

Diri urges Buhari to constitute substantive board for NDDC

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA** (Yenagoa) and **ISAAC JOB** (Uyo)

■ Laments 1700 abandoned projects in Bayelsa
■ Group alleges moves by bigwigs to thwart audit.

Bayelsa State Governor Douye Diri has urged President Muhammadu Buhari to constitute a substantive board for the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in accordance with its enabling Act.

He said its absence was hindering the commission's operations and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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EFCC recovers NHIS's N1.4bn from commercial banks

→ 14

EDITORIAL

Terrorists' threat to kidnap President Buhari

→ 12



BEDC's MD in police net for alleged threat to life, trespass

→ 11



Delta proposes N459.2bn budget for 2023

→ 4

Anxiety in PDP as Wike, allies meet with Obi → 2

■ Parley with Atiku fails to hold



Labour Party Presidential Candidate Peter Obi (middle) and some current, former governors and others when he met them at the residence of Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike (5th right) in Port Harcourt. Story on top strip.

Anxiety in PDP as Wike, allies meet with Obi

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**,
Abuja

The late Monday night meeting of Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate of Peter Obi with Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike and his allies is unsettling members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). This is because there is growing anxiety of losing the 2023 presidential election over a possible alliance between Wike and Obi.

Obi met with Wike at the governor's private residence in Port Harcourt while those in attendance included some PDP governors and two the former states' helmsmen Dr. Olusegun Mimiko (Ondo) and Donald Duke (Cross River).

The allies of the Rivers helmsman at the meeting

included Governors Samuel Ortom (Benue) and Okezie Ikpeazu (Abia), as well as former Gombe State Governor Ibrahim Dankwambo, among others.

The purpose of the Wike/Obi meeting could not be immediately ascertained amid speculation that it may not be far from possible alignment of forces ahead of the 2023 general election.

Former Governor Mimiko who in on Tuesday a shared photograph with the other politicians, tweeted: "Nice to share some time last night with @GovWike @DonaldDuke @PeterObi @HEDankwambo @GovSamuelOrtom, @GovernorIkpeazu, @MohammedAdokeSAN and many other friends."

Wike and Obi had met before but no official engagement was



Atiku

perfected between the two politicians. However, due to the prolonged crisis in the PDP sparked by the faceoff between Wike and PDP presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar, speculations are rife that the Rivers chief may sever relationship with the party while he

continues to explore his next political platform.

Meanwhile, the much-awaited meeting between the Atiku's and Wike's camps failed to take place Monday night in Port-Harcourt.

The Trumpet learnt that the two sides agreed to meet in the Rivers State capital to commence

negotiation towards reaching a truce to fortify the party's position ahead of the presidential campaign.

But the meeting could not hold because Atiku's team failed to show up.

A source said the team could not make the trip because of failed flight schedule from Yola International Airport to Port-Harcourt Monday evening.

Most of members of the Atiku team led by Adamawa Governor, Rt. Hon. Umaru Fintiri, on Monday afternoon attended receptions in honour of the former vice president and for about 1600 members of other political parties that defected to PDP by the state chapter of the party.

Apart from its Chairman Fintiri; others in the Atiku team are former Minister Adamu Waziri; erstwhile Cross

River State governor, Liyel Imoke, one-time PDP governorship candidate in Ekiti State Eytayo Jegede, and Jide Adeniji.

Expected for the Wike side were former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Bello Adoke; erstwhile Information Minister, Professor Jerry Gana; as well as Duke, Mimiko and Dankwambo.

During the day in Port-Harcourt, Wike and his allies were busy felicitating with a former governor of Rivers State, Dr. Peter Odili, whose 74th birthday anniversary was celebrated.

It was later gathered that when it became obvious that the Atiku/Wike parley could not hold again, they retired to the governor's residence where Obi was hosted.

Diri urges Buhari to constitute substantive board for NDDC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

deliverables.

Diri, who stressed that the interim administration arrangement was alien to the Act and unacceptable to governors of the Niger Delta, noted that the commission had not been able to meet its mandate because of the absence of a substantive board.

The governor stated this, yesterday, when the NDDC Interim Administrator, Dr. Akwa Effiong, visited him in Government House, Yenagoa.

Describing the NDDC as an interventionist body created to fill the development gap in the Niger Delta region, Diri said the governors have also been robbed of their advisory role, which would have enabled the board to embark on people-oriented projects in the region.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Daniel Alabrah, he expressed his administration's preparedness to work with the commission to foster development in the state, saying: "The NDDC has a lot of abandoned projects in Bayelsa State. From reports, we have over 1700 projects across Bayelsa State and that is not healthy.

"At this juncture, I again, appeal to President Buhari to constitute a substantive board for the NDDC according to the Act setting it up. The NDDC was conceived and established as an interventionist body to fill developmental gap. We cannot accept these policy summersaults that make our development to suffer.

"The interim arrangement has become the norm rather than the exception. That is totally unacceptable to us as governors of the Niger Delta states. We have a very huge stake according to the Act establishing the NDDC and that role is not being played. With the interim administration, there is no board for us to advise."

He also disclosed that there were over 1,700 abandoned NDDC projects in different parts of the state, describing the situation as unacceptable.

Some of the abandoned projects include the Angalabiri-Ebedebiri-Toru-Orua shore protection project captured in the commission's 2020 budget, the Sabagreia-Polaku Bridge and the Akenfa Bridge, among others.

Diri stressed that there be synergy that

will profile the projects before they are conceived. NDDC was not to go into every nook and cranny of states in the region. It should be looking at very large projects, sometimes inter-state projects with mutual agreement and cooperation of the state governments.

"I believe that collaborating with the NDDC will create a more robust impression and leave a lasting legacy for our people and generations yet unborn. The NDDC must continue to work closely with governors in the nine states to ensure synergy and avoid duplication of projects and activate the powers of the governors in the board in line with section 2 of the Act establishing it," he said

He stressed that he was against the scrapping of the NDDC, but that it should be revived to enable it to deliver its core mandate, noting that the non-collaboration of the commission with catchment states that would advise on priority projects had led to duplication and abandonment of projects.

Diri, however, commended Effiong for the donation of a 1000KVA generator and a coaster bus to the state-owned Niger Delta University

as well as four waste disposal trucks to the state government.

Earlier, Effiong appreciated the governor for his developmental strides, saying he had done well within the short period in office and assured of NDDC's preparedness to collaborate with the state government on construction of the Nembe-Brass road project the state had undertaken.

Meanwhile, a group under the aegis of Niger Delta Network has alleged pressure by some individuals and organisations to scuttle the proposed personnel audit of the NDDC.

In a statement made available to newsmen in Uyo, the Director of Public Communication of the group, Dr John Douglas, said the annexation and the audit process were directives from the presidency.

Recall that some groups had accused that the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs Obong Umanah Okon Umanah of attempts to annex the commission.

The statement tilted: "Re' Attempt by the Ministry of the Niger Delta Affairs to Annex NDDC is illegal, Unlawful and shall be strongly resisted," described the alleged annexation of the NDDC

personnel audit as baseless

It reads in parts : "We have read with amusement, the above sponsored press statement against the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Mr Umana Umana, alleging attempt to annex the NDDC to MNDA.

"No one whose recruitment is legal, lawful and legitimate, will oppose or fret over a Ministerial directive for a personnel audit of the NDDC.

"It can no longer be business as usual for unscrupulous persons who used NDDC funds to finance personal or sectional interest. Time to do things differently starts now.

"It is on record that the annexation of the commission was initiated by the presidency. The transfer of the supervisory role of the NDDC from the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, to the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, did not start under Mr Umana Umana."

The Director of Public Communication explained that there is a new dawn in both the NDDC and Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, stressing that It can no longer be business as usual.

He stated that it is

unlike the past when corruption was a direct principle of state policy where NDDC funds were used to finance personal or sectional interest.

He disclosed that only those who perpetrated and benefited from the faulty and fraudulent staff recruitment will be happy while lovers of good governance will attest that the ongoing reforms are meant to ensure that processes and procedures are transparent and followed due process.

"Abuse of office and public trust must give way to due process, transparency, accountability," he said.

He solicited support from Niger Delta stakeholders for the Umanah in his strategic Ministerial Action Plan of ensuring among others, the review of disproportionate staff recruitment during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Douglas maintained that the plan of the Minister to audit the NDDC personnel was based on petitions over irregular staff promotions and deployment in the commission including the compilation/publication of list of all completed projects awaiting payments for public scrutiny.



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Lecturers task Obaseki on subvention to varsity

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Benin Zone of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has called on the Edo State Government to increase its subvention to the Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, to arrest what the union described as its monumental slide to perfidy.

ASUU Benin Zone, which comprises of University of Benin, Benin City; Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma; Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko; Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa; Delta State University, Abraka; Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun and University of Delta, Agbor, made the call at a press conference addressed

by the union to draw the attention of the Edo State Government and stakeholders in the Education sector to the issues confronting the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

Addressing the press, the Coordinator of the Benin Zone of ASUU, Prof. Fred Esumeh, who read from a text signed by all the branch chairmen of the Benin Zone of ASUU, said they want to draw the attention of the Edo State Government and the general public to the critical issues affecting the AAU which include, "the crisis of irregular and selective payment of salaries, the administration of the university on an ad-hoc basis, academic fraud, the suppression of staff right and freedom of association, a d v e r t i s e m e n t of vacancies of staff positions/



Obaseki

employments, and the controversial and inconclusive biometrics amongst others."

While appealing to the Edo State Government to increase its monthly subvention to the university, issue a white paper on the Special Visitation Panel to the University in October, 2020, the union pointed out that "the first step towards the restoration

of sanity, academic and administrative stability, industrial peace and harmony in the University is for the State Government to immediately pay all outstanding emoluments of workers in the school, including unpaid check-off dues and unpaid sundry deductions from the salaries of workers.

"The Edo State Government should

approve a bail-out fund for the University and satisfactorily increase the monthly subvention to the University. Due process should guide the recruitment of staff for the University.

"A Governing Council should be restored to the University to pave way for the appointment of substantive Principal Officers.

"The Edo State Government should make haste to release a white paper on the report on the Special Visitation Panel to the University in October, 2020 to deter further embezzlement of the finances of the University and mismanagement of its affairs.

"The constitutional right and freedom of workers to unionize should be respected and protected."

New Ondo commissioner resumes office

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure

Ondo State Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has sworn on Mr. Amidu Takuro as a Commissioner. The swearing-in of Takuro followed his screening and confirmation by the State House of Assembly.

Takuro was sworn-in at the exco-chamber of the Governor's Office, Alagbaka, Akure on Tuesday. He is now a Commissioner from Odigbo Local Government Area of the State.

Akeredolu charged him to see his new position as a call to serve the people of the State.

At the event were members of Takuro's family including his wife, the Deputy Governor, Hon. Lucky Aiyedatiwa and members of the State Executive Council led by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Princess Oladunni Odu.

Delta proposes N459.2bn budget for 2023

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba

Delta State Government has proposed N459.2 billion as indicative

budget figure for 2023. Commissioner for Economic Planning, Dr. Barry Gbe, disclosed this during a press briefing in Asaba

He said the figure was arrived at based on the state's government adoption of the micro-economic framework set by the Federal

Government for the 2023 fiscal year. He explained that the figure was a global size estimate and it is subject to approval by the State Executive

Council before it could be forwarded to the State Assembly.

He said, "the budget circle starts with going to the Executive Council with what we call a global figure or indicative figure, if it is approved we then return back to the ministries and do a reevaluation. Inflation, exchange rate, GDP and economic happenings around the world are discussed and the budget is returned to the State Executive Council for approval and then taken to the State Assembly."

The Commissioner further stated that the state government would not embark on any new project unless it is specially approved by the state governor, adding that the 2023 budget would focus on the completion of ongoing projects and debt servicing.

"For capital projects, we will not take any

new project but will try to complete existing ones. Only things we can finance and that falls within the policy trust of the administration would be done," he stated.

Speaking further, he disclosed that the state government may submit a supplementary budget to the State Assembly to capture over N150 billion projected as extra cost for projects already awarded under the 2022 budget. He said, "Due to inflation and exchange rates, prices of things have gone up and the contractors are requesting for upward review of contracts.

"Such request will be rolled over to the 2023 budget or we may go for a supplementary budget. Although I cannot give you an exact figure because we are still receiving memos from contractors, but we are projecting N150 billion for project reviews."

Appeal Court returns Okorie as Ebonyi PDP chairman

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, Abakaliki

Ebonyi chairman of Peoples Democratic party (PDP), Hon. Tochukwu Okorie has hailed the judgment of the Court of Appeal which restored him as the political grouping's substantive boss in the state.

The Court of Appeal Abuja Division had nullified and set aside the judgment of the FHC of April 13, 2022 which installed Mr. Silas Onu as Chairman PDP Ebonyi State chapter and restored Tochukwu Okorie as substantive chairman of the party in the state.

In a unanimous decision, the 3-man panel of Justices held that that the trial court erred when it assumed

jurisdiction to hear the matter being an internal affair of the party which is not justiceable.

In his reaction to the ruling, the Chairman, PDP, Ebonyi state, Hon Tochukwu Okorie in a statement described the judgment as victory for all and congratulated the members of the Party, stakeholders and entire Ebonyians for the victory.

The statement read in part : "Yesterday, August 15, 2022 the Appeal Court sitting in Abuja summarily restored the mandate freely given to me by the members of our great party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the substantive Chairman of the party in Ebonyi State. I congratulate all our teeming members, unrelenting supporters, leaders, stakeholders and the

entire Ndi-Ebonyi on this momentous victory".

"This victory is indeed our victory and I am humbled by the outpouring of love, solidarity and goodwill that have been showered on me, and most especially the way our members have tenaciously stood by me and the party throughout this period".

"I am therefore using this opportunity to implore our members to end the disagreements as the time to move forward is now".

"In a few weeks campaigns for the 2023 general elections will kick off in full steam. PDP remains the only grassroots party in Ebonyi State, the PDP remains the hope of restoration for the oppressed people of our dear Ebonyi State, the PDP remains the

hope and the way forward for Ndi Ebonyi. The time to recalibrate is now".

"Consequently, in this collective victory, I am calling on all members of our party, aspirants, and candidates for various elective positions under our beautiful umbrella to close ranks with one another. Let's work together to revive the love and brotherhood that gave us victories since 1999 till date. Let us be reminded that PDP has hardly lost election in Ebonyi State".

"In the next few days, we shall be rolling out our plans for greater PDP in Ebonyi State. The PDP is one united family, despite the fact that we may have different orientations, ambitions, and group loyalties, we are united under the capable umbrella".

Edo charges local communities on securing oil, gas installations

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Edo State Government has charged local communities on protecting oil and gas installations.

Speaking at the official commissioning of the Efe Field OML152 in Orhionmwon Local Government Area, the Edo State Commissioner for Mining, Oil and Gas, Hon. Ethan Uzamere, said the asset will boost Edo State's contribution to the nation's ability to meet its oil production allocation by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

"On behalf of Edo State Government, I want to specially congratulate Newcross Petroleum Limited for this feat as you have secured the start-up and stabilization of production from the Efe field - OML152.

"I know it gives your management a sense of fulfilment as today serves as a landmark for your success story ever since you showed interest in this asset. I know that ever since you fulfilled all regulatory requirements for the conversion of the asset here from an Oil Prospecting Licence (OPL) phase to an Oil Mining License (OML) phase, you have not relented in your pursuit that has led you to this commissioning. I am impressed with the level of work and commitment you have put into achieving this milestone."

He noted that "For us as a government, this commissioning will boost Edo State's contribution to the nation's ability to meet its oil production allocation by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and make Edo one step ahead in cementing our place as a force to reckon with in the oil and gas industry.

"Edo today is leading in the Ease of doing business in Nigeria and you may want to know why? His Excellency, Mr.

Godwin Obaseki, the Executive Governor of Edo State has made lofty efforts to make Edo an investment haven as security infrastructure is being prioritized and invested in.

"We have a security architecture that is community based. Some of the infrastructure we have very close here in Orhionmwon built by Governor Godwin Obaseki include the Abudu Township Road with three adjoining streets and a bridge. Others are Ugo Skill Acquisition Center in Niyekorhionmwon and the Town Hall in Obazogbe-Nugu. We have also completed the new Police Area Command Office in Urhomehe. There are more to come in our efforts as a government to improve and protect the well-being of our residents."

According to the commissioner, "As you may very well know, we now have two modular refineries which will start operations very soon. The first being a 6600 barrels per day modular refinery established by Edo Refinery and Petrochemical Limited and AIPCC Energy Limited.

"The second was established by Dupont Midstream Company Limited. We are not stopping here. We are poised to attract more investments to Edo. The third may just be established by Newcross Petroleum Limited because I believe in your capacity as a forthright industry player.

"We urge you to explore collaboration with us along this line in the downstream sector, especially in areas of oil and gas parks and refineries. We want to make Edo State the energy hub of Nigeria."

He said the state oil and gas ministry has a robust and active collaboration with security agencies to protect investments in oil and gas across the state, adding, "We will deepen our collaboration with you to help secure this facility. This is critical as attacks on this installation or others will affect revenue targets from the oil sector. According to research, oil bunkering, theft, and other maladies are due to the absence of critical community partnerships. I will implore you to take your role as a corporate citizen in Edo State seriously and be active in many projects that promote health, education and socio-economic development."

Uzamere urged the management of Newcross Petroleum Limited to take necessary measures to ensure that all safety and environmental steps in line with global best practices to safeguard lives and the environment are put in place in this facility.



Gov. Godwin Obaseki

Victims of Taraba terror attacks to be treated free

By SURU CHARLES, Jalingo

The joy of the victims and relatives of last Friday's attacks by bandits in Taraba on Monday knew no bounds as the state government announced taking over of their medical bills.

The announcement came when the deputy governor visited the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Jalingo to personally see the victims who sustained various degrees of gun injuries.

Bandits, in their numbers, it would be recalled, sacked some communities in Gassol local government council of

the state last weekend.

The attacks which led to the killing and abduction of scores and abduction also led to massive destruction of houses and other valuables.

The deputy governor said his principal has ordered the immediate evacuation of all the victims from various hospitals to the FMC which is located in Jalingo, the state capital.

The government has directed the hospital management to treat all the victims free of charge. He assured the victims and Tarabans at large of state government's readiness to face the bandits headlong.

He stressed the need for the

National Assembly to enact laws that would frustrate terrorists. The law that would be enacted, he said, should be tailored towards providing the much-needed apparatus to all the security operatives.

He urged the people to be vigilant and assist security personnel with vital information that would lead to the arrest and flushing out of bandits from the state.

Elated by the government's gestures, some victims who spoke with *The Trumpet* urged the government to urgently put in place mechanisms to halt bandits from giving them sleepless nights.



Isoko women protest against illegal bunkering

By KELVIN OHOROR

Worried about incessant bunkering activities and frequent tension from shooting which vandals have subjected residents to, women of Igbide Community in Isoko South Local Government Area, Delta State, have sent Save Our Soul (SOS), to the state government, security agencies and other relevant authorities to urgently come to their rescue before things get out of hands.

The women in a peaceful protest displayed various placards with inscriptions such as, 'Igbide Community condemn pipeline vandalization/bunkering activities', 'Enough is Enough', 'We cannot continue with this anymore', 'Stop the air pollution', 'Stop the shooting', 'Make the environment safe for all', amongst others, the women vow to shut down oil exploration at the expiration of the ultimatum issued

by the community leadership.

Addressing journalists at the Oroni Flow Station, Igbide, President General of Igbide Community, Chief Egbaoghene Ugolo, said, "If you look behind me, you will see the thick smoke, it is from the bunkering activities. For a very long time, this community has been complaining and I have with me a letter that was written and addressed to the Governor of Delta State, and it was acknowledged, and sent to the Isoko South Council Chairman as well as the 181 Battalion, Nigeria Army".

Continuing he said, "we have complained severally of this bunkering activities. Our women no longer go to their farms for fear of being killed. They can no longer harvest their farm produce even as we go to bed here and wake up with fear because of their incessant shooting from the evenings to the mornings."

He also stated that as a result of air pollution different diseases and sicknesses are of increase as the environment and water has been polluted. Ugolo maintained that "the women and the entire community are fed up, and use the medium to remind the Delta State Governor to come to our rescue."

Also speaking, one of the women leaders, identified as Chief Mrs. Grace Egwero and the Secretary, Mrs. Egbage Edafe, both lamented the havoc done by oil bunkers to the community, adding that, since the inception of bunkering activities in their bush, they have suffered alot as they can no longer use rain water to wash clothes as a result of pollution.

They also complained about the thick smoke emanating from bunkering activities, stating that it has caused environmental disorders as it affects their health.

Expert canvasses leveraging gas reserves for Africa's energy transition

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA,**
Yenagoa

An energy expert, Odianosen Masade, has urged Africa to adopt a diversified approach to its energy transition quest by leveraging its abundant gas reserves.

Masade, who is Publicity Secretary of the Nigerian Gas Association (NGA), gave the charge in an interview with The Trumpet in Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital against the backdrop of rising global energy costs.

He noted that amid the lingering global energy crisis and increased calls for replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions, the NGA was advocating a diversified approach to energy transition on the continent.

Insisting that Africa needed to be cautious and consider all the pertinent issues in transiting from fossil fuel to cleaner, more

sustainable energy sources, he maintained that Africa accounted for the least share of global greenhouse gas emissions at 3.8 per cent in contrast to 23 per cent in China, 19 per cent in the United States and 13 per cent in the European Union (EU).

He said that while Africa remained the least industrialised continent in the world, it was the most vulnerable to climate change, adding that it was regrettable that while the developed economies responsible for the challenges posed by climate change took over a century to reposition for fossil transition, Africa is being expected to transition in a few decades.

Masade, who applauded the recent transformation of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) into a commercial and profit-oriented business entity, said experts in the energy sector have long advocated the privatisa-

tion of the public-owned behemoth to increase its efficiency and separate its regulatory, revenue generating and oil production components.

"The idea is for the entity to become more profitable. With privatisation, the NNPC will be relieved of all the burdens of government control and become autonomous. It can now be listed on the Nigeria Stock Exchange, secure investments and generate more revenue for the country," he said.

However, the NGA scribe expressed the need for proper implementation of the new policy without jettisoning proposed changes in the operation of the company in the new era.

Masade, who is also the Corporate Communications Lead, Eroton Exploration & Production Company, examined some of the socio-economic and political issues shaping the global energy market.

The indicators, he said, include the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the controversial visit of United States House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan and the latest meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries Plus (OPEC+).

OPEC+ is an oil supply rival pressure group consisting of the 13 OPEC members and 10 of the world's major non-OPEC oil-exporting nations, aimed to regulate the supply of oil in order to set the price on the world

market.

"The meeting was held against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine crisis, which has led to a global energy crisis with the limits placed on Russian fossil fuels. The United States has already earlier called on Saudi Arabia to pump out more oil to fill the gap.

While OPEC is under obligation to protect its members including Nigeria, the current reality indicates that the outcome will be shaped by the decisions of the big global players such as the US, Russia and Saudi Arabia," Masade said.

He lamented the challenges inhibiting Nigeria from maximising opportunities of the Ukraine conflict, which has reduced the global supply

of gas, as according to him, lack of political will and investments on critical infrastructure were some of the greatest reasons for Nigeria's disadvantaged position.

Masade listed one of such infrastructure that would have generated significant income for the country is the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline, which will traverse Nigeria, Niger and Algeria across the Sahara Desert to Europe.

He said it was estimated that once completed, the \$13 billion worth pipeline would transport up to 30 billion cubic meters (1 trillion cubic feet) of natural gas yearly from Warri, Delta State through Niger Republic and Algeria to Europe.

Okowa greets Ohanaeze President, Obiozor at 80

Governor of Delta State, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, has congratulated the President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, Professor George Obiozor, as he clocked 80 years on Monday.

Okowa, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, in Asaba, said the country benefited immensely from Obiozor's unblemished services to the nation, including as Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs; High Commissioner to Cyprus; as well as Ambassador to Israel and the United States.

Okowa who is also the Vice-Presidential candidate of the Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP) at next year's general election described the octogenarian as an accomplished and erudite scholar, renowned author and seasoned diplomat, and an epitome of selflessness and statesmanship. He prayed that God would raise more persons in Obiozor's mould in Nigeria's political and socio-economic firmament.

"On behalf of my family, the government and people of Delta, I felicitate with you, Professor George Obiozor, on your 80th birth anniversary.

"As a great patriot and elder statesman, you have made significant contributions to the growth and stability of our nation through your selfless service to the country and humanity.

"As President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo worldwide, you have displayed an uncommon wisdom and irrepressible courage in your service to the Igbo nation.

"As you celebrate your 80th birth anniversary, I join your family, friends, well-wishers and Ndigbos worldwide to thank Almighty God for your life and to pray that He continues to bless you with robust health, greater wisdom, guidance, protection and enduring provisions," Okowa added.



United States Consul General Will Stevens (left) with Carrington Youth Fellowship Initiative (CYFI) executive board members and mentors during the induction for 2022/2023 cohort of the programme in Lagos on Tuesday.

Consulate General inducts new Carrington Youth Fellows

United States Consulate General in Lagos has inducted 50 Nigerians into the 2022/2023 cohort of the Carrington Youth Fellowship Initiative (CYFI). It was at a ceremony attended by U.S. Consul General Will Stevens.

CYFI is a dynamic youth-based initiative launched in 2011 by the U.S. Consulate General, Lagos. CYFI brings together Nigerian youth, aged 21-35, of exceptional skills and experience to design and implement projects over a 12-month period

that will help enhance Nigerian society in the fields of health, education, civil liberties, environment, and economic empowerment. CYFI is named after former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Walter Carrington. Ambassador Carrington was a champion for civil liberties, democracy and closer ties between the United States and Nigeria, and CYFI fellows are committed to putting the ideals of Walter Carrington into practice.

During his remarks at the induction ceremony

in Lagos, U.S. Consul General Stevens encouraged the new CYFI fellows to continue to be a catalyst for positive change in their local communities as they foster economic growth, enhance democratic governance, and strengthen civil society structures. "No nation can thrive if it neglects to include its youth in governance, political and economic platforms, wealth creation and poverty alleviation. You have the responsibility placed on your shoulders to serve as strong, positive role

models for Nigeria," said Consul General Stevens to the newly inducted fellows.

This year, the Carrington Youth Fellowship Alumni Association partnered with the Kensington Adebukunola Adebutu Foundation and Access Bank to increase the amount of fellows from 25 to 50 in addition to expanding the fellowship to Ogun and Oyo states. To date, CYFI has graduated 174 outstanding young Nigerians who share a common goal of positively impacting Nigerian society.



Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa

Sanwo-Olu gives deadline for sawmillers' relocation to permanent site

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has assured timber traders that the long wait for the planned relocation of sawmillers of Oko Baba in Ebute Metta, Lagos Mainland, to a proposed permanent site in Agbowo will come to an end in December.

He gave the assurance on Tuesday during his tour of Agbowo-Ikosi Timberville in Ikosi-Ejirin Local Council Development Area (LCDA) to inspect level of work done on the site.

The state government started the development of the Timberville during the Babatunde Fashola administration. The project was stalled afterwards, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty over the fate of the saw millers in Oko Baba.

Sanwo-Olu revisited the project by re-mobilizing the contractor back on the site. The sawmillers could not hold back their excitement at the development. Their leader, Alh. Abdul-Ganiu Onikeku joined the governor on the tour of the site as well as Deputy Governor Obafemi Hamzat and Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Dr. Idris Salako.

Sanwo-Olu also inspected

a 1,500 tons per hour brickette plant built on the site by Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), which will enable the conversion of mill's byproduct to combustible brick materials for industrial use.

The state government, Sanwo-Olu said, revised the approved design of the project to bring more amenities to the Timberville for the comfort of the timber traders.

He disclosed that 160 units of two-bedroom flats had been completed for the accommodation of the inhabitants, while blocks of offices for administrative services had been out in place.

He said: "This project has been on for years, but we are happy that our own Government has brought it back. We have invested a lot of resources to be able to bring it to a useable level. Part of the facilities we have put in place for the potential Oko Baba saw millers that will be moving here is 160 units of two-bedroom flats that have been completed. We also have offices in their various shades that have been built. The other amenity built on this site is a brickette plant facility

which will be managed by LAWMA.

"The leaders of Oko Baba saw millers' association are excited and are willing to relocate to the site. The ship piles where ships will be berthing have been done. What is left is to clear the trailer path for the saw millers, and put up a police post and a fire service. In this regard, we are making additional funding available to the contractor to ensure that before the end of this year, we all should sing Hallelujah and bring everybody down here. It's been a very long journey, but our administration is committed to bringing the long wait to an end."

The Governor explained why there was a delay in the construction of a 3km

access road from the main expressway to the site, stressing that the ongoing construction of a bridge crossing on-site slowed down work on the road.

Sanwo-Olu, however, said alternative roads had been completed to pave the way for smooth relocation of the saw millers. He added the access road would be tarred immediately after the crossing bridge is completed.

Once the amenities are in place, Sanwo-Olu said the Government would start relocating the saw millers. He reiterated that his administration possessed the political will to complete the project and move the inhabitants to the site.

The governor said: "They are waiting on us to clean up and ensure the Timberville

is fully habitable for them. In terms of agreement with the saw millers, they have shown their readiness to relocate. We have the full political will to ensure this relocation is done, but we don't want to throw our citizens into a place that is not fully ready.

"The saw millers at Oko Oba have been cooperative with the Government and working with us tirelessly to ensure everything required is provided. It has been a very long journey, but our administration is committed to bringing the long wait to an end."

Onikeku, president of Lagos Mainland Sawmillers Association, recalled that the Timberville could have been completed but for the disagreement over the

design of the project, which led to it being abandoned.

He said: "All of us are happy this project has been revived by Gov. Sanwo-Olu after many years it was abandoned. One of the reasons we did not agree with the previous Government is that the design was not done according to our agreement. This has been reversed and we have our input in the new design.

"Our people will not be relocated here to be playing ludo game; they are coming to cut timbers and we will make judicious use of the facility. We are expressing our appreciation to the Governor and his deputy for listening to our pleas to revive the project when we met them over the development."



Erstwhile Chief of Army Staff, Lt-Gen. Azubike Ihejirika (rtd); Wife of a former NYSC Director General, Mrs. Adejoke Olawumi; Ekiti State Governor-elect, Mr. Biodun Abayomi Oyejebanji; her husband, Major-General JB Olawumi (rtd), and President, NDA 36 Regular Course Association, Brig-Gen. Mustapha Onoiveta (rtd), during the burial of the mother of Gen. Olawumi, Mrs. Rachael Olufunke Olawunmi, at Iyin Ekiti.

Court remands seven charged with kidnapping, murder by Amotekun

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

An Ondo State Magistrate Court, sitting in Akure, has ordered the remand of seven persons charged by Amokekun Corps for alleged kidnapping, murder and armed robbery.

The defendants were said to have kidnapped Niran Adeyemo, Bello Mukaila and Risikatu Sulieman and also killed one Mudashiru while driving on the Owo-Ikare Road by firing gunshots at him while the deceased attempted to resist being kidnapped.

The defendants are Mohammed Umaru, Sulieman Aliu, Abubakar Ibrahim, Abudu Barzor, Muhammed Tukur, Aota Bello, and Cindu Yahu.

The defendants were arrested and arraigned on four counts, conspiracy, armed robbery, murder and kidnapping by the state security outfit, Amokekun Corps.

The Police prosecutor told the court that the defendants committed the offence on August 4, 2022, between Ago Paanu and Ose River along Owo-Ikare Road.

He stated that the defendants also robbed Abdul Murtala of a sum of N4 million and other valuables at gunpoint.

He said the offence committed by the defendants contravened Sections 3(ii)b and 6 of the Ondo State Anti-Kidnapping and Anti-Abduction Law, 2010, Sections 1(1) and 2 of the Robbery and Firearms Act, Cap R.11 Laws Volume 14 of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and Section 308, 316, 320 of the Criminal Code, Cap 37, Vol. 1, Laws of Ondo 2006. The prosecutor prayed the court to remand the defendants at the Correctional Centre.

However, the defendants pleaded not guilty to the charge as their counsel, U.F. Salau, prayed for an adjournment to enable him to file a counter affidavit to the application.

In his ruling, the Magistrate, Damilola Sekoni, ordered that the defendants should be remanded in Amotekun custody. He further adjourned the case till August 18 on ruling on the remand application.

Akeredolu lauds church leadership on installation of CCTV cameras

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Ondo State Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has lauded church leaders in the state for complying with government directives on the compulsory installation of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in their churches and public places. Akeredolu stated this at the Agape International Church 34th Annual Convention 2022, held in Akure.

Recall that the governor in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Richard Olatunde, announced the extension of the enforcement of compulsory

installation of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) devices in all public places in the state to September 1, 2022. The extension was sequel to appeals from churches, mosques and other public centres to enable them to put in place necessary measures as contained in the State Executive Order.

The Chairman of the Southern Governors' Forum, also used the occasion to thank God for the arrest of attackers of St. Francis Catholic Church Owo, saying it is a prayer answered. He further charged the congregation and all residents of the state to always be security conscious and be alert.

"If you see something, say something. If you hear something, say something. Please let us be watchful and be security conscious. Our security lies in our hands. We must be alert. God will continue to protect all of us.

"Whatever the government asks you to do, please comply. Have security men at your gates, have your CCTV cameras and check all new faces before allowing them into your churches," he said.

He warned those acting as informants to kidnapers in the state, stressing that anybody, camp or village that aids and abets kidnapers in the state would be obliterated. He

said, "We will not wait for us to be captured. Nobody can capture us. We are from Ondo State, we are indomitable, we are fighters and we will fight to the last."



Gov. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu

Balanced Discipline versus Violent Discipline in schools

By **DANIEL IGHAKPE**

"Foolishness is tied up in the heart of a boy* (*Or "child; youth") but the rod of discipline will remove it far from him."

-Proverbs 22:15.

"Do not hold back discipline from a boy* (*Or "child; youth"). If you strike him with the rod, he will not die. With the rod you should strike him in order to save him from the grave."

-Proverbs 23:13, 14.

A recent news report shows that 85 per cent of Nigerian children between the ages of 1 and 14 experience violent discipline in schools, with nearly 1 in 3 children experiencing severe physical punishment. UNICEF Chief of Education, Saadhna Panday-Soobrayan, disclosed this at a two-day National Awareness Creation Meeting on "Ending Corporal Punishment In Schools," organised by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, TRCN, in collaboration with UNICEF.

In that light, I would like to express my views on administering discipline in schools using balanced disciplinary measures as against unbalanced and severe or excessive disciplinary measures. I believe that when discipline is administered in a loving and balanced way, even when a cane or flogging is used, it can be beneficial and bring good results on a child. However, I am not advocating or supporting the excessive or violent use of a cane/flogging in administering discipline.

Discipline in schools is very important, yet it constitutes one of the greatest challenges facing teachers nowadays. A lack of proper parental and school discipline can result in disruptive behaviours in the classroom. Nowadays however, the views of many child psychologists on discipline conflict with what is recommended in God's Word, the Bible, as recorded in the verses of Proverbs quoted above. Their theories collide head on with the counsel we find in the Holy Scriptures.

What have been the results of sowing the seeds of permissiveness? In one publication of Jehovah's Witnesses ("Making Your Family Life Happy"), in Chapter 10, titled "The Value of Disciplining in Love," paragraph 3 (accessible on www.jw.org), we find this report: "The bumper crop of crime and delinquency is well known. Youth crime accounts for over 50 percent of serious crimes in many industrialized nations. In some parts of the world, school campuses are hotbeds of class disruptions, fights, verbal abuse and obscenities, vandalism, assault, extortion, arson, robberies, rapes, drugs

and murders." A spanking may therefore be a lifesaver to a child, as God's Word recommends in the Book of Proverbs. If parents and teachers hold the children's life interests dear to them, they will not weakly or carelessly let disciplinary action slip from their hands. Love will motivate them to take action, wisely and fairly, when it is needed.

As regards discipline itself, it is not limited to punishing. Discipline basically means 'instruction and training that holds to a certain order or framework.' Discipline, rightly given, is evidence to a child that he is loved.

Three types of discipline are: -
PREVENTATIVE DISCIPLINE: Establishing expectations, guidelines and rules for behaviour.

SUPPORTIVE DISCIPLINE: Measures taken when rules are broken, usually a verbal warning or a suggestion for the correction of behaviour.

CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE: Measures taken when supportive discipline has failed to change the child's behaviour after repeated attempts. It mostly refers to the consequences delivered following an infraction.

Children need consequences to mold and learn the correct ways to function. Without consequences, they will only continue poor behaviour choices, and many will escalate those behaviours over time. Children are always trying to figure out their world, and they do that by testing limits, pushing boundaries until they reach resistance. That is very likely why Proverbs 22:15 says: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child" Therefore, if that resistance, discipline, never comes, then they never learn what is right and wrong.

However, one blog about "Classroom Discipline" on www.eurekly.com, contains this advice: "Before proceeding with punishment, teachers should think carefully and understand its pros and cons. While punishing students can quickly stop a problem, it tends to be a short-term solution that can often be accompanied by negative side effects, such as a drop in positive attitudes towards school and a more negative perception of teachers. Punishment is defined as inflicting a penalty as a retribution for a transgression. According to that definition, since school children often commit transgressions, it would make sense to punish them for their bad behaviour. However, teachers must refrain from applying such a "black and white" approach to dealing with unruly behaviour and use critical thinking instead to determine whether punishment is necessary.



Adamu Adamu

Teachers should always consider alternative options for dealing with bad behaviour, before proceeding with punishment."

Acceptable forms of punishment include but are not limited to: demerit systems, apologies, time-out, detentions, picking up litter around the school, among

others.

However, in case of severe problems with classroom management and children that are unresponsive to corrections, teachers should reach out to colleagues for support and involve the school's administration and the child's family when

necessary.

There is never an easy answer, or even one correct answer, when it comes to raising children. Discipline is no different, and there are many theories on how it should be administered in school settings.

In conclusion, here are eight steps for parents and educators on raising children to be balanced adults: -

- LOVE ABUNDANTLY.
- DISCIPLINE CONSTRUCTIVELY.
- *SPEND TIME TOGETHER.
- TEACH YOUR CHILDREN RIGHT FROM WRONG.
- DEVELOP MUTUAL RESPECT.
- REALLY LISTEN TO THEM.
- OFFER GUIDANCE RATHER THAN A SPEECH.
- *BE REALISTIC.

I hope that over time, educators, administrators, parents and policy makers can work together to create better discipline policies in education. We all play an important role, and we all deserve to be heard!

*IGHAKPE (08174795742; danny.ighakpe@gmail.com) is of 'Tendertouch Intellectuals Primary School,' FESTAC Town, Lagos.

Widows of teachers protest over unpaid entitlements in A' Ibom

By **ISAAC JOB**, Uyo

Widows and next-of-kin of retired primary school teachers in Akwa Ibom have embarked on peaceful protest over unpaid entitlements by the state government.

The protesters who barricaded entrance to Government House along Wellington Bassey Way end on Tuesday displayed placards with various inscriptions such as: "Deacon Udom Emmanuel Save Our Soul (SOS)", "The Agonies of Widows/Next of Kin of Primary School Teachers in Akwa Ibom State," among others and urged governor Udom Emmanuel to release funds for immediate payment of pensions and gratuities arrears of teachers who are alive from 2011- 2018.

They also appealed to the governor to refund 7.5% pension contribution as well as harmonisation of pensions.

Addressing the protesters, Secretary of the union, Mr Benson Benjamin regretted that out of the N33billion the state government owe them, they only paid N1billion which according to him was only a 'paltry' sum.

"Last year the governor said we should conduct verification exercise, and after the exercise it was discovered that the governor was owing over N33billion and the governor thereafter released a paltry N1billion, which was

not enough."

He observed that government officials take their pensions and gratuities upfront before leaving office after serving for just eight years and wondered why retired primary school teachers who have served 35 years would be deprived of their entitlements.

He warned that if the governor fails to accede to their demands, they would stage another protest on September 23 which is the state anniversary to tell the world how they have suffered.

His words: "These people have served for 35 years and they deserve their entitlements and today we are telling the governor to take the responsibility and pay these people their entitlements, we ask him to come and do the needful.

"Our members are dieing by the day, our members cannot go for their medical treatments. We urge the government to take the bull by the horn and pay the entitlements.

"The government should do the needful, if we go back today without a positive response we will come back on September 23, to press further our demands and you know what that means because we need that money

Things are so expensive, we cannot afford house accommodations, it is the governor's responsibility to pay the money."

he said

One of the retirees Mr Samuel Billy said that the state government has the money to pay but the governor was not willing to pay them.

"AKwa Ibom state government is very rich but government is not willing to pay the retired primary school teachers"



Gov. Udom Emmanuel



Ahmad Lawan and matters arising

By EZREL TABIOWO

I have in the past stumbled across several publications in the media that questioned the leadership approach of the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, over his collaboration with the Executive arm of government, but none has attracted my attention as the distasteful publication in the Sunday, August 14, 2022, edition of the Guardian Newspaper, in particular.

The piece, written by the Deputy Politics Editor, Leo Sobechi, maintained that Lawan's style is hinged on "legislative patronage and misplaced loyalty" to the Buhari administration and "synonymous with failure". How ridiculous can one get!

Also, the writer's claim about Lawan's leadership "falling short in terms of legislation" is one I consider laughable, absolutely misleading and delusional. What it suggests is that he is either grossly uninformed or willfully ignorant about the sterling accomplishments of the Ninth Assembly.

I recommend he reads through an article I published earlier this year titled, "The validity of Lawan's correctness on harmony between the Executive and Legislature", to get educated on the Senate President's approach to governance.

On the other hand, his choice of words on Senator Lawan, speaks poorly of his professional disposition and leave much to be desired.

To set the records straight, it is noteworthy to recall that when Ahmad Lawan took a shot at the Senate Presidency for a second time in 2019, it was against the backdrop of persistent clamour by lawmakers across party lines, as against the influence of external party forces as the writer would rather have readers believe.

In fact, returning lawmakers who had just won the National Assembly elections at the time were fed-up and bent on not having a repeat of the frosty and counter-productive relationship with the executive which characterised the Eight Assembly under Dr. Bukola Saraki. I know this because I was a reporter then who covered the activities of the upper chamber.

Determined to opt for a different approach to governance, Senators-elect rallied behind Lawan's candidacy, because it was widely believed that his legislative agenda, which was anchored on Executive-Legislature harmony, would better serve the interest of Nigerians. And, so far, it has. Lawan's victory and emergence as Senate President became a big win for democracy and good governance as events show.



Ahmad Lawan

Under his leadership, the National Assembly recorded the consideration and passage of the most impactful pieces of legislative interventions targeted at economic recovery since 1999.

Such interventions include the reversal of the nation's budget cycle to the January - December timeline which saved Nigeria twice in three years from a recession which could have totally consumed the economy.

The effort of the National Assembly in this direction also insulated the economy against the after-effect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On efforts to increase the nation's revenue earnings, the passage of the Deep Offshore Act by the National Assembly under Lawan paved way for the country to generate almost \$2 billion dollars as against the previous measly \$250 million raked in from royalties paid by International Oil Companies (IOCs) operating in Nigeria annually.

It also put revenue generating agencies on the spot to remit more funds to the federation account.

For example, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) alone, in 2021, was able to generate the sum of N6.4 trillion from taxes, a figure said to be the highest in the nation's history.

This is not to mention the passage of critical legislations such as the PIA, the Finance Act, amongst others, which hitherto failed to receive Presidential assent into law under previous assemblies.

In guaranteeing the security of Nigerians, the Ninth Assembly approved the allocation of N982.72 billion and almost N1 trillion budget for defense operations, procurement and upgrade of military capabilities, and infrastructure for 2021 and 2022, respectively.

The amounts approved in the last two years represent the highest sum ever budgeted by parliament for security alone. This, of course, is not to leave out infrastructural development spread across the country.

The National Assembly, on its part, also

prioritised other areas such as education which got a whopping N593.4 billion in 2022.

It is, therefore, uncharitable for anyone to downplay the outstanding accomplishments of the Ninth Assembly to suit a mischievous script aimed at serving whatever purpose the writer sought out to achieve.

I daresay, that history will be kind to Lawan, as he would in no distant time be reckoned with for his impactful legacies, which, include a selfless improvement to our electoral processes, after his eventual exit from office next year, as President of the Ninth Senate.

The impeachment saga and Lawan's stand The Senate President, in the last couple of weeks, has been at the centre of conversations over the botched attempt by opposition lawmakers to initiate impeachment moves against President Muhammadu Buhari owing to the country's failing security.

Much as the National Assembly is disturbed by the devastating dimension which the activities of terrorists have assumed lately, it however cannot be stampeded into taking any resolution that would ultimately surrender Nigeria over to its enemies.

This is where Lawan steps in as Chairman of the National Assembly; to give direction to proceedings of the upper chamber, against all odds and devoid of emotive or political considerations, in a way that fosters national stability as against over-heating the polity and exposing it to anarchy.

It must be noted that the bid by opposition lawmakers to serve the President with an impeachment notice after a six-week ultimatum is unrealistic, particularly taking into consideration the processes and time needed to actualise same before the conduct of the 2023 general elections. See Chapter 6. Part 1. Section 143 of the 1999 Constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria, as Amended.

The move would also mean falling for the antics of terrorists who are out to destabilise the federal government and undermine the supremacy of Nigeria's democratic institutions.

For anyone who cares to know, it is a modus operandi for terrorist groups to exploit disorder caused by crises that are identified to be potent enough to lead to the collapse of state institutions.

The International Crisis Group, in a special report on 'Jihad In Modern Conflict', shows how Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other extremists groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP complicate efforts to end insecurity in the Middle East and some parts of Africa.

According to the report titled, "Exploiting Disorder: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State", common tactics deployed by insurgent groups in the regions where they operate include

controlling territory, supplanting the state and ruling with a calibrated mix of coercion and co-option.

This explains the movement and conquest of some territories by Boko Haram and ISWAP in some North Eastern and North Western States of Nigeria to ensure the replacement of democratically elected leadership.

In Zamfara and Niger States, for example, some leaders of insurgent groups were granted leadership status by overwhelmed communities within certain local government areas in exchange for protection from terrorists and bandits.

In addition, the Governor of Kaduna State, Governor Nasir El-rufai, was reportedly said to have drawn the attention of President Buhari, in a memo, to attempts by terrorists to create a parallel government and consolidate on their operations in the state by establishing a permanent operation base.

Attacks and threats by terrorist groups, according to a report "Rethinking Transnational Terrorism" by Martha Crenshaw of the United States Institute of Peace, are intended to "maximise shock" on the civilian population and highly symbolic and emotionally resonant targets such as churches, mosques or a government building.

At a time when the country faces severe security threats from the activities of insurgents, it would be recklessly rash and irresponsible for a parliament to commence impeachment proceedings against the sitting President, as doing so, would, on the contrary, give legitimacy and boost to the authority of terrorists to rule with coercion and consider establishing a parallel government.

It would also deny the country the needed leadership at such a critical moment, as well as embolden insurgents, who are enemies of the Nigerian State, to launch a full scale war against it, given the distraction likely to follow.

Furthermore, an impeachment proceeding would go on to expose the weaknesses of our institutions and arms of government, particularly in view of existing political divisions. It would present the perfect opportunity for external incursions to polarise constitutionally elected governments at the state and federal levels.

In confronting terrorism, therefore, the International Crisis Group, in its report, advises governments to de-escalate the crises insurgents feed off and prevent others from erupting - such as kidnapping and attacks on places of worship given the Nigerian scenario.

It also recommends that leaders embrace dialogue, inclusion and reform, while underscoring the need for them to "react sensibly" to terrorist attacks.

Whilst the National Assembly and Nigerians continue to clamour for full-scale military action against insurgents, the ICG on the contrary warns that, "too often military action against extremists helps them recruit", adding, "little suggests they can be defeated by military means alone."

It is anticipated that upon resumption from the annual recess on the 20th of September, 2022, Senators across party lines would unanimously consider the best approach to address the nation's security challenges.

Such consideration would, no doubt, give preference to, and take into account, aspects capable of strengthening Nigeria's resolve and determination in the fight to stamp out terrorism.

●Dr. Tabiowo is the Special Assistant (Press) to the Senate President and writes from Abuja.

Governors meet to examine economic hardship, security

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Governors of the 36 states of the federation are meeting in Abuja to discuss issues relating to the nation's worsening economic situation.

Scheduled to meet at the Banquet Hall, of the Presidential Villa in Abuja, the governors are to compare notes on effects of the harsh economic environment and how to bring succour to the citizenry.

According to the invitation issued by the Director General of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Mr Asishana Bayo Okauru, the state of the economy will dominate the conversation.

He said "considering the economic woes that the citizenry has been complaining about and the hardship associated with it, several governors reasoned that it is high time to tell each other the bare truth by confronting each other on the situation and brainstorming on it.

"This formed the basis for resorting to an in-person meeting which since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic been relegated by the states' executives.

"Two things will feature prominently in the conversation: the economy and security.

"This will be the first time in the year, contrary to media reports that Governors had collectively advised the president on the

weeding of fifty-year-olds from the federal civil service and other spurious suggestions meant to impose further hardship on the people, that governors will collectively meet to consider a total overhaul of the nation's economy."

The Director General further said the meeting will begin with the launch of the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Fund, followed by the launch of the World Bank SFTAS charter before the real conversation on the state of the economy begins.

"There will also be such regular updates as the CARES program and the Chairman's remarks," he added.

2023: Tinubu not going to represent South West interest - PDP chieftain

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Despite the popular belief that the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, is the candidate of the South West in the 2023 election, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Prince Dare Adeleke, has said the former Lagos State governor may not serve the interest of the zone. This, according to the PDP chief, is because the Jagaban Borgu has allegedly never worked for the South West interest but for himself.

Adeleke, an ally of Oyo governor, Engr. Seyi Makinde, who is the chairman of state transport company, Pace-Setter Transportation Service, said Tinubu will not be a threat to the chances of PDP in the South West during the election.

Speaking on preparation of the major political parties, particularly, the PDP ahead of the election, the former governorship aspirant in the state told The Trumpet that southern candidature is different from southern representation.

Though on the Nyesom Wike divide of the PDP, Adeleke debunked the insinuation that the entire Yoruba men and women in the South West are ready to vote for Tinubu because of his antecedents as a self-centered

politician who does not have the interest of Yorubaland at heart.

He said "frankly speaking, you are mixing the issue of Southern candidature with Southern representative with regard to genuine Southern representation at the centre. When you look at it, I am not sure some of us are ready to support a Bola Tinubu candidature, because of that he has demonstrated in the past.

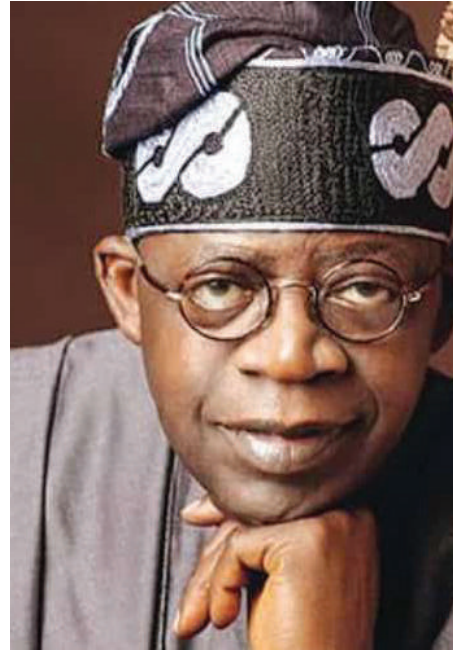
"When Mulikat Adeola was contesting, he brought up a northerner, Tambuwal, against the southerner. I don't think he has the moral right to lay claim to Southern agenda to run for presidency.

"He never protected interest of the South. That's one of the reasons many southerners are shouting obedient. And politics is religion as religion is politics."

He added that the same religion ticket will be an albatross to Tinubu's ambition stressing that "you cannot bring a Muslim to be your deputy even as you are a Muslim. Nigeria is about the red line right now; we have to be mindful of the fault lines.

"That is even why we are saying PDP's chairmanship should come to the South-West. That is even why you cannot blame Wike for saying that if they lost the election, it is their fault."

Adeleke, like many of Wike's supporters said there is no two way to peace



Bola Tinubu

in PDP than for the national chairman Dr. Iyorchia Ayu to resign.

He posited that for fairness, as Atiku has emerged presidential candidate, Ayu should step down as chairman of the party.

"I said it; it is a matter of common sense; Ayu should step down. As a

matter of fact, Ayu should resign without being pushed or forced. But with the situation, he appears to think that he has to be there. Remember that there was supposed to be a National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting the last time, but it was put on hold. We had passed a vote of no confidence on him. But I am very sure that he should resign honourably.

"Don't you think with Atiku, as a Northerner and presidential candidate of your party, and Ayu, another Northerner, as chairman of your party, going into the 2023 election might make the party suffer a backlash in the South?

"There is no doubt that it could be an issue. You know, party members will do their bit as members of the party, but what about the non-party members who are voters? Politicians are less than five per cent of the voters. The majority of the voters are non-party members.

So, we need to convince them that when we have a national chairman from the South-West, that will usher in good tidings from the people of the South.

"Don't forget that we have never had that shot in the South-West. This is what we are clamouring for; with that, we could easily negotiate with the people of the South-West, irrespective of political inclination," Adeleke said.

Agenda for incoming South South Governors after next year's polls

By CHRIS EZEONOH, PORT HARCOURT

With the conclusion of the governorship primaries of the different political parties ahead of the 2023 general elections, it is generally believed that the candidates who emerged are now locked in the political laboratory with their teams working on their manifestos as the campaigns are expected to kick off in September.

As the governorship candidates in the South-South region also grapple with the task of envisioning a blueprint they would present to the electorates as the campaigns get underway, there is a clarion call for them to anticipate a working relationship amongst themselves that would transcend political leanings and affiliations after the battle of electioneering.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the South-South also referred to as Niger Delta has peculiar developmental challenges, and more so, falling into the category of minority states in the lopsided federal structure, an alliance of the states to form a formidable socio-economic force has remained a desideratum.

Some analysts say this alliance, if in place and backed up with the advantage of the enormous resources inherent in the region, has the potential to reverse the cockeyed minority status to having an intimidating voice in the socio-economic and political equation in the polity.

More than a decade ago, this desired synergy among the South-South states was dreamt and birthed, but it died no sooner than it was birthed. In the year 2009, the then six governors in the region, Chief Timipre Sylva of Bayelsa State, Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, Chief Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Liyel Imoke of Cross River State, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State and Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan of Delta State under the aegis of the South-

South Governors Forum broke the ice and embraced economic integration of the region to engender common prosperity.

They came up with an acronym, BRACED states, derived from the first letter of each state, B from Bayelsa, R from Rivers, A from Akwa Ibom, C from Cross River, E from Edo and D from Delta- B-R-A-C-E-D. From this they went further to set up the BRACED Commission to drive integrated development of the entire region and Rotimi Amaechi graciously donated and furnished an imposing secretariat building in Port Harcourt for the commission.

The governors took their resolve for economic prosperity of the region further and organized the first South-South Economic Summit which drew participants across the globe. The three day summit held at the prestigious Tinapa Business Resort in Calabar, Cross River State from April 22 to 25, 2009 veritably opened a vista of hope for socio-economic renaissance of the region.

The summit was declared open by Late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and also attended by then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. Egg heads from the academia, business moguls, diplomats and experts in various fields of human endeavour delivered incisive papers at the summit.

The six governors promoting the summit also took turns to present papers where they highlighted the economic potentials of their various states, inviting the world to come explore and harness the resources.

Then chairman of the South-South Governor's Forum, Senator Liyel Imoke had set the tone for the summit in his welcome address. "It would be recalled that at the various meetings of the South-South Governor's Forum, my colleagues and I considered it necessary for us to collectively pursue regional economic integration and work more closely with one another to strengthen our economies by exploring opportunities for growth. This new approach is imperative if we

must collectively achieve our vision and aspirations, not only for the South-South Zone but also our individual states.

Imoke also said, "We are also aware that we have up till now, not been able to optimize our potentials with regards to the strength which our partnering with one another is capable of evincing. We have a multi trillion naira economy that if well harnessed will create wealth for our people and transform them. Yet, as it is often said, greater strength lies in unity and a commonness of purpose, particularly as we can achieve even more by exploring our various areas of comparative advantage for our common good. This, my colleagues and I are committed to. We have the political will. We are committed and we are united"

It is interesting to note that at the end of the summit, the organizers came up with a compendium of the major papers presented at the summit and the road map to realizing all the topical issues raised in a book aptly entitled "Braced for Global Competitiveness".

All that was needed thereafter was ACTION to transform the region into an enviable spectacle as envisaged. Regrettably, the noble idea inexplicably died shortly after and could not even outlive the tenure of the six governors who envisioned it.

Some commentators have attributed the premature death of the BRACED idea to political differences among the governors, but then it was only Adams Oshiomhole that was in ACN then. The other five governors were all in PDP. What rivalry could there have been that arose no sooner than they presented themselves to the world as people who were serious and having "political will", "committed" and "united" as espoused by Imoke to pursue an integrated economic agenda?

That was one momentous opportunity to recalibrate the totality of the Niger Delta landscape, but it was thrown into the abyss. The current chief executives in the various

states have not even been seen or heard mention anything related to the BRACED Commission. Each one of them is a one man riot squad in his own 'fiefdom'.

If the states had remained 'BRACED' till now, one could imagine the mileage that the region would have achieved since 2009 with the NDDC and Niger Delta ministry playing complementary roles in the integrated development agenda.

Again if the states had remained 'BRACED' it is possible that they could have invested in development of modular refineries and even acquire major stakes in the assets the divesting IOCs are leaving behind.

If they had remained 'BRACED', it is possible that they would have pressured more vigorously to get something higher than the paltry 3 percent allotted to the oil producing states in the Petroleum Industry Act, (PIA) or even achieve outright resource control with the force they would carry.

In the same breathe, could anyone have imagined to insult the sensibilities of the people with the nonsensical Water Resources bill in the National Assembly if they were bound by strong socio-economic ties?

Even in the face of insecurity ravaging most parts of the country, the BRACED states wouldn't have been among the knee jerked states fearing any onslaught by bandits or some invaders as such threats would have been provided for in the integrated security master plan.

The 'BRACED' concept represented an omnibus panacea to many socio-economic maladies afflicting the South-South states. It was well thought out and the visioners scored a bull's eye with the idea. But it is thumbs down for them for chickening out when it mattered most.

Those who would mount the saddle as governors in 2023 in the region should find the report of the Tinapa Summit, adopt and run with it in line with current realities. It is still our Niger Delta, the land of great promise.

Falana, Fusika, others sue A'lbom CJ over Effiong's imprisonment

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A group of lawyers led by Popular Human Rights Lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Femi Falana, and Adeyinka Olumide-Fusika SAN, has dragged the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom, Justice Ekaette Obot before the Federal High Court sitting in Uyo for the enforcement of the fundamental rights of incarcerated human rights activist, Inibehe Effiong.

Justice Obot had on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, committed Effiong to the state correctional centre for one month over perceived contempt of court.

Justice Obot justified the conviction warrant by saying she had run out of patience with the excesses and unruly behaviours of the embattled lawyer who was the defence counsel to Leo Ekpenyong in an ongoing case.

Stating the reason for his conviction, Effiong said on Twitter, "The Chief Judge of Akwa Akwa Ibom ordered a Premium Times reporter to leave the court. I said my lord, we were thinking that since the proceeding is public, members of the public should be allowed to observe the proceeding. My Lord asked me to proceed



Inibehe Effiong.

with cross-examination.

"I will be going to the Uyo Correctional Centre now. I have not done anything. I wasn't even given the opportunity to say anything before the "conviction". Two

lawyers in the court appealed to the Hon. Chief Judge but my Lord insisted that I must be jailed."

Meanwhile, there were indications last week that Effiong is being manhandled by prison officials as his beards were alleged to have been forcefully shaved.

However, the Akwa Ibom Command of the Nigeria Correctional Service said Effiong was duly informed and he also obliged before his beards were shaved, saying it was done for security precaution in the interest of the lawyer.

"On arrival at Uyo, he was duly admitted into the facility and was also informed of the need to cut his hair and beards as a security measure as well as a routine practice in the facility," a spokesperson for the command, Richard Meeting said in a statement.

Reacting to the development, Falana berated the prison officials for torturing Effiong while threatening to sue them for the enforcement of his human rights.

According to an Originating Processes shown to new men on Monday in Uyo, the legal team which includes Femi Falana SAN, Adeyinka Olumide-Fusika SAN, John Aikpokpo-Martins Esq, Monday Ubani Esq,

Olukunle Edun, Funmi Falana Esq, Femi Adeborisade Esq, Nsisak Akai, Augustine Asuquo, E.E. Philip, and Joseph Eleh, said it was illegal and unconstitutional for the respondent to deny Effiong access to a copy of the judgement after seven days of the conclusion of the case.

In the Application marked FHC/117/FHn/170/22 BETWEEN: Inibehe Effiong and Honourable Justice Ekaette Fabian Obot, the Applicant through his Counsel prayed the Court for three reliefs:

"A Declaration that the Applicant who was jailed on the 27th of July on the account of contempt of court is entitled to a copy of the judgement within seven days of the conclusion of the case.

"A Declaration that the refusal of the respondent to make available a copy of her judgement to the Applicant since 27th of July, 2022 despite repeated applications is illegal and unconstitutional as it violates Section 36(7) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic, 1999 as amended.

"An Order directing the Respondent with a copy of the judgement on July 27th forthwith."

At the time of filing this report, a date is yet to be slated for a hearing.

Court sends two to jail over investment, internet fraud in Kaduna

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Two internet fraudsters, Martins Nnabuihe and Joseph Amoto Patrick, have been convicted and sentenced to jail by Justice N. U Sadiq of the Kaduna State High Court on charges bordering on an attempt to cheat by impersonation and cheating by impersonation.

The Kaduna Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured the judgement on Monday, August 15, 2022.

In a statement by the commission, trouble started for the defendants when the EFCC received an Intelligence report on their alleged involvement in internet-related fraud.

The anti-graft agency said upon the receipt of the report, they were placed under surveillance, which led to their eventual arrest.

The Commission revealed that Nnabuihe, 2021, had presented himself as Chief Executive Officer of Trade Master FX, an online investment platform, to scam unsuspecting members of the public.

The one count charge for which he was convicted reads, "That you, Nnabuihe

Martins, (M) sometime in 2021 in Kaduna, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, did pretend to be a Chief Executive Officer of one Trade Master FX, an online investment platform when you knew you were not and in such assumed character cheated unsuspecting victims the sum of \$500(Five Hundred USD), when you claimed that such monies will be invested and you thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 308 of the Kaduna State Penal Code Law of 2017 and punishable under Section 309 of the same Law."

On his part, Patrick had presented himself as Asian person with the names, Chen Zhijin and Shini Iseul, to several unsuspecting victims on social media with the intention to scam them of their hard resources.

The charge against him reads, "That you, Joseph Amoto Patrick between January and July, 2022 at Kaduna within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court attempted to commit an offence and in such an attempt did a certain act towards the commission of the said offence, to wit; falsely presented yourself as Chen Zhijin and Shini Iseul (an Asian) to several unsuspecting victims on several online social media applications in order to cheat them and you thereby

committed an offence contrary to Section 57 of the Kaduna State Penal Code Law of 2017 and punishable under Section 309 of the same Law."

Both defendants were said to have pleaded guilty to the charges preferred against them by the EFCC.

Upon their pleas, the prosecution counsel, M.J. Argungu and defence counsel, S.A Yahaya and Achimugu John Achimugu urged the court to enter the plea bargain agreement between the parties as the judgement of the court.

The judge consequently convicted and sentenced Patrick to five years of Imprisonment with an option of a fine of N150,000.00. He was also asked to forfeit the Apple iPhone used as an instrument to perpetrate the crime to the Federal Government of Nigeria through EFCC.

Martins was convicted and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment or a fine of N150,000.00. He was equally ordered to forfeit an LG DVD Home Theatre, Litan Generator, LG semi-automatic washing machine, MTN wireless local area network, Samsung Galaxy A22, and a 55-inch Samsung TV to the Federal Government of Nigeria through EFCC.

EFCC hands over equipment, accoutrement recovered to military

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Has handed over some military equipment and accoutrement recovered by its officials to the Nigerian Military High Command.

Spokesperson for the Commission, Wilson Uwujaren, disclosed this in a statement on Monday, saying the Chairman of the Commission, Abdulrasheed Bawa, who was represented by the Head of Operations, Headquarters, Assistant Commander of the EFCC ACE II, Michael Wetkas, handed over the materials at a ceremony that was held at the Commission's Zonal Command in Wuse 2, Abuja, on Monday.

He listed the items handed over to include 7 ballistic jackets with plates, 1 ballistic jacket

without plate, 3 flotation jackets, 5 pieces of plates and 6 pieces of helmets.

Others are 9 pieces of camouflage T-shirts and 30 sacks containing web equipment.

According to him, the equipment and accoutrement were recovered from a contractor, who supplies military equipment to the armed forces.

"Assistant Commander of the EFCC ACE II Michael Wetkas who stood in for the Executive Chairman commended the longstanding collaborative relationship between the Commission and the Nigerian Military.

"He explained that the items were recovered from a contractor who supplies military equipment, stating that they were voluntarily handed over to the Commission

in the course of an investigation. He said it was important to hand over the equipment directly to the military to prevent them from getting into the wrong hands," Uwujaren said.

Col. A.T Bitiyong, who received the items on behalf of the Commander, Defence Headquarters Garrison, expressed appreciation to the EFCC for the mutual relationship between the military and the Commission.

He assured the Commission that all the equipment will be delivered to the appropriate quarters.

The ceremony was witnessed by the Abuja Zonal Commander, ACE II Adeniyi Adebayo, Head Special Investigation, ACE II Goji Mohammed, CSE Junaid M. Sa'id and the Commission's Exhibit Keeper, CSE Salawu Abdulrazaq.

EFCC recovers NHIS's N1.4bn from commercial banks

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has again recovered about N1.4 billion for the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

The money was recovered from some commercial banks that refused to transmit to the Treasury Single Account (TSA) since 2015, Wilson Uwujaren, spokesperson for the commission said on Tuesday.

Uwujaren further disclosed that the recovered money was released to the NHIS on August 5, 2022 by the commission.

Recall that the Commission had in a similar fashion on February 10, 2022, released a sum of N1.5 billion to the Management of the Scheme.

"The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on February 10, 2022 returned the sum of N1, 550,000,000 (One Billion, Five Hundred and Fifty Million Naira) to the National Health Insurance Scheme, NHIS.

"The fund is part of monies which some commercial banks fraudulently withheld and refused to transmit to their Treasury Single Account, TSA, since 2015.

"The Commission had earlier on September 16, 2021 released N1, 300,000,000, also recovered from the banks to the Agency," the Commission earlier stated on its website.



Abdulrasheed Bawa

Terrorists' threat to kidnap President Buhari

In a recent video that made local and international headlines last month, some terrorists have threatened to kidnap the President, Commander in Chief of Armed Forces of Nigeria, General Muhammadu Buhari. The terrorists claimed they were the attackers of the Abuja-Kaduna train of March 28, 2022. They extended the kidnap threat to Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai; and warned that they would sell or kill the remaining captives in their custody if their demands were not met. In the video, the captives were reduced into pathetic pulp as they were brutally beaten with sticks. More sadly, all these are coming after President Buhari recently declared that he was tired and could not wait to leave office.

This is the peak of all the daring assaults on the Nigerian State. In the same month of July there was an attack on the President's advance team to Daura. Nigeria's 'most fortified' prison was also invaded by gunmen who later identified themselves as members of the Islamic State West Africa (ISWAP). The gunmen freed more than 60 of their members and hundreds of others who had been kept in the prison. After that time, killings across the country generally increased by 24 percent. Mere anarchy appears to have been let loose in the state of Nigeria. In all these there has not been any serious statement from the Presidency and the entire security agencies. The only statement from the Presidency is that military action would hurt hostages; just as if that is the only way to address the problem.

We are alarmed at the general state of insecurity and the threat to kidnap the president. Many security analysts have openly classified the country's security crisis as loophole in intelligence gathering. Equipped with appropriate intelligence reports, Nigeria should be able to ward off any threat or attacks in different parts of her territory. If the President's convoy that consists of a standard minimum security

of 59 armed vehicles of different forces is not enough deterrent to terrorists, the ordinary citizens of the country are not in any way safe.

Who are these terrorists and bandits who have practically forced the Federal Republic of Nigeria to her knees and humiliated the president with the threat of kidnap? Are they so invisible and invincible that the country must allow them to continue operating freely in Nigeria? What has happened to satellite imagery and other sky equipment that can track and repel these terrorists? In Nigeria defence contracts worth millions of dollars are awarded yearly. These contracts allegedly include things like fighter jets, armoured tanks, assault rifles, etc. Why are we still under terrorists' threats?

We reject in its entirety the option of negotiating with terrorists that many have brought to the table. No serious-minded nation negotiates with terrorists and criminals. Doing so amounts to cowardice and surrender of sovereignty. As a last resort, attacking the scoundrels in their hideouts should not be ruled out. If truly our security agents know the terrorists' locations, they should invade the camps and massively wide them out. The inevitable casualties amongst the captives can be declared as national martyrs and compensation paid to their families. It is better to lose 50 lives in brave, decisive circumstances than negotiate with and pay ransom to terrorists who will continually be empowered to threaten two hundred million Nigerians.

We strongly recommend that The Nigerian military should heavily guard external parts of the Federal Capital Territory to prevent any external invasion. While this is done, the Police and DSS should launch special movements to comb all communities in order identify strangers and interlopers. Curfews can be set, movements restricted, more checkpoints mounted etc. Most importantly, this should be carried out in a moderate manner so as not to create fear and panic amongst residents. External help can be sought for equipment to track these terrorists. It is high time the government began to hold responsible the heads of security agencies under whose jurisdiction insecurity prevail. Such should either be sacked or forced to resign.

In conclusion, terrorists daring to abduct the Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is an absolute disgrace to the Nigerian State. The President has declared publicly through words and action that he is tired and cannot wait to leave. It is high-time he threw in the towel for the sake of his own honour and national security and allow a more decisive leader take over the reins of power.



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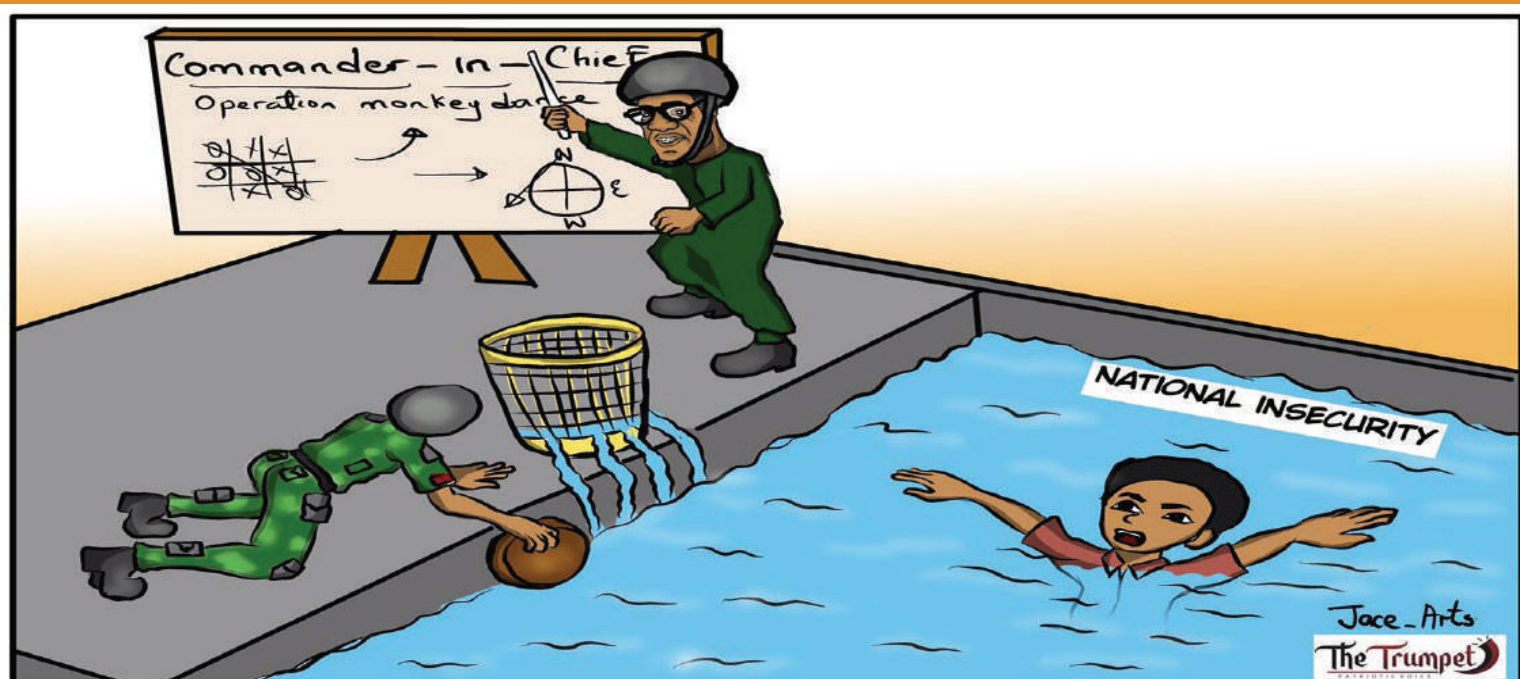
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Divided we fall: Nigerian mosaic

There is a land whose heart is the fork of mighty rivers. Virile valleys traverse fruitful lands, nestled by people bright, blessed and beautiful. Firm in the fecund embrace of oceans of sand and sea she is a triumph of versatility, plurality and power. From the elegant shrub lands of the sahel to the muscular mangroves of its deltas, its a land teeming with wonder, magic and forment.

Sounds familiar? It should be. That land, that country is Nigeria, the great gnarled giant of Africa. Gnarled because the Nigerian experiment has fallen. A profoundly promising project in post colonial nation building is now in tatters, reduced to a colossal powder keg on the brink of implosion. How did she get here? How did a virtual cornucopia of plenty become this abject?

When the British, in the late 1800s, finally got down to the business of colonizing the lands that would eventually be called Nigeria she was already settled by a multitude of aboriginal tribes and cultures with origins lost in the mist of time. There is a sufficiency of scientific evidence of their presence here since antiquity. Iron age artifacts in locations like Nssuka and in the Taruga basin predate those of Egypt by centuries.

Over millennia these anthropological clusters flourished through an age ruled by crazy gods, demons and spirits, developing with amazing distinctness into discrete tongues and tribes. Nigeria has a whooping 250 ethnic groups with distinct linguistic forms, not taking into account dialectal differences. These tribal clusters would coalesce in time and in places and flourish into thriving subsaharan communities, develop complex kingdoms and empires and create systems of community and cohesiveness that were as intimate

as they would become innate. The Yoruba kingdom flourished in the 1700s extending at its peak to as far as modern day Togo. The Benin empire survived in its military and cultural hegemony for about 400 years and the Kanem-Bornu empire was a mighty transsaharan outpost of Islamic theocracy, residual now as the Borno Emirate in modern day Borno state. The transformational Sokoto Caliphate extended its cultured and religious dominance from the Sahel almost to the Atlantic.

Into this unallied confederation of nations sauntered the British in the mid to late 1800 first through its annexation of Lagos and then of the Southern Nigerian Protectorate via the pacification activities in the lower Niger of its commercial arrowhead, The Royal Niger Company. The northern reaches of the country was to follow and fall solidifying the entire region under one administrative authority.

Nigeria, drawing on her enormous human and material resources was to quickly evolve as a regional power and by independence in 1960 was the dominant country in the West African subregion.

With independence the various tribes, now constituted into 3 loosely allied administrative regions, were to begin the arduous task of forging a working nation. And they started on a promising if shaky footing. Sadly all too soon the tensions of tribalism and regionalism would stoke the embers of war. The country, at the mercy of its new power hungry political class, soon descended into internecine war.

1970 and the conclusion of the Biafran war brought the chance of a reset and a new start especially powered by the discovery of Nigeria's huge crude oil reserves. But the evolving culture of public office mismanagement, prevalent

all over Africa, was gaining force in the Nigerian polity. Over the ensuing decades corruption and state irresponsibility was to tear at the very fabric of the country and reduce the Nigerian dream to ashes.

These have been dealt with both by other articles in this column and by other columnists. The mandate here for Stethoscope is to examine the mechanism or mechanisms of this dissolution of hope.

At independence Nigeria was correctly a confederation of federating regions, with an umpire Federal Government. But with the incursion of the military into civil governance, firstly with the two coups of 1966, the outcome was more consolidation of power at the center with a definite unitary bent. Continuing from that point the federal government was to hold titular power over a pseudo-federation and become the nexus of political power and privilege.

The Nigerian constitution in its last 1999 iteration was to consolidate that position and perpetuate the system of regional dependence for sustenance on the centre. When the oil boom occurred in the seventies with this arrangement in place, it devolved on the centre the sole authority and means to disburse the surplus in oil revenues. That began the culture of federal subsidies to states which quickly eroded regional focus on age-old economic expertise: cocoa farming in the West, mining and production industry in the East, vegetables cash crop farming and animal husbandry in the North and sundry other profitable ventures from the diverse and versatile plurality of the country. Slowly these time honored strengths withered down to mere subsistence level activities, the province of toiling, resource-strapped peasant farmers, artisans and laborers, instead of the national and global production engines that

Stethoscope

By

PHILLIP OAK



they should have evolved into.

Today the country is worse of for it, a beggar and pariah nation at the lagging hind-guard of the nations' race. Countries like Malasia who once sought developmental assistance from Nigeria are now light years ahead, true giants of economic and industrial growth and prosperity.

The Nigerian people are as industrious as they are happy, hospitable and beautiful. But they are also made up of several ethnically distinct groups each with time-deep roots into the meaning of self and the cosmos. And this is not a bad thing. The writer grew up in Benin city, that centred stronghold of the old Benin Kingdom, land of great obas and ancient traditions. Post independence Benin city was serially capital city of the Midwestern region, Bendel state and now of Edo state. Then and now from its landlocked location roadways and cultural connectivity radiated out in all directions to all the reaches of the country. Benin-City in the seventies in the wake of the civil war was a thriving metropolis, a multi tribal mecca of interdependent neighbors. My childhood neighborhood at Second East Circular road and Esigie street, representative of most neighborhoods in Benin, was a microcosm of the larger Nigeria with close quartered multi tribal

neighbours, coexisting more like relatives cross exchanging values and cultural mores with no recognition of tribe or religion. From such formidable moral melting pots a child received the tenets of the Nigerian aptitude for loyalty and charity, codependency, amity and fortitude.

Unfortunately, so far, the puerile political class has been unable or unwilling to harness this diversity for its true potential but rather, as is true all over Africa, has exploited it to destructive ends for its own selfish gains and aggrandizement without any real sense of patriotism or duty.

The result today is a failed state peppered by economic woes and subhuman levels of social amenities and security. Yet she remains potentially a tour de force, a country of great promise, its people ready and able to wake up, dust off and rise again. What is needed ultimately is a restructuring of the federal project to allow for enough independence of regions, and a watering down of the powers of the centre-seat, to give kinetics to regional development and growth.

The constitution and the federal structure must therefore be revamped towards more not less regional autonomy. And only in so doing can the dream be revived: that of a Nigeria in which united, we rise.

By
**Eric
TENIOLA**



Abdullahi Adamu on issues forty-five years ago (2)

for any reason the subjects do not pay their taxes one finds that the only person who has that rare ability to persuade the people to meet their civic obligations in society is the traditional ruler. Now, if on the one hand one appreciates the fact that such an institution can be useful to society, why does one on the other hand turn round to say one does not want it.

Today if one goes to London there is one particular square (I have forgotten its name) where one can say any rubbish about anybody but if one dares mention the Queen and says any jazz about her one would be in soup. Even though she has no executive function the tradition has been kept, the image of the institution is being strengthened over time. We are deceiving ourselves we are deceiving ourselves.

Like one of the earlier speakers has mentioned one just takes Napoleon because one reads history. This is what Napoleon did under certain circumstances. So, one feels, why not Nigeria? Our culture is different. Our standard of civilization is different. Of course, one is not saying that we should remain static. We are definitely progressing, but why do we not spread out the development in relation also to our very property as a people? Let us spread what we believe and what we cherish so that even if we have to sever relations

with these institutions we do not give them a sudden break as the Draft has provided. I believe the Constitution should take a more careful look on these institutions.

I want further to touch on the question of freedom of the Press. I believe that any individual in this country should not fundamentally have any better right than another person. I believe the Press, journalism or whatever terminology one uses for it, is a profession and if I am an accountant, a sailor or a traditional ruler, I have got my professional hazards. As long as our Press do not want to accept professional hazards within the profession I think they are being unrealistic themselves. Since the Draft Constitution as now presented provides for one to hold an opinion and to dissipate such an opinion by various news media available, I think it is absolutely adequate for the time being.

Of course, there is the type of bias we see because the Nigerian Press is divided along the Nigerian political axis and one saw this clearly during the census exercise. If one takes the 1973 census into consideration one can see the type of Press we have. I believe in as much as I want the Press to have that accessibility to news items, at the same time I do not believe

in giving a blank cheque to this type of organisation. I believe that the

right of the Press has to be related to the rate of development in the same institution, and what is more, since the

Constitution is supposed to be a dynamic instrument of state. I believe when the right time comes the legislature or the interested arm of government will initiate reviews in the

Constitution as it affects the Press. However, at the moment I do not believe we should go any further in providing for the freedom of the Press than what have been done to take care of it in the Draft.

On the question of individual right to establish newspapers or radio stations, I observe that if care is not taken we are going to end up, having our aspiring multi-millionaires to establish newspapers and radio stations and using these as instruments for perpetrating their interests. I would rather want to see the establishment of radio and television institutionalized. It can be earmarked for the trade unions or the Nigerian Union of Journalists, having sufficient funds to establish radio stations. For instance, they can establish a radio station or a television station. However, I think there must be check somewhere to the extent of individual per se. With these observations, Mr Chairman, I wish to stop.

Thank you.

Concluded

Continued from Monday edition
I believe if one only reflects back to 1976 when we had the unfortunate incident of the abortive coup the whole country was in the brink of having another major disaster. I observe, with no apology, that the last resort that the Military had was to turn to the traditional institution to propagate the idea that the coup was neither tribally inspired nor religiously inspired. It was these institutions more than any other that were able to go down the grass roots and talk to people to bring some sanity in the situation that was threatening the nation.

In a situation like this I think it will be unrealistic to just provide for some ceremonial type of status as presently shown in the Draft Constitution. I feel the traditional institutions-it does not matter where you go in this country, are the custodians of our culture. I am not

an anthropologist, but to my people culture is the sum total of our ways of life and these ways of life are enshrined or are being protected by a particular institution. So, if one wants to be identified with one's culture and at the same time wants to do away with or relegate to the background the custodians of that institution. I think that is one of the most unrealistic ways of going about it. I believe also that the fact of our relegating our traditional institutions to the background has been contributory to the wave of indiscipline which is now the major problem of this country. If one takes as an example any part of this country where the traditional ruler is worth his salt, where he is absolutely accepted by his subject, one may take up the question of the collection of taxes. There is a secretary of a local government area or whatever title you give him. If

IGP lauds officer for rejecting \$200,000 bribe

Police honour retired CP, decorates promoted officers

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

Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, has commended an officer who rejected a bribe of \$200,000.

SP Daniel Amah was said to have busted a syndicate involving one Ali Zaki and some police officers in an armed robbery of over N320 million.

Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of Finance and Administration, and acting Police Commissioner of Kano State, DCP Abubakar Zubairu, presented the IGP commendation letter to Amah.

“On behalf of the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Alkali Baba Usman, psc (+), NPM, fdc, the Command’s Acting Commissioner of Police, presented a commendation letter to SP Daniel I. Amah for maintaining outstanding excellent work ethics, uncommon

focus and dedication to duty, and exhibiting sound professionalism leading to the arrest and prosecution of one Ali Zaki and some Police Officers in a case of an armed robbery involving the sum of three hundred and twenty million, five hundred thousand naira only (N320,500,000:00) as well rejecting the sum of two hundred thousand United State Dollars (\$200,000:00) offered to him as a bribe,” spokesperson of the command, SP Abdullahi Haruna Kiyawa said.

Also, the Kano State Police Command has organised a sent forth party to celebrate the State’s Commissioner of Police, CP Sama’ila Shu’aibu Dikko, and five others as they retire from the Force.

The event, which was held in the State’s Capital, was organised by the Command in collaboration with the Kano Citizens Forum.

Kiyawa, in a statement on Monday night said the event was organised to

honour the retired officers for their selfless service in ensuring peace in Kano State.

“On the 14th of August, 2022, the Kano State Government in Collaboration with the Kano Citizens Forum Organized Send Forth Dinner in Honour of Retired CP Sama’ila Shu’aibu Dikko, fsi and five others for their selfless service in ensuring peace in Kano State,” Kiyawa stated.

He also disclosed that 38 officers who were promoted to higher ranks were also decorated by the acting Commissioner of Police in the State, DCP Abubakar Zubairu.

The spokesperson said the officers were promoted from Deputy Superintendent of Police to Superintendent of Police.

“Today, 15th August 2022, the Acting Commissioner of Police, Kano State Police Command, who is the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of Finance and Administration, DCP



IGP Baba Alkali

Abubakar Zubairu, psc, in his weekly briefing with members of Kano State Police Command’s Management Team, decorates thirty-eight (38) newly promoted Police Officers from the rank of DSP to the rank of SP.

“He reminded the officers that to whom much

is given, much is expected. He charged the officers to look at themselves as supervisors, and know their subordinates so that they can supervise them very well. He wishes the newly promoted officers long life and prosperity and prays may Almighty Allah bless their new rank,”

Zamfara govt orders house-to-house search over insecurity

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

Zamfara government has directed the state’s task force on security to embark on house-to-house search to flush out criminal elements in the 19 emirates.

Executive Governor of the State, Bello Matawalle gave the directive during a broadcast to the people of Zamfara in the early hours of Tuesday in Gusau.

The broadcast was preceded by an expanded Security Council meeting that lasted for several hours.

Matawalle said the measure was part of his efforts to restore law and order and ensure peace in the state.

He urged the emirs who were part of the council meeting to be vigilant and report suspicious persons or strange movements in their respective domains to Security agents.

The governor also announced restriction on motorcycle movement in the communities on the outskirts of Gusau from 9pm till dawn.

He ordered the security agencies to shoot at sight, any motorcycle rider who violated the order and refused to stop at security checking points within the affected areas.

According to him, the measure follows reports of the use of motorcycles by bandits and other criminal elements to perpetrate their criminal activities within the state capital and its environs.

The governor also ordered hotel operators to scrutinise their guests by means of valid identification before accommodating them.

“This measure idols part of government’s efforts to tackle insecurity in the state, as government is concern over usage of hotels by terrorists and criminals to perpetrate their heinous activities in the state.

“Any hotelier found violating the new order will have his hotel shut down and face prosecution according to the law.

“The state government would not take it lightly with any one found disturbing the peace and security of the people,” he added.

Matawalle further stated that the government was committed to protecting lives and property of the people.

“Security of lives and property of the citizenry is a basic function of government anywhere.

“My government is doing everything humanly possible in accordance with the laws of the land to ensure the discharge of this responsibility,” he added.

Meanwhile, the council charged security operatives, particularly military and police, to scale up effort in combating banditry and other criminal activities in the state.

While stating that peace was gradually returning to the State, the council tasked the security operatives on synergy and coordination to tackle the pockets of banditry and kidnapping in some parts of the state.

Suspected kidnapper who threatened to abduct varsity students nabbed

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

Oyo State Police Command has arrested a 37-year-old alleged kidnapper, Olarinde Adekunle, over a threat to abduct three students of a private university.

Adekunle was said to have written a letter to the school’s authority demanding for N10 million failure of which shall lead to

the kidnapping of three students.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Adewale Osifeso, disclosed this on Monday while parading the suspect at the State Police Command.

He said the threat, as expected, disrupted academic activities within the university, stirring up panic and uncertainty among the university community.

According to Osifeso,

investigation by police officers led to the arrest of one Azeez Mufutau, whose phone number was used by the prime suspect as a decoy to conceal his activities.

He said, “A notorious kidnapping syndicate sent a ‘hand-written’ note to the management of a private university institution, in Oyo town wherein they threatened to abduct three of its students should the

management fail to pay up (N10,000,000) ten million naira within a stipulated period.

“Consequent upon the above, discreet forensic based investigations were carried out and this led to the arrest of one Azeez Mufutau ‘M’ whose phone numbers were inscribed on the ‘hand-written notes’ sent to both the school management and the bank.

“Upon questioning, the

suspect confirmed that the phone number on the note was his but denied being the author of the document.

“The investigation further led to the arrest of one Olarinde Adekunle ‘M’ age 37 who confessed to being the author the hand-written notes under scrutiny and added that Azeez Mufutau was used as a decoy for the purpose of concealing his direct involvement.”

BEDC’s MD in police net for alleged threat to life, illegal trespass

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

Managing Director of Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC), Mrs Funke Osibudu, has been allegedly arrested by a team of Special Tactical Squad, Force Headquarters Abuja for alleged threat to life and trespass.

She was whisked away on Monday from the Headquarters of BEDC in Benin city after initial resistance by staff members which led to destruction of some property.

It was gathered that Mrs Osibudu was taken

to Edo State police headquarters.

It was reported in some media (not The Trumpet) that Osibudu’s arrest was done by the Federal Government to enforce change of the management and board of the company.

Recall that the FG had on July 2022 reconstituted the boards of five power distribution companies including BEDC and those of Kano, Kaduna, Ibadan and Port Harcourt.

However, there has been alleged resistance by the BEDC management led by Osibudu against takeover by the Federal Government’s newly reconstituted board.

BEDC had argued that on July 8, 2022, it obtained an Interim Order of the Federal High Court in an attempt to halt the board’s reconstitution process. But Director-General (DG) of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), Mr Alex Okoh, who is representing the Federal government, explained in a statement that the order was obtained after the new boards had been reconstituted on July 5, 2022.

The reconstitution of the boards of the five DisCos arose following poor performances of the DisCos in electricity supply to their respective franchise areas and their

inability to repay the loans obtained to acquire majority stakes in the DisCos in furtherance of the 2013 privatisation exercise.

Contacted by The Trumpet, the Public Relations Officer of BEDC, Mr Ibe Odoh, said the arrest of the company’s MD by security personnel has nothing to do with the ongoing board reconstitution saga.

Odoh said the arrest followed a petition by one Mr Henry Ajagbawa over allegations of threat to life and illegal trespass by the company.

“There has been this issue of Board dissolution and reconstitution, which

BEDC has obtained a court injunction on and everybody is aware of this. “However, yesterday (Monday) uniformed men came to the office, they shot radically into the air, manhandling staff that they were looking for the MD.

“The MD obliged and followed them to the police station. On getting there, the police said there was a petition by one Mr Henry Ajagbawa of illegal trespass by BEDC property and threat to life.”

Odoh added that Mrs Osibudu was released immediately while stressing that her arrest was not in connection with the FG’s reconstituted board.



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1 x 2	12,448.80	13,382.46	1 x 2	11,294.45	12,141.54	1 x 2	9,174.94	9,863.07	1 x 2	7,573.97	8,142.02	
2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
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	
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02	
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61	
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13	
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67	
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62	8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48	8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05	7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18	
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80	
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41	
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	269,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91	
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72	
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84				
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79				
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50				
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79				
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Centre Spread (HP)	1,017,063.80	1,093,343.59	Back Page 10x6	5,320,000.00	5,782,750.00
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Page 2 (Full Page)	1,420,250.00	1,526,768.75	ROP (Strip) 2x6 Colour	266,000.00	285,950.00
Page 3 (Full Page)	1,311,000.00	1,409,325.00	ROP (Strip) 2.6 (B/W)	717,000.00	768,825.00
Page 4 (Full Page)	1,187,500.00	1,276,562.50	3x6 Front Page	1,140,000.00	1,225,500.00
Page 5 (Full Page)	1,064,000.00	1,143,800.00	2x6 Under Mast Head	3,990,000.00	4,289,250.00
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RSA active funds rise in Q1 2022

Active funds in the Retirement Savings Account (RSA) within the age bracket of active pension contributors' and categorised into different age brackets in ascending order, witnessed higher returns in the first quarter of 2022.

A report of the National Pension Commission (PenCom) revealed that the average yearly rates on RSA funds I, II, III and V were 10.88 per cent, 10.29 per cent, 10.13 per cent and 9.13 per cent respectively.

According to the report, the performance was higher than the average rate of returns, which earlier peaked at 9.21 per cent, 10.05 per cent, 9.95 per cent and 8.00 per cent, as recorded by the respective funds in Q4 2021.

PenCom explained that the facts behind the performance of Q1 2022 and the higher performance of the RSA active funds in Q1 2022 were due to dividends recovered and appreciation in the respective funds during the first quarter spanning January, February and March 2022 when compared to the last quarter of 2021.

Again, Naira falls, exchanges for N430 to \$1 at I&E window

The Naira further depreciated against the dollar during the beginning of the week at the Investors and Exporters (I&E) window, as it exchanged for N430 on Monday, August 15, 2022 and N431 on Tuesday, August 16, 2022.

The figure represented a decrease of 0.09 per cent compared with the N429 it exchanged for the dollar on Friday, August 12, 2022, even as the open indicative rate closed at N429.70 to the dollar on Monday.

An exchange rate of N444 to the dollar was the highest rate recorded within the day trading before it settled at N430, while the naira sold for as low as N417 to the dollar during the day's trading.

Also, a total of 134.30 million deals were traded in foreign exchange (forex) at the official investors and exported window on Monday, while The Trumpet checks on Monday and Tuesday at parallel market locations at Ikorodu and Allen Avenue in Ikeja, Lagos, showed that the naira sold for between N630 and N645 to the dollar, depending on the location and seller.

FG unveils committee on review of workers payroll systems, TSA

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Federal Government has inaugurated a committee tasked with reviewing the contentious Integrated Payroll and Personal Information System Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) and the Treasury Single Account (TSA) to address irregularities and block all leakages.

Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami, disclosed this while inaugurating the Presidential Steering Committee on behalf of President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja.

Pantami, who is expected to chair the committee, said the systems have technical challenges, which needed to be corrected, pointing out that the committee's mandate will be to proffer solutions to the possible leakages in the systems unscrupulous elements were exploiting to divert public funds.

"President Buhari has mandated the technical committee through a letter requesting his approval to review some of the technical processes and systems deployed in government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

"It will serve as the Presiden-

tial Committee with the mandate of ensuring review of the systems and the challenges and weaknesses. The committee will advise the President on how to improve the systems, especially if there are leakages being exploited by corrupt persons.

"The issue came about on July 19, 2022 when we had a meeting with the President along with other ministries where some technical issues and some challenges were discussed," he said.

The minister recalled that the process of deploying the Integrated Payment Platform Integrated System (IPPIIS) commenced in 2012, while the TSA commenced in 2015.

Pantami further explained that at the time they were deployed, provision of section A of the National Integrated Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Act 2006 of setting the standardisation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) deployment in public institutions was not followed.

"The three systems were not subjected to government certification and clearance of Information Technology Project, as encouraged by law and other government policies.

"However, in spite of that,

their deployment has recorded several achievements. For example, based on the report from relevant institutions, the IPPIIS saved N120 billion, while the TSA saved over N10 trillion for the government," he said.

He noted that the records showed that the government had recorded some gains particularly in the recent allegations on the system by people who siphoned money, adding: "Because of this, we must identified the challenges and see how the systems can be enhanced technically to consolidate the gains achieved so far and improve on them to achieve more results.

"Looking at its mandate, NITDA will serve as the secretariat. The approval and the directive have specified that all government institutions that manage the three systems should give unrestrained access to the committee to ensure strong recommendations for approval."

The minister warned that any institution that failed to give access would be reported to President Buhari and thereafter sanctioned, stressing that the committee, which would be supervised by the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, as well as other relevant government institutions will sanitise the



Prof. Isa Pantami

systems against manipulation and corrupt tendencies.

Members of the committee include NITDA, Galaxy Backbone, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Office of the Head of Service of the Federation and the National Salaries, Wages and Income Commission (NSWIC), the Bureau of Public Service and Reformation (BPSR) and the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy.

NNPC, IOCs sign deal to boost crude oil production

Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited and some International Oil Companies (IOCs) have signed an agreement to ensure the production of about 10 billion barrels of crude oil and generate over \$500 billion revenue to all partners.

NNPC officials and their counterparts from the IOCs, including Shell, Chevron, Texaco, Sinopec, Sapetro, ESSO, Exploration and Production

Nigeria Limited, among others, renewed their agreements in five Oil Mining Leases (OMLs) namely: OMLs 128, 130, 132, 133 and 138.

The agreement renewed by the parties were production sharing contracts as well as Dispute Resolution Agreements, among others at a signing ceremony held at the Abuja headquarters of the NNPC.

Speaking at the event, the

Group General Manager, National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS), Bala Wunti, said: "Cumulatively, we hope to produce and monetise over 10 billion barrels of crude oil with the signatories we had today and this is by no means will give significant revenue to all the parties. We expect over \$500 billion revenue for all the stakeholders."

Earlier, Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NNPC, Mele Kyari, explained that the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 gave NNPC the legal backing to renegotiate all its existing agreements in conformity with the provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) within a year.

Section 311 (2) of the PIA, which became law on August 16, 2021 after it was signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari, stipulates that new agreements under new terms will be signed between NNPC, as concessionaire and its contracting partners as of August 15, 2022.

Kyari noted that the provision paved the way for the resolution of lingering disputes which cre-

ated investment uncertainty and stifled new investments in the new investments in the nation's deep offshore assets.

He said to achieve the objectives, NNPC leveraged the near end-term of the agreement, adding that negotiation was currently ongoing to ensure that the contractors work towards trading the past for the future.

"The agreement would provide several benefits, such as improved long-term relationship with contractors, elimination of contractual ambiguities, especially in relation to gas terms, enablement of yearly contract renewal among others.

"Signing the new agreement is a key milestone achievement of NNPC aimed at ultimately stimulating investments and unlocking opportunities in the upstream sector of the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

The execution of the NNPC and IOCs collaboration will deepen investments, drive development of the company's resources and ensure that the NNPC's mandate of ensuring availability and accessibility of energy sources in the country.



Mele Kyari

SON tasks engineers on adherence to quality standards

Director-General (DG) of Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Mallam Farouk Salim, has charged engineers to ensure strict adherence to quality standards to boost the nation's economy.

Salim gave the charge at the 30th General Assembly of the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) in Abuja in a paper titled: Sustainable Codes And Standards In Engineering Practice In Nigeria.

He said all hands should be on deck to tackle the menace of substandard products and services in the country, stressing that all facets of life are guided by standards and code of ethics, and as such the panacea for all the issues facing the country lies with adherence to ethics and standards.

Salim, who acknowledged the several feats engineering had made in the world, which allowed mankind to achieve great exploits ranging from reusable rockets to surgical processes, described standards application as tools, protocols and instructions that have to be adhered to for proper functioning of life.

He pointed out that the absence of standards application would result in continuous decline in the quality of products, safety, lifespan, effectiveness and service delivery.

Also speaking, President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Tasiu Sa'ad Gidari-Wudil, commended the SON for its ongoing work in the education sector and restated the need for inclusion of standards in school curriculum at the tertiary level.

Wudil said including standards in university curriculum would further help in the application of standards to our day-to-day activities, adding that it would also increase awareness, ensure patriotism and a culture of fellowship among Nigerians on the importance of standards and their role in quality and sustainable development.



Farouk Salim

DBN to begin entrepreneurship training, funding for MSMEs development

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN) has declared that it has concluded plans to boost Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through a capacity building and training programme for financial institutions in the country.

It explained that the programme, which is one of its core mandates, will also target provision of access to finance for MSMEs and partial credit guarantee to participating financial institutions on a market conformity basis to enable them to lend to small businesses.

Specifically, the development finance institution said it was committed to building capacity of Nigerian MSMEs to enable them to formally grow and become bankable to easily access available credit.

Commenting on the initiative, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of the bank, Tony Okpanachi, said part of DBN's role is to partner with financial institutions and collaborate with them to better provide facilities for MSMEs.

He explained that in most cases, the bank also offers technical assistance programmes to financial institutions to enhance their lending capacity to MSMEs.

His words: "In the short-term, we plan to strengthen our catalytic role in the Nigerian economy by expanding our reach to more MSMEs in underserved regions, such as crisis impacted areas and enhancing development impact in key areas such as women and youth-owned enterprises, startups and first time borrowers.

"We will continue to provide capacity building to MSMEs and

technical assistance to participating financial institutions and also strengthen their capacity to MSMEs. In the medium-term, we plan to complete the digital transformation efforts currently underway in the banking sector and expand our channels of information dissemination to MSMEs, which speaks to our drive for increased collaboration with other partners within the space.

"In the long-term, our focus is for DBN to be recognised locally and internationally, as the foremost institution that drives the growth and sustainability of the Nigerian economy through the provision of financial support for MSMEs."

While explaining the structured entrepreneurship training to the Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN) executive, who visited the Lagos Office of the bank, Head of Corporate Services, Idris Saliu, said DBN would be deploying its Learning Management System (LMS), a free learning portal with carefully planned courses for the programme.

"The portal is open to all Nigerian MSMEs that are interested in acquiring the right knowledge needed to succeed in doing businesses in Nigeria," he said, adding that DBN will select the best 200 businesses to attend practical training in Lagos and Abuja.

He pointed out that the physical session would be an opportunity for businesses to practically learn important success principles for their businesses, as well as discuss and get business support in specific areas of need.

He further explained that all businesses will be eligible

to apply for the capacity building programme, adding: "All applications must be submitted online through the application portal. Interested businesses must register on the DBN BizAid Learning Management Platform and obtain an average score of 70 per cent."

According to the bank's spokesman, the courses that must be completed are Accounting and Bookkeeping, Sustainability for MSMEs, Marketing and Sales, Techniques, as well as Credit Management and Access to Finance.

In an earlier statement DBN noted that all businesses that have completed the course by September 2023 would receive an email with a link to apply for the practical training upon submission of the application form and email that will be

sent to the applicants within 24 hours.

"Applicants will be screened and shortlisted after the close of the application based on the eligibility criteria, selection will be done through the defined selection criteria from the pool of shortlisted applications and communication with successful applicants shall be contacted through the email addresses provided or a call to the telephone number provided on the application form," he explained.

On eligibility criteria, the bank specified that business owners must be profit-oriented in any sector, must be a Nigerian or legal resident in the country, must be 18 years and above, and must be available to commit to the training schedule once accepted.

It further stated that bankability-level and readiness to upscale their businesses, feasibility and sustainability of the business model, scalability or demonstrated potential for growth of the business to create jobs, are important criteria for selection.

DBN, a wholly development finance institution was set up to providing finance for MSMEs through Participating Financial Intermediaries (PFIs), which became the face of DBN since the bank could not interface directly with the end borrowers, an arrangement that limits the level of knowledge the end-borrowers should have about the institution.

The bank is committed to continued acceleration of its awareness campaign and stakeholders' engagement to drive MSMEs access to finance and deliver the needed development impact in all sectors of the economy.



Tony Okpanachi

Nigeria, India reach accord to boost trade

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

India's High Commissioner to Nigeria, Gangadharan Balasubramanian, says New Delhi and Abuja are moving to strengthen ties from traditional business cooperation to new areas.

Balasubramanian who made the assurances during the commemoration of India's 76th Independence Day on Monday in Abuja said that the new areas of cooperation will include Fintech, artificial intelligence, scientific development and solar energy. He noted that this will further strengthen the bilateral ties between both countries.

The High Commissioner

noted that the trade and economic relations between India and Nigeria have been very strong, with over 135 Indian companies operating in various sectors, from agricultural products to petroleum products and from pharmaceuticals to textiles, among other sectors.

"So, there is a large possibility of increasing this trade and economic cooperation between our two countries," he said, adding that since 1958 when the two countries established diplomatic ties, their relationship had remained one of the best.

"Since 1958 our relationship has developed in various ways almost in all places. Human

capacity development is one of the most important areas we are concentrating on in Nigeria," he stressed.

Maintaining that the volume of trade between both countries has increased after the COVID-19 pandemic, he disclosed that the trade volume between India and Nigeria reached \$14.95 billion in 2021, adding that the trade volume further increased substantially after the COVID-19 pandemic on both sides.

"India is a major importer of crude oil from Nigeria, as it imports about \$10 billion worth of oil from Nigeria. India also exports several items such as agricultural,

petroleum, pharmaceutical and scientific products, among others to Nigeria and it has been a win-win situation for both countries," he stated.

Balasubramanian said his country was happy with assistance and cooperation of successive Nigerian governments, adding that he could boldly say that the relationship between the two countries remains very cordial.

Also disclosing that both countries have established military cooperation and training of military personnel, he maintained that India would be happy to continue its partnership and cooperation with Nigeria going forward.

FBN Insurance Brokers leverage technology, strategic partnerships for better customer experience

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

FBN Insurance Brokers Limited, a subsidiary of FBN Holdings Plc has restated its commitment to leverage technology and strategic partnerships for greater value creation and enhanced customer experience.

The brokerage firm says it has remained driven by its vision to be the leading provider of insurance brokerage and advisory services in Nigeria, and so has completely automated its key processes in order to guarantee a seamless experience for her customers.

Daniel Braie is MD/CEO of Linkage Assurance while Olumide Ibadapo is MD/CEO of FBN Insurance Brokers

Ibadapo, said: "We continue to explore and firm up business partnerships within and outside the country to increase the size and quality of our insurance and risk management offerings to both our existing and potential clients.

Ibadapo, who spoke during an interview with journalists in Lagos, said FBN Insurance Brokers has recorded giant strides in the last one year in the areas of customer experience, strategic partnerships and as digital transformation, adding: "We are currently engaging underwriters with a view of coming up with appropriate bundles of product that give our customers the much-needed cover(s) with a high degree of flexibility especially in terms of coverage."

He explained that on the international front, the company had strengthened its partnership with major entities like Howden One, TRM and BUPA International, which it said, had positioned the company to provide bespoke insurance solutions to our clients' emerging risks.

"At FBN Insurance Brokers, we have created a digital roadmap that would see us realise our goal of completely automating our business processes while leveraging on the best technology available.

"On the customer front, we intend to use data-driven approach to better understand their needs, preferences and possible challenges. Doing this will help us to proffer the right insurance solutions, while providing useful insights to our underwriting partners for products development.

"We are also currently developing a digital solution that would make insurance solutions easily available to the public. This platform when operational will improve the customer's experience end to end from policy purchase to claims management," he stated.

He said to harness the potentials that lie fallow in the Nigerian insurance industry, FBN Insurance Brokers goal is to fully transition into a digital outfit, while delivering bespoke risk advisory and management solutions to the retail, corporate and public sector segments of our economy to positively impact its customers experience at all touch points.

"We plan to consolidate on our existing network of partners while also striking new partnerships with the aim of providing a comprehensive array of solutions to our customers while also exploring new lines of businesses.

"We also plan to continue to acquire and develop capacities and competencies, including human capital development that will give a competitive advantage in the insurance brokerage sub-sector. This will enable us to deliver on our promise of top-notch risk advisory services to our esteemed customers," he added.

NAICOM to shut down underperforming insurance firms

•Market sanitisation, recapitalisation top agenda

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

If feelers from the industry regulator are anything to go by, the newly constituted

board of the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) will soon close down non-performing underwriting companies in the sector.

Chairman, board of NAICOM, Dr. Abubakar Sani, gave the hint when he and members of the board visited the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed in Abuja on Monday.

Sani specifically intimated the minister of plans to carry out an exercise aimed at sanitising the country's insurance industry, stressing that enforcement of the code of ethics for companies in the sector was already underway.

"We shall enforce the professional code of ethics among the insurance entities and strengthen their corporate governance, which the board believes, will help to sanitise the market.

"The board of NAICOM will in due course revisit the issue of recapitalisation of the insurance industry and will clean up its acts with the enforcement of code

or ethics of insurance profession and practice, as well as code of good corporate governance in companies.

As such, the board is working on the best way to sanitise the market and will be closing down companies that are not measuring up to expectation," he said.

Speaking, Ahmed charged the board and management of NAICOM to develop and implement policies that would strengthen the insurance sector and reposition the industry to enhance its contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the economy.

She, however, urged the board to be mindful of existing guidelines, regulations and circular that guide the operations and conduct of governing boards of Federal Government agencies and commissions and strictly adhere to them.

"The initiative to embark on this visit barely two months after your inauguration demonstrates your sense of purpose and desire to work closely with the ministry towards realising NAICOM's mandate.

"During your inauguration,

I called your attention to some issues of interests and concerns that require urgent attention in the insurance industry. The visit, therefore, affords me another opportunity to congratulate you again on your inauguration and inform you that government has a very high expectation of this board.

"You must build on the successes of the immediate past board and in this regard, I restate some of the issues and remind you of your role as chairman and members of the board of NAICOM," she said.

The board, which also comprises the management should develop and implement policies aimed at strengthening the insurance sector and reposition the industry to enhance its contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the economy.

"It is utmost importance for the new board and the management of NAICOM to work harmoniously together to actualise the mandate of the commission. The board has to develop strategies to systematically build the capacity of members through workshop, seminars, study, tours



Dr. Abubakar Sani

and other ways to enable effective contribution towards the growth of the industry, especially as some members were not drawn from the insurance sector.

"Members to note that there are guidelines, regulations and circulars that guide the operation and conduct of governing boards of Federal Government agencies and commissions," she stated.

Linkage Assurance grows profit to N1.465b in first half of 2022

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

In spite the challenging business environment, Linkage Assurance Plc has delivered strong performance and returned to profitability in the first half of 2022.

In a statement to the Nigerian Stock Exchange and shareholders on the unaudited result for the second quarter ended June 30, 2022 it recorded a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of N1.465 billion from a negative position of N2.111 billion in the corresponding period of last year.

Its Profit After Tax (PAT) also closed at N1.392 billion at the end of June 2022, as against N2.090 billion loss it recorded during the same period in 2021.

In a statement jointly signed by Chairman of the Board, Chief Joshua B. Fumudoh, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO), Daniel Braie and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Emmanuel Otitolaiye, Linkage



Daniel Braie

Assurance Plc recorded a written gross premium of N8.303 billion in the period from N6.952 billion in the previous year.

During the period, the company also recorded a net underwriting

income of N3.515 billion from N2.703 billion in 2021, while the underwriting profit stood at N231.28 million from a loss position of N1.027 billion.

The company attributed the growth in underwriting profit to quality risks management and prudence in risks selection, even as it continued to meet its claims obligation promptly to its customers.

It also paid N1.422 billion on claims to its customers that suffered one loss or the other during the half year period, from N3.989 billion the previous period.

Braie, who told shareholders at its last Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos that the company was going in a positive direction, as shown in its quarter by quarter performance in the current year, assured that management was doing everything possible to ensure that its underwriting and risks management strategies were adequately deployed to achieve

a healthy and stronger bottom line at year end.

Meanwhile, Linkage Assurance Plc's total assets continues on its robust mood, standing at N44.508 billion at the end of half year, from N38.71 billion in 2021, indicating a growth of 14.98 per cent.

Management of Linkage says it will continue to refine its strategy in line with the political, economic, sociological and technological changes in the industry particularly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business landscape.

"We will also continue to develop innovative products, alternative channels of distributions and strategic initiatives that will enable us achieve our corporate goals and objectives. With a medium-to-long term perspective, we believe we will benefit from the growth, as a result of the initiatives," Braie said.

FG, states asked to professionalize protocol practice in Nigeria

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

An expert in global best practices for Protocol management, Julius Lambert Nyananyo, has canvassed professionalization of protocol practice in Nigeria.

He stated this in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State during an interview saying professionalism in the protocol field still lacks in the country.

Nyananyo, who is Deputy Director and Head, Protocol and Information with the Bayelsa State Judiciary noted that unlike other countries of the world, Nigeria was far from professionalising protocol management.

He hinted that while protocol management continued to develop

in other climes, there was the need not to make the profession an all comer affairs in Nigeria and urged the federal and states governments to make enabling laws that would ensure professionalism in protocol management, just as he restated that successive administrations in the country have intended to professionalise protocol, but never made headway in their quest to ensure professionalism of protocol management.

According to Nyananyo, who the World Protocol Magazine (WPM) said has had over 20 years of experience as a protocol professional, the order of precedence at events in Nigeria had been bastardised on

several occasions.

He cited instances where some superior officers in the states and federal governments were acknowledged after the official acknowledgement of their supposed subordinates due to the absence of a law that regulates protocol practice in the country.

"The prospects and usefulness of Protocol management today cannot be over-emphasised. Nigeria as a developing country is expected to observe the rules in diplomatic engagements, investments promotion, events management and others. The concept of protocol profession has developed a vast literature among scholars, diplomats and individuals, who have contributed to the field

of study.

"Professionalism is the conduct, aims or qualities that characterise or mark a profession or a professional person and defines 'profession' as a calling that requires specialised knowledge and often long intensive academic preparation."

Meanwhile, Nyananyo cited Chapter 8, Section 57 (2) of the Ghanaian Constitution in which had professionalised protocol management, saying that part of the Ghanaian organic law covers the order of precedence and that in the United States of America, the State Chief of protocol goes through congressional clearance before his appointment by the President.



Magic entertainment can add to tourism -Mccaulay

Ono Mccaulay, CEO of Hype Media, is a name that has recurred severally in the entertainment space as well as music career of a lot of A-list Nigerian artistes. He is at present pushing MAGIC ENTERTAINMENT. He spoke with OMONTYI ALLI on the need to revamp magic as a form of entertainment, his work with teenage sensation Babs Cardini among others.

Q: You have worked with some of the biggest musicians in Nigeria. How has the experience been?

A: It's been nice, but that story doesn't start without my appreciating God and the likes of Efe Omorogbe, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Now Music which is home to 2Baba. Also, my appreciation goes to both Ossy Achievas, Peter Cole, Audu Maikori and some other big names in the industry. I have been in the entertainment industry for quite a while, ultimately close to 15 or 16 years. I started off being an in-house Public Relations expert for Hypertek Records and Now Music. I worked with some of Nigeria's biggest music brands including 2Baba. With the help of Efe Omorogbe, I was also able to gain ground in the talent management angle. Aside from 2Baba, I worked with other celebrities including Timi Dakolo, right after he left the Idols West Africa competition. My career as a talent manager also saw me working with Terry G, Terry the Rapman and several other stars. Efe Omorogbe gave me the opportunity to do my own things and that was where my path and that of Achievas Entertainment and Solidstar crossed. I worked with the platform as a talent manager and manager for Achievas Entertainment which was then home to Solidstar.

Q: You were also out of circulation for a while. Tell us about that.

A: As you said, I went on a break. I realized that I had made a name in the music industry and it was time to take a break of a sort, a breather to think and see what more I could

do to add to my name, to add to the achievements I had already recorded in the industry. During the course of my sojourn, I was able to talk to people, stakeholders, experts and I noticed that there was an aspect of the entertainment industry that was still lacking and that is magic as a form of entertainment. In the past, we had the likes of late Professor Peller, God bless his soul. He made the art to be very revered, but as soon as he died, the art died with him. It has only existed on a very low key level.

Q: You were also in the United Kingdom for a while; was that also about finding a new path in entertainment?

A: Though I was sick for a while, it was also an opportunity to look inwards and find something missing in the entertainment industry. I discovered that magic if taken seriously and brought to light again could actually be great and an addition to the already great Nigerian music industry. So, I did my research, sought out the names of magicians in Nigeria. Obviously, I discovered a lot of people, but I settled for a young boy who is fast growing in the country.

Q: Can you tell us about him?

A: His name is Babatunde, he is also known as Babs Cardini. I reached out to him and witnessed what he could do first hand. I was so excited, he had the looks, the charisma, the talent, and finesse. I told him what I wanted to achieve and he told me about his dreams. As soon as he opened his mouth, it was obvious we were going to do good things together, we

decided that we were going to bring back the glory days of magic as a form of entertainment in Nigeria. As the days went on, I did my things, did plug-in here and there, things to make the package a total success.

Q: Babs Cardini had a positive review last year and is still going on strong; was that your effort?

A: The positive review came because he was easily accepted from the international scene and not Nigeria. He cut his teeth into the industry from the international platform; we did our thing and reached out to the Nigerian people. Reuters, SABC reached out to us and even BBC, I am not talking about BBC Africa. They were shocked to find out that Babs Cardini was African and Nigerian, they doubted that he was not an international act, but I told them that he didn't even have travel experience at all. The guys who shot the BBC interview said that Cardini was at the same level as what they had seen in America and Europe. I didn't think much about the impact of the story, even when we got a call that he was being featured on BBC World News. Even at that level, it still didn't sink at first until they did a repeat broadcast and a spot-on on Africa. As soon as that hit the shelves, it became a frenzy, things went crazy and people in Nigeria started calling us. We had features with Reuters, CGTN and it has been on and on like that. We have been growing the brand. His latest endorsement is with a Pan-African footwear brand, Keexs.

Q: What is Cardini's acceptability

level?

A: His acceptability has been popular among the elite, names that you only get to read about in the papers. If you look at their age and you trace it back, you will find out that they witnessed late Professor Peller, so they knew what the art was. Seeing something like that in this generation, this modern era has been impressive for them. The calls have been coming because they know what Cardini can do; he doesn't repeat the same trick or illusion. That is the stuff that he is made of.

Q: Do you have plans for a magic show soon?

A: That is our ultimate plan. Making the name and craft to be accepted which is done. We are in talks with corporate partners and we will soon be starting a magic series where people can sit down and watch at home. We are also looking at organising the first of its kind magic concert.

Q: In Nigeria, the Pellers are associated with magic. What relationship does Cardini have with them?

A: No matter what you do in life, you have to give respect to who it's due. Cardini is the in-thing in magic now, but we need to remember that it was somebody before him. We reached out and they accepted us, we have had good words from people like Honourable Shina Peller who we have a personal relationship with. So, everything we want to do on a major scale, we will always reach out to them because that name is revered as far as magic in Nigeria is concerned.

Tourism

Celebrating rich Eyo Festival of Lagosians

Eyo Festival, otherwise known as the Adamu Orisha Play, is a Yoruba and unique to Lagos, Nigeria. In modern times, it is presented by the people of the city as a tourist event and, due to its history, is traditionally performed on Lagos Island.

Background

Lagos is a very popular city that almost everybody hears about. The former capital city of Nigeria, and presently the commercial capital of Nigeria, is popularly called the "Centre of Excellence." The city, called Lagos is in Lagos State, South West Nigeria. Ikeja is the state capital.

Lagos city is divided or separated by a Lagoon. Thus, it is in to two parts: the Lagos Island and the Lagos Mainland. The indigenes of Lagos are mostly domiciled in Lagos Island, known also as, Isale Eko. It is these indigenes, who celebrate the Eyo festival, a cultural and traditional masquerade display, which emerges from the Iga (palace) of the Oba or any of his cabinet members.

The Eyo Festival

The Eyo is the masquerade that comes out only in Lagos Island. It is believed to represent the spirits of the ancestors. The Eyo festival may be held in honour of a chief or an elder of a ruling family or an Oba, who had died. It may also be held when a new head of an Iga (palace) or a new Oba is installed. With the advent of westernization and modernization, a governor or a political leader may also request that the festival be organized to add colour to an occasion for a fee. Eyo is usually held on a Saturday.

Each Eyo comes out of an Iga (palace) of a ruling family in the morning and heads for the shrine (Agodo). It is robed from head to toe in white flowing cloth. The white flowing costume consists of an 'agbada' (the top robe), and the 'aropale' (the bottom wrap around). No part of the person carrying the Eyo is expected to be seen. The Eyo also wears an 'Akete' a hat that bears the colors and shield of the Iga from which he comes. An Eyo may tie ribbons in his Iga's colors to the Opambata (palm branch) that he carries. An Iga's Eyo may have up to 50 to 100 or more members. Each person carrying a robe as Eyo must pay a fee for the privilege. This fee is paid to the Iga – ruling house, whose colors and Akete the Eyo wears.

Only adult males may robe as Eyo; but sometimes, there may be a child Eyo in a group. The sons and daughters and wives, as well as friends and neighbours of the Iga follow the Eyo on a parade from one end of Lagos Island to



the other. The route of each Eyo goes from the Iga, where the Iga's Eyo leave en masse, and then on to the Agodo – the shrine of the Orisa Eyo. After this, the Eyo may go anywhere on Lagos Island their feet can carry them, all the way from Ebute Éro to Obalende, via Oke Popo, Campus, Lafiaji and all neighbourhoods the Eyo's whims may carry him. In fact, an Eyo may easily cover 20 to 30 kilometres on that day. The crowd of supporters following the Eyo does not wear white robes

Imagine the spectacle of thousands of white robed figures in colourful hats, flowing ribbons, men women and children milling about the streets singing and dancing. The Lagos Eyo gives good meaning to the words, festival and spectacle.

The only Eyo that is not part of a group is the most senior Eyo-Adimu Orisa. This Eyo's nose is forever running, hence, the name Adimu. Only a very old and spiritually advanced male can robe as the Adimu. It is the last Eyo to leave the "agodo."

The Eyo, when it encounters people, greets them with the phrase, "E sunrunkunrun, we ma jagbon die!" meaning, "Don't fear anything, have a taste of the palm tree," and taps the individual on the shoulders with the "opambata." When he is given money, he will pray for the person and recite the praise song of his Iga. The phrase, "e sunrunkunrun, we ma jagbon die!" is in the Ijebu dialect of Yoruba. It was rendered as a wedding present when the Oba of Lagos married an Ijebu princess.

It is however, a taboo to either wear the Eyo costume overnight or cross any body of water, such as the Lagoon, Rivers, and so on.

Significance

The Eyo festival is organized under the auspices of the Yoruba tradition, as well as social organizations or clubs. It is an outlet used to showcase the culture of the Isale Eko people, since it can be organized for special occasions apart from the death of prominent chiefs, elders, or installation of a new Oba. It can

be used to entertain at special state functions or occasions.

Groups

- The Adimu (Orisa baba Nla Mila)
- Okanlaba Ekun (Alakete pupa), the Olopa Eyo
- Eyo Orisa Oniko (Abara yewu, egun onigemo)
- Eyo Orisa Ologede (Olugbani)
- Eyo Orisa Angere (Agere Mo Lokun)

Taboo

Items and activities prohibited at the festival are Okada (motorcycles, bicycles, sandals and smoking. Others are

- Suku - hairstyle that is popular among the Yorubas, one that has the hair converge at the middle, then shoot upward, before tipping downward.

- Female with head tie or head gear or any covering of the head

- male with cap of any kind

The masquerades are known to beat people who use any of the prohibited items at sight with their staffs.

Foodies

Five steps to make Afang soup

One pride of natives of Akwa Ibom and Cross River is their local dish, Afang soup. A celebration for them is not complete without this dish. Also peculiar is the use of periwinkles. Depending on your preference, you can serve it with rice or any swallow of your choice.

Ingredients

- 4 handfuls Okazi or Afang leaves, ground
- 2 handfuls water leaves, sliced
- 1 large dry fish
- 1 large stockfish
- 1kg assorted meat
- 4 tbsp crayfish
- 2 cups palm oil
- 5 pieces of fresh yellow pepper
- 5 stock cubes
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 cups of water
- 1 cup of periwinkles, washed
- Salt to taste

Method

Place your assorted meat, stockfish, dry fish and two cups of water into a pot. Add one onion, three stock cubes and salt to taste. Cook until soft.

When the meat water is almost dry, add the water leaves, leave to cook for 3 minutes. (Tip: No need to put in more water because water leaves produce a lot of water on their own.)

Put the periwinkles, ground crayfish and five blended yellow pepper, let that cook for another three minutes.

Add your ground Afang or Okazi leaves and let cook for two minutes. Lastly, add palm oil and leave to simmer for about two minutes.

Serve hot with your preferred staple food.



Unique Afro-Caribbean food line to open in Scotland

Gidi Grill is an exciting West African and Caribbean grilled food fusion restaurant founded in Dundee. It fuses the best spices,

herbs and sauces marinated over freshly cooked prime meat cuts.

The new flagship restaurant is opening

in Aberdeen September 2022. Expect big things!

www.Instagram.com/gidi_grill



Founders of Gidi Grill, Mo and Eni Adebisi





Cincinnati Masters: Murray defeats Wawrinka, faces Norrie in second round

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

Former world No 1 Andy Murray defeated a familiar foe Stan Wawrinka in the first round of the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati to set up a match with world-ranked no 11 Cameron Norrie in the round of 32.

Murray, in the round of 64 against Swiss Wawrinka, claimed a victory after winning two in the three-set contest.

The 35-year-old, who has lost in five Australian Open finals, four of which are to Serbian Novak Djokovic, admitted that the contest with the Swiss which he won 7-6 (7-5) 4-6 6-4 was physically draining.

"The court is pretty lively when the weather is like this. Physically I feel tired," Murray said after the match.



The British tennis star, during the match, won the first set but unfortunately, lost the second set after he developed a muscle cramp.

However, highly spirited

to overcome Wawrinka's threats, Murray shook off the muscular setback to claim the victory.

He said, "I had some issues with cramp during

the match, the same as Washington, so that is something I need to get on top of.

"I tried to take the ball on a little more and finish points at the net. I wasn't that successful when I came up, but the intention was there.

"I was a little more offensive on the second-serve return. Last game I was just fighting, trying to find a way through," Murray continued.

The British tennis professional won three Grand Slam titles and will hope to rejuvenate winning a trophy since he last won in 2016.

Meanwhile, the clash between Murray and Norrie, in the second round of the Cincinnati Masters, will be the second time both tennis stars will be meeting in their career after the former defeated the latter 7-6(6) 6-7(4) 6-1 in Beijing 2019.

We'll do everything to qualify for FIBA 2023 World Cup, NBBF pledges

Names 15-man team for qualifiers

President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Engr Ahmadu Musa Kida, has assured Nigerians that the federation will do everything possible to ensure the country qualifies for the FIBA 2023 World Cup hosted by Australia.

Kida said Nigeria is amongst the best basketball sports nations in Africa which are supposed to be at the world cup, adding that the federation will provide all necessary support to see that it happens that way.

"We are one of the best teams in Africa, we have to be at the World Cup. As a federation, we will do everything within our power to deliver the World Cup ticket," said the NBBF President.

The federation helmsman appealed to all stakeholders and Nigerians to throw their solemn support for the Nigerian senior men's basketball team to qualify for the world cup.

Kida said, "We must all come together as Nigerians to support the team so that we can head the group before the final Qualifiers. The mood among the players and coaching staff and D'Tigers management team is high because the players are ready to make the country proud."

The federation named 15 players comprising 12 foreign-based and 3 home-based players to process the World Cup qualifiers in Abidjan next week.

Moreover, certain changes were made to the team, with five players, Emmanuel Omogbo, TK Edogi - Kolin, Michael Oriakhi, Victor Koko and Ikenna Ndugba, who played the third window qualifier in Kigali, Rwanda, dropped from the squad.

However, eight players including Josh Okogie (Phoenix Suns, NBA, USA), Olumiye Dimolu (Utah Jazz, NBA, USA), Ike Nwamu (BC Samara, Russia), Keith Omoerah (Jamtland, Sweden), Amanze Egezeke (Kataja Basket Club, Korisliiga, Finland), Abdul-Malik Abu (Oliver Wuerzburg, Basketball Bundesliga, Germany), Michael Oguine (Saint-Chamond, France), and John Mathias Iduh of Kano pillars, Nigeria, were made the 15-man cut.

Kida, defending the squad list released on Sunday in Lagos, added that the technical crew believes this crop of players can pick the qualifying ticket for Nigeria in Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire.

"All the players on the team are Nigerians representing the country. These are players that the technical crew believes can get the job done during

this window and we must give them our full support," clarified the NBBF President.

Following the fourth quarter of the FIBA 2023 World Cup qualifier scheduled from August 26 - 28 in Abidjan, there is every indication that head coach Mike Brown, who was unavailable to lead the team in the third qualifying series, will be on ground to spur the squad to top Group E.

However, in the course of leading its campaign for the world cup ticket in Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria will tackle host Cote D'Ivoire on 26 while rounding up the contests with Angola on the 28, a day after battling Guinea on the 27th.

The complete list of invited players :

POINT GUARDS:

- Michael Oguine - Saint-Chamond, France
- Uchenna Iroegbu - Free Agent
- Michael Okiki - Gombe Bulls, Nigeria

SHOOTING GUARDS:

- Josh Okogie - Phoenix Suns, NBA, USA
- Olumiye Dimolu "Miye Oni" - Utah Jazz, NBA, USA
- Ben Emelogu II - Avtdor Saratov, VTB United League, USA

SMALL FORWARDS:

- Ike Nwamu - BC Samara, Russia
- Keith Omoerah - Jamtland, Sweden
- Ibe Aguchi - Customs Nigeria
- Michael Gbinije - Oklahoma City Blue, NBA G League

POWER FORWARDS:

- Chimezie Metu - Sacramento Kings, NBA, USA
- Amanze Egezeke - Kataja Basket Club, Korisliiga, Finland
- John Mathias Iduh - Kano pillars, Nigeria

CENTER:

- Christian Mekowulu - Casademort, Zaragoza, Spain
- Abdul-Malik Abu - s.Oliver Wuerzburg, Basketball Bundesliga, Germany



'Rangers flop' Umar Sadiq close to becoming Almeria record sale

There is every indication that Almeria star Sadiq Umar will be switching to Villarreal this summer.

The former AS Roma striker has been a subject of transfer discussions for top European clubs that are eager to sign him this season.

However, one of such clubs that have gone beyond the confines of a wish, are the Yellow Submarine after being overwhelmed with the Nigeria international's performance last season which earned the Andalusian club promotion to Spain's top flight division. Also, Umar is fond of Villarreal and will welcome a move to unite with Unai Emery.

Last season in the second-tier division, Umar starred for Almeria, netting 18 times

to complement Rojiblanco's return to La Liga after 7 years away.

Umar's sudden rise in European football has continued to shock Rangers that regarded the star striker as a flop to cut short his loan spell at Ibrox. When at Ibrox, the star striker featured only four times for the Gers before moving to AC Perugia Calcio in Italy on loan.

Reportedly, Almeria valued Umar at €30 million and expect Villarreal to meet their target before its prized asset can be allowed to switch allegiance to Estadio de la Ceramica.

Moreover, Almeria CEO Mohamed El Assy, having completed the signing of midfielder Giovanni Lo Celso from Premier League side

Tottenham on Sunday, has turned his attention to Umar.

Recently in an interview, the in-form striker revealed how he was treated badly by Steven Gerrard who was then, the club's manager.

He said a time came when he was ostracised from the first team's dressing room with a directive to change with the kids.

Umar added that he was later banned from parking his car inside the sports centre and sometimes he would return from training sobbing.

"Suddenly I was told I couldn't use the first-team changing room anymore. I had to change with the kids and a few days later I was even banned from parking my car inside the sports centre," Sadiq told Sunday



Post.

In a twist of fate, the player who was once rejected at Rangers, processing several loan deals across Europe, is about to become the biggest sale in history for Almeria.

U17 Women's World Cup suffers setback as FIFA suspends Indian football body

The U17 FIFA Women's World Cup suffered a setback as the Bureau of the FIFA Council, in a unanimous decision, suspended the All India Football Federation (AIFF) with immediate effect for violating FIFA statutes over undue influence from third parties.

What this means is that India will not be able to participate in international tournaments and this also applies to clubs from the country that will be denied the right to participate in Asian tournaments.

In a statement on Tuesday, August 15, the world football governing body said they will rescind their decision should the order to usurp the powers of the AIFF Executive Committee

through the constitution of the committee of administrators is repealed.

"The suspension will be lifted once an order to set up a committee of administrators to assume the powers of the AIFF Executive Committee has been repealed and the AIFF administration regains full control of the AIFF's daily affairs," FIFA said.

AIFF, according to reports, has been in a state of chaos after serving former helmsman, Praful Patel, who has stayed in office for about 12 years without holding fresh elections, was removed by the court.

Following his removal, after the Supreme Court of India disbanded the AIFF, a three-man committee of administrators was tasked

■Bhutia condemns decision

to oversee football, amend the AIFF constitution and conduct fresh elections that have been pending for over 18 months.

However, FIFA, aware of what its decision has caused the U17 FIFA Women's World Cup scheduled from October 11 - 30, in India, added that they are assessing the next step to take regarding the hosting of the tournament.

"FIFA is assessing the next steps with regard to the tournament and will refer the matter to the Bureau of the Council if and when necessary," the world football body added.

Furthermore, FIFA revealed they are in

constant contact with India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and hopefully, a positive result will be achieved.

Meanwhile, former Indian international, Bhaichung Bhutia, condemned FIFA's decision against the Asian country saying it is very harsh.

He said that the directive the stakeholders, including the sports ministry, took which warranted FIFA's hammer was an opportunity to get India's football right.

Bhutia noted that it is vital for every stakeholder, federations, state associations, and sports ministry to work together to bring value to Indian football.

Victor Osimhen mocks racist chanting Hellas Verona's fans

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

Napoli striker Victor Osimhen celebrated his first goal of the season against Hellas Verona with a mocking display to taunt the home fans who hurled racist chants at him.

Osimhen through a corner flicked by Giovanni Di Lorenzo slid the ball into the far end of the post to hand Napoli the lead at Stadio Marcantonio Bentegodi after Kвича Kvaratskhelia's equaliser cancelled Kevin Lasagna's opener for Verona.

Immediately after the Napoli striker netted his goal, he silenced all racist taunts with a puckish gesture to shrug off any effect of the highly



condemnable, unethical behaviour of Verona's fans would have on him.

The in-form Osimhen, who is being considered by Paris Saint-Germain as next season's target during a discussion with Napoli's sporting director Cristiano Giuntoli in France recently, flicked the ball to Matteo Politano who sealed the 5-2 victory for Partenopei from

12 yards.

Meanwhile, Luciano Spalletti is pleased with his side's performance to have come from a goal down to thump Hellas Verona 5-2.

"We need time, in some situations we showed that we are still young, even if in the end we won the game quite comfortably," Spalletti said after the match.

Spalletti commended

Kvaratskhelia for his contribution but noted that the Georgian has not reached his full potential.

"Kvaratskhelia was too naive sometimes, but he is a complete player with an important technique. He scored an amazing goal, a header, not his best quality," he claimed.

"I was sure we would put in a great performance because I saw all the players interested and determined. Sometimes we must be more wicked and raise the rhythm, but the lads deserve the praise," Spalletti added.

Napoli started the season in superb form despite losing Kalidou Koulibaly to Chelsea, Lorenzo Insigne to MLS and three others this season, and will host AC Monza in their second Serie A game at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona on Sunday

U21 African V/ball: Nigeria beats Gambia, records second win

Nigeria's U21 men's volleyball team defeated Gambia 3-0 (25-21, 25-16, 25-15) to record their second consecutive win at the ongoing 2022 African U21 Men's Nation Volleyball Championship in Tunisia.

In the first set, Nigeria won 7 service points (29%), 18 receivers' points (82%), 1 ace, got 4 maximum points in a row, 4 service errors and 0 timeouts, winning by 25-21 points. Nigeria had a better outing in the second set with 12 service points (48%), 13 receivers' points (81%), 1 ace, got 4 maximum points in a row, 0 service errors and 0 timeouts, winning by 25-16 points.

In the final set, Nigeria recorded 1 ace, 5 maximum points in a row, 1 service error, 0 timeouts, 12 service points (50%) and 13 receivers' points (81%) to win 25-15.

Nigeria's Abdulquadri Jaiyeola recorded 19 points in the match against Gambia with 13 attacks, 3 blocks and 1 ace from service

Speaking after the match, the head coach of the Nigeria U21 Team, Sani Mohammed revealed that the team wants to finish top

of the group and stand a better chance of qualifying for the semi-finals.

Mohammed said the Gambians showed prospects before the game but Nigeria overpowered them in the second and third sets.

"This is a great result for the Nigeria U21 Men's team; we want to secure all the available points in the group stage," he said.

"I and the assistant coach, Suleiman Ajeigbe took our time to study the Gambians when they played against host Tunisia yesterday.

"The Gambian side are good but we are better," Mohammed continued.

"The goal is to finish first in Group A; Nigeria will either meet the Egyptian or Cameroonian U21 Men's teams. Any of the teams that come our way in the next round will be played with our last drop.

The boys are ready to make Nigeria proud and get one of the available tickets to the 2023 FIVB World Championship," Nigeria U21 coach added.

Nigeria will face Tunisia (host) on Wednesday at 6pm in their last group stage match.



Aiteo Cup: Heartland faults NFF resolution, seeks minister's intervention

Heartland FC of Owerri have faulted the resolution by Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to schedule a replay of the Aiteo Federation Cup quarter-finals for August 20 against Katsina United.

The club said they are not willing to go that route having defeated Katsina United earlier in the round of eight to proceed to the semi-final.

Following the above position by the Naze Millionaires, the management of the Owerri-based club forwarded a petition to the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, to vent their frustration over the nation's football governing body to reschedule a match they duly won.

In the petition forwarded to Dare, the Heartland accused NFF of having a sinister motive which the football body can only refute by unambiguously affirming them as a semi-finalist in the oldest football competition in the nation.

"The only way the NFF would reassure us that they are not up to anything sinister is to make it clear that Heartland is through to the semifinal," the statement read in part.

Recall that during the course of competing in the Aiteo Cup tourney, the participating

clubs got informed of the NFF's decision to hand Kwara United the second qualifying ticket to compete in the CAF Confederation Cup after Remo Stars booked their place for finishing third on the log in recently concluded Nigeria Professional Football League Season.

The consequence of NFF's decision resulted in clubs that have already qualified to play the round of eight boycotting the competition except for Heartland and Katsina United.

However, the NFF in a bid to tackle the shortfalls awarded N3 million to clubs that qualified for the quarterfinal while that of Heartland of Owerri and Katsina United reviewed to N5 million should both clubs decide to honour a rematch.

Meanwhile, Promise Nwachukwu, Heartland of Owerri Acting General Manager, underlined that the competition has reached a critical stage that does not warrant unmerited privileges handed to any club.

Nwachukwu, however, added that the Nigerian football community, including stakeholders, fans and sponsors are watching closely to see how the organisation of the 2022 Aiteo Cup competition turns out.

No security challenges, NCF assures as Nigeria host ICC Africa U-19 cricket world cup qualifiers

Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) have assured of maximum security as Nigeria host the International Cricket Council Africa U19 Division 2 World Cup qualifiers in Package B of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium Abuja next month.

NCF said for the International Cricket Council (ICC) to give Nigeria the right to host the qualifiers proves that the world cricket body is satisfied with the security architecture in place.

In a statement by the NCF Public Relations Officer, Musa Ehizoje, on Monday, to newsmen, he stressed that one of the reasons ICC considered Nigeria to host the qualifiers is because the body is comfortable with Nigeria's security details.

"There are no challenges with regards to security," Ehizoje said.

"Before any country will be given the right to host

any tournament, ICC must be comfortable with your security plan and they are comfortable with our security details," he reiterated.

The NCF PRO claimed that Nigeria prides itself in the areas of establishing the best security architecture in competitive tournaments, both local and international, as the country has never been found wanting of security breaches.

Ehizoje added, "Nigeria can boast of the best security architecture in hosting tournaments as there has never been a case where there are security threats in our competitions both local and international."

He clarified that Nigeria hosting the Africa U19 Cricket World Cup qualifiers is not mind-boggling as the country was once awarded the right by ICC to host T20 Qualifier A in 2018 in Lagos.

Ehizoje also acknowledged

the NCF's cricket grassroots development initiative which plays a vital role in ICC considerations to award Nigeria the right to host cricket tourneys.

"This is not the first time Nigeria is hosting an ICC qualifier. We hosted the T20 Qualifier A in 2018 in Lagos," said the NCF PRO.

"This will be the second time and it is because the world cricket governing body has seen what Nigeria is doing with regards to grassroots cricket development," he added.

Ehizoje, in defending why the Moshood Abiola national stadium was selected as the venue for the Africa U19 cricket world cup qualifiers, claimed that the stadium contains twin pitches which are turf wickets.

He added that as a 50 overs competition, the minimum requirement is to have two pitches close to each other which the national stadium in

Abuja contains.

He continued: "Abuja also provides a natural solution to host the competition because of the twin pitches at the stadium and both are turf wickets.

"This is a 50 overs competition and you will require a minimum of two pitches at close proximity and that's why Abuja has been chosen," he asserted.

Ehizoje, however, underlined that Nigeria is ready to host the 12-day tournament which is slated from 28 September to 9 October, adding that preparations are in top gear to ensure the event leaves a lasting remark worthy of commendations.

"Nigeria is very ready to host the tournament. The most important aspect of hosting a tournament is already in place, which are the grounds," he assured.

Eight nations including Nigeria are expected to compete in the qualifiers.

Reason Neymar is unhappy with Mbappe

Neymar Jr and Kylian Mbappe are not on the best of terms in Parc des Princes following a recent development which reveals the latter conceded to a move that would have forced the Brazilian away from the club.

At the close of last season, Spanish giants Real Madrid developed a strong interest in Mbappe, dignifying the player as its prime target in the summer transfer window.

This raised some dust, knowing fully well the player is very instrumental to the sharp-cutting attack of the Parisians. Aside from that, French Football Federation (FFF) President Noel Le Graet last year, advised that if the prolific attacker leaves Ligue 1 for La Liga, his chances of winning the Ballon d'Or would become slim.

Following the signals from France which were all

in support of the 23-year-old remaining in Paris Saint-Germain, including conversing with French President Emmanuel Macron on the subject, Mbappe decided to snub Los Blancos to sign a new contract that will keep him in Parc des Princes until 2025.

Consequent to signing the new contract, Mbappe opened an avenue for PSG to part ways with Neymar, with the Brazilian heavily linked with a

move away from Paris.

Neymar was not aware of the undertone that fuelled the Ligue 1 champions' decision to upload him until recently.

According to reports by top European media, Neymar got pissed off after getting wind of Mbappe's intentions to force him out of the club when he signed his new contract. To the Brazilian, it was a stab in the back for Mbappe to have ever intended to do so.

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

— Leo Tolstoy

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Okowa greets Babangida at 81

Delta State Governor, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, has congratulated former military president, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, on his 81st birthday.

In a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, in Asaba, the governor commended the elder statesman for his commitment to the unity and development of Nigeria.

He particularly recalled that it was during his administration that a number of states, including Delta, and new local government areas were created, and extolled him for his contributions to nation-building.

Okowa said: “Your Excellency, your life has been that of

illustrious service to the people of Nigeria, and as Deltans, we remain grateful for your effort in ensuring that our dear state, Delta, was created in 1991.

“We commend you, as you attain 81 years in your life’s journey, and for your stellar contributions in many ways, to notable developmental marks in our country.

“We celebrate you and all that you have accomplished through your humble beginnings in your illustrious and enviable military career, which saw you rise to military President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria from 1985 to 1993.

“As we mark the 31st anniversary of the creation of Delta, we recall



IBB

with gratitude your imprint in making it a reality.

“At 31, we are reaping the benefits of state creation with tremendous changes and great impact in the lives of Deltans and others, who live and do business in

the state.

“Our economy, infrastructure and human capital development have also been impacted positively as we strive toward a Stronger Delta of our dreams.

“As a national icon



Okowa

and elder statesman, we hold you in very high esteem for good deeds.

“On behalf of my family, the government and people of Delta, I heartily congratulate you, our great leader and elder statesman,

Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, on your 81st birth anniversary.

“It is our prayer that God will continue to protect you and grant you more years in good health to render more services to mankind.”

Vote for LP to establish good governance, says group



Obi

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

A group, Elite Movement For Good Governance (EMFGG) has charged Nigerians to vote massively for Labour Party (LP) duo of Peter Obi and Yussuf Datti-Ahmed in the 2023 presidential election as they are the solution to Nigeria’s myriad of problems.

S p e a k i n g

through one of its chieftains, a retired civil servant, Aiko Obobaifo, EMFGG stated, “we have a very strong desire to reorder the management structure of Nigeria using our group, Elite Movement For Good Governance (EMFGG). We have members across the world.

“Our major objective is to

establish good governance using the platform of Peter Obi and Yussuf Datti-Ahmed (of Labour Party) combination to actualise our dream.

“We have all experienced very poor management in this country. It is our desire that this time as we have been looking forward to the bright light

in the tunnel God has given us this opportunity and it is one that can be useful to everybody in this country for us to live as human beings.”

Going further, Obobaifo stressed: “To live as human beings we need to forge a different perspective from the existing stories we have had in this country.”