.

"The suspect was arrested at about 1120hrs on Friday, July 29, 2022, along Ipakodo

road after his victim raised the alarm.

"Investigation revealed that the suspect, alongside his conspirators (still at large) while operating in a Volkswagen Jetta saloon car, with registration number JJJ 27 DG, disguised as driver and passengers, picked unsuspecting passengers, and started discussions about some money purportedly kept in the boot.

"The suspect confessed to

having started this crime in January, adding that he was arrested on his sixth outing. Effort is in top gear to arrest other fleeing members of the gang and other perpetrators of such crime."

Hundeyin further disclosed that the Commissioner of Police in Lagos State, CP Abiodun Alabi, has directed that the case be transferred to the headquarters for further investigations and prosecution.

Terrorists attack Niger community, kill FIRS director, abduct 3

By PAUL MICHAEL,
Defence Editor, Abuja

Terrorists popularly known as bandits have attacked Saminaka community, along Lapai-Lambata Road in Niger State, killing Alhaji Muhammad Kudu Adamu, Coordinator, Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in charge of Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi states and abducting three others.

Dr Zubairu Ibrahim, who is a friend of the deceased, disclosed this to newsmen while saying Adamu was killed when he was returning from Lafiagi, his hometown in Kwara State, where he had gone to greet his relations who just returned from the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

According to him, Adamu and the three other occupants in the vehicle ran into the bandits who shot indiscriminately in their direction on Sunday evening.

It was gathered that two tankers loaded with Premium Motor Spirit and parked by the roadside were also hit by bullets and engulfed in fire.

Saminaka is a busy community along Lambata-Bida Road where dozens of tankers and heavy articulated drivers and other travellers

park to rest.

The Niger State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Wasiu Abiodun, confirmed the attack and said three persons were kidnapped while two tankers caught fire.

He said the attack occurred around 10:30 pm on Sunday. Abiodun said the bandits invaded a restaurant in Saminaka and abducted its owner, Zainab Usman, and two others.

Also, the Chief Imam of Saminaka, Alhaji Umaru Mohammed, told newsmen on the telephone that the bandits chased a woman into the Mosque during Quranic teaching and abducted her alongside the deputy chief imam.

"When they wanted to shoot her in the Mosque, the deputy chief imam started pleading with them and one of them said he should also be taken along. Luckily, they (bandits) entered a shop opposite the Mosque where they sell mobile phones and started packing phones. It was in that process that the deputy chief imam escaped but they went away with the restaurant owner and two of her workers," he said.

Mohammed said the restaurant had been attacked twice in two years, adding that a boy named Mohammad,

was also hit by a bullet in his shoulder and was taken to a hospital.

According to him, the vehicle in which the FIRS official was travelling was also hit by a stray bullet but the driver of the vehicle was able to escape.

A community leader, who pleaded anonymity, lamented that the area which extends from Old Gawu to Yaba in Abaji Area Council had been very dangerous due to mountains and a thick forest that served as shelters for criminals.

He said, "Sometimes, they do send their informants to communities to work as labourers who study the environment and get back to them before they attack. The Abaji Area Council has posed a serious threat to our communities.

"They have kidnapped many people in our area. A few weeks ago, they invaded Rafin-Daji village and kidnapped 15 farmers including four women on their farms. One of the tractor drivers was killed and one of the two tractors with which they were working was set ablaze. They were released after collecting N3 million for each person as ransom.

"We also spent N400, 000 in buying bags of rice, wraps of Indian hemp, cartons of

noodles, packs of cigarettes and other hard drugs that they demanded. The victims spent about two months before they were released.

"Also recently, six people were kidnapped in a village very close to us. They were released after the payment of ransom. The village head that was among the victims had his legs and hands broken before they released them."

Meanwhile, residents in the area decried the absence of security operatives despite the incessant attacks and kidnapping.

"There are no armed security personnel in our area. There are policemen but you won't see them with guns. The attacks were beyond the strength of our vigilantes," a resident said.

Police warn cultists against unlawful gathering in Osun

By PAUL MICHAEL,
Defence Editor, Abuja

The Osun State Police Command has warned members of unlawful societies and other criminals in the state against unlawful gatherings.

In a statement issued on Monday by the Police Public Relations Officer of the Command, Yemisi Opolola, the Commissioner of Police in the State, CP Olawale Olokode, gave a marching order to Area Commanders, Divisional Police Officers (DPOs), and Tactical units to be on alert.

According to the statement, the Command had an intelligence report that cultists were planning to mark August 8, 2022, to celebrate cultism.

The statement "warned cultists and other unscrupulous

elements in the state to stop the plan or any of such action(s) forthwith.

"Consequently, the State Police Command, in collaboration with other security agents and Civilian JTF will not tolerate any unlawful gathering or assembly that will endanger the peaceful atmosphere of the state, especially during this electioneering period as the plan to mark 8/8 may lead to bloodletting and destruction of properties.

"Therefore, the Commissioner of Police has given a marching order to the Area Commanders, Divisional Police Officers (DPOs), and Tactical units to be at alert and nip in the bud any act capable of truncating the peace of the state.

"Also, hoteliers, recreation/event centers, and landlords/landladies are, by this announcement, warned not to allow their facilities to be

used for any cult-related activities/meetings, as owners of such facilities are liable for prosecution."

The CP advised parents and guardians to caution their wards to be law-abiding and desist from any act or unlawful gathering and assembly before, during, and beyond the said date while warning that any individual found in contravention of the warning would be arrested and prosecuted.

"Finally, the citizens are urged to be security conscious, vigilant, co-operate and collaborate with the security agents by giving useful, credible, and timely information and report any suspicious movement or activities of cultists and other criminals through these numbers: 08039537995, 08123823981 and 08075872433," the statement added.

Best Western Plus Elomaz Hotel, Asaba.

Address: Plot 22 A/B -27 Core Area, DBS Road,
GRA, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

Tel: +2348038193264





Situating bakers' alert to another hike in bread price

Last week, Premium Bread Makers Association of Nigeria (PBAN, once again addressed the media to alert members of the public about planned increase in the price of bread due to the several challenges facing the sector daily. It said the move was aimed at intimating bread consumers ahead of the increase, prompting JOHNMARK UKOKO to ask whether another hike in the price of bread is necessary, as the economy takes a toll on ordinary Nigerians.

Bread remains one of the oldest and commonest food items all over the world, as the product predates the birth of Jesus Christ over two thousand years ago. It is a staple food item taken by majority of people, but especially by the masses, as it should be available and accessible to all and sundry in all climes and countries.

To stress the importance of bread and fish, the scriptures told a story of how Jesus Christ and his 12 disciples fed a multitude that followed Jesus while on earth with five loaves and some fish.

In most Arab countries and some Latin America countries, the citizens of those countries have sent their government packing because bread price was increased by few Shillings or little amounts.

In the time past labourers in Nigeria live on bread and beans alone daily to carried out their daily shores.

In times past in Nigeria, pupils and students from poor homes practically, live on bread to survive.

In times past, when Nigerians travel back to their country's side, one item they must buy home in large quantities to share for their kit and kin or simply put, their kinsmen and other relatives is bread.

The product was so cheap and sold everywhere that it was taken for granted until the Russia-Ukraine conflict started.

Since the beginning of the conflict in late February 2022, the price of the product that was usually taken for granted, as the food of the poor has increased by over 300 per cent.

Last week, precisely on August 5, 2021, the umbrella body of the bread bakers had during a media briefing where the news was once again broken in quick succession, lamented that the commonest food for ordinary citizens has suddenly become like a precious gold.

Chairman of the Premium Bread Makers Association of Nigeria (PBAN), Emmanuel Onuorah, broke the news that the association was proposing to increase the price of bread

for the umpteenth time this year due to rising cost of baking materials.

He noted that the recent development in the global market place had not translated to a better operating environment for local bakers.

The planned hike followed a recent strike by members of PBAN and the Association of Master Bakers and Caterers of Nigeria, which culminated in a 15 per cent hike in the price of bread about three weeks ago.

Onuorah said most members of the association had been forced to close down their business operations this year due to increasing cost of doing business, maintaining the price of bread had to increase just as millers and sugar refiners have increased their prices by over N2,000.

"We had an increase of over N10,000 between three weeks ago and last week. We have no other option, but to increase our prices again within a few days. The price of preservatives has also increased by N2,000, while the price of butter has risen by over N2,000. So, we have to respond accordingly to remain in business.

"For us as an industry, our own is garbage in, garbage out. If the price of wheat reduces, certainly we will look at the price of our products and also act accordingly," Onuorah said.

He also appealed to the Federal Government to open up foreign exchange (forex) window for the sector and industry players, particularly the flour millers, saying this would significantly address the indiscriminate increase in the prices of flour in the market.

"When we withdrew our services, flour was sold for N28,500 per bag, but as of Friday, August 5, 2022, the price had increased to N30,500," he further lamented.

Although the PBAN leadership has good grounds to contemplate another increase in the price of bread less than two months after the last hike, most Nigerians are asking whether only Russia and Ukraine are producing wheat and flour in the whole world.

"What happened to the



Emmanuel Onuorah

cassava bread experiment that was promoted by former President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration through the Federal Industrial Institute Research Organisation (FIIRO) about a decade and half ago? Does it mean that despite the huge amount of money the Obasanjo administration gave FIIRO to ensure that the country depended less on wheat importation simply ended in private pockets?

On many occasions, Obasanjo and FIIRO assured Nigerians then that the country would no longer be at the mercy of the foreign wheat producers, the Russia and Ukraine conflict has shown that Obasanjo and FIIRO did not tell Nigerians the entire truth.

While the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war is being felt in Nigeria and other African countries, the warring countries signed an agreement to ship over 20 million tons of grain stuck in Black Seaport, through an agreement brokered with support of the United Nations (UN) and Turkey, which Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, described

as an unprecedented accord between both countries.

Does it also mean that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development did not render any account in the ministry's avowed assistance for local wheat farmers?

It is also curious to observe that all intervention grants the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) claimed to have given local farmers through its Anchor Borrowers Programme (ABP), which gulped trillions of naira did not include local wheat farmers.

The CBN forex crisis has dealt a big blow to all sectors of the country's economy, especially the importation of machineries, raw materials and other production inputs, but exactly the country reached the current situation beat everyone's imagination, as some politicians and their family members continue to easily access dollars, which they spray in parties.

The PBAN also cited the current price of diesel, which now sells for between N800 and N1,000 per litre depending on the location, as one of the main

reasons why the association is contemplating price hike. But in all, the Buhari government and the successive administrations are to be blamed for the country's present situation.

No doubt, diesel is the main energy source in Nigeria as the successive administrations have been unable to repair, or even built and turn around the country's comatose refineries.

When the likes of Chad, Republic of Niger are building and refining enough diesel for their local consumption and export, Nigeria, which prides itself as the giant of Africa and with all the abundant natural gas and crude oil reserves, has failed to do so.

While some Nigerians have urged the Federal Government to support and hasten completion of the Dangote Refinery, it remains a sad reality that Aliko Dangote is about to achieve what the government and over 200 million Nigerians could not do.

The other issue, is while Nigerians await the Dangote Refinery to come on stream to refine petroleum products for the country, what happens to the modular refineries, which Vice President Yemi Osinbajo encouraged during his visit to the Niger Delta some time ago?

Does it mean that after six years of the Vice President's pledge, the modular refineries were still in the drawing board as none of them have commenced refining crude oil? If Nigerians are unable to buy rice, beans, garri, semovita and now bread, what do the authorities expect the people to eat?

Onuorah and members of PBAN may increase the price of bread in response to skyrocketing prices of flour, sugar, butter, diesel and worsening forex exchange crisis, but Nigerians are asking whether if and when the Russia and Ukraine war ends, the prices will ever revert to the pre Russia-Ukraine war rates?

They also wonder whether Nigerians will be able to afford bread again with the way the PBAN has been increasing the prices of bread every month. Only time will tell!

FG's indebtedness to CBN hits \$47 billion

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Indications have emerged that Nigeria's indebtedness to the Central Bank of Nigeria has reached \$47 billion or an equivalent of N20 trillion even as the obligation has not been added to the country's outstanding public debts.

This was revealed by a recent report on the official website of the Budget Office, which provided details of the country's expenditure plans for 2023-2025.

It hinted that the country's outstanding public debt is now in excess of N41.6 trillion and that even with the additional obligations, the country remains within its self-imposed limit of 40 per cent debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

It also revealed that the Federal Government plans to securitise its ways and means advances from the CBN and upgrade it into a longer-tenor amortised facility at a lower interest rate.

According to the Budget Office, the Federal Government earlier declined that it barely earned enough revenue to cover payments for debt servicing in 2021, adding that government income amounted to only N1.63 trillion in the first four months of 2022.

Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, said expenditure was less than N1.94 trillion needed to cover debt servicing, adding that while the debt portfolio remains vulnerable to revenue and exports shock and that the government was trying to address the issue through strategic revenue growth initiatives.



Zainab Ahmed

Why Buhari approved Seplat's acquisition of \$1.283 billion Mobil share capital

•Nominates Executive Commissioner for Upstream Regulatory Commission

By EDU ABADE, Business Editor

President Muhammadu Buhari has endorsed the granting of ministerial consent to Seplat Energy Offshore Limited, a subsidiary of Seplat Energy cash acquisition of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited's (MPNU) share capital of its shareholders, Mobil Development Nigeria Incorporated (MDNI) and Mobil Exploration Nigeria Incorporated (MENI), being entities of Exxon Mobil Corporation (ExxonMobil) registered in Delaware, United States of America (USA).

As announced on February 25, 2022, Seplat Energy agreed to acquire the share capital of MPNU for \$1.283 billion and \$300 million contingent consideration.

The transformational transaction would create one of the largest independent energy companies on the Nigerian and London Stock Exchanges and boost Seplat Energy's ability to drive growth, profitability and stakeholder prosperity.

The approval was given by President Buhari in his capacity as substantive Minister of Petroleum Resources, with the granting of ministerial consent pursuant to the powers of the minister under paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of the first schedule of the Petroleum

Act 1969.

A separate announcement from the State House, Abuja was released earlier on the development in a letter through which the President directed the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources to convey ministerial consent to all relevant parties.

The stakeholders are the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), ExxonMobil companies, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), Seplat Energy and Seplat Energy Offshore Limited, among others.

The President further directed that the Minister of Petroleum Resources shall ensure that the ExxonMobil and Seplat Energy operating entity, being the MPNU, carries out operatorship of all the Oil Mining Leases (OMLs) in the related shallow water assets to optimise production in support of Nigeria's quota of the Organisation of Oil Producing Countries (OPEC) in the short-term, as well as ensure accelerated development and monetisation of the gas resources in the assets for the Nigerian economy.

Responding, the board and management of Seplat Energy thanked President Buhari for



President Buhari

the ministerial consent on the landmark acquisition of the share capital of MPNU.

Meanwhile, the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reports that President Buhari has forwarded the name of Muhammad Sabo Lamido to the Senate, as Executive Commissioner, Finance and Accounts, for the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission. Senior Special Assistant to the

President on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, confirmed this in a statement in Abuja on Monday.

Buhari, in a letter addressed to President of the Senate, Ahmed Lawan, said Lamido was nominated due to the death of Hassan Gambo, who occupied the position until his demise and therefore, urged the Senate to confirm the nominee "in the usual expeditious manner."

Again, bakers threaten to hike prices of bread

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Premium Bread Makers Association of Nigeria (PBAN), the umbrella body of bakers in the country has concluded plans to increase the prices of bread for the umpteenth time this year due to the skyrocketing cost of baking materials.

President of the association, Emmanuel Onuorah, said the recent developments in the global market place had not translated into a better operating environment for local bakers.

The planned price hike follows a recent industrial action by the PBAN as well as the Association of Master Bakers and Caterers of Nigeria, which culminated in a 15 per cent hike in the price of bread barely two weeks ago.

Onuorah said many of his members had been forced to shut down business operations this year due to the skyrocketing cost of doing business.

The price of bread is going up again. The Millers just increased prices by N2,000.

Sugar refiners increased by N2,000, we had an N10,000 increase in the last two to three weeks.

We are set to increase the prices of our bread again. Preservatives has increased by N2,000 and butter has increased by N2,000, so we have to respond. For us as an industry, our own is garbage in, garbage out. If the price of wheat comes down, certainly we will look at the price of our products and act accordingly," he assured.

Onuorah appealed to the federal government to open up a forex window for industry players, particularly the flour millers.

This, he said would significantly address the indiscriminate increase in the prices of flour in the market, adding: "When we went on withdrawal of services, flour was N28,500 as of Tuesday, August 9, 2022, it is N30,500," Onuorah.

It would be recalled that on July 22, 2022, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement to free more than 20 million

tons of grain stuck in Ukraine's Black Sea ports, the agreement brokered with support from the United Nations and Turkey, was projected to have major implications on global food security and food prices.

The inability of Ukraine to export grain from its Black Sea ports had severely reduced the supply of food to import dependent African and Middle Eastern countries.

Before the war in Ukraine, Ukraine had a breadbasket, providing wheat, maize and barley to countries, throughout Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

A baker, Sunday Ighotemu, who spoke to *The Trumpet*, also lamented the rapid increase in the price of flour.

According to him, bakers now had to review prices on a weekly basis in order to recoup costs and maintain profit margins, adding: "A bag of flour now sells for N30,000. That was on Friday, August 5, 2022. Who knows if it has increased again by now?"

We have to review prices

regularly. People don't want to understand, but we are all in this country and we know what is going on in the economy.

Ighotemu said the bakers were not happy over the regular increase in the price of bread, adding that they also feel the pains of Nigerians and that the constant increase in the price of bread had reduced the demand and sale of the product, as most Nigerians could no longer afford bread.

"PBAN as an association is not happy with the situation in our industry. At the beginning of the year, we didn't imagine that by early August, the price of bread would have increased for four times, but that is the situation we find ourselves.

"The Russia-Ukraine war and scarcity of foreign exchange (forex) in the last three months have impacted negatively, not only in the bakery sector, but also the entire economy of Nigeria," Ighotemu said.

negatively, not only in the bakery sector, but also the entire economy of Nigeria," Ighotemu said.

Monarchs, others back Umana, urge FG, IOCs to release \$5.6 billion owed NDDC

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Traditional rulers and youth groups from the nine states of the Niger Delta region have urged the Federal Government and international oil companies (IOCs) operating in the region to release the \$5.6 billion being owed the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

They said paying the money would allow the Minister of the Niger Delta Affairs, Umana Okon Umana, to reposition and implement the commission's newly developed roadmap, adding that at the last count under the tenure of the former Minister, Godswill Obot Akpabio, the NDDC was owed about \$5.6 billion and another N649 billion by the multinational oil companies.

"Umana's newly developed roadmap to achieve the commission's core mandate may not work if the NDDC is not removed from its life support approach, because what the commission receives every month is only enough to pay employees' salaries and office maintenance," they stated.

The stakeholders, comprising traditional rulers, chiefs, women and youth leaders, in a statement issued by its Secretary-General, Chief Anthony Loveday, noted that the call on the Federal Government and the IOCs was necessitated by the short time left for the President Muhammadu Buhari administration and the reality that the roadmap developed by Umana could not be implemented without proper funding.

They also restated their support for the rebranding of the commission to enable it to serve as a vehicle for driving the socio-economic development of the region.

"The leadership must understand that time is of the essence, as millions of people in the region are languishing in abject poverty. Therefore, the Federal Government should match its words with action and release the funds owed the NDDC, as well as direct the multinational oil and gas companies to release the money owed the commission.

"We support the new policy directions and the expected rebranding of the commission under Umana's leadership. We await the Federal Government to release the funds for the expected reforms to commence. We expect the reforms to lead to sound decisions on various issues affecting the Niger Delta region, including the completion of the East-West road and review of various infrastructure development projects across the region.

"The Presidency should as a matter of urgency, grant the NDDC powers to award new contracts to enable the it to provide communities in the nine states of the region empowerment and entrepreneurship training programmes to alleviate the sufferings of the people and ensure payments of verified and completed contracts before the expiration of President Buhari's tenure," the statement reads.

The stakeholders also commended Umana and management team at the NDDC for prioritising projects execution and payments that deliver most impact for the region and their new focus on execution of security, health, education, water and road infrastructure projects.

The equally backed the minister's directive that further award of contracts on water hyacinths in the Niger Delta region should be suspended, while all such ongoing projects should be reviewed.

Stakeholders kick as FG plans to raise tax on telecoms services, others

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

There are indications that the Federal Government has concluded plans to begin the implementation of its proposed excise duties on telecommunications services and beverages from the 2023 fiscal year.

The Budget Office under the supervision of the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed has assured that the plan will start in 2023 and last till 2025, adding that it was in the Medium Term Expenditure Fiscal Strategy Paper, which was released recently in Abuja.

She explained that this was in a bid to boost the country's non-oil revenue streams, adding that it was expected that excise duty revenue would grow exponentially due to the introduction of charges on telecommunication services.

Discussing the tax under the purview of the Nigeria Custom Service (NCS), she said the NCS would introduce a framework for recovering duties, taxes, as well as appropriate fees and transactions conducted through electronic platforms.

Explaining the strategies that would be implemented to improve customs revenue collections between 2023 and 2025, the minister said full implementation of the excise duty would apply to telecoms services, alcoholic drinks, sugar, sweetened beverages, cigarettes and other tobacco products.

It would be recalled that the introduction of the excise duty on telecoms services was against the backdrop of opposition to the move by the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami and the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN).

Pantami, who stated this during the maiden edition of the Nigerian Telecommunications Indigenous Content Exposition organised for developing the indigenous telecoms sector, said the ministry slammed a five per cent tax on telecoms services.

He said: "The ministry of communications and Digital Economy is not satisfied with any effort to introduce excise duty on telecommunication services. Beyond making our position known, we will go behind the scenes against any policy that will destroy

the digital economy sector. We will go to any extent to legally defend its interests."

However, the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning had attributed the main reason behind the introduction of the excise tax on telecommunication services to the dwindling revenue against increasing government expenditure, which had resulted in huge deficits pending finance through huge borrowings.

"Revenue generation remains the major fiscal challenge of the Federal Government. The systemic resources mobilisation problem has been compounded by recent economic challenges and for sustainable development, the Federal Government has instituted the strategic revenue growth initiative to improve revenues and entrench fiscal prudence with emphasis on achieving value for more.

"The measures include improving the tax administration framework, including tax filing and payment as well as the introduction of new and or further increase in existing pro-health taxes like excise on sugar, sweetened beverages and tobacco products," he added.



Prof. Isa Pantami

However, mixed reactions have trailed the Federal Government's plans with many respondents rejecting the move saying it is one tax too many, maintaining that when implemented, the tax would further increase the operations for telecoms companies, worsen the local manufacturing challenges and increase the prices Nigerians will have to pay for the services.

Customs, brokers allege extortion, delays by NPA, NCS at Onne Port

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Clearing agents under the aegis of the Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) have decried delays and extortions by officers of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) at the gate of Onne Port in Rivers State.

The clearing agents, who operate at the eastern ports, accused officers of both agencies of serious infractions through their nefarious activities during



Kayode Farinto

the three-day working visit of ANLCA officials led by the Acting National President, Dr. Kayode Farinto, to the eastern port last week.

They maintained that the most frustrating experience for freight forwarders was the delay of consignments duly cleared from the oil and gas customs command, but which were delayed alongside conventional cargoes from the Onne Port at the gate by customs officers.

They also lamented that the delays and illegal packing fees attracted N25,000 daily from the NPA.

Speaking at the meeting, Chairman, Calabar Chapter of ANLCA, Dr. Ohabuchi Uchecukwu Magnus, who stated that containers duly cleared at the Onne Oil and Gas Free Zone were usually delayed for several days by customs officers, lamented that the situation has created serious challenge for the clearing agents at the port.

Also, Chairman, Oil and Gas Zone of ANLCA, Okere Chinyere, said it took a minimum of 30 days to move bulk containers from the port due to lack of customs personnel to escort the consignments, explaining that as a result of the delays, freight forwarders

were running at a loss due to huge demurrage charges being incurred.

Her words: "It will take an agent who has bulk containers to clear, who loaded 100 containers going to Kano a minimum of 30 days to clear all the containers because Customs rations consignments in five.

"So before the 100 containers will leave the port you have incurred demurrage because NPA charges N25,000 each day they stay in the port after the first two days free grace period. As such, most times we finish the without even making money for ourselves and customs officers are living large."

She also lamented that the oil and gas customs command still extort cargoes at the Onne Port gate as such oil and gas consignments, which are urgently needed by operators are often delayed alongside conventional cargoes.

She pleaded with the leadership of ANLCA take up the issue with management of the NCS for the customs officers not to kill their business.

On the issue of multiple alerts, she accused the customs, especially at the Port of generating multiple alerts to extort them and called on the ANLCA leadership to also

intervene on the matter.

Also speaking, Chairman of Onne port Chapter of the association, said a member loaded truck and for good five months, customs officers did not allow the truck to go out.

Speaking on the other challenges affecting the eastern zone, Chairman of Airport Chapter Area I, Charles Onyeama, who lamented the issue of the low volume of cargoes at the eastern port, particularly at the Airport chapter, added that there were no more jobs and that the MSC Shipping Company has practically relocated from the area.

He said this was due to the fact that the Port Harcourt Airport was not a certified airport, as such international airlines do not patronise, a situation which is making the agents to lose cargoes that would have been coming to the port.

Responding, Farinto promised to engage the various government agencies to tackle some of the challenges members of ANLCA were facing.

He also asked them to be compliance and law-abiding in their activities, so as to be able to challenge any government agency that might trample on their rights, while carrying out their daily business operations.



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5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
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10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	26,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
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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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Romantic roles have always been the most difficult for me to play -Patrick Diabuah

Patrick Diabuah is one of the fastest growing Nigerian actor, musician, voice-over artist and part time sculptor. Patrick who became more popular after starring in the award winning stage play *Saro the musical* and has equally featured in several theatre productions like *Wakaa the musical*, *Kakadu the musical* and *London Life Lagos Living* to name a few. His film/ TV credits include the award winning *93days*, *Tinsel*, *Boomerang* amongst others. In this chat with **OMONYI ALLI**, Patrick reminisces on his career as actor, musician and sculptor amongst others.

Q: How did you become an actor? Was it by coincidence or by choice?

A: Initially the plan was not to become an actor, although I've always wanted to perform on a stage or in front of a camera from when I was pretty young. I mean as young as age seven, I was already mimicking the characters I saw on TV. But I really decided to be an actor after secondary school. I left secondary school as a science student but realised a few years after that I wasn't cut out to be a scientist. I wanted to be a doctor or a pilot in the army. In fact at some point, I wanted to be too many things. So I thought to myself, how can I be all these things? I decided to become an actor. I went to the university to learn performance.

Q: Who or what were your early influences?

A: My earliest influence was Patrick Cargill who played Patrick Woodford in the British comedy many 'Wives of



Patrick'. I didn't know what the show was about. But I was just drawn to the character or shall I say the actor. There was also Mr. Olu Jacobs, Joke Silva, Funsho Alabi, Robert Powell, and let's not forget Michael Crawford and John Cleese. I have a long list but let's keep it short.

Q: Would you regard Patrick Diabuah as a lover boy?

A: Lover boy, well, I know I like women and I respect them and will never treat them as "a play thing". I can be smooth if I decide to be, but I think I'll reserve that side for stage and screen.

Q: How do handle romantic roles?

A: Romantic roles have always been the most difficult for me to play. I believe it's because of its subtlety, but then it has to be big enough for the viewers to feel it and yet authentic enough for them to believe it. So what I do most times is build trust with my scene partners. So I start off by knowing who my partner is, what they like. Basically we just become friends. It's easier for me, to play romantic roles

with a friend, than a complete stranger

Q: So how easy was it for you blending knowing that you are coming from stage?

A: It wasn't easy at first but you know having that stage partner that we were trained on the stage to be large, to be very big. It wasn't easy but I got over it after first two days of shoot.

Q: Is there any other dream role that you would love to play?

A: I have always wanted to join the army but my mother prayed it out of my brain, I will like to do more of action, do more of stunts like I said it has always been my dream as a child and these things are driven just by the desire to just change the world

Q: What do you look out for the most before accepting a script?

A: I know it would be cliché to say I look out for a good story, but yes I do look out for a good story. One that I too can learn something from. I also look out for a story that can take me to a world outside of my existing reality, that's another reason we are actors, the fun of escaping to a different world. The privilege of leaving behind every

day, that we have so much come to take for granted. Another thing I look out for is the character I will be playing, the more complex the better

Q: You are a sculptor, voiceover artist, actor, singer and acting coach. How do you cope with Imposter Syndrome?

A: I think it is only natural sometimes to feel like you're not as good at what you do. I've learned to see that feeling as natural and somewhat true. But instead of letting it drive me to the ground, I use it as a springboard to push my skill to the next level. In the words of Marcus Aurelius "throw me to the wolves, and I shall return, leading the pack". It is a bad feeling -"impostorism" but then what are you going to do about it? I choose to let it move me to the next ring of the ladder.

Q: What will you say is your most memorable experience on stage and screen?

I have had many memorable moments on stage, one which would be the *Trials of Brother Jero*, very memorable production for me. My first time on a musical too was one I would not forget in a hurry.

Wellness

5 Amazing benefits of Aloe Vera

When it comes to taking care of your skin and looking young and healthy, especially when it comes to the ladies, you have to get the raccoon eyes off somehow, but many makeup removers contain harsh chemicals that are very harmful to your skin. So, we took it upon ourselves to share with you the benefits of Aloe Vera. When you squeeze a dollop of pure aloe gel onto a cotton ball and swipe away the day for a simple and effective alternative, these are the other things natural Aloe Vera can help you with.

1. Reduces Constipation:

Aloe Vera has often been used to treat constipation. This time it is not the gel, but the latex, that provides the benefits. The latex is a sticky yellow residue found just under the skin of the leaf of the Aloe Vera plant. The key compound responsible for this effect is called aloin, or barbaloin, which has well-established laxative effects. So when next you over eat at thanksgiving or at a wedding, don't bother or be scared. Just get home and cut an Aloe Vera plant and help yourself.

2. Lowers blood sugar levels in diabetics:

A study has shown that putting to use natural Aloe Vera has been more helpful and effectual than your normal day drug pills. Aloe Vera has sometimes been used as a traditional diabetes remedy. It is said to enhance insulin sensitivity and help improve blood sugar management. Just like we stated before, several animal and human studies in type 2 diabetics have actually found promising results from consuming Aloe Vera extract. So when next you experience a time of high sugar levels in your body, put to use an Aloe Vera Plant and get speedy results.

3. Prevent wrinkles:

There is some preliminary evidence that topical Aloe Vera gel can slow aging of the skin. According to a study conducted on 30 women over the age of 45, topical application of the gel was shown to increase collagen production and improve skin elasticity over a 90-day period. Another study found that Aloe Vera reduced erythema (redness of the skin), but was also found to dehydrate skin cells. So for the ladies, when you decide to really take care of your skin and preserve it for the later days, take a pinch of Aloe Vera gel and apply. Keep looking radiant.

4. Reduces dental plaque:

Tooth decay and diseases of the gum are very common health problems. One of the best ways to prevent this from happening is to reduce the buildup of plaque (bacterial biofilms)



on the teeth. In a mouth rinse study of 300 healthy people, 100% pure Aloe Vera juice was compared to the standard mouthwash ingredient chlorhexidine. After 4 days of use, the Aloe Vera mouth rinse was found to be just as effective as chlorhexidine in reducing dental plaque. Another study found similar benefits of Aloe Vera mouth rinse when used over a 15- to 30-day period. So for the kids, after eating a lot of chocolates and candies and ice cream, make sure

you use a little Aloe Vera juice to rinse mouth before bed.

5. Weight Loss:

According to Britt Brandon, the author of *The Everything Guide to Aloe Vera for Health*,

"Aloe Vera can improve the effectiveness of your diet and maximize your weight-loss potential. With ample amounts of vitamins and minerals that contribute to weight-loss, as well as amino acids, enzymes and sterols, Aloe Vera ensures your diet is not

only supportive of weight-loss, but also improves the body's absorption and utilization, improving overall health as well as weight-loss success." Aloe Vera is used in a wide range of health products, like diet supplements, juices etc. It's rich in anti-oxidants which means it helps cut out free radicals in the body and boost your immunity. So if you ever feel over weight, don't be sad, just make sure you use a little bit of Aloe Vera regularly.





Injury rules Thiago Alcantara out of Liverpool's August actions

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

Thiago Alcantara has been ruled out of action for Liverpool after the midfielder limped out of the field in a 2-2 draw against Fulham, on Saturday, after he was affected by a hamstring injury.

The player will undergo a scan within the week to ascertain the level of injury.

With this report, the 31-year-old will be ruled out of action in August and may likely return in September.

In August, the Reds' will play Crystal Palace, Manchester United, Bournemouth and Newcastle which the Spanish player regrettably will not be part of.

Despite the sad incident and the effect, Reds boss Jurgen Klopp has shrugged off the absence of Thiago from the squad.

Klopp claimed that the absence of the player will not have any effect as the club have the depth to cover for



the slack but laments that some other midfielders were also injured.

"We said we don't need a midfielder because we have enough - and we actually have enough, but the problem now is we get punished for something that is not our responsibility really because things like this

can happen," the Reds' boss said.

"Nobody could imagine that Curtis gets the thing he gets; it is nothing serious but he is a young boy and it is a kind of stress reaction. Bodies are like this. Naby is only ill and he will now be back definitely next week again. Oxlade happened

early and now with Thiago that is, of course, not good and we will see" Klopp added.

The Liverpool boss urged the club to do something quickly because some of their midfielders, Naby Keita, Curtis Jones and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, who could have covered up for Thiago's absence were down with injuries or ailments.

He continued: "Look, a transfer must make sense now and in the long term; we have midfielders, we still have enough midfielders. It is not that we lack midfielders, but it's just that some of them are injured.

"This is not a good situation, I don't like it at all, but we have to see how we react to that - but for sure not panicking," Klopp added.

Liverpool welcome Crystal Palace to Anfield on Saturday and their playmaker will not be available to process the game following the hamstring injury that has ruled him out of action until September.

Chelsea to make club-record bid for Fofana

Chelsea owner Todd Boehly has not ended his business in the transfer market for a defender despite signing Kalidou Koulibaly from Napoli and has turned his attention to Leicester City centre-back Wesley Fofana.

Reportedly, Boehly wishes to snap Fofana to Chelsea at a club-record fee that will make him the most expensive defender in the world but Leicester insist he is not for sale.

Chelsea are eager to build back a formidable defence after losing Antonio Rudiger and Andreas Christensen to Real Madrid and Barcelona respectively on free transfers.

Boehly is prepared to give Thomas Tuchel what he wants for the season and another highly rated Fofana could be just that player the club needs.

According to reports from England, Chelsea are prepared to tender a bid for the 21-year-old France international who made his debut for the France U21 national team in October 2020.

However, from the Blues' proposition, Fofana could

cost them up to £85m should they decide to formalise their words into actions.

Recall that in 2019, Leicester sold one of their prized assets, Harry Maguire, to Manchester United for €87m.

Meanwhile, French media L'Equipe reports that Chelsea's initial bid of €75m was rejected by Leicester who need a minimum of £80m that will see the defender become the most expensive sale of the club, surpassing Maguire's record in the process.

Fofana joined Leicester last two years from French Ligue 1 side Saint-Etienne and has featured in 51 matches while scoring 1 goal in the process.



Your remarks on Africans, AFCON, irresponsible, unacceptable, CAF tell Napoli President

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) have taken a swipe at the President of Napoli, Aurelio de Laurentiis, over his recent comments against African players and the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

CAF said the remarks by De Laurentiis were unacceptable and irresponsible after the latter stressed that African players coming to Napoli must sign a waiver to withdraw from the AFCON competition.

According to the continental football governing body, in a statement released on Sunday, the decision by the Napoli President likely falls under Article 14 of the UEFA Disciplinary Regulations.

Going by the above Disciplinary Regulation, CAF have charged the Union of European Football Associations to commence a disciplinary investigation against De Laurentiis.

"By publicly declaring that players who sign for Napoli must sign a waiver denouncing participation in the Africa Cup of Nations as a condition

of employment, De Laurentiis' comments are likely to fall under Article 14 of the UEFA Disciplinary Regulations. CAF, therefore, urges UEFA to initiate disciplinary investigation against him," CAF said.

The continental football governing body stressed that they are committed to the role that unites diverse people of different cultural and language backgrounds.

"CAF is committed to the role that football plays in Africa, Europe, North and South America, Asia and globally of bringing together and uniting people of different cultures, language groups, races, ethnic groups and religious backgrounds," the football continental body said.

Furthermore, CAF noted that they believe that Napoli and UEFA are committed to the same humanitarian role as it does.

"We have no doubt that Napoli and UEFA are as committed as CAF is to these global humanitarian objectives," CAF said.



However, the continental football governing body asked De Laurentiis if he was going to extend such actions against players from other continents from taking part in their continental competition.

CAF asked, "Are we to assume that the Chairman of Napoli is going to include similar restrictive conditions to players from South America, Asia and other Confederations prohibiting them from playing in their Continental competitions which are important for the development and growth of football globally?"

Recall that Napoli President recently made a comment where he said the club will never sign African players unless they are ready to sign a waiver, prohibiting them from taking part in AFCON.

CAF, to exemplify the importance of AFCON to the African people, explained that the "Africa Cup of Nations is the flagship competition of the African continent and one of the leading global football competitions. Its last edition in Cameroon was shown in more than 160 countries and attracted more than 600 million viewers".

'Joe Aribo £6m fee to Southampton shocking'

Scottish pundit Si Ferry said he is shocked a good player like Joe Aribo would be offered to Southampton for £6m despite his contribution and importance in the field of play.

Ferry adjudged the Super Eagles midfielder as strong, does the box-to-box runs, create opportunities and score goals.

According to the soccer pundit, who praised the £20m move of Calvin Bassey to Ajax, a deal that will potentially rise to £22.5m, Aribo's national teammate only performed for six months to become Rangers' record sale.

"£20m is the most that clubs in Scotland will get for a player now. If you look at Kieran Tierney, who was exceptional in the league over the course of a couple of years, he left for £25m and so you look at Calvin Bassey who's only really performed consistently for six months - for me £20m is a no brainer," Ferry told Grosvenor Sport.

"Joe Aribo's £6m fee was more of a shock for me. He can run box-to-box, he's strong, can tackle and also score and create goals," the soccer pundit added.

The 26-year-old joined the Gers for a nominal fee of £300,000 from Charlton while other sources reveal it was on a free transfer. Either way, Rangers made huge profit in a deal that will potentially rise to £10m on add-ons.

However, Ferry rethought that Aribo's drop in form in

the peak of the last season's campaign for the Gers would have culminated into the £6m offer from the Saints.

Furthermore, the Super Eagles midfielder had a year left in his contract at Ibrox which Rangers had to capitalise on than to lose him on a free transfer.

"But maybe, because he wasn't as effective in the last three months of his Rangers career as he was in the first six months of the season, the price tag came down a little bit," he said.

"Based on his quality alone I'd have been wanting a bit more than £6m but what Scottish clubs don't want is players running down their contracts and going for free so if there is a hint that Aribo is looking for a move away, it's so important that clubs do get a bit of money for them," Ferry added.

Aribo made his debut for the Saints against Tottenham on Saturday under Ralph Hasenhüttl where they fell 4-1 at the Tottenham Stadium.



Fred, McTominay, won't get United on top, says Keane

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

Manchester United legend Roy Keane has condemned the poor display of Fred and McTominay against Brighton & Hove Albion, asserting that the duo's performances will not propel Red Devils to compete at the top of the Premier League.

Keane said both players' performances highlight the slack in the midfield, a resultant effect of the decline in football intelligence exhibited especially by Fred. "The [lack of] decision-making and football intelligence from midfield, particularly Fred," Keane told Sky Sports.

According to Keane, he has been assessing both players' contributions in the midfield and concluded they do not possess the essential qualities to rejuvenate Manchester United to the top.

The Irish continued: "I've been going on about it for a long time – Fred and [Scott] McTominay are not good enough.

"They won't get Manchester United back

Quality in middle is really poor- Scholes



competing at the top. We see it week in, week out. They're not up to it," Keane reiterated.

Also, former United midfielder and legend of the club, Paul Scholes has described the performance by the duo in midfield as ridiculous.

Scholes labelled their display in the central midfield position as shambolic which was easily spotted a few minutes after kickoff.

He said, "It was a shocking start for Man United and the first half was shambolic really.

"The signs were there right from the first few minutes that this was going to be bad," he added.

Scholes retired in 2013 from Manchester United having played 499 Premier League games where he found the back of the net 55 times and provided 338 assists.

He noted that some of the moves McTominay carried out were laughable adding that the midfielder was lucky to have narrowly escaped being red-carded for a nasty challenge during the 2-1 defeat in Old Trafford by the Seagulls.

"McTominay was always trying to run with the ball, ridiculous. The quality in the middle of the pitch was really poor," Scholes said.

"I was happy he didn't get sent off [for a high challenge]

but I think he was slightly lucky. Again, he's running with the ball, absolutely ridiculous.

"It could easily have been a red card. The quality in the middle of the pitch was nowhere near good enough but we've seen that for the last few years with these two players," he added.

He advised the club manager Erik ten Hag to drop one of them, stressing that even this proposition is surplus to requirement.

Scholes continued: "With Fred and McTominay, he [Ten Hag] is going to have to go with just one of them but even one of them is probably too many.

"Fred gives the ball away all the time and McTominay tries to run with the ball constantly and then gives it away. Pass it to your best players! It's not that difficult. It's criminal on a day like today," he lamented.

Manchester United are arduously working hard to bolster their midfield with the signing of Barcelona's midfielder Frenkie de Jong but the Dutchman has refused to consent to United's approaches.

Algeria 2023: Akuneto, Madu, 33 others invited to national team camp for Ghana clash

Head Coach of the home-based Super Eagles Salisu Yusuf has invited Chijioko Akuneto, Isa Ali and 33 others to the Super Eagles B camp ahead of the 2023 CHAN qualifiers in a few weeks' time.

Yusuf made the list following his exploits in last season's Nigeria Professional Football League as the highest goalscorer.

Also on the list is goalkeeper Adeyinka Adewale, who was in the Super Eagles A team roster for the international friendly games vs Mexico and Ecuador as well as the two Africa Cup of Nations qualifying matches against Sierra Leone and Sao Tome and Principe in June 2022.

Also on the list of invited players are Katsina United FC defender Sani Faisal, Akwa United midfielder Babatunde Bello, Enyimba FC goalkeeper Ojo Olorunleke and Rivers United midfielder Chiamaka Madu. All four were part of the Super Eagles squad for the international friendlies vs Mexico and Ecuador.

Nathaniel Nwosi gets a call-up for his excellent performance in goal for the Flying Eagles as they won the WAFU B U20 Cup in Niger Republic in May.

Alongside Chijioko Akuneto, eight other Rivers United NPFL title-winning squad members made the 35-man list.

All invited players are expected to report at the Bolton White Apartments in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, on Wednesday, 10th August, 2022.

Nigeria will play Ghana in Accra on Sunday, 28th August, with the return leg to be held at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, on Saturday, 3rd September.

The winner on aggregate will qualify for the 7th African Nations Championship to be hosted by Algeria in 2023.

Nigeria were bronze medalists in South Africa in 2014 before emerging as runners-up in Morocco 2018.

Nigeria did not qualify for the 2021 Africa Nations Championship hosted by Cameroon, a disappointment Coach Salisu Yusuf will hope to rectify when they take on Ghana in 20 days' time.

ALL THE INVITED PLAYERS

Goalkeepers: Victor Sochima (Rivers United); Adeyinka Adewale (Akwa United); Ojo Olorunleke (Enyimba FC); Nathaniel Nwosu (Flying Eagles)

Defenders: Tope Olusesi (Rangers Int'l); Kazie Enyinnaya (Rivers United); Sani Faisal (Katsina United); Samson Gbadebo (Akwa United); Ebube Duru (Rivers United); Christopher Nwaeze (Akwa United); Isa Ali (Remo Stars); Tosin Adegbite (Enyimba FC); Temple Emekayi (Rivers United); Andrew Ikefe (Plateau United)

Midfielders: Babatunde Bello (Akwa United); Philip Ozor (Enyimba FC); Maurice Chukwu (Rivers United); Hafeez Nosiru (Kwara United); Zulkifilu Mohammed (Plateau United); Chiamaka Madu (Rivers United); Jide Fatokun (Kwara United); Kenechukwu Agu (Rangers Int'l); Joseph Onoja (Rivers United); Haggai Katoh (Plateau United); Uche Onwuasonaya (Rivers United)

Forwards: Abdulazeez Yusuf (Gombe United); Sadiq Abubakar (Enyimba FC); Chidiebere Nwobodo (Rangers Int'l); Promise Amadi (Akwa United); Chijioko Akuneto (Rivers United); Valentine Odoh (Abia Warriors); Andy Okpe (Remo Stars); Adams Yakubu (Akwa United); Godspower Aniefiok (Kano Pillars); Ossi Martins (Rangers Int'l)

CWG2022: Nigeria's achievements, a fitting parting gift- Buhari

President Buhari has commended the Nigeria team for an outstanding outing in the just concluded Commonwealth Games classifying it as a special moment and a fitting parting gift.

Buhari said this was the last Commonwealth Games he will experience while in office as the number one citizen, adding that the feat recorded by the athletes will linger in the memory perennially.

"We are proud of these achievements and the memories will linger with the nation forever and for me this is a special moment and a fitting parting gift, being my last Commonwealth Games as Head of State," he said.

In a statement released on Sunday, August 7, by Femi Adesina, the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Buhari noted that he joined millions of sports-loving Nigerians to watch some of the remarkable moments in a competition that hosted about 5000 athletes from 72 nations that competed for 280 medal events.

Dignifying the feat attained by Team Nigeria, Buhari explained that 94 worthy ambassadors that proudly flew the Nigerian

flag in nine sporting events, relished exciting moments, especially, when the medalists brought smiles to our faces by breaking world, Africa, national and game records, as well as achieving personal bests in their career.

According to him, 35 medals, comprising 12 gold, 9 silver and 14 bronze, were harvested already on the late evening of the 10th day of the Games, and more medals likely for the country on the last day.

Buhari thanked the golden fishes of Nigeria for competing among the best in the world and displaying the God-given attributes of the real Nigerian- never give up and strive to the

end. The President underlined that most of the medals won were done by young and agile women, who did extremely well in different categories of sports in Birmingham.

Particularly, in his commendations, Buhari listed the harvest of gold medals by multi-medalist Tobi Amusan (100m Women's Hurdle and 4x100m Relay), Favour Ofili, Rosemary Chukwuma, Grace Nwokocha (4x100m Relay); Miesinnee Mercy Genesis (50 kg), Blessing Oborududu (57 kg) and Odunayo Adekorooye (57kg) in Women's Freestyle wrestling; as well as Adijat Adenike Olarinoye (55kg)

and Rafiatu Folashade Lawal (59kg) in Women's weightlifting.

Also among the gold medalists are Folashade Oluwafemiayo, Women's heavyweight Para Powerlifting, Eucharika Iyazi, Women's shot put, Chioma Onyekwere and Goodness Nwachukwu in Women's Discus throw, and Ese Brume, long jump.

Nigeria, outstandingly, outperformed the 2018 edition in Gold Coast, Australia, where they won 25 medals that comprised 9 gold, 10 silver and 6 bronze to emerge 8th on the medal table and second in Africa behind South Africa who were 6th on the log.



Barcelona to void Frenkie de Jong contract for irregularities

Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong has been told by the club management that his contract will be voided for failure to meet the required guideline.

The club said that the contract offered by the previous board under the leadership of president Josep Maria Bartomeu, was illegal.

De Jong has been on the radar of Manchester United who have offered €85m to Barcelona to snap the midfielder to Old Trafford but reports reveal that the player refused to honour the move following the failure by the Red Devils to qualify for Champions League.

In a new development, The Athletic reveals that the player is seeking that Blaugrana pays him €20m in deferred wages after he agreed to alter his contract during Barcelona's financial struggles in the last couple of years.

The Athletic said the Dutchman was contacted by the club management on July 15 to inform him of the irregularities found in the contract extension he signed in October 2020 with the knowledge of former President Bartomeu.

According to the contract signed

by the 25-year-old which will see him remain in Camp Nou until 2026, there was a reduction in wages for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons, with the difference being made up in the following four years.

The present Barcelona board headed by Joan Laporta have since told De Jong they believe certain laws were broken in signing such a deal and they are considering legal action with a view to the contract being annulled. They then proposed the midfielder returns to the terms of his first contract with the club signed in 2019'.

According to the present board, the previous board who concluded the deals that also included Gerard Pique, Marc-Andre ter Stegen and Clement Lenglet agreeing to the terms, everything regarding these contracts was above board because La Liga and other legal parties greenlit them.

The club management, particularly head coach Xavi Hernandez and President Laporta, intend to have the Dutch midfielder remain in Camp Nou with the latter not inclined to take a pay cut but signals from the Cataluan club reveal a different story.

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

— Leo Tolstoy



Delta APC, group back Tinubu/ Shettima Muslim-Muslim ticket

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO**
(Asaba)

Delta State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Ijaw Youth Mass Mobilization Movement for Bola Tinubu, South South, has backed the party's Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket.

Speaking exclusively to The Trumpet, the Coordinator of the Ijaw group, Hon. Duduke Ebitemi, disclosed that it has already drawn out a plan and programme that will help foster victory for the party in the 2023 general

elections in the South South region. He observed that there was nothing wrong for the APC presidential candidate to choose who he believes can help his chances of winning the 2023 election irrespective of tribe and religion, adding that the criticism that has greeted the Muslim-Muslim ticket was a misplaced outcry.

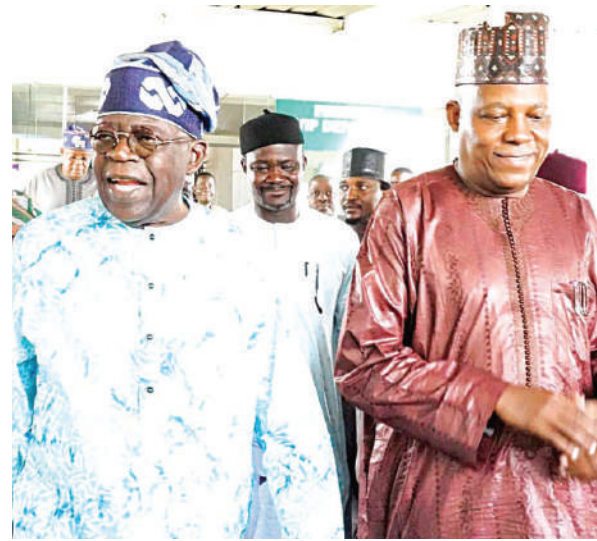
He said, “what we should be concerned about in Nigeria is somebody with a track record and capacity to salvage this nation in all fronts, economically, politically, security and other. We know what is happening and why there is an outcry, but we believe Tinubu, he is not a religious

bigot neither is he a tribalist.

“However, people need to understand this, and that is why our group have drawn out a plan to sensitize and mobilize the people of the South South region, especially those in the creek, to drive this message and make them understand that there is nothing to fear in the joint Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket.”

Speaking on behalf of the Delta State chapter of the APC, its immediate past state chairman, Mr. Jones Erue, said APC in the state is strongly backing the ticket to a resounding electoral victory come 2023.

He said, “Delta APC in working assiduously



Tinubu/Shettima

in tandem with relevant stakeholders nationwide to deliver the Tinubu/Shettima presidential ticket. The truth must be said that Delta State

APC is highly committed to deliver the Tinubu/Shettima ticket in the State in the next presidential election.

“The party is presently

mobilizing not just members, but Deltans in general to vote massively for the presidential candidate of our great party. I am of the very firm view that the Tinubu/Shettima ticket is a ticket that is highly capable of moving the country to the next level of economic growth that is desperately needed right now.

“It is urgently necessary for us to disabuse the minds of our people in the Niger Delta states that the Tinubu/Shettima ticket is a jihadist agenda against the existential survival of Christians in Nigeria, particularly in the south-south.”

He held that, what was behind the emergence of the Tinubu/Shettima ticket was competence, service delivery and not religious pontifications.

WHO launches position paper on brain health

Brain health is an evolving concept, attracting increasing attention not only from the health sector but also from wider society, stimulating rich debate – and for good reasons. The brain and central nervous system are the command centre of the human body, controlling both conscious and unconscious body functions and thereby influencing every aspect of life. If our brains are challenged by disease or other factors, this poses significant risks not only to an individual's overall health and well-being but also to global development and productivity.

It is estimated that 1 in 3 people will develop a neurological disorder at some point in their life, making neurological disorders the leading cause of disability and the second leading cause of death. Additionally, 43% of children under the age of five in low- and middle-income countries are believed to miss their developmental potential

due to extreme poverty and growth stunting, leading to financial losses and projected 26% lower annual earnings in adulthood.

The new WHO position paper launched on 9 August 2022 presents a framework for understanding brain health and the importance of brain health optimization for all. Brain health can be defined as the state of brain functioning across cognitive, sensory, social-emotional, behavioural and motor domains, allowing a person to realize their full potential over their life course, irrespective of the presence or absence of disorders. Many determinants are known to impact brain health and continuous interactions between these determinants plus an individual's context lead to lifelong adaptation of brain structure and functioning. The position paper provides insight into the following clusters of determinants:

- physical health,
- healthy environments,
- safety and security,
- learning and social connection and
- access to quality services.

Optimizing brain health by addressing these determinants leads to multiple benefits including lower rates of many chronic health conditions – neurological, mental, substance use and physical – as well as improved quality of life and multiple social and economic benefits, all of which contribute to greater well-being and help advance society. The paper demonstrates the relevance of optimizing brain health within the broader context of public health and society and offers practical policy solutions and future directions for the field including specific actions for addressing brain health determinants, ongoing priorities in brain health research, and operationalizing and measuring brain health.

Again, INEC denies Lawan's, Akpabio's names on candidates lists

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, (Abuja)

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has again denied allegations of listing names of the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan and that of former minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio as candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for Yobe North and Akwa Ibom North West senatorial districts.

This is coming on the heels of an online publication purporting that INEC has doctored, backdated and certified documents to accommodate the nominations of the duo.

According to the National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Barrister Festus Okoye, the allegations is spurious and total falsehood as the Commission has not recognized either Lawan or Akpabio as APC candidates.

He described such publication as unwarranted attack in the Commission.

Reacting to the allegation in a statement on Tuesday, Okoye said “not for the first time, our

attention has been drawn to a story published by an online medium that the Commission has doctored, backdated and certified documents to accommodate the nominations emanating from Yobe North and Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial Districts in respect of Senators Ahmed Lawan and Godswill Akpabio. Nothing can be further from the truth.

“As evidence of the alleged role played by the Commission, a certified true copy of Form 9C uploaded by their political party and received by the Commission on 17th June 2022 when the nomination portal closed was presented.

“For clarity, the Form EC9 (submission of names of candidates by political parties) is the Form uploaded by parties on the INEC nomination portal. This is clearly indicated on the title of the Form which was received on 17th June 2022 when the portal closed.

“What follows is the publication of the personal particulars of nominated candidates which was done a week later. The Forms of the

two personalities in question were not published by the Commission. The decision of the Commission triggered legal action which are still ongoing. It therefore defies logic and common sense to go around and submit doctored documents purportedly recognising the duo as candidates when the matter is clearly sub-judice.

“As part of the ongoing case in Court, a law firm requested the Commission for a Certified True Copy (CTC) of the Form EC9 submitted by the All Progressives Congress (APC) as its candidate for Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District which we are duty bound to oblige them under the law. The Form was certified on 15th July 2022. If minimum care has been exercised by the promoters of the story, they would have seen the two stamps of the Commission bearing different dates on the Form. It is this Form that is now misconstrued as INEC's endorsement.

“For the record, the Commission has not recognised any of the two personalities as a Senatorial candidate.”