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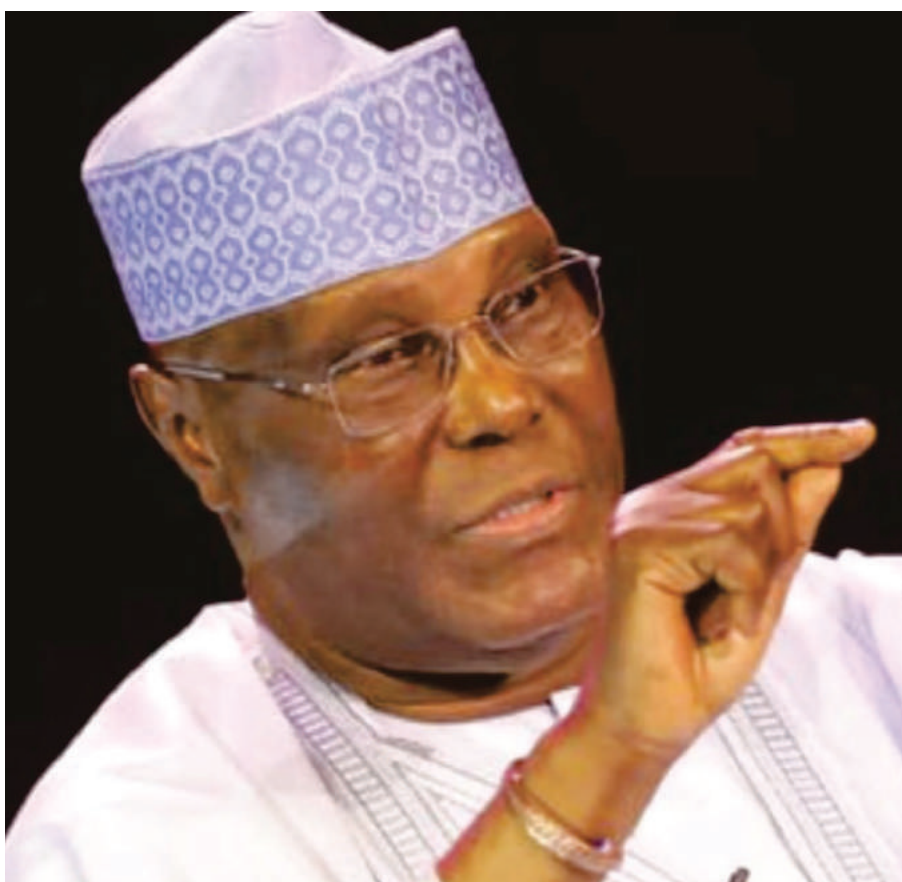
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Single term for Atiku, Ayu's removal top PDP peace deal

By **TUNDE JOSHUA** (Abuja) and **CHRIS EZEONOH** (Port Harcourt)

A positive step towards resolving the lingering crisis in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was taken during a parley between its presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike, The Trumpet has authoritatively gathered.

Atiku was said to have given in to terms presented at the meeting held Thursday at Carlton Hotel in London.

Top of the demands by Wike, it was learnt, was for Atiku to do a four-year single tenure if he wins the presidency.

The second equally tough demand was the repeated call for resignation of PDP National Chairman, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu.

But, according to a source, Atiku put a caveat that he will further discuss Wike's terms with his team, while a consolidated meeting between the duo will be held soon. The former Vice President was at the meeting with Adamawa State Governor Ahmadu Fintiri, who leads his reconciliation team.

A source in the party told The Trumpet that Atiku could not have unilaterally acceded to demands by Wike without consultations.

He said: "the presidential candidate still has to consult despite the fact that he held the meeting personally with Wike."

"Don't forget that the two sides raised a negotiating team which met last week in Port-Harcourt. He (Atiku) needs to brief his team on whatever demand Wike put on

the table and decisions have to be taken before the next meeting. So, it cannot be true to say he totally gave in to Wike."

The source said since negotiation is 'give and take', the issue of the agitation for Ayu's removal could also be negotiated.

He said: "the call for the national chairman's resignation could be resolved in the larger interest of the party. There are delicate conditions to be considered. Our major competitor, the APC is far ahead of us in constituting their national campaign council while we are still neck deep in crisis."

"Calling for Ayu's removal now is dicey. If he is removed today, do we have the time on our hand to convene a mini-convention for the purpose of choosing his successor? If we should adopt other option of allowing either of the deputy national chairmen to take over in acting capacity, it will further aggravate the crisis."

"If the deputy chairman North is allowed, the problem of balancing between north and south continues and if we ask the deputy chairman south to take over, then the national secretary, who is also a southerner has to step down."

"You see that we will continue in a circle of crisis. So, it better that the Wike team soft-pedal and not be rigid on the call for Ayu's removal."

The Trumpet, however, gathered Wike might have plotted another plan to remove Ayu by instigating his sympathisers within the party's National Working Committee (NWC) to institute a probe of the party's



Wike

finances under the chairman.

The pro-Wike members of the NWC are said to be calling for an external auditor to probe how much was got from sale of nomination forms ahead of primaries in May this year and how the funds were expended.

However, neither Wike nor any of his allies gave an insight into the meeting with Atiku on their arrival Friday in Port-Harcourt.

Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom simply told journalists that reconciliation is not a one-off process but ongoing.

On the Europe meetings, Ortom noted that they met with prominent persons in the past few days because of their belief that Nigeria is in distress and requires concerted effort to rescue it.

He stated that they had fruitful talks with those they had met and it was beyond partisan politics, because well-meaning Nigerians need to work together in ensuring that Nigeria survives.

He remarked: "For us, we are looking at the larger picture. Nigeria today is in distress. It is about what can we do. No man or woman alone can get it right for

our country.

"We are looking at how we can harness ideas and put ourselves together to ensure that we get out of the present challenge we are in Nigeria today."

"From top to bottom, consider what has happened from 2015 and where we are today. So, what we are doing is a concern that we have for our country, Nigeria."

"This is beyond partisan politics. We are looking at how we can come together and find a way of ensuring that Nigeria survives. Nigeria is on drip, Nigeria is on oxygen and it is about how can we get out of this."

Wike, on his part, said the meeting held with presidential aspirants of other parties like Peter Obi of Labour Party and Bola Tinubu of AllProgressives Congress as well as former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was were attempts to chart a new course for the country.

He said his team is more interested in a better Nigeria, and they are consulting widely with those who mean well for the country.

The Rivers governor noted that all is not well with the country and they are seeking remedies that will restore

enduring hope in Nigeria.

He stated: "I can confirm that this is the first time as a team that we are meeting with presidential candidates. We met with the presidential candidate of APC and we met with our leader, former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo."

"We also met the presidential candidate of Labour Party. We also met with our presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. For whatever it's worth, consultation is ongoing."

"Whatever we are talking about is for the interest of Nigeria and Nigerians. It is not parochial and tied to one person or group of persons. We believe that with what is going on, it will be for the interest of Nigerians at the end of the day."

Wike decried the situation where standards, training and competence have always been traded for mediocrity.

The governor said leadership should not be about one individual and the interest of his family, but everybody.

"Consultation is still ongoing. Never mind some people who do not believe in the existence of this country," he said.

Wike, thereafter, fired back at a former Jigawa State governor, Alhaji Sule Lamido, for dismissing his political relevance.

He said: "leadership is not about you and your family. Leadership is about everybody. It's unfortunate that

we are in a country now where a man finishes eight years as a governor and brings his own son as

a governor too and as member of National Assembly.

"It's only in this part of the world that you can see that, when we are talking about poverty everywhere. These are people who do not mean well for this Nigeria."

"The only identity they have in this country is religion and ethnicity, nothing more. It's either, I'm a Christian or I'm a Moslem, I'm a Fulani or I'm an Igbo. Nigeria cannot move forward except they think it will be them. That's where we are."

"We are in a country where someone with primary school certificate can be appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. That tells you how bad this country has become."

"But with our consultation, all these will be a thing of the past. No amount of intimidation or blackmail will deter us. We are determined to right the wrong."

Wike team member and Abia State governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, emphasized that they are on a mission and determined to find a way of rescuing Nigeria.

He pledged that they are mindful of what society to bequeath to the present generation, their children and grandchildren.

"And this is a country with great potential and we have to protect it well. We think that we need to engage across board."

"We are also looking at speaking with civil society organisations and those who have ideas, with Nigerians in the diaspora. All the resources available in this country have to come together at this time to see how best we can move Nigeria forward," the Abia Governor stressed.



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Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri (left); Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Kingdom and Chairman, Traditional Rulers Council, King Bubaraye Dakolo; Obanobhan of Ogbia Kingdom, King Dumarow Owa and the Amanyanabo of Twon Brass, King Alfred Diete-Spiff during a meeting with monarchs in Yenagoa.

NIMASA harps on effective judiciary for success of maritime sector

Agency committed to strategic collaboration for industry's growth, says Jamoh

By EDU ABADE, Business Editor

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), yesterday, declared that the agency will continue to take deliberate steps to work with critical institutions and professional bodies to reposition the country's maritime industry.

Director-General of NIMASA, Dr Bashir Jamoh, made the assertion when the leadership of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) visited the agency in Lagos, maintaining that working with the association and the judiciary was sacrosanct given the complex and time-sensitive nature of maritime issues and the necessity for prompt resolution of matters.

His words: "Prompt dispensation of justice is important for achieving success in our drive to elicit a sustained investors'

confidence, and the judiciary is a critical factor in this drive. When there is delay in cases, investment opportunities are lost.

"I, therefore, solicit the cooperation of the NBA to always push for timely dispute resolution for maritime related issues, as we all have one role or another to play in developing the Nigerian economy."

Speaking further, Jamoh pointed out that the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Crimes (SPOMO) Act 2019 has come to stay and remained a victory for Nigeria in the nation's determination to assume its rightful position in the comity of maritime nations.

He noted that some convictions were secured in relation to maritime crimes, describing the development as a sign that Nigeria was on the right path in the war against piracy and other crimes on the nation's waterways.

"We will not relent in our efforts to ensure a secure

and safer maritime domain in line with our mandate. As such, NIMASA will continue to work closely with other institutions and agencies of government, the international community and other stakeholders to improve security in the Nigerian waterways and the Gulf of Guinea (GoG).

"With the SPOMO Act, we have secured 23 convictions, of which 10 were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, 10 to seven years, while three foreigners were made to pay fines of various sums for their involvement in crime on the Nigerian territorial waters to serve as a deterrent to other criminal elements who are still engaging in the nefarious activities on the waterways," he added.

He maintained that notwithstanding the strides being recorded in the safety and security of the Nigerian maritime domain, the management of NIMASA equally recognised the need for professional development, alignment as well as

increased partnership and collaboration among all stakeholders, including the judiciary.

He further stated that training and development were important components of NIMASA's administrative growth, stressing that NIMASA has a system where officers, including those of the Legal Unit, are continually trained in various fields and admiralty law at the World Maritime University (WМУ) in Sweden for global competitiveness.

Responding, Chairman of the Abuja chapter of NBA, Adjeh Monday, who commended NIMASA for its achievements, restated the need for continuous collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop the Nation's maritime industry.

He said the Association will continue to seek more value-added models of collaborating with the agency to provide necessary assistance to NIMASA in its bid to ensure secure and safer maritime space.

Esan youths protest against bad road, urge FG to fix Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi Road

A group under the aegis of the Esan Liberation Movement (ELM) has called on the Federal Government to as a matter of urgency fix the abandoned portions of the Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi road.

In a statement signed by Prosper Iyere, Leader of Esan Liberation Movement on behalf of the Concerned Ekpoma Eminent Stakeholders Forum, (CEESF), Iruokpen Youth Association respectively, the Group also called on the federal lawmakers representing the entire Esanland to prevail on relevant government authorities to direct the contractor handling the road construction to mobilize to site and immediately commence work on the project, to address the pains and terrible experience the people face on a daily basis.

The group and other concerned youths in Esanland have been protesting the neglect of the road by federal authorities since Monday, August 22, 2022.

The group noted that despite a series of letters to authorities drawing attention to the deplorable condition of the road, they were yet to get any response, a move he said Prompted the protests across Esanland.

According to the Group, "It is no longer news that the terrible condition of the road has a terrible impact on the overall socio-economic life of the people, including but not limited to the destruction of their businesses, particularly of those who deal with perishable foodstuffs, who get stranded on a daily basis when their vehicles break down on the road. The result of this sad experience has always been huge losses of revenues, loss of lives, waste of time on the highway, and risk to lives and properties".

The Group noted that the consequences of failure on

the path of the government to fix the road have also led to the use of alternative routes inside Ekpoma town which they said have now become unbearable for the people.

"As part of the South-South region that contributes majorly to the sustenance of the Nigerian economy through revenue from oil and gas, we dare to say that we deserve to enjoy the proceeds that come from the region and demanding for a good road network is not asking for too much," Iyere said.

The Group Leader decried the negligent, conduct and nonchalant attitude of lawmakers representing the region saying they have refused to exercise oversight over the road and other facilities in Esan land, particularly the Benin/Auchi highway.

"Equally, we are concerned with the insensitivity of our representatives in the National Assembly to the plight of the people, in terms of attracting amenities to our area."

As part of its protest, Iyere said the Ewu axis of the highway will be sealed off from public use until "our demands for immediate action on the road rehabilitation are met".

He however assured the Police and other law enforcement agencies of their resolve to be peaceful and law-abiding during the protest adding that they will not allow any hoodlum or group of persons to hijack the protests with a view to tarnishing "our image by whatever means".

The Group has also pledged to support the contractors, Dantata and Sawoe, to enable them to effectively handle the construction, even as they appealed to "our political representatives as well as the contractors concerned to come to our rescue," Iyere said.

Ovie Omo-Agege to receive Global Merit Award on Leadership in U.S.

As part of the quest to change the leadership narrative in the country by recognizing distinguished Nigerians who truly represent their people in various leadership capacities deepens, one of Nigeria's most active not-for-profit making organizations in the fight against social vices (Drug Abuse) in the country, Silec Initiatives with over a decade of effective campaigns and sensitization of Nigerians, will honour Sen. Ovie Omo-Agege, Deputy Senate President of the 9th Assembly.

The internationally recognized life-saving organization with calls on quality Leadership as led by its founder, Amb. Sunny Irakpo, a U.S Government Sponsored Exchange Alumni, said that such award will help to encourage performance.

While addressing the press during the Press Conference of the Initiative tagged: Vision Re-classification and Sensitization in the Fight Against Drug Abuse in Nigeria, held recently at the American Corner in Lagos, where the convener unveiled the idea to award Global Merit Award to

distinguished Nigerians in various categories, he said: "This is to help single out performance-oriented individual, celebrating good leadership by consciously associating with those who are truly touching the lives of the ordinary Nigerians based on their effective representation in government."

Making the choice of the DSP for recognition by the selection committee in this critical period in Nigeria, in a letter signed by the founder, Silec Initiatives, Irakpo voiced that "on behalf of the noble organization and

partners, stating very clearly that the Senator has done a lot and deserves this global award with the work on ground that are attributed to his pragmatic leadership across delta state.

"The distinguished Senator has shown legislative prowess by sponsoring over 20 bills in the upper legislative chamber, which has earned him a lot of accolades. In community development, the DSP has done over 18 safe water projects, he has secured, facilitated, influenced and executed more than 75 electrification

projects, installed more than 500 transformers in various communities, built 18 educational ICT facilities, built classrooms and infrastructures and ultimately facilitated the Federal Polytechnic, Orogun. The Polytechnic project is arguably his best legacy project for his constituency and Deltans that will outlive him."

As Silec Initiatives and World Chicago implement the first stage of their 5years partnership to equip Nigerian youths for leadership where the DSP will be honoured

alongside Dr Dele Momodu, Chairman, Ovation Media Group and others in the state, I use this opportunity to call on political gladiators to emulate the many virtues of this distinguished senator to deliver the dividends of democracy to the people.

"As we approach the 2023 general elections, I equally call on our youths to vote only capable individuals who can solve the current challenges confronting the country including insecurity, drug abuse and the heightened state of unemployment in the country." He added.

Benin monarch warns against moves to divert Benin artefacts

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

The Benin Monarch, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare, II, N'Ogidigan, has warned against attempts by anyone or a group of persons to divert Benin artefacts, warning that Edo people would resist the move before it reaches a tipping point.

Recall that the monarch had asked the Nigerian Government to temporarily take custody of the 1,130 stolen Benin artefacts in Germany after they are repatriated, pending the completion of the Benin Royal Museum where the artefacts which have created a wave of public

support would be kept. Oba Ewuare II made the assertions when members of the Benin Community in Abuja and the Principal Officers of College of Education, Technical, Ekiadolor, Edo State, paid him a courtesy visit in his Palace in Benin City. The monarch also played host to leaders of Edo United Union in Rome, Italy, led by its President, Mr Edwin Omoregie.

Oba Ewuare noted that there is no controversy over the ownership or who should take possession of the repatriated Benin bronzes, which were produced on the mandate of his forebears in Benin Kingdom centuries ago. The traditional ruler,

who spoke in Benin Language, charged his loyal subjects and concerned authorities not to succumb to pressure from unnamed individuals who are treading on a lonely path to either divert or sell the priceless treasures for personal gains.

"We won't lose our heritage. You remember our Benin artefacts that were looted during the invasion of Benin by foreigners. Some of them have agreed to return them. But, it should be returned to the Oba of Benin Palace.

"Edo people all over the world should not allow anyone to bamboozle them to give up their heritage to strangers. Benin artefacts were made by the famous Igun Bronze Casters' Guild in Benin on orders of our forebears. The Palace gave them the enablement and approval to make them.

"Our artefacts will not go to another destination. It should come to the right destination, which is Oba of Benin Palace. Edo people should not allow them to be either diverted or sold. Edo people will not allow that to happen. Our ances-

tors do not approve of it.

"Advice your supporters and others to counsel those who are making such moves to retrace their steps. You should insist that the right thing is done at the right time for the benefit of Edo people," Oba Ewuare II said while commending notable Nigerians that have taken up the agitation for the return of the artworks.

Addressing the Benin throne, the President of Benin Community in Abuja, Mr Lucky Odigie, commended the peaceful reign of the Oba of Benin and his proclamations

that led to the abolition of Community Development Associations (CDAs) as it was a visible respite in curbing social vices in the society, particularly prostitution and human trafficking.

On his part, the Provost, College of Education, Technical, Ekiadolor, Dr Emmanuel Asagha, gave a brief history of the colleges and the process of the smooth take-off of the institution. He, therefore, sued for Oba Ewuare II support towards the attainment of set goals in the tertiary institution.

Nigerians hail UN appointment of Obieze as Special Envoy on Education

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, Abakaliki

A cross-section of Nigerians, on Thursday, hailed United Nations International Peace and Governance Council (UN-IPGC) for appointing Dr Chimbo Obieze as a Special Envoy on Sustainable Peace Education to Anambra State.

Obieze was handed over an award and letter of appointment by Dr Farzam Kamalabadi, the UN-IPGC Africa Head of Mission in Abuja recently.

It would be recalled that the educational philanthropist achieved the humanitarian feat of keeping children in schools in Anambra State through his Support Children Education Fund (SCEFUND).

They were of the view that Obieze, an educational philanthropist, having given over 2,000 pupils in Anambra State scholarship empowerment to remain and continue with their education deserves special recognition and destination as a Special Envoy.

Speaking, Prof Marcel Ezenwoye, President of Chartered Institute of Educational Practitioners UK (CIEPUK) Africa Region, said that Obieze deserves to be celebrated.

Ezenwoye said: "Dr Obieze has pulled so many children out of the streets through his SCEFUND organization.

"I call for more partners to support SCEFUND mandate and Anambra State Government through the ministry of education to make education fees easier for parents and teeming youths to access quality

education."

Maj.-Gen. Bello Tsoho also charged Obieze not to relent in his good works to humanity but to continue on the track record he had set through his SCEFUND project.

Tsoho, who is the IPGC Chairman, Advisory Panel on Sustainable Peace Education, noted that no effort should be spared in ensuring that "every child is in school for their upbringing to be holistic".

"I call on the good people of Anambra State to sustain this ongoing effort for the betterment of the future of our children and society at large," he said.

Chief Dennis Ezeora, a leader in Atani community, said that Obieze had supported some families in his community for their children to continue schooling.

"We are grateful to Dr Obieze for this timely intervention notwithstanding the harsh economic realities facing everyone," Ezeora, who retired as a primary school headmaster in the state, said.

Chioma Anichebe, a resident of Awka Road in Onitsha, noted that when it was difficult for her four children to go to school at a time, Obieze's organization gave the family a lifeline.

"SCEFUND provided the extra funding to keep them in the private primary schools they are attending now," Anichebe said.

It would be recalled that SCEFUND is a certified organisation tasked with grooming and supporting the education of upcoming leaders that would take charge tomorrow in their various fields of human endeavours.



Chief Ede Dafinone and Igben political members

Why we endorsed Omo-Agege, Dafinone - IPF

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba

The Igben Political Family, (IPF) has said it was supporting Chief Ede Dafinone to take over from the Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege as Senator representing Delta Central Senatorial District because it believes Dafinone is well experienced to leverage on the massive strides of the current Senator.

The group also reaffirmed its support for Senator Ovie Omo-Agege's governorship ambition, describing the Deputy Senate President as a great leader, under whose watch Delta Central had witnessed tremendous infrastructural transformation, especially in the area of rural electrification. Chief Ede Dafinone is the All Progressives Congress (APC) Senatorial candidate for Delta Central Senatorial District for the 2023 general election.

Speaking during a consultation visit of Dafinone to

the group, at Orhuwhorun in Udu Local Government Area of the state, IPF National leader, under whose auspices the body was formed, Hon. Harvest Igben, told Chief Ede Dafinone and his supporters that the IPF was fully in support of his political ambition. Hon. Igben described Dafinone as the most qualified for the position going by his wealth of experience and academic competence with proven track records.

He disclosed boastfully that the Igben Political Family covered every part of Udu Local Government Area with large membership, and also cuts across different Local Government Areas of Delta State, assuring Dafinone that their support for him was a great sign of victory.

Hon. Igben said IPF, which acts as a pressure group within the APC, would work for all the candidates of the party from the national to the state level in the election. He accused

PDP in the state and Udu Local Government Area of bad leadership that has set the state backward.

Earlier, Chief Ede Dafinone in his address said the APC has been in opposition for too long and it was time for them to change the narrative by voting out the PDP in the coming elections.

Dafinone said his visit was to familiarize himself with the people, to encourage and motivate them to move from house to house to win the people to APC, adding that it was their scorecard that would secure appointments and development for them in the future.

He told the group that as a chartered accountant, whose family name was in the Guinness Book of Record, and as a member of the Chartered Institute of England and Wales, he was eminently qualified for the position of a senator to represent Delta Central.

He commended the Deputy Senate President

Senator Ovie Omo-Agege for uniting APC in the state, stressing that now that the party was united, there was a great chance for them to win the election, just as he urged members of the IPF to vote for all APC candidates in the coming election.

Dafinone said what the Deputy Senate President had done as a senator was a sign that if elected, the state would witness tremendous transformation.



Sen. Ovie Omo-Agege

Pastor escapes from kidnapper den in Kaduna

By GABRIEL EWAWOCHÉ

Pastor Yahaya Dikko of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Kaduna, who was kidnapped by suspected gunmen two months ago,

has escaped from the forest.

The pastor was kidnapped in Sabon Kurutu in Kachia Local Government Area of Kaduna State in June 2022.

However, the bandits demanded an undisclosed ransom to regain his freedom.

But after the payment of the ransom, and two new motorcycles were delivered, the terrorists still held him in captivity.

He escaped from the kidnappers' den two days ago and had since been taken

to the hospital for treatment.

Also confirming the release, a community leader, Mr Makeri Danjuma Mohammad said the pastor's abductors refused to release him after collecting ransom and motorcycles worth

N800,000.

"This is Pastor Yahaya Dikko of ECWA Church Sabon Kurutu in Kachia LGA of Kaduna State. He was kidnapped about two months ago. Ransom has been paid but the Kidnappers insisted

that a motorcycle worth N800,000 must be brought before his release," he said.

According to him, the pastor escaped miraculously, adding that he had been taken to an undisclosed hospital for treatment.

Court, acquits Lamurde, Bobboi of corruption charges

By SURU CHARLES

The Federal High Court in Adamawa has discharged and acquitted the former Adamawa state commissioner of finance, Sanda Lamurde, and the former state chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Abdurrahman Bobboi.

The duo who have been in court for graft charges levelled against them by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), were on Thursday discharged by a Yola High Court presided over by Justice Nathan Musa.

In his ruling, the judge, as observed by our correspondent, faulted the commission for being both the complainant and the prosecutor of persons and groups.

Lamurde, who was the former commissioner of

finance under the administration of Governor Bala James Nggilari administration was discharged and acquitted for want of evidence.

The Commission was noticed to have preferred 21 count charges against the former Commissioner, among the charges which include; breach of trust and diverting funds to the tune of over N700m.

Striking out the case for lack of evidence against the former Commissioner, Justice Musa said the prosecution has as well failed to prove the case beyond any reasonable doubt.

Like the former Commissioner who was discharged and acquitted, the former PDP chairman, whom the commission accused of diverting the sum of N8.140 million was also exonerated of all charges.

In the Commission's three count charges against the former party's chairman, who is the incumbent political Adviser to the state governor, Ahmadu Umar Fintiri, accused the former chairman of diverting the amount which according to them, was set aside for the transportation of food items to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the state.

The judge also faulted the process where the anti-graft commission was alleged to have served as the complaint and the prosecutor at the same time.



Corp member

Why I renovate Zamfara mosque- Christian Corp member

By SURU CHARLES

The need for Nigerians to put aside their differences by promoting religious tolerance has become a source of concern to the twenty-five years old Corp member presently undergoing his one-year mandatory service in Zamfara State.

Demonstrating this, the Christian Corp member, Mr Jeremiah Shimasaan, as noticed by The Trumpet, has gone ahead to shoulder the responsibility of not only constructing and renovating the ablutions points situated in one of the mosques located in Gusau, the state capital but also went as far as renovating some of the mosque toilets.

He also added suggestion boxes at the main entrance of both the State Radio and Television Services administrative block by the Corp member.

He said he was geared towards reducing the stress of getting clean drinking water for ablution, especially for the Muslim ummah during prayers.

On the suggestion boxes, he believed would assist the two Broadcasting stations in collecting and collating suggestions and emails for administrative purposes.

"My decision to have the project in a Mosque is to promote religious tolerance, unity, and Peaceful coexistence among people of different faith".

Adding that "If all of

us in this country will respect each other's faith, and love one another unconditionally, we will have the Nigeria of our dreams without killing or attacking one another."

The Corp member who went head to reeled out why the country has been bedevilled by skirmishes, said "Our problem as a people is that we have little or no respect for our religion and belief" stressing that "if we do, the next generation will have no reason whatsoever not to see each as brothers or sisters".

While commissioning the projects, the Permanent Secretary of the State Ministry of Environment, Ahmad Liman, described the Christian corp member

as a "unifier."

His decision to uplift the standard of the Mosque conveniences and ablution point, as opined by the Permanent Secretary, will surely attract the corp member Allah's blessings, guidance, and protection at all times."

Beckoning at other corps members posted to the state, to borrow leaves from Shimasaan's such gestures, he believed would go a long way in promoting peace and unity among people irrespective of any differences.

Also overwhelmed by the corp member projects, the Chairman of the State Radio and Television Services, Sa'idu Maishanu, described the projects as a welcome development.



Sanda Lamurde

Youths kick against confirmation of former council boss as caretaker committee chairman

By SURU CHARLES

Vehicular movements were temporarily obstructed in Wukari local government council of Taraba state following the confirmation of the former chairman of the council, Dr Daniel Adigrace as the council Caretaker committee chairman.

The confirmation, which did not go down well with the people, was observed to have led to protests, the situation which briefly paralyzes business activities.

The state House of As-

sembly, it would be recalled, on Wednesday confirmed the names of the selected caretaker chairmen of the sixteen councils forwarded to them by the state Governor, Arc. Darius Dickson Ishaku.

The caretaker chairman, whom The Trumpet gathered to have been among the council's chairmen who were earlier asked to step aside following the expiration of their tenure in office was however returned as a caretaker committee chairman, the action which people vehemently frowned at.

Piqued by the development,

the people, who are made of various youth groups, were said to have embarked on a protest in the council on Wednesday demanding for his immediate removal.

Wondering why the governor has gone ahead to return the former chairman whom they described as "a failure" the need for the governor to as a matter of urgency bring in "a better replacement" they said has become necessary.

The protest which led to the blocking of major roads in Wukari, the administrative headquarters of the council,

was also noticed to have led to the massive destruction of billboards belonging to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Some of the protesters who spoke with our state correspondent via telephone expressed their sadness at the state government's decision to return the former chairman who, according to them, failed to carry the people of the council along during his past tenure.

Citing how he was alleged to have made life difficult for the people in the past, allow-

ing him to further preside over the affairs of the council, the people believed, would no doubt portend danger for the area.

In a swift reaction, the caretaker chairman who spoke with our correspondent via telephone agreed that there was a protest over his confirmation but quickly noticed that those that embarked on the protest were the aggrieved ones whose dreams of ascending the position turned out to be a mirage.

Making references to the

excitement and celebration that erupted in the council following his confirmation, those that embarked on the protest, according to "are very few" adding that "they did that because they were angry for not being selected."

Adigrace who went ahead to forward the Video clips of the excitement and celebration that erupted in the council to our state correspondent via WhatsApp said he will not stop from carrying all the people of the council along, irrespective of religious and political affiliations."

NDDC denies arrest of director by EFCC over diversion of N25b

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The National Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has denied media reports that its Director, of Finance and Accounts, Mr Eno Ubi Otu, was arrested by operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The media had widely reported that Mr Otu was arrested in relation to a case of alleged diversion of over N25 billion in tax remittances.

Reacting in a statement signed by its management, the Commission said Mr Otu was only invited by the EFCC as part of a routine procedural investigation into a non-remittance VAT of over 15 years.

It further stressed that the Director did not loot the said N25 billion, as the money covers even a period when he was not yet a Director of the Commission.

The statement reads, "The attention of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has been drawn to a story published by the Vanguard, The Nation, Punch, Premium Times and few other news journals, alleging that the Director, Finance and Accounts of the Commission, Mr Eno Ubi Otu, has been arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, 'in relation to a case of alleged diversion of over N25 billion tax remittances'.

"Management wishes to categorically, and without equivocation, state that Mr Eno Ubi Otu was only invited by the EFCC as part of a routine procedural investigation into non-remittance VAT over a 15-year period, raised by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), ostensibly orchestrated by persons seeking to be named in the forthcoming Board of the Commission.

"It is important to state that this period covers when the Director was not even a

member of the Commission's Management Committee. EFCC has therefore only invited him to provide more clarity to their investigations. Mr Eno Ubi Otu was not arrested.

"Indeed, Management views with grave concern the report that there is an attempt to uncover 'how N25 billion was looted and how it was shared'. It is also to be noted that this is mere conjecture by the reporters since such information has not been attributed to any individual, neither did the EFCC's spokesman, Mr Wilson Uwujaren, provide such information nor did he confirm it. To imply therefore a criminal liability is most reckless and distasteful, even to the least standards of ethical journalism.

"As an agency of the Federal Government, the commission has reached out to the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), another agency of the same government, to ascertain the actual inter-agency claims, to enable the office of the Accountant General of the Federation

to effect a direct debit transfer to FIRS, taking into consideration huge income due to NDDC from unpaid Ecological Funds and shortfalls on monthly statutory remittances, as provided for under section 14(2) of the NDDC Establishment Act.

"The alleged issue of diversion of VAT by our Finance Director, as reported by the media, is most unfortunate. The distorted and distractive news item is viewed in line with a contrived media campaign orchestrated by some unproductive persons who are bent on getting appointed into another interim management in NDDC. The ulterior motives of these individuals are already known; which is to grab an opportunity from the government and use the same as an ATM for the upcoming 2023 general elections! Nothing about service or value addition.

"The commission hereby advises members of the public to disregard the twisted online news."

Effiong regains freedom from prison, urges CJ to release CCTV footage

By PAUL MICHAEL

Human Rights Activist and lawyer, Inibehe Effiong has regained freedom from the custody of Nigeria Correctional Centre, Uyo Facility amid a freedom march by his supporters and sympathizers to welcome him.

Inibehe exhausted his one-month committal by the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, Justice Ekaette Obot, on Friday. He was seen in a Facebook Live video shared by Former Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Prof Chidi Odinkalu, walking out of the prison facility.

The lawyer was received by supporters after his release and marched with them in their public awareness campaign tagged the 'March of Freedom'.

In an interview he granted journalists after his release on Friday, 26th August 2022, the human rights lawyer said he had done nothing wrong prior to his arrest for contempt.

"I have done nothing wrong," he said.

"You know there are two types of Judges, Judge in Heaven and Judge of Conscience, and the Honorable CJ of Akwa Ibom knows I did nothing wrong.

"I only stated that by provisions of the Constitution, courtroom proceedings should be made public, and then, when the CJ disagreed



Inibehe Effiong

with me, I still insisted on the matter being laid to rest.

"Also, I prayed that the two armed policemen seated by my side as I was to begin cross-examination be sent out of the court, and My Lord refused, but I insisted on making it a formal request before the Court. I think my offence was my persistence," he added.

He further disclosed that it was at this point that the learned CJ of Akwa Ibom, Hon Justice E. Obot began to write his committal order, asked him to step out of the bar, derobe himself and sentenced him to 1-month imprisonment to "purge himself of contempt".

Effiong expressed shock and stated that he desired to clear facts now that he was out. He stated that he didn't point at the CJ or bang the table, that even if he was the most stubborn or insolent lawyer, it granted the CJ no right to attribute things to him and scandalize his name which according to him was to "justify the unjustifiable".

He urged the CJ to release the CCTV camera footage of her Court to the public so as to prove the facts right, saying he treated the court and the CJ with nothing but reverence.

Effiong stated that he was prepared for his experience in prison.

"You cannot be a lawyer who fights for the people and not expect to be thrown in prison. It is inevitable," he said.

According to him, the prison was not a bad experience, all he had to do is adapt. He stated that those who laughed at him when he was incarcerated saying he would be quiet when he comes out will be in for a shock as he was not backing down anytime soon.

He said stepping out of the prison was

another experience to solidify him as a lawyer.

While speaking on his exploits in Prison, Effiong stated that he had secured the release of 17 inmates who had no business being in prison and had made provisions to come and defend and secure the release of more inmates. He stated that his experience and the experience of some of his inmates in which the innocents are thrown into jail calls for the revisiting of the Nigerian Criminal Justice System.

"They are oppressed citizens of Nigeria. The Federal Government has abandoned them; the Akwa Ibom Government has abandoned them. Most of them are innocent and not criminals as they tag them," he noted.

Effiong expressed his thanks to the Olumide Akpata-led administration of the NBA, Femi Falana SAN, and other Lawyers of Conscience who stood by him and fought his conviction.

He assured those that hate him that he was back and louder than ever.

"I pity those that said that when he comes out, he would be silent, the voice they so hate is now louder."

Effiong was committed to one month in prison for contempt by the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, on the 27th of July. His incarceration had since generated controversies and drawn criticism to the judiciary.

EFCC moves to tackle illegal mining, non-payment of royalties

By PAUL MICHAEL

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has declared its readiness to strengthen its collaboration with the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to tackle illegal mining and non-payment of royalties by miners in Kwara State.

This was made known by the Commission in the statement published on its website on Friday.

According to the statement, the Commander, Ilorin Zonal Command of the EFCC, Michael Nzekwe, gave the hint on Thursday, August 25, 2022, while playing host to the State Commandant of the NSCDC, Ibrahim Muhammed who was at the Commission on a familiarization visit.

Nzekwe described the NSCDC as a strategic partner in the fight against corruption.

"One of the critical areas that we will want to seek your collaboration is in the area of illegal mining. As agencies of government, part of our responsibilities is to check corruption and preserve sources through which the government generates revenue for the wellbeing of its citizenry.

"We cannot, therefore, sit back and watch people divert or pilfer what is meant for government to personal use.

"The law made it compulsory for miners to pay royalties to the Federal Government. The Federal Government is losing a lot to the activities of the illegal miners not only in Kwara State but elsewhere in Nigeria.

"If due processes are followed and royalties are paid, not only that the Federal Government would benefit, the State Government

is equally entitled to royalty to cater for its people," he stated.

The Zonal Commander, who described the inability of some of the miners to pay royalties as "economy sabotage" said, the Ilorin Zonal Command of the agency would investigate the activities of the illegal miners in Kwara, Ekiti, and Kogi States which are under his Command with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Responding, the Kwara NSCDC boss,

Ibrahim Mohammed, commended EFCC for promoting inter-agency synergy in the fight against corruption.

According to NSCDC Commandant, the visit was to familiarize him with military and para-military formations following his recent transfer to Kwara State.

While calling for further ties between the EFCC and the NSCDC, he said the collaboration became imperative as "no agency can do it alone".

ICPC spokesperson, 78 others inducted as Fellows of NIPR

By PAUL MICHAEL

The Spokesperson of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Mrs Azuka Ogugua, and 78 other Nigerians were inducted as Fellows of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the body that regulates the practice of public relations in Nigeria.

A statement by ICPC on Thursday said

the spokesperson and others were inducted on Wednesday 24th August 2022.

Mrs Ogugua, a Deputy Director in the Public Enlightenment & Education Department of the Commission, was decorated as a Fellow by the President & Chairman of the Governing Council of the Institute, Mallam Mukhtar Zubairu Sirajo at the 2022 AGM, which was held at the International Conference Center, Abuja.

Speaking at the AGM after the Investiture ceremony, the NIPR President noted that new

Fellows of the Institute were selected after a rigorous screening exercise of candidates aspiring for the Fellowship of the Institute by the Fellowship Advisory Committee.

In addition to the regular upgrade, the Institute had opened a special membership upgrade window "in response to the yearnings of members, to facilitate the processing of the upgrade of NIPR members who had lost precedence or proper categorization due to circumstances beyond their control," Sirajo said.

Wike has right to be angry – Bello Muhammed

Dr Bello Haliru Mohammed is a former National Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). He was a guest on Channels Television programme during the week in which he dissects issues around the unease in the PDP. He says such could not be expected pre-election period but was quick to blame the lingering crisis on the untimely intervention of the party leadership, particularly the Board of Trustees (BoT). He expresses optimism that all issues will be resolved through the ongoing reconciliation process and that PDP will bounce back to power come 2023. Excerpts

Q: What is the update on the resolution of the crisis in the party?

I have never had any doubt that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will be able to resolve this crisis happening in-house because this is not the first time we are going to have a major crisis; we have gone through several since 1999 and PDP has the expertise and people with experience to come in and solve such crisis; we have done it before.

So, what happened in Port Harcourt (Atiku Abubakar's emissaries to Governor Nyesom Wike) was inspiring, because Governor (Ahmadu) Fintiri has come out to say there has been progress. And I have no doubt they are going to come out with a solution that will satisfy all concerned in this crisis and we are going into the coming elections as a strong and united party; and by the grace of God, we are going to win the election.

Q: Haven't experienced such crises in the past, what makes this current crisis difficult to resolve?

Nomination problem is always a significant issue in any election period. We have always come through them. But this very one, because of the importance of Governor Wike in our party; remember he stood with the party when we were in deep crisis over the Ali Modu Sheriff problem; and he has also been our pillar, supporting the party since that time. In fact, the rebuilding of the party happened, thanks to him and some other governors, since we lost the 2015 election. But all the same, the issue of nomination, and especially nomination of running mate, this time, became problematic, not because Atiku Abubakar set up the committee; that was correct, because, last time, in 2019, when the vice president was nominated without consultation, there was a lot of complaints and brouhaha. This time around, the Waziri of Adamawa corrected that mistake and consulted widely among party members before nominating his running mate. But the problem is, as always, for any appointment or nomination, there are several contenders. I believe the way it was handled before the announcement was the cause of the problem and people have the right to feel slighted because of the problem. Wike has the right to feel slighted because he was expecting to be nominated and when the decision was made, he was not privy to it before the announcement. I think that was the mistake that was made.

But that is a minor issue. Wike is a loyal party man. As I said earlier, he has been supporting the party and he will like the PDP to win the presidential election. And after he is consulted and he is assuaged, I think he will support the candidature of Atiku Abubakar and work hard to make sure the PDP wins the presidential election. I am sure everything will be sorted out after this Port Harcourt meeting.

Q: As an experienced party administrator, what method is to be adopted to remove the kind of malignant disease that has



Nyesom Wike

plagued the PDP at every election period?

I don't agree with you that we have a malignant disease in the PDP. We have what I consider a slight problem; a member of our party and a number of supporters felt slighted in the course of nominating our vice presidential candidate. With the expertise and experience of the PDP in problem solving, I don't think that is enough problem to be called malignant. We are working on it. It is a difficult subject to discuss at this point because it is ongoing; we have a committee that is working in Port Harcourt and we will not like to throw a hammer in the works. I wouldn't want to go into much detail about what is happening or what will happen.

But if we were to solve the problem, I think it would not even have reached this stage. I think there have been, I wouldn't say failures of leadership, but some mistakes on the side of the Board of Trustees (BoT). You know, the BoT has the responsibility of moving in to resolve issues between party members, between party and legislators or between legislators and the presidency when we are in government. But this time, because we don't have a president, the BoT did not act as fast as it should; if it had stepped in and called the party to order, this problem would not have reached the stage it has reached. But even then, it is not too late. The party has set courses in motion and I believe that after this Port Harcourt meeting, there will no longer be

any problem. Wike will come back to his brothers and sisters in the leadership of the party and we will move ahead to win the election in 2023.

Q: Was there any possible mistake inaction taken by Atiku?

It must be said that the right to nominate a running mate belongs to the candidate. And he has exercised it judiciously and the majority of the party is happy with the choice. So, there is no mistake in that. As I said, the mistake was on the part of the BoT, because when the announcement was made and Wike was not properly consulted and assuaged on why he was not picked as against Governor Okowa; the BoT was the one that was supposed to have reached out to him and assuage him and bring him on the same wavelength with the nominee of the party. But that was not done immediately; and Wike felt he was slighted, neglected and unappreciated. That is what caused the whole problem.

But now that steps are being taken to reach out to him and he has agreed to meet with the team that has been set up by the presidential nominee, the Waziri of Adamawa, I think the very fact of the agreement to meet is an indication that there is ongoing reconciliation; and as soon as that has been achieved, he will join the campaign and play a prominent role in the campaign as all of us will do. And the party will be victorious by the grace of God.

Q: Would there be peace if Dr Iyorchia Ayu resign as national chairman as being clamoured for by a section of the party?

Senator Ayu has made that statement and he was right. The constitution of the PDP and the constitution of Nigeria make it clear that whatever is being done should reflect the diversity of the country. That is what the Nigerian constitution provides; that is what the PDP constitution provides and it has been the culture in the PDP. So, if there is a presidential candidate from the North, it is right that the party chairman should come from the South. But we have also to look at the problem of sending away the chairman at this stage a few months before the election. The aim of the party is to win the election. So, if we find out that sending out the chairman will upset the apple cart and weaken our preparation for 2023, I can see the position of those saying the chairman should not be changed now. On the other hand, I have a personal experience that when Chief (Okwesilieze) Nwodo who was our chairman then had a problem and had to step down as the chairman during our convention of 2011, I stepped in as chairman and I was not removed for a substantive chairman until after the election, because the party felt it would be distracting for a chairman to be dropped just a few months to the election.

So, you can see that it has happened before. But now, we have a peculiar situation where we have to assess how the removal of the chairman will affect our preparation for the 2023 election. And I believe the relevant organs of the party are looking at it and giving it consideration. But Ayu himself has agreed that if there is a presidential candidate from the North, the chairman should come from the South; the issue now is the timing. So, it is for the party organs to meet and decide what will be the best option. We are only a few months from the presidential election.

Why optimistic that PDP will win the 2023 election?

I know that in politics, a week is a long time. But there are several reasons every right-thinking person will believe that the PDP will win the election in 2023. One item alone is enough to get to that conclusion; the way the APC has messed up the nation. They have messed up the economy, they have messed up the security; they have messed up the livelihood of the people. And that, in itself, will make the people of Nigeria say God forbid a return to the APC. But apart from that, there are many other things like the performance of the PDP from 1999 to 2015. Every right-thinking politician or voter will know that there is a marked difference between the situations of the nation in the economy, security, education, etc. during that period compared to the seven years of the APC. Even that is enough for any right-thinking person to feel that nobody will like to go back to an APC government. As you can see, the education sector is in turmoil. We have never had it this bad.

Court nullifies Ebonyi LGA Elections

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, ABAKALIKI

A Federal High Court sitting in Abakaliki, capital of Ebonyi state on Thursday nullified the local government election across the 13 LGA and 171 Electoral wards in the state.

It was learnt that the local government election was conducted on 30th July; 2022 by the Ebonyi state independent National electoral commission EBSIEC.

The Presiding Judge Fatun Riman in suit No. FHC/AI/CS/151/2022 ruled that the conduct of the Ebonyi local government election was undemocratic and unlawful and therefore declared it null and void.

Speaking to journalists in Abakaliki, the counsel to the plaintiff, Barr. Mudi Erhenedi commended the Federal High court for upholding justice in Ebonyi state.

According to him: "It is undemocratic and unlawful to conduct an election into the local government areas or council without availing the plaintiffs with the exact law that is meant to regulate the exercise.

"There are a lot of other issues with

non-compliance with the electoral act 2022. The electoral act 2022 said the procedures for conducting elections into the local government areas by state commissioners must comply with that procedure for conducting into area councils in the FCT.

"If you look at it, how do you access compliance without law if you hide the law with which you want to conduct the election is it not when you make the law public that we will know whether you complied with it or not, how can you be making laws and hiding them.

"My position now is that my clients demanded to be availed of this law, we came under the freedom of information act it intending the procedure to conduct elections, we wrote to EBSIEC, we wrote the House of Assembly, we wrote to INEC whose responsibilities all of these bodies refused to provide us with the law" he stated.

However, all efforts to reach Barr. Roy Nweze, lawyer to the state government to respond to the ruling of the court, at the time of filing this report failed, as he was not picking up calls.

Court says Agoda is APC candidate for Ethiope West Federal Constituency

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, ABAKALIKI

The candidacy of John Agoda as the flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for Ethiope Federal Constituency of Delta State has been affirmed by the Federal High Court, Abuja.

The court in a ruling by Justice Inyang Ekwo validated Agoda's election at the APC House of Representatives primaries held on May 27, 2022.

In a suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1038/2022 filed by his lawyer, S.N. Ernest-Egbuna, the candidate sued the APC and Independent National Electoral Commission. (INEC) as 1st and 2nd defendant respectively.

In the originating summons filed on July 1, the plaintiff prayed the court for the implementation of the provisions of Sections 29(1) and 84(5)(c)(li) of the Electoral Act, 2022.

The act urged the APC to forward Agoda's name to INEC as its duly nominated candidate for the election to the House of Representatives for Ethiope Federal Constituency having declared him

as the winner of the primaries with the highest number of votes cast at the end of voting.

"A declaration that by the provisions of Sections 29(1) and (3), 32(1) and 84(5) (c)(II) of the Electoral Act, 2022, the 2nd defendant is under obligation to accept and publish, by displaying or causing to be displayed at the relevant office or offices of the 2nd defendant and on its website.

"A statement of the full names and address of the plaintiff as the candidate of the 1st defendant standing nominated for election to the membership of the House of Representatives for Ethiope Federal Constituency in Delta State.

"(This is for) emerging as winner of the primaries conducted on the 27th of May, 2022 by the 1st defendant and duly monitored by the 2nd defendant."

Besides, Agoda prayed the court for an order of mandatory injunction directing INEC to accept and publish his full name and address as the candidate of the APC for the election.

Delivering the judgment, the judge said that the failure of the party to upload Agoda's name to INEC when the names of its "other candidates were initially uploaded means a wrong has been done to the plaintiff."

"The law is, where there is wrong there is a remedy. The courts have been enjoined to apply this maxim in relevant and deserved cases. This case is one of such," he said.

According to Ekwo, I find that the plaintiff has made a compelling case which ought to succeed on the merit and I so hold."

Consequently, the judge answered the two questions formulated by the plaintiff in the positive.

"Judgement is hereby entered on terms as follows:

"A declaration is hereby made that by the provisions of Sections 29(1) and 84(5)(c)(il) of the Electoral Act, 2022 the 1st defendant is under a duty/obligation to forward to the 2nd defendant in the prescribed Form the name and particulars of the plaintiff as Its duly nominated candidate for the election.

"A declaration is hereby made that by the provisions of Sections 29(1) and (3), 32(1) and 84(5)(c)(ii) of the Electoral Act, 2022, the 2nd defendant is under obligation to accept and publish, by displaying or causing to be displayed at the relevant office or offices of the 2nd defendant and on its website, a statement of the full names and address of the plaintiff as the candidate of the 1st defendant standing nominated for election to the membership of the House of Representatives for Ethiope Federal Constituency in Delta State having emerged as winner of the primaries conducted on the 27th of May, 2022 by the 1st defendant and duly monitored by the 2nd defendant.

"An order of mandatory Injunction is hereby made directing the 1st defendant to forward to the 2nd defendant in the prescribed Form the name and particulars of the plaintiff as its duly nominated candidate for the election to the membership of the House of Representatives for Ethiope Federal Constituency scheduled to hold on the 25th of February 2023 or any other date fixed by the 2nd defendant.

"This is the judgement of this court," he said.

Diri tasks Bayelsa monarchs on fairness to all parties in 2023 politics

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, YENAGOA

Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri, has charged traditional rulers to steer clear of partisan politics in the 2023 general elections, saying they should rather provide a level playing field for all candidates and political parties.

He stated this during a meeting with the state's Traditional Rulers Council at its secretariat in Yenagoa, the state capital.

While urging them not to allow any political party to hijack the process to perpetrate electoral fraud, he however expressed the hope that introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) would bring to an end electoral malpractices.

A statement issued by Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Daniel Alabrah, said: "As custodians of our heritage and culture, it is incumbent that you provide a level playing field for all political parties in the state to freely canvas for votes in a conducive and peaceful atmosphere.

"We all know that issues like elections fragment brothers, sisters and communities. So, as we approach the 2023 general election, I implore traditional rulers to remain apolitical. Don't allow any political party to hijack the process in your domains to perpetrate electoral fraud. If that happens, while the traditional ruler sits in the comfort of his home, his recognition will be withdrawn.

"You have been recognised in your various kingdoms as custodians of our heritage and culture. In Bayelsa State, you have been performing administrative duties, working closely with council chairmen.

"I had directed the local government chairmen to involve traditional rulers in their monthly security council meetings. Our security architecture has been rejigged and for the past one-month crime rate has reduced."



Douye Diri

Responding to issues raised by chairman of the Traditional Rulers Council, King Bubaraye Dakolo, who is the Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Kingdom, Diri said collaborative efforts between the state government and security agencies on improving security on land and waterways were yielding results, particularly in Ekeremor and Southern Ijaw councils.

On the dearth of teachers in schools in rural areas, the governor directed the Commissioner for Education, Gentle Emelah, to ascertain the number of teachers in urban schools and ensure a balance with their counterparts in rural areas.

Diri, who also approved renovation of the traditional rulers' secretariat through the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, assured that the government would look into other issues of review of stipends, running costs and provision of utility vehicles.

Earlier in his remarks, King Bubaraye Dakolo applauded the developmental strides of the administration, particularly in the execution of people-oriented projects across the state.

Dakolo, who pledged the monarch's support to the administration, also highlighted a number of issues bordering on security, education and other concerns of the council.

Troops recover 8 guns in terrorists' hideouts raid in Abuja

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

Troops of the Nigerian Army's Guards Brigade have raided suspected terrorists' hideouts at Dei Dei Abattoir in the Abuja Municipal Area Council, and in Gwagwalada Area Council, Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Recall that the Guards Brigade, which is responsible for protecting the president, was in July ambushed by terrorists in Bwari, Abuja, killing no fewer than three soldiers.

The Director of Defence Media Operations, Musa Danmadami, disclosed this during a bi-weekly press briefing on Thursday at the Defence Headquarters in Abuja, saying the hideouts were raided on August 13.

Danmadami further stated that troops of operation Whirl Punch operating in the north-central have sustained the momentum to deny terrorists freedom of action in their joint operation area.

"Consequently, between 13 - 18 August 2022 the air component of Operation WHIRL PUNCH conducted air interdiction operations at terrorists enclaves in Kurebe in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State," the statement further read.

"The air strike was on the terrorists who had assembled for a meeting hosted by a notorious terrorist leader Aminu Duniya, Report revealed that the air strikes resulted in the neutralization of several of the terrorists.

"Similarly, between 14 - 17 August 2022, troops of Operation SAFE HAVEN in conjunction with vigilantes and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp conducted operational activities at Mum village, Garga District, in Kanam Local Government Area of Plateau State, as well as Mariri Town, Kuru Local Government Area and Zango Kataf Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

"During the operations, 21 suspected terrorists, 7 suspected kidnapers and 3 suspected vandals were arrested at different locations, while 7 terrorists were neutralized with 12 civilians rescued from the kidnapers' den. Items recovered from the suspects include 3 motorcycles, 8 mobile phones, some quantity of illicit drugs and the sum of N60,000.00

"Furthermore, between 14 - 18 August 2022 troops of Operation WHIRL STROKE in conjunction with the Department of State Service conducted raid operation at bandit's camps at Ankya Village, ZakiBiam town in Ukum Local Government Area, Mahaga Community



Major Gen Danmadami

in Logo Local Government Area of Benue State, as well as Jamata in KotonKarfe Local Government Area of Kogi State.

"During the operation, a notorious bandit identified as Timothy Nwagaga (aka Ambiju) was arrested at Zaki Biam town in Benue State. It was revealed that the suspect is a gang member of a notorious bandit know as Anhie (aka short man) who has been on troops wanted list," he stated.

The spokesperson also stated that a wanted gun runner, Naziru Mohammed, was also said to have been arrested at Murtala

Mohammed Bridge in Koton Karfe LGA of Kogi state.

Danmadami said items recovered during the operation include 1,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, a large sum of money, two mobile phones, one tricycle and one motorcycle.

He added that all recovered items have been handed over to the relevant authorities for further action.

Danmadami also explained that troops engaged terrorists in their hideouts in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

"Troops of Operation

HadarinDaji recorded a major success in the ongoing fight against terrorism, kidnapping and other forms of criminality in this zone. On 13 August 2022, in a coordinated joint operation by the land and air component, terrorist enclaves around Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State were engaged. Intelligence revealed that the terrorists had planned to attack villages within the vicinity where there were operating.

"Consequently, own troops leveraged on the report and conducted clearance operation against the terrorists that resulted in the neutralization of several of the terrorists while others fled with severe gunshot wounds.

"Items recovered include 2 GPMGs, 3 AK47 rifles and 7 motorcycles. Furthermore, troops raided terrorist hideout at Bida village market in Chikun Local Government Area, Zaria-Ikara road around Kwari village in Ikara Local Government Area, Kaya-Giwa in Giwa Local Government Area, Kabode forest in Kachia Local Government Area all in Kaduna State. During the operations, troops arrested 37 suspected terrorists, recovered 11 motorcycles, 8 cutlasses, 3 mobile phones and rescued 8 civilians," he added.

Army commences military drill for women corps

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

The Nigerian Army Women Corps (NAWC) is set to embark on a 7-day military drill exercise for its troops starting on 27 August to 2 September 2022 in Giri-Gwagwalada general area, Abuja.

According to a statement made by Acting Assistant Director, Army Public Relations NAWC, Hashimu Sa'ad Abdullahi, on Thursday, the Army said that the training is designed to test leadership skills, physical fitness, teamwork and military operations among others.

Abdullahi urged residents around Gwagwalada, Giri, Tugan Maji, Ana-Gada, Gudumba, Tagilogo and Makalma in Abuja to be calm and not to panic following the mass movement of military personnel, vehicles and equipment.

The statement said, "The Nigerian Army Women Corps (NAWC) will commence a 7-day FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE (FTX) for its troops from 27 August - 2 September 2022 in Giri-Gwagwalada general area, Abuja. The exercise is designed to test the troop's Leadership skills, Physical fitness, Teamwork, Military Operations Other than War among other military drills.

"The exercise would also provide a platform to ascertain troops' preparedness towards supporting all the Nigerian Army's engagements.

"Consequently, communities living around Gwagwalada, Giri, Tugan Maji, Ana-Gada, Gudumba, Tagilogo and Makalma in Abuja are enjoined not to panic on seeing mass movement of military personnel, vehicles and equipment in the general area from 27 August - 2 September 2022.

"Residents in the general areas mentioned are therefore enjoined to go about their normal daily routine activities and report any breach of security to the nearest authority. Furthermore, members of the communities are advised to stay away from the exercise area during the entire period of the FTX.

"You are requested to use your medium to disseminate and enlighten the general public, particularly the inhabitants of the aforementioned areas. While thanking you for your usual cooperation, please accept the esteem regards of the Acting Commander of the Corps."

Insecurity: CP addresses Sokoto State Assembly, seeks legislative support

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

The Sokoto State Commissioner of Police, CP Muhammad Usaini Gumel, on Thursday, addressed the members of the State's House of Assembly seeking their legislative support to combat crime and insecurity in the State.

CP Gumel embarked on the visit alongside his management team as part of his assumption of duty tour. He said there is a need for a legislative framework that enables security operatives to tackle some of the security challenges in the State.

According to a statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer of the Command, DSP Sanusi Abubakar, the CP assured the honourable members of the readiness of the Command to tackle cross-border crimes in the State.

The statement said, "The Commissioner of Police, Sokoto State Police Command, CP Muhammad Usaini Gumel FIPMA, psc had on 25th August 2022 visited Sokoto State house of assembly alongside his management team on the occasion of his assumption of duty tour.

"The CP affirmed that the

Expresses command's readiness to tackle cross-border crimes

legislative arm of government is the pillar standing between the Judiciary and the Executive arms and it's being the top machinery of government providing succour to the population and of course critical to development, unity, peace and security.

"On the foregoing, the police command being part of the executive arm of government is looking for a robust convocation by honourable members to have the right legislations on government policies, enactment of laws that have a

direct bearing on solutions to the ongoing insecurity.

"The CP added that the narrative of internal security has changed over time and on this note encouraged Hon. Members bring up necessary legislation in support of the police to acquire the right technology, equipment and other needed support to function effectively.

"The Deputy Speaker of House of Assembly Sokoto warmly welcomed the CP together with the house leaders, honourable members and clerk to the house.

The Deputy Speaker in his response extends on behalf of the house their condolences to the Command over the death of six mobile policemen, who met their untimely death in a gun duel with bandits while protecting transiting pilgrims and securing their return unhurt.

"While reiterating his commitment to partner with the police, he assured the CP of the house's readiness to support the police with all necessary legislation needed to fight the menace of banditry and other crimes."

NPF says community policing constabulary scheme not paid employment

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has cleared the air regarding the recent protest by the Community Policing Constables in Ilorin, Kwara State, saying the scheme is voluntary not paid employment.

Members of the scheme had in a protest that went viral on social media lamented the non-payment of salaries in the state.

The protest was said to have caused serious traffic gridlock along the popular Ahmadu Bello way in Ilorin, the state capital.

Reacting in a statement on Thursday, the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said the Community Policing Constabulary Scheme of the Force is purely voluntary service for those who are engaged in other paid jobs.

Adejobi, who said it was shocking that members of the scheme were protesting, also noted that the constables are not direct employees/personnel of the Police but those carrying out voluntary services for their respective communities in collaboration with the NPF.

He said, "The Nigeria Police

Force, due to the imperativeness of addressing and clarifying issues surrounding the recent protest of Community Policing Constables in Ilorin, Kwara State, wishes to state unequivocally that the Community Policing Constabulary Scheme of the Force is a purely voluntary service commenced by the Federal Government to train and incorporate individuals with prior paid employment who desire to spend their spare time assisting the police in its simple police tasks within their various communities.

"It, therefore, came as a rude

shock that members of the scheme were protesting non-payment of salaries in Kwara State recently when the ultimate purpose and rule of engagement of the scheme is to promote community partnership in crime control via the presence of respected members of the public, with a source of livelihood, partnering with the Force under the scheme to render voluntary service for better and improved policing within their communities.

"The scheme clearly delineates the roles of the Community Policing Constables, who are not direct

employees/personnel of the Police but of their respective communities, at both divisional and state levels to include assisting the police in crime detection and prevention, conflict resolution, intelligence gathering and dissemination to local Police Commanders, maintenance of law and order, deployment to complement conventional police officers in patrolling their communal public space, advising the public on safety, crime prevention, and security tips, dealing with minor offences and social vices, working with relevant stakeholders on crime control, and

traffic management and school safety duties.

"The Nigeria Police, therefore, re-emphasizes the fact that the scheme is voluntary and no payments were agreed with the individuals under the scheme neither were paid terms of appointment discussed prior to its commencement. Subsequently, considering the fact that a protest for payment when there is no basis for such is mischievous and ill-conceived; the Force, however, will be taking adequate measures to review the effectiveness of the scheme as soon as possible."

NBC suspends action over indebted corporations

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Abuja

The Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has temporarily suspended actions to shut down indebted broadcasting corporations.

This twist of the event is the result of a fruitful meeting held amongst the Commission, Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON) and critical stakeholders in the industry.

Recall that on August 19, 2022, NBC issued a shutdown notice to all broadcasting corporations that are indebted to the commission.

However, following the notice of a shutdown, the affected licensees, including the BON, met with NBC and reached a compromise prompting the latter to issue a statement to that effect.

According to NBC, several meetings were held with these key players in the broadcasting industry before an agreement was reached.

In a statement signed by NBC Director General, Balarabe Shehu Ilelah, the commission appreciated the efforts and steps taken by BON and other stakeholders in the industry and also admitted to not being oblivious of what their actions may have caused their organisations.

"Sequel to a follow-up meeting held with Executives of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON), and other critical Stakeholders in the industry, the Commission has decided to temporarily suspend the shutdown of the indebted Broadcast stations all over the Country," NBC said.

"We express our profound appreciation to the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, the affected licensees and Broadcast Stakeholders for their responses and interventions.

"We, specifically, thank DAAR Communications Ltd and Silverbird TV/Rhythm FM for their responses," the NBC added.

Ilelah added that the commission is not unaware of the difficulties this shutdown must have caused the operators and other stakeholders.

He said that NBC will always operate within the National Broadcasting Commission Act, Cap. N11, Laws of the Federation, 2004



NBC Director General, Balarabe Shehu Ilelah

Ohanaeze mourns Biafra warlord, Madiebo

•Declares four market days of mourning

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**, Abakaliki

The leadership of the apex Igbo socio-cultural Organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo worldwide has described the demise of the former Nigerian Army officer and General Officer Commanding (GOC) defunct Biafran Army, Major General Alexander Atta Madiebo, as a great loss.

In a statement signed and made available to The Trumpet by the Secretary-General of body, Maxi Okechukwu Isiguzoro, said the late Madiebo was a disciplined military administrator who will be remembered for his fearlessness, bravery, and history will be kind to him for standing up for what was perpendicular in his career as a result of the circumstances surrounding his time in history.

According to Isiguzoro, Ndigbo will join peace-loving Nigerians to commemorate the life and

times of Major General Alexander Madiebo as he will be laid to rest in his country home at Umuokpu Awka, Awka North of Anambra on Friday, 26th August 2022.

"Ohanaeze Ndigbo declares four market days of mourning in honour of Major General Alexander Atta Madiebo, in which Ndigbo is expected to honour him strictly in line with the established Igbo traditional rites, cultural, and other burial ordinances.

"Nzeamalu as fondly called will be remembered for his adventurous outings in defence of the old Eastern region".

"Ohanaeze Ndigbo modern library will be named after Major General Alexander Madiebo in remembrance of his gallantry and chivalry during the Biafra War, and after the war, he lived a private life filled with humility and service in Christianity.

"May the Almighty God forgive his shortcomings and grant his family, friends and Ndigbo fortitude to bear this loss, the statement stated."



Major General Alexander Atta Madiebo

Surveillance Contract: Isoko youths raise alarm over moves to hijack execution of contract

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

The president of the Isoko National Youth Assembly (INYA), Comrade Amos Ogbokor-Etaluku, has stated that only persons from the Isoko nation will be beneficiaries of the Federal Government oil pipeline contract awarded to High Chief Government Ekpemupolo a.k.a Tompolo.

Recall that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited awarded the pipeline surveillance contract to the ex-militant warlord.

INYA President, Comrade Ogbokor-Etaluku, in a press statement, raised the alarm over alleged moves by some groups from other tribes in the Niger Delta region to hijack the execution of the contract for Isoko.

He also enjoined that "non-Isoko person" should not be allowed to participate in the contract as far as the Isoko region is concerned.

"We are also through this medium stating our stance on

the execution of the contract in Isoko nation. Its entire value chain must be executed by Isoko people without any non-Isoko person in the mix in any manner whatsoever.

"We have intelligence that some elements from other tribes are trying to corner the execution of the contract in Isoko nation for their own political benefits.

"We reiterate that there should not be a non-Isoko person in the chain of execution of the Isoko part of this contract even if the non-Isoko person appoints his stooge to front for him.

"Any attempt to undermine our legitimate place in this contract will be met with brutal resistance that will not only defeat the purpose the contract was meant to serve in Isoko Nation but will also jeopardize the political and allied interests such subversion is intended to meet.

"We have more than competent persons in the entire value chain to handle the execution of the contract in Isoko Nation in the spirit of Local Content,

equity and fairness. And as an organization of able-bodied and visionary youths, we will continue to cooperate with the Federal government, NNPC and the GOC as well as serve as watchdogs for the protection of the interests of the Isoko people who have elected us to do things of this nature in times like this.

"We are by this release asking the GMD of NNPC, stakeholders and the general public to please take note. A stitch in time, they say, saves nine!"

On the contract awarded to the ex-Niger Delta warlord, the youth leader congratulated Tompolo assuring him that the indigenous people of Isoko extraction will work in synergy to protect national assets.

He said: "As the apex youth organization of the Isoko Nation, we seize this opportunity to congratulate the indefatigable freedom fighter, Chief Government Ekpemupolo (AKA Tompolo) on the well deserving award of the pipeline surveillance contract by the NNPC Limited.

Edo begins 3-day free medical outreach for journalists, others

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Edo State Government has kicked off a three-day free healthcare programme for journalists and other media professionals in the state.

The free medical services commenced on Thursday, August 25, 2022, and will end on Saturday, August 27, 2022.

The programme is being organised by the Edo State Ministry of Health in partnership with the Edo State Chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ).

Journalists in the state will receive free healthcare services from 9am daily at the New Conference Hall, NUJ Press Centre, No. 1 Sir

Gabriel Igbinedion Way, GRA, Benin City.

Declaring the health pro-

gramme open, the Edo State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Obehi Akoria, said the 3-day programme is in line with

the vision of the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration's Edo Health Improvement Programme (EDOHIP) to strengthen health promotion, disease prevention and early detection of diseases, amongst other healthcare improvement interventions that are ongoing in Edo State.

According to her, journalists are critical stakeholders in the Edo healthcare improvement agenda.

In a statement, the Ministry said, "The programme began with media practitioners in Edo State Ministry of Communication and Orientation, Federal Ministry of Information, ITV/Radio and Vibes FM,

on Thursday, August 25, 2022.

"On Friday, August 26, 2022, officials in the Edo Broadcasting

Service, the Nigerian OBSERVER, Nigeria Television Authority and Reliance will benefit from the free medical services.

"The programme will end on Saturday, August 27, 2022, with those in Correspondents, Merit, Bronze Fm (Radio Nig), Federated and AIT/Ray Power, as well as the spillover from other chapels."

The statement further read: "Arrangements have been made to provide continuity of care for participants who will require follow-up care.

"Chapel leaders are expected to prepare their members for the free medical check-up in line with the timetable."

State governments and pensioners

It is unacceptable that various state governments in Nigeria are guilty of failing to pay pensioners, man and women who toiled and gave their lives serving their various states. More offensive is the fact that many of these state governors live in stupendous affluence, financing their private lives and expensive tastes with public funds.

There have been recorded cases of pensioners dying on the road, at government offices, at home and sundry places while waiting for their state governments to pay them their pension. This is sad, despicable, and abominable. To think that many of these governors mindlessly pontificate on the way forward for Nigeria is a shame and insult on our collective sensibilities. In fact, many of these state governors had the temerity to aspire to become Nigeria's next president but failed woefully. The operating system in the country which makes it possible for governors to owe pensioners without any consequences must be resisted by organised labour and all stakeholders.

In 2004, the federal government through the National Assembly passed the Pension Reform Act which in turn established the National Pension Commission (PENCOM). The Reform Act setting up PENCOM introduced the mandatory Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) making it compulsory for employers and employees in both public and private sectors to contribute towards the retirement benefit of employees. According to the provisions of the pension scheme, 18% of monthly emolument shall be contributed for the employee at the end of every month. Of the 18%, 10% shall be contributed by the employer while 8% shall be contributed by the employee, but if the employee decides to bear all the contribution, the minimum contribution shall be 20% of monthly emoluments. In 2014, the government revisited the Pension Reform Act and unified it. It now covers four categories of employees – Public Service of the Federation, Public Service of FCT, Public Service of State Government,

and Public Service of Local Government Council. Retirees under the Nigerian Union of Pensioners (NUP) have lamented the huge amount of money owed them by their different states. Although some states in Nigeria are free from this social and moral obligation, there are states that have defaulted in the payment of pensioners.

States in South-West of the country owe pensioners a total of N242 billion. Ogun State owes pensioners N68 billion, Ondo State owes pensioners N78 billion, Ekiti State owes pensioners N38 billion, and Osun State owes pensioners N58 billion. Delta State according to Association of Contributory Retirees, owes pensioners N100 billion naira. Abia is in arrears by thirty-three months. Anambra owes N14

billion naira. Kwara owes N1.68bn, Kano State N26 billion naira, and Taraba N30 billion naira. Some pensioners in Niger State claim the government is owing N50 billion naira though the government disputes this figure. In Imo State, 20% of retirees have not been paid a dime since March 2020.

Of the three phases of life, retirement is the most sensitive because people have exhausted their youthful strength. When pensioners are not paid, it encourages desperation and stealing by those who are still in service. The argument is that workers must enrich themselves one way or another so that they will be able to take care of their lives at old age. It is not uncommon therefore to see civil servants steal funds while in service.

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) should do more to protect the rights of pensioners and ensure that State governments pay them their due. There is no justifiable reason why government at any level should owe senior citizens. It should be an impeachable offence for any governor to owe pensioners and other categories of workers. It is dehumanising to see retired military officers begging along the highways in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. It is a national embarrassment which should attract the attention of Mr President. Research has shown that there is an existing record distortion across Nigeria by corrupt auditors which makes it very difficult to pay pensioners many years after they retire.

It is no rocket science to pay retirees if governments play by the rule. In South Africa, for example, retired civil servants get their emoluments a few days after disengaging from service. It is the same in the organised private sector in Nigeria. There should be a total overhaul of the pension scheme in Nigeria which and ease the process of payments. Pensioners must not suffer while politicians waste money and loot public funds. The blood of pensioners who died waiting for their pension cries against defaulting governors.



THE TRUMPET

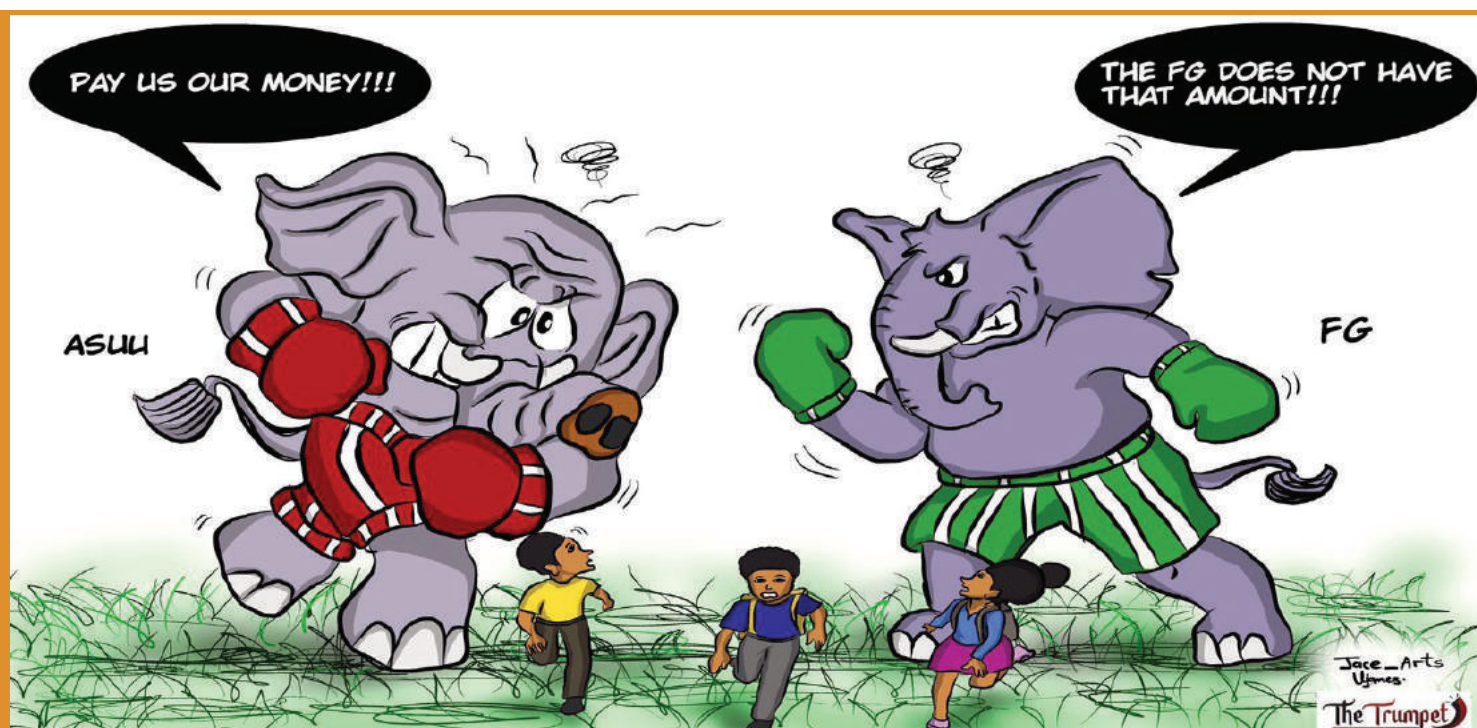
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Olusegun-Obasanjo

The vice-presidency is incurable frustration

By ERIC TENIOLA

Trust is always inherent in the relationship between the President and the Vice-President. Even if they deny it, it is constantly there. The office of the Vice President is generally considered to be the graveyard of political careers. It is a lonely office. It is also a miserable office. The name vice means "in place of". It typically serves as a pro-tempore (Latin) for the time being to the President.

Former US Vice-President, Walter Mondale says "since the start of our nation, the vice presidency has been an awkward office, its occupants have, by and large, been notoriously unhappy."

In Nigeria the office of the Vice President is a solitary office, so desolate that it has an unelected official-the Chief of Staff to the President around, who is not recognized by the Constitution and who the President directed must be the safest and best gateway to his office. The directive which is abnormal and atypical has not been abrogated in spite of the demise of the former holder of the office. That directive makes the office of the Vice President to be extremely intricate and complex. Vice Presidents suffer and endure in silence. In some cases they are targets of attacks, ridicule and fake news. The worst thing is that there is little they can do about it. Getting out of sight is a solution most favoured by Presidents, hence, most often the job schedule of vice presidents is to attend funerals, birthdays, anniversaries, lectures, seminars, retreat, etc. They do not really belong to the inner caucus of the President. If anything goes wrong they are always suspects. In 1979, the most powerful person in the country by then, apart from President Usman Aliyu Shehu Shagari (25 February, 1925-December 28 2018), GCFR, was not his Vice President, Dr. Alexander Ifeanyichukwu Ekwueme (1932-2017) but the then Minister of Transport, Alhaji Umaru Abdurahman Dikko (1936-2014). The excuse for this then was that the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) did not win in Anambra state, the home state of Dr. Ekwueme or in Imo state. In the 1979 elections, Dr. Nnamdi Benjamin Azikiwe (16 November 1904 – 11 May 1996), GCFR, of the NPP still controlled his empire of

Imo and Anambra states. If you wanted anything in Shagari's era, you need to contact Alhaji Umaru Dikko, who was also the Chairman of the Presidential Taskforce on Rice. The argument then was that, Dr. Ekwueme had no electoral asset or political base in 1979. That argument was demolished in 1999 in that President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, was not voted by the people of his own region, the Southwest region. The man the people of Southwest voted for in 1999, Chief Samuel Oluyemi Falae (82) from Oyemekun land in Ondo state, by irony was himself a recipient of General Obasanjo's generosity when he made him Permanent Secretary in 1977 and also introduced him to General Ibrahim Babangida (80), GCFR, who made him Secretary to the Government of the Federation in 1985. Perhaps the weakness of the office of the Vice President in Nigeria since 1999 could be traced to the effect that there has not been mutual relationship between the President and the Vice President before they were appointed Vice President. The process for selecting Vice President in this country since 1999 is faulty.

For example, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, GCON, was the PDP candidate for the January 9 gubernatorial election in Adamawa state in 1999. He was not close to President Obasanjo who was the Presidential nominee of the PDP at that time. His financial purse and a little help from some of his friends including Otunba Oyewole Fasawe, Chief Tony Anenih prevailed on Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to make Atiku Abubakar, GCON, as the Vice Presidential candidate for the PDP, over Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi and Professor Jerry Gana after the PDP convention held in Jos on February 16, 1999. Atiku's running mate at that time as deputy governor Boni Haruna later became governor by defeating Bala Takaya by 329,595 to 283,863 votes in the 1999 Adamawa state gubernatorial election. In the December 16, 2006 convention held in Abuja, it was presidential Obasanjo who forced Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR, then Governor of Bayelsa state on President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, GCFR, to be his running mate. Alhaji Umaru Yar'adua (16 August 1951 – 5 May 2010) preferred either Dr. Peter Odili (73) or Chief James Onanefe Ibori (62). President Goodluck Ebele

Jonathan picked Alhaji Namadi Sambo (67), the former governor of Kaduna state, to be his Vice President on May 19, 2010 following pressure from the governor's forum, who wanted their own to be vice president. President Muhammadu Buhari picked Professor Yemi Osinbajo, GCON, in very interesting circumstances. The rejection of the Muslim/Muslim was floated in 2014 because certain elements within the APC at that time never wanted Chief Bola Tinubu to be Vice President. I still do not believe, if we are to learn from the 1993 experience, that religion plays a vital role in the Presidential election. Pardon me if I am wrong.

In fairness, President Muhammadu Buhari fulfilled his obligation to Chief Bola Tinubu at that time.

On December 11, 2014, President Muhammadu Buhari defeated his political rivals in the APC with 3,430 votes, Dr. Rabiun Kwankaso had 974 votes, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar 954 votes, Governor Rochas Okorocha-624 votes with Dr. Kayode Fayemi as the returning officer at the Teslim Balogun stadium in Lagos at the party's Convention.

In order to calm nerves down, General Buhari left the decision to pick the Vice President in the hands of Chief Bola Tinubu. He could have picked Chief Pius Olu Akinyelure (79), a former Mobil Chief Executive, who is a Methodist Knight. He could as well have picked Chief Olusegun Osoba (82), the twice elected governor of Ogun state. He could have dared his critics as well and picked Chief Bisi Akande, a Muslim and a former governor of Osun state and Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola (64), former governor of Osun state, now Minister of Interior Affairs and the course of history would have changed by now.

A few days later Chief Tinubu picked Professor Yemi Osinbajo. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, a Victoria Garden City (VGC), Lagos resident and a Pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God had earlier served as the Commissioner of Justice during the tenure Chief Bola Tinubu as the Governor of Lagos State.

Finally on December 17, 2014 in Abuja, General Muhammadu Buhari announced Professor Osinbajo as his running mate. Till today I am still at a loss as to why General Buhari did not name Chief Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi (56) as

his running mate. These decisions by President Buhari and Chief Tinubu are still causing serious "Katakata" in APC till today.

Either Vice Presidents have political base or structure, the office is a futile job, full of frustrations. The Vice Presidency is like the human appendix, a vestigial organ on the body politic. It is difficult for a President to take the Vice President completely into his confidence. The President by necessity builds his own staff and makes his own decision and the Vice President remains an outsider. For example most Ministers if not all, owe their loyalty to the President for appointing them and not to the Vice President. Even the present Vice-President could not nominate a Minister from his own state of Ogun. That privilege was given to Governor Ibikunle Amosun, who first nominated Mrs. Kemi Adeosun (54) six years ago. The same Ibikunle Amosun who is now a Senator further nominated Mr Olamilekan Adegbite, who served under him as Commissioner for works, as Minister for Mines and Steel Development two years ago.

In any Presidential contest, no one competes to be Vice President. It is when they lose out that they are compensated to be Vice President. In reality the Vice Presidency is a consolation prize which diminishes the office.

Since 1999, when we started this democratic experience, we have had only two former Vice-Presidents who have not become President yet. They are Alhaji Abubakar Atiku (75), GCON and Alhaji Namadi Sambo (67), GCON. The Third, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (64), GCFR, eventually became President on May 5, 2010 following the demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua (16 August 1951 – 5 May 2010), GCFR. He too was later elected President in his own right. None of these former Vice Presidents has written memoirs to let us know their experience while serving as Vice President.

In 1999, it was a smooth take off for President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR and Vice President Atiku Abubakar. No major storm was experienced in their first term in office. In his wisdom President Obasanjo equipped Vice President Atiku with loaded schedules. He first made him the Chairman of National Boundary Commission and posted an experienced Civil Servant, Alhaji D. Bobbo as his Permanent

Secretary. President Obasanjo later constituted the National Council For Privatisation and the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE). He made Alhaji Atiku Abubakar the Chairman of the Council. Other members of the council at that time were the Minister of Finance, Alhaji Adamu Ciroma (1934-2018) (Vice Chairman), the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekette (1939-2019), CFR, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Ajibola James Ige (1930-2001), the Governor of Central, Mr. Joseph Oladele Sarusi (84), from Ogbagi in Akoko, Ondo state, the Minister of Industry, Chief Kolawole Babalola Jamodu (78), the Chief Economic Adviser and Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission, Chief Phillip Chukwuedo Asiodu (88), the Director General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai (62) and four others who were appointed from time to time by President Obasanjo. It was the Council that formulated policies and approved the Privatisation Programmes of the Central Government. The Office of the Vice President then was equipped with experienced public officers with the likes of Prince Sola Akanmode, Abdullahi Nyako, Chris Mamah, Abdu Yari Lafiya (DSP), Mahmoud Abdullahi, Sajo Mohammed, Professor Boris Aborisade, Dr. Usman Bugaje, Dr. Hamilton Isu, Tokunbo Adeola, Umar Ardo, Ajuji Ahmed, John Agwu, A.A. Achibong, A. Maigari, O.O. Oyelakin, M.F. Aiyegbusi, Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi, G.A. Sobajo, Alhaji I.G. Kura, Dr. A. Ndukwe, Butrous Pembri, and A. Braimoh. President Obasanjo also directed the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette, CFR, to assign the following portfolios to the Office of the Vice President. They are General Services and Administration, States and Local Government Affairs, Code of Conduct Bureau, National Institute For Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), National Population Commission, Public Complaints Commission and National Planning Commission. Unlike what is playing out now, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar had the privilege and power to nominate ministers, ambassadors, special advisers and other officials from Adamawa state.

To be continued

Dealing with sins as a Christian

There is the old Anglican bidding at morning and evening prayers for public worship. It reads: "Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father, but confess them with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most holy word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul..." (BCN)

Thereafter, the Christians, being miserable sinners, are called to confess and plead for the mercy of God. This is premised on the biblical injunction: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to clean us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9). The Church is established for various purposes. A few reasons why Christians gather for worship are to render thanks for the great benefits God has given us, to praise God; for He is worthy to be praised, and to ask (pray) for those things which are requisite and necessary for the body and soul (Psalm 95). This is only achievable if we purge ourselves of sins through the mercy, faithfulness and grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Sin creates a huge lacuna between us and God. It alienates us from God. Only the holy ones can behold God. Yet, Jesus came for sinners. In His hatred of sins is also contained Christ's love for sinners. He desires to seek, wash us and deliver sinners to God as clean and perfect people. Nevertheless, there is a new theology that says once you are born

again you have disentangled yourself from sin, and there is no need to confess your sin every Sunday.

Most of the early Christian denominations were accused of "going in and out" of sin weekly simply because of the bidding that acknowledged human sinful nature.

Without making much debate of this, one would only ask, is this world now a better place today, are we not witnessing atrocities of Christians; and even of pastors daily? Not acknowledging the sinful nature of man is being in self-deceit. Let us not get entangled in the human delusion that Christians do not sin. "To the Lord, our God belongs mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us" (Daniel 9:9-10).

With a sense of humility, we must self-ask one another as the Psalmist has done. "Who can know his own unwitting sins?" And prays, "O cleanse me from my secret faults" (Psalm 19:12). In verses 13 and 14, he pleads, "Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins lest they get the mastery over me so I shall be clean and innocent of great offence. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight O Lord my strength and my redeemer."

The Church is not a place where sin is encouraged and promoted. Members are called to a life of holiness. However, being members who carry body and flesh, they are encouraged to rely on someone who is the Strength and Redeemer of the faithful. He is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Psalm 19:14). The first thing the church must do is acknowledge human sinful nature. Sin is the cause of human suffering and limitations. It denies us the privilege of accessing God. It is exactly this message Apostle Paul puts across in Romans 8:20-22. "For the creation was

subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

For we know that the whole creation groans and labour with birth pangs together until now." Consequently, we should acknowledge our weakness as people who possess flesh and blood. A body of Christ (the Church) that does not underscore this fact cannot build a strong Christian community of great people of faith.

Christians should surrender themselves to the Holy Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He who searches the heart knows what the mind of the Spirit is because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27). Only the Holy Spirit can free us from the bondage of sin. The Holy Spirit makes us heirs and inheritors of the kingdom of God (Romans 8:31-33). It is in the Holy Spirit that we are justified in God.

Christ Jesus teaches that we should be child-like if we are to be truly His disciples. He enjoins us to be converted, humble, receivers,

not to offend and to shed off sin-bearer (vv. 3-9). With this Christians can be sure of being worthy Disciples of Christ and be heaven bound. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." The church must not cast out the sinner. Rather it should seek sinners and restore them to Christ. The way we must relate with transgressors is to forgive and reconcile them to the body of Christ; not to cast them out. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." The church of God is not a place for shaming sinners. It is a place for seeking and building. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14). It is in the Church we are taught about sins that kill. Such sins include trespasses against God's law (John 1:29); unforgiving spirit (Matthew 18:15-17); false doctrines and offences contrary to Scriptures (Roman 16:17); hatred of Christ (1 Corinthians 16:22); disorderly conduct and disobedience (2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15); apostasy (Timothy 1:19-20, 4:1-8); heresy (Titus 3:10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5); as well as fornication and other gross sins that are soul-killing (1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9-11).

We must recall that the church refers to those who have been called out and separated unto a holy and sanctified life (1 Peter 2:9-10). To continue to live in sin is to reject being 'called' or 'chosen.' For sin is the transgression of God's known will or any principle or law regarded as embodying this. Sin is also "the condition of estrangement from God arising from transgression". Let us, therefore, believe in the power of Christ to save us from sin and condemnation (John 3:17-19).

Shalom and be blessed.

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Science of total submission

The science of total submission has proved that total submission to any constituted authority activates love, trust and deep friendship in that relationship, be it physical or spiritual.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was totally submissive to the Word of God in His journey on earth. He never did anything on His own but only did what He saw the Father do according to Him. Even at the tail end of His journey on earth when He needed to die on the Cross to save humanity from sin and death, He requested if God could change the PROGRAMME by allowing the cup of compulsory death to pass from Him, but He finally said: "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt".

The scripture recorded in Matthew 26 verse 39 thus: "And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt". Therefore, it was total submission to the Will of God that made Jesus Christ triumph and not His wisdom.

The Apostles and Disciples were also totally submissive and obedient to the command of Jesus Christ and that is why they were victorious. Before Jesus Christ finally ascended to Heaven, He left instructions for them to remain in Jerusalem until they receive power from God through the Holy Ghost baptism before they could take the gospel and spread it to the world. This is exactly what the Apostles and Disciples did because it was in one of such tarrying and waiting for the promise from on high that the Holy Spirit suddenly came down and baptized all of them in the upper room. They didn't jump the gun and started preaching immediately after Jesus left for Heaven, but followed the instruction to the letter and waited.



Dr. Agbodo

Jesus said in the book of Luke chapter 24 verse 49 thus: "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry (wait) in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high", and this is exactly what they did until the day Pentecost when all of them were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem.

So, total submission brings blessings if a worker is not totally submissive to the instructions of a master, it shows clearly that there will not be unity of purpose and the company will not be able to succeed in its mission because there will be confusion.

If a house help or home worker is not submissive to the instructions of the employer in the house, it won't take long before the end of that relationship will come.

If the Deputy Governor or Vice President of a government is not submissive to the instructions of the Governor or President respectively, there will be anarchy in that government soon.

In essence, the truth is that living a successful life is about total submission to the will and words of the Almighty God and not too many struggles.

Your destiny as created by God has been secured before you were born, but it takes your obedience and total submission to the Word of God to inherit what has been written about you, or else the devil will unveil and execute his destiny of destruction for that person.

If you believe in God and want God to be your Helper and Friend, you have to know His written constitution (Bible and other complementary and non-contradictory scriptures) for man and be submissive to obey every word there.

In the word of God, total submission to God and other earthly authorities approved by God is the beginning of salvation. However, the first structure that God created on earth for man is the nuclear family hence God wants order to be in homes, and the hierarchical structure God has created is the Husband/father, Wife/mother and children.

This knowledge and subsequent submission in that order are important because the problem of this world started from the lack of total submission and obedience to God in the home of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

In fact, it is still the lack of total submission to God's order in the home that is turning the whole world upside down today.

This lack of submission to the hierarchical order and subsequent anarchy in the home is largely responsible for raising rebellious,

wayward and destructive children today in the world, thereby multiplying evil in the world.

According to God's word, the head of the nuclear family relationship is the man/husband while the woman/wife is next, then the children. That however does not mean that man should be a dictator because even God consults His creatures at times before taking some decisions. The husband and head of the home should manage his home with Godly wisdom and know the information to share with the family and what not to share. The wife is the second in command and her contributions to the family are very key also. Even the children can bring the right suggestions and contributions to the family at times and those suggestions can be accepted or moderated to blend with the situation on the ground for the entire success of the family.

In conclusion therefore the science of total submission both to God and in our man to man relationships has proved that total submission to a constituted authority breeds harmony and love but any form of disobedience and rebellion breeds hatred and disharmony in that system. So, to succeed under the authority of God is to obey the Word of God without moving to the right or moving to the left.

God has said we should be Holy because He is Holy and what we need to do by all means is to cling to the Word of God always and remain Holy so that we can enjoy the complete blessings He has created for us. God bless us in Jesus Name.

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Africa, CHINA tasked on bilateral ties to overcome rising global challenges

By **EDU ABADE** with agency reports

China and Africa have been urged to continue to strengthen their bilateral ties and cooperation to overcome increasing global universal challenges and changes.

The Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation gave the charge at its fifth edition organised by Beijing Municipal Radio and Television Bureau and co-hosted by the National Radio and Television Administration, the People's Government of Beijing Municipality and African Union of Broadcasting.

A joint declaration issued after the event at the China World Hotel Conference Centre in Beijing said: "The world is undergoing great changes not yet seen over a century. Setting foot on a new starting point, we should continue to uphold the spirit of China-Africa friendship, cooperation and equality."

"This should be a win-win for mutual benefit and common development, fairness, justice, progress with the times, as well as openness and inclusiveness to foster a new vision of achieving common development and greater international influence of our media."

"We should support new developments in the media field that serve China's Long-Range Objectives Through 2035, African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 and development strategies of African countries."

"We should also blaze a new trail in China-Africa media cooperation by implementing the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024), building on content

creation and technological innovation and boosting convergent media development and digital economy."

The Forum which gathered over 240 delegates from government departments, media institutions, audio-video enterprises, diplomatic missions from China and 42 African countries, the African Union Commission and the African Union of Broadcasting, reached common understanding to enhance dialogue, exchange ideas and strengthen collaboration in international communication.

Areas of understanding include that: "Chinese and African media will continue to develop strategies and regulatory systems in the light of our economic and socio-cultural development. We will continue to disseminate news and information to the international community that is panoramic, true, objective and just."

"We will support each other on major issues relating to our core interests and of common concern in the international arena. We will strive for a growing influence of Chinese and African media, and advocate humanity's common values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom."

"Fulfill media responsibility and make contributions to global development. We highly agree that development holds the key to solving various difficult problems and delivering better lives to the people. Media of both sides will advocate for and take part in global development."

"We will strive to promote the vision of sustainable development among the general public, contributing to forging a global development partnership and

fostering a development paradigm featuring benefits for all, balance, coordination, inclusiveness, win-win cooperation and common prosperity."

Others are to promote innovation in content creation and present compelling stories of China-Africa friendship. In particular, the stories should reflect the common struggles against the COVID-19 pandemic, mutual support and joint development.

The ties should also deepen support for the creation of high-quality audio-video content

on themes and co-produce TV dramas, documentaries, animations and short videos that reflect the socio-economic development of China and Africa and bilateral relationship, among others.

Some of the participants said: "We applaud the fruitful achievements of the forum. Guided by the spirit of congratulatory letters by leaders of China and Africa, we look forward to embracing a new decade of even more vigorous China-Africa media cooperation."

"Hence we will be able to make new contributions to the well-being

of our peoples and to the building of a China-Africa community of shared future in the new era, so as to achieve stronger, greener and healthier global development."

China's President Xi Jinping and President Macky Sall of Senegal congratulated the Forum and spoke highly of its role in advancing dialogue and cooperation between Chinese and African media, promoting mutual learning between the civilizations and deepening the China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership.



Prof. Ekata Rosemary Isibor of Amachree University, Benin Republic (left); presenting value for money multimultivitamin brand of the year 2022 (Reload Multimultivitamin) to Director, Sales and Marketing, Pharmacy Plus Limited, Jude Elue and Head of Marketing, Ikechukwu Aneke, at the first edition of Consumers Value Awards and Dinner held in Lagos.

Bayelsa govt moves to revive comatose plastic company

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State government has hinted of plans to revive the comatose plastic company to enable it commence business activities, create jobs for the people of the state and generate revenue for the state government

A visit to the state-owned plastic company by journalists, who were invited to tour the factory with a view to capturing its dilapidated state and efforts being made to revive the facility, revealed that all the machines and equipment have been carted away, while the few remaining were sighted in the warehouse.

From the gate to the entire premises, there was neither any activity, nor human presence, as journalists had easy access to the dilapidated facility during the fact finding mission.

The plastic industry was revived during the time of Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, as governor of the state, but the firm was abandoned when he left office.

However, Governor Douye Diri had announced last year that his administration would revive the company after which it actually came alive before it collapsed again after a few months of operations.

In a statement issued by the state government, Diri had said:

"We are ready to talk to our businessmen and ensure that all the components of the facility are completed in our tenure and become functional and useful for the benefit of Bayelsa people and Nigerians at large."

Although the facilities were vandalised, looted and abandoned one year after Diri's commitment, but information available to *The Trumpet* indicated that acting on the directives of the state government, Managing Director of the company, Ebimie Norman Niweigha, had started making arrangements to revive the firm in partnership with a German investor, U&H Integrated Services Limited.

As of the time of filing this report, Niweigha did not respond to all calls and text messages to his telephone line, but the state Commissioner for Trade and Investments, Federal Otokito, who responded to the development when contacted on telephone, said he was aware of the development and that the matter was already being handled.

"I am aware of the efforts being made to revive the company and return business activities to the factory and that is why we invited journalists to a tour of the facility. Efforts will be sustained to ensure that the company begins operations again soon enough."

Firm unveils 25 value for money products, brands in 2022

•As Checkers Custard, Dulux Paints, Mr. Chef, MTN, Coca Cola, others emerge winners

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Consumer Value Broadcasting (CVB) Limited, a company committed to the protection of consumer rights and recognising products, services and brands that give maximum value for customers' money, has named 25 brands as winners of the 2022 consumer value award.

The company named the 25 winners in various categories at its maiden edition of the consumer value award held at the Radisson Blu Hotel on Isaac John Street, Ikeja, Lagos on Wednesday, August 24, 2022

In his welcome address at the award ceremony, Chairman of the company, Adedayo Ojo, said Nigeria's business environment and consumers were already inundated with so much hype, publicity and promotions, some of which are not approved by regulatory authorities.

"This situation throws up an opportunity for some guiding light to help navigate through the labyrinth. It is our mission to provide the required guiding light and deliver value that will make brands, products and services more accountable to consumers."

"What sets the Consumers Value Awards apart is that consumers make the decision on who wins. Therefore, our role as organisers is restricted to facilitating the conversation between products, services, brands and consumers. More importantly, we are committed to doing these transparently, ethically and with integrity."

"Our goal at Consumers Value

Broadcasting is to ensure that consumers' rights and privileges are recognised, prioritised and delivered," he stated.

He explained that CVB Limited's goal was to ensure that brands recognise, prioritise and deliver consumers' rights and privileges, adding that the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2019 provided on the rights of the consumer, including the right to safe and quality goods and services, the right to reject goods and right to disclosure, among others.

Ojo added: "Successful brands deserve to be celebrated. Today, winners will emerge in about 25 categories. The award rules and guidelines mirror the consumers' jury's commitment to ensuring that all details of the award process are transparent and accessible."

Speaking, Managing Director of the company, Akonte Ekine, lamented the situation where airlines, banks, telecommunications firms and other service providers take consumer rights for granted, saying even in cases where customers had paid for certain services that are usually not provided, the service providers fail to make refunds.

He insisted that the experience must stop and that a Consumer FM would soon be unveiled to broadcast such failures and ensure maximum service delivery, consumer satisfaction and adequate compensation for service failures.

Brands that emerged winners in the online voting are: Checkers Custard with 83 per cent; Dulux

Paints (66 per cent); MTN (63.4 per cent); Mr. Chef (63 per cent); Coca Cola (55.1 per cent); Dangote Sugar (53.9 per cent); Lush (51.4 per cent); Amstel Malta (50.3 per cent); Knorr (50 per cent); Interswitch (33.3 per cent) and Origin Bitters (25 per cent).

Others are Golden Penny pasta; Toyota; Reload Multimultivitamin; Dangote Cement; GTBank (GTCO); Milo; Kellogg's Corn Flakes; Sunlight Detergent; Lucozade Boost; Chivita Fruit Juice; Colgate; Power Oil; Dano Milk and WAW Detergent.

At the ceremony, Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Danbatta, who was represented by Joseph Dimka; Registrar of the Advertising Regulatory Council (ARCON), who was represented by Mrs. Suzzy Onwuka; Director-General of the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, who was represented by Dr. Paul Kamai and Chief Executive of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), Babatunde Irukeru, in their goodwill messages, expressed support for the initiative.

They applauded the promoters of Consumer Value Broadcasting Limited for their passion and vision in ensuring that the Nigerian consumers get real value for their money irrespective of the brands offering such products and services, insisting that the era of taking consumer satisfaction for granted and dumping all manner of substandard goods on Nigerians was over for good.

Imo woos investors in jobs creation industrial renewal

Stakeholders have declared that most of the social challenges being experienced in the South East and particularly Imo State are mainly driven by economic deprivations and poverty.

To mitigate the negative impact of economic deprivation and poverty, the Imo State Government is wooing impact investors to help tackle such challenges by investing in the state.

Following its resolve, the state government has also hinted that it was formulating an industrial policy focused on employment and the creation of jobs for young people and arrest insecurity in the state.

Chief Economic Adviser to the Imo State government, Prof. Kenneth Amaechi, explained that the government was considering exploring the digital economy, as a possible next step to deepen the economic development of Imo State.

Amaechi, a professor of sustainable finance at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy and visiting professor of leadership

and financial markets in Africa at the London School of Economics, United Kingdom, pointed out that globally, technology firms have overtaken oil and gas businesses in wealth creation.

Affirming that Imo State has a large population of talented young people to support a digital economy, he said "a digital economy is global in nature and will open the state to the world and help to transcend the limitations of space or geography.

"Someone can be in Owerri and earn money from overseas, you don't need to travel. There are people here who stay in their homes and are working for companies abroad. And so, it will help a lot in addressing unemployment and that is what we are trying to do with the industrial policy," Amaechi stressed.

He further explained that Imo State Industrial Policy is one that is employment-led, pointing out that many industrial policies tend to be investor-led.

Minister applauds 17.92% ICT contribution to Nigeria's GDP

Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Pantami, has applauded the consistent growth and contributions of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which hit 17.92 per cent in the last quarter of 2020 and first quarter of 2021.

The minister, who gave the figures at the opening of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), stated that information and communication technology had continued on an impressive growth trajectory.

He explained that roundtables and technical workshops on building capabilities for sustainable and inclusive digital transformation in Nigeria had ensured that besides digital service, the percentage increase of ICT contribution to the economy was unprecedented.

He noted that digital access and connectivity have become a necessity, as they play an increasingly vital role in everyday lives of Nigerians and have become key drivers of the fourth industrial revolution.

Pantami, who addressed representatives of ITU, FCDO and other international agencies, embassies and Executive Vice Chairman (EVC) of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, underscored the importance of private sector support towards the attainment of the goals of digital economy.

"The Federal Government understands that the enormous support of the private sector and

international organisations are essential in enabling us to realise our goals for Nigeria's digital economy and this has informed our decision to partner with key international organisations such as ITU and FCDO. The digital age is upon us and all relevant stakeholders must be prepared for the enormous, but inevitable changes that will occur," he said.

Pantami also restated the Federal Government's commitment to the development of the digital economy and pledged that the government would ensure that all critical infrastructure was made available to facilitate digital connectivity transformation and realisation of a robust digital economy.

Speaking, Danbatta revealed that government policies in the communications and digital economy sector were already yielding positive results, including a reduction in the access gap, improved digital financial inclusion and a steadily increasing contribution to the country's GDP.

He noted that the sector had remained the most resilient in the country's economy while stressing that the commission recognised the need to do more in strengthening the telecommunication sector and improving Internet penetration.

"As of the end of 2021, the estimated population of people living in the underserved areas declined from 31.16 million in 2019 to 28.87 million in 2021, while the access gaps reduced from 227 to 114," he said.

Danbatta also stated that the NCC would not rest on its oars in supporting Internet penetration and improvement of services, but was prepared to support Internet penetration and digital skills to give concrete expression to policies and initiatives and close identified gaps.

He said: "The commission is quite conscious of the need to do more and considers this as another opportunity to collate feedback and expert opinions of participants. Therefore, all participants are enjoined to contribute freely and recommend measures that will further support Nigeria in meeting its connectivity target and develop a robust digital economy.

"We look forward to the outcome of the deliberations and expect feedback that will deepen the conversations on policies and initiatives for digital access and connectivity in Nigeria."



Prof. Isa Ali Pantami

Nigeria, India unveil forum to boost trade, investments

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

Nigeria and India have inaugurated the Nigeria and India Business Council (NIBC) to serve as a forum for expansion of trade and investments between the two countries in new areas of interest such as Fintech, artificial intelligence, renewable energy and technology, among others.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, who unveiled the platform in Abuja on Wednesday, said the NIBC would result in mutually beneficial economic exchanges for both countries in the preferred sectors.

Speaking on the theme: *Expanding Trade And Investment Opportunities Between Nigeria And India*, Osinbajo, who was represented by the Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Olamilekan Adegbite, said both countries have a dynamic business environment and potential, which provide opportunities for trade and investments in addition to their common aspiration for promoting economic growth and improving the welfare and material condition of the people.

"Nigeria and India have shared interest to successfully tackle the challenges facing the global public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic and the fallout of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

"There are many areas in which both countries can build the already active bilateral relationship including education, creative industry, digital economy, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, manufacturing, oil and gas and I am certain that such ties will continue to blossom.

"Indeed, I expect that the NIBC will be an active vehicle to further strengthen and consolidate our relationship and also serve as a platform to coordinate and facilitate investment and business interactions," he said.

Noting that both countries were already collaborating on defence



Vice President Yemi Osinbajo

to curb insecurity in Nigeria, Osinbajo, however, canvassed more collaboration in the areas of entrepreneurship and vocational training, stressing that India has been able to use entrepreneurship to reduce its unemployment level to about 70 per cent, while Nigeria's unemployment level is quite high at about 35 per cent.

"Similarly through entrepreneurship, India has boosted its export of goods and services to about \$546 billion, while that of Nigeria is only at \$70 billion. There is also the need for emphasis on skills acquisition and capacity building, which puts large numbers of young people to work, as well as boost the nation's capacity innovation, technology and contributing to the nation's economic growth," he added.

Speaking, the visiting India Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Vmuredharan, said Nigeria had always been a preferred investment destination for Indian businesses, maintaining that there were over 135 Indian companies estimated to have invested over \$20 billion in the

country.

"It is also a matter of pride that companies owned by Indians or persons of Indian origin are reputed to be the second largest providers of employment in Nigeria. The country has a large talented and growing youth population, abundant natural resources, democratic and business friendly government, while the strong cultural bonds between our people have fuelled rising economic engagement between both countries.

"But there is still great potential to enhance our economic cooperation and with the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, both countries must look to vigorously make up for lost opportunities in the last two years," he said.

On the trade front, the minister said Nigeria has been India's largest trade partner in Africa and a valuable energy partner, stressing that bilateral trade between both countries in 2021 and 2022 rose substantially to about \$14.95 billion.

Responding, Nigeria's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Zubairu Dada, said both countries would strive to strengthen bilateral cooperation, even as he assured that the Federal Government will continue to provide an enabling environment for investors.

Nigerian High Commissioner to India, Ahmed Sule, who said the NIBC is a platform to identify potential business partners and provide opportunities to leverage them, charged the delegates to interact with their Nigerian counterparts to explore the country's vast potential.

On his part, Indian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Gangadharan Balasubramanian, who said about 135 Indian companies in different sectors are in Nigeria providing thousands of jobs, stressed the need for more investments in manufacturing, Fintech, artificial intelligence, green agriculture, renewable energy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), among others.

Prices of food items rise in July, says NBS •As prices of local products drop

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has disclosed that the prices of selected food items increased in July 2022 when compared to their prices in the corresponding month of last year.

In its selected food prices watch report for July 2022 released in Abuja recently, NBS stated that the average price of 1kg of beans rose by 23.22 per cent from N444.21 in July 2021 to N547.38 in July 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the price increased by 2.09 per cent from N536.17 in June to N547.38 in July 2022, it added.

It also stated that the average price of 1kg of tomatoes increased on a yearly basis by 7.71 per cent from N446.81 in July 2021 to N446.83 in July 2022, while the average price of 1kg beef in July 2022 increased by 27.58 per cent from N660.76 in July last year to N853.12 in July 2022.

The NBS also stated that the average price of all products

increased dramatically, adding that the price of groundnut oil stood at N858.03, amounting to an increase of 40.24 per cent in July 2022, while the average price of a bottle of groundnut oil stood at N1,078.11 in July 2022, showing an increase of 40.24 per cent from N768.91 in July 2021.

It added that the average price of 1kg of local rice increased on a year-on-year basis by 13.55 per cent from N411.77 in July 2021 to N630.10 in July 2022, while the average price of a bottle of palm oil stood at N890.67 in July 2022, showing an increase of 40.19 per cent from the N655.31 recorded in July 2021.

State by state analysis showed that Ebonyi recorded the highest average increase in the price of 1kg of beans in July 2021 at N900.51, while the lowest price was recorded in Borno State at N317.73.

However, *The Trumpet* investigation at Sabo Market in Ikorodu

and Mile 12 International Foodstuff Market in Lagos, showed that the prices of the local food items reduced marginally, as the price of white garri, otherwise called 'Bendel garri' that sold for N800 per rubber paint in June sold for N700 in July.

While Ijebu garri that sold for N700 per paint in June 2021 sold for N600 or N650 per paint depending on the quality and seller, *The Trumpet* findings showed that four big new yams that were sold for between N6,500 and N7000 in June 2021, sold for between N5,000 and N6,000 depending on the seller and the buyer's bargaining power.

While a bunch of plantain that was sold for about N2,500 and N2,800 in July 2021 increased to between N3,000 and N3,500 in July 2022, the price of local rice dropped marginally from about N32,000 to N30,000 depending on the brand and seller in July 2021 to between N30,000 and N27,500 in July 2022 depending on the brand and quality.



Real estate devt: Edo strengthens synergy among stakeholders in construction industry

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

To strengthen collaboration among stakeholders in the state's construction industry, the Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO) and the Edo Development and Property Agency (EDPA) have held a strategic meeting with distributors of building materials in the state to promote local content use among builders.

Managing Director, Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO), Mr Kelvin Uwaibi, speaking during the meeting, said there was a need to forge alliance and partnership among stakeholders in the industry to ensure that a substantial amount of materials used in building constructions in the state are from local manufacturers and distributors.

He said the move was

necessary to mitigate the use of sub-standard materials in building construction so as to forestall building collapse and other hazards.

According to Uwaibi, "We are very concerned about the improvement of businesses in Edo. One of the challenges that we have had is that, when investors come, they complain about the capacity of the local businesses. We are looking at promoting local content in building projects in the state.

"Edo products have to meet international standards. For example, if an investor or a developer buys rods to construct his storey building and the building collapses, that will be an issue. So, how do we ensure that the rods manufactured in Edo State can meet the right standards? Bearing in mind that the more that is produced here, the better for the businesses and the economy"

He added: "We have observed that most of the Diaspora brothers and sisters invest huge amounts of their exchange in consumption and construction. The construction is where you people belong. I had a conversation with an investor who said he spent over 250 million naira on his residential house in Edo State and over 80 percent of that money went to another state because he had to bring workers and materials from there.

"You can see that for us to be able to strengthen local content, we need to also strengthen local capacity. We are trying to look



Kelvin Uwaibi

at this right now and as we get along, other sister agencies will come to support us to see how we can together strengthen the industry. We are going to expand the conversation further"

The Managing Director, Edo Development and Property Agency (EDPA), Mr John Zedomi noted that there was the need to interface with stakeholders in the building materials sector within the state in order to understand the issues they face.

He said: "We want to deliver affordable housing to the people of Edo State. We need to see standard materials that are affordable and available

in the state. Materials that are sourced locally grow the local economy. We want to first interface with the distributors of building materials so that we can begin to sanitize and collaborate with them to ensure that we can deliver the right housing that is affordable to the people"

President of the New Builders Association, Edo State, Mr Oyang Paul Ubah noted that the problem of sub-standard building materials can be addressed by establishing strong synergy with the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) and other standardization and regulatory authorities in the state and the country.

Ebonyi Govt donates N18m to victims of collapsed building

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, Abakaliki

Ebonyi State Government has donated the Sum of 18 million Naira as palliative to families of victims of collapsed building at Eke Aja Market in Uburu, Ohaozara Local Government Council of the State.

Families of those who lost their lives received the sum of 3 million Naira each through their next of kin, while those who sustained injuries received the sum of 2 million Naira each.

It would be recalled that the building collapse incident which occurred on the 20th of May 2022 claimed four lives while three others sustained various degrees of injuries.

The State Governor, Engr David Umahi, represented by the Deputy Governor, Dr Kelechi Igwe, while presenting the cheques to the beneficiaries at Obiozara, the Council's Headquarter described the incident as unfortunate, hence the decision of the State Government to look

into the plights of the families of the victims.

"We are here today to empathize with the victims of the unfortunate incident that claimed the lives of four persons while three persons are receiving treatment at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Abakalilki. It is our prayer that it will not happen again in any part of Ebonyi State. Once in a while, we find ourselves in an inexplicable circumstance but we should see it as an act of God which no Man can control."

He encouraged the beneficiaries to strive to make judicious use of the money to cushion the effects of the unfortunate incident.

The secretary to Ebonyi State Government, Dr Kenneth Ugbala explained that the Governor out of magnanimity approved the financial assistance after deliberations in the Executive Council.

While encouraging the families to put behind their sorrows, Dr Ugbala assured that the Government will always stand by them at all times.



Gov. Engr David Umahi

Edo extends Operation Show Your Building Plan to Ekpoma

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Edo State Ministry of Physical Planning, Urban and Regional Development will on Thursday commence Operation Show Your Building Plan (OSYBP) exercise in Ekpoma, Esan West Local Government Area of Edo Central Senatorial Zone of the State.

In a statement, the Ministry said the exercise is intended to extend the Building Approval sensitisation campaign to Edo Central Senatorial District, to ensure that laws and regulations on buildings and physical planning are enforced uniformly across the State and adhered to.

"Developers in the area will be expected to show their Planning Permits upon demand. Buildings that constitute infractions will be sealed. The teams from Benin City will join their colleagues to carry out a town-wide exercise. Residents are enjoined to co-operate with officers of the Ministry to avoid the breach of the peace," it said.

According to the statement, the government "is determined to ensure that we monitor developments across the State and certify that all buildings meet the minimum standards set by the Ministry. This is in line with the Masterplans being developed for the State and to prevent incidences of building

collapse.

"The exercise will be extended to major towns in the State which include Uromi, Irrua, Ubiaja, Auchu and Igarra. This will ensure that they are properly captured within the State's Masterplans.

"The exercise will enable us to ascertain the level of compliance of developers in the area offices to building regulations. We want to know how many of the developers have applied for building plans, and in addition, do an on-the-spot needs assessment of what other requirements may be needed to deliver on the requirements for town planning work in the area offices."

Many trapped as Mall Collapses in Abuja

By GENESIS ERIRIOMA

A two-storey building housing a mall in Kubwa, a suburb within Abuja Municipal Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, collapsed on Thursday night the

Trumpet gathered.

As of the time of this publication, five people have been rescued by a joint rescue operation of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigeria Police Force, and some residents.

One of the rescued victims, Hafeez Olayinka, while recounting his ordeal, confirmed that the building had collapsed on Thursday night at about 11:30 pm, but they were only rescued in the early hours of Friday and were taken to the hospital.

He noted that he arrived at the collapsed building on Monday to fix up some things in the building.

"We've been trapped since Thursday night. I have been here since Monday to fix up some things in the building. "At

about 11:30 pm on Thursday, we noticed that the building was collapsing, and we tried to escape. But five of us were rescued this morning, and they took us to the hospital." Olayinka narrated.



Important points to note before buying land in Nigeria

By GENESIS ERIRIOMA

The word Landlord is a big word in the Nigerian space because it is considered a lifetime achievement to own a piece of land. Considering the numerous attendant benefits of owning a land, there is little wonder as to why anyone who becomes buoyant enough seeks to buy and own a land in Nigeria.

Land is a sure good way to make profits, especially for those in the real estate sector, whether it be bought for resale or development of housing units, however, as common as the need to buy a land is in the country, not everyone is equipped with the considerations that should be put in place before paying their hard-earned money for a piece of land.

This has made many fall victims to fraudsters and fake developers who swindle buyers by selling them non-existent vacant lands, or lands in locations with zero economic relevance.

To make the best decision in the purchase of land, there are six (6) basic things to be considered itemized below:

Budget

The first step for the buyer is to know the actual cost for the land and other additional important documentation that

comes with the purchase of the land.

When this is properly researched, the intending buyer knows how best to budget for the land he or she wants to buy.

Some of the extra expenses that must be put into consideration when planning your budget are; legal fees: this is usually 5% of the cost of the land; Agency fees are also around 5% of the cost of the land; survey plan: depending on your choice of location, it is usually in the range of N100,000 to N300,000; and also the cost of getting all the required documents such as Certificate of Occupancy (C of O), Governor's consent etc. from the government.

Land Size

While experienced professionals may be used to land sizes and measurements, some first-time intending owners get confused as to the various measurements.

There are different land sizes and these sizes also play vital roles in the prices of a land. Professionally, lands are basically measured in acres, plots, and hectares.

An acre is much bigger than a plot and is the standard unit of measurement used by most land sellers. In terms of measurement, it is the product of a rectangle plot of land that is about 4,046

square meters or 43,560 square feet. An acre usually consists of 6 plots, each measuring about 60 x 120ft. However, an acre is roughly 40% of a hectare.

A plot is an arbitrary term used to describe a land division set out for developmental purposes, the size of a plot may vary for different reasons but according to Nigeria's land division, the recommended plot for house construction is 50 x 100ft.

The hectare is the largest of the three sizes. A hectare measures about 100m x 100m, or 328 feet x 328 feet, or 10,000 square meters. A hectare is about two and a half acres which are usually about 15 plots. The size of a hectare has been a bone of contention between prospective buyers and real estate developers.

It is important to note that though plots, acres and hectares are standard measurements, factors like land location, possession, and circumstances leading to the transaction, there are different variations in measurements.

Location

Location is a very big determinant of the cost of land. It should be a major consideration when budgeting for the land.

In the world of real estate, the location plays a vital role in the overall value of the land. It should be noted that the value

of a land is different from the price of the land at the time of purchase as value incorporate other factors such as future sale value, potential growth of the area, proximity to infrastructures and amenities amongst others.

Purpose of Land Purchase

The question is, what is the major reason for purchasing the land? The purpose of buying a land should also greatly influence the decision of purchase. As land can be used for various reasons such as agriculture, building construction, direct re-sale, setting up of industry, it is on the intending buyer to check if the land in question satisfies his or her need.

Documentations

Most times, people fall victim to land fraud and fail to get the necessary documentation for the land or sometimes some of these documents are faked by fraudulent sellers.

Buying land without getting the necessary documents is a recipe for disaster so a prospective buyer must first investigate if the seller in question has the legal authority to sell the land.

It is essential you ask for the proof of ownership from the seller before carrying out any transaction and if such cannot be provided, chances are, it is

a fraudulent transaction.

It is also in the same vein that you must ensure you have all the documents required after the transaction, in order to avoid unnecessary issues with the government or land grabbers.

It is best advice to seek the help of a legal practitioner at this point.

Documentation of purchase

It is important to make all efforts to identify a good land that suits your purpose, hiring professionals to authenticate the documents can easily be wiped away if an intending buyer fails to document the purchase of the land.

As much as possible, avoid the use of cash for land purchases, so as to ensure electronic traceability.

Also, you must ensure everything is properly documented from the cost of the land to the receipt of survey fees.

Lastly, it is also paramount to engage a lawyer in order to prepare a purchase receipt in which all parties can sign to acknowledge payments through any of the bank channels.

This cancels the possibility of a seller denying the exact amount paid, when it was paid and for the purpose it was paid, and yes, that extra charge of the lawyer is totally worth it.

How I fell out of my law ambition -Chinedu Ikedieze

'Aki' Chinedu Ikedieze is a Nigerian actor, entrepreneur, and serial investor. Having featured in countless films and numerous entrepreneurship projects; Aki became one of Nollywood's most successful & sought-after actors after he landed a role in the 2002 comedy flick 'Aki Na Ukwa'. In this interview, he tells OMONIYI ALLI, about the journey thus far, his many ambitions, handling distractions amongst other issues.

Q: Following the remake of 'Aki Na Ukwa', titled 'Aki and PawPaw', it seemed like you were reminding the Nigerian audience where the name came from.

A: No. The truth is that the moniker, Aki and Pawpaw are household names and have come to stay. The executive producer just chose to remake it, and this time decided to go with the character names, Aki and PawPaw. The movie is a sequel to the original 'Aki Na Ukwa'. If it was an embryo, this remake would be considered long overdue. Osita and I had wanted to do it, we had discussed it severally, but it is not the kind of movie that can be done in a wishy-washy way, it is an epic story, and we didn't just want to jump into it. We were still on it when Charles Okpaleke approached us. He had already started doing other remakes, 'Living in Bondage: Breaking Free', 'Nneka the Pretty Serpent' and the rest of them, so we felt comfortable working with him.

Q: Were you worried at any point that your fans would not receive the movie well?

A: No. I am an actor, why should I be worried? You simply have to be convincing, and I let them know that we are still there, and we will always be there.

Q: Please tell us the back story behind Aki Na Ukwa?

A: When Osita and I got our scripts, we didn't think of it as a comic movie so we were acting normally. The screenwriter wrote the script and intended for it to be a film that was heavy on life lessons and morals. Maybe there was a bit of comic expectations, especially from some other actors like my father in the movie, the late Sam Loco and some other big comic actors, but not from us. We were just acting like little kids with no intention to make people laugh or roll on the floor. We were just acting normally. If you watch the film again, you will notice that we were just



interpreting the role of innocent children

Q: Did you foresee the film becoming a success at the time?

A: I didn't really think that the movie would be an instant hit but I think it was a success because of the chemistry Osita and I share. The movie was a first, something Nigerians and the movie industry hadn't seen until then. It was the first time people would see two child actors who blended easily in one movie.

Q: Having starred in over 150 Nollywood films, do you have a favourite?

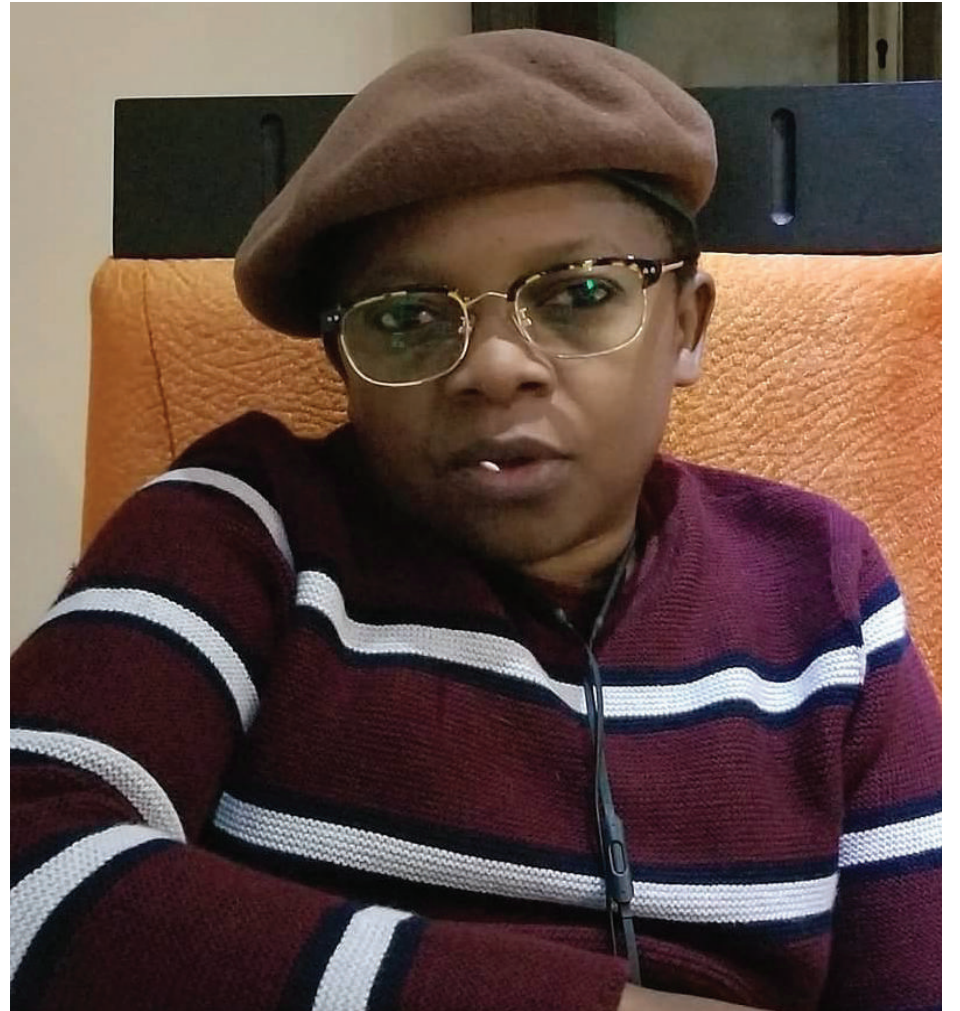
A: It definitely has to be 'Aki na Ukwa' because it was the film that shot me into limelight. I am also eternally grateful to the late Chukwuka Emeliyeonwu. He took a very big risk when he invested his money in that movie. Even though he didn't write the script, but for him to agree to invest his money, even after he was banned by his union for distributing the movie, he managed to market the movie using his brother's distribution company. 'Aki Na Ukwa' became the highest-grossing movie for him selling throughout Africa and other parts of the world. He made money, even though the movie was massively pirated as well.

Q: Your role as Efe Johnson in the Africa Magic series 'The Johnson' was a surprising addition to your repertoire as an actor. Surprising because the audience did not expect to see you in a serious role like that. As an actor, what kind of roles do you embody more?

A: All of the above. I never want to limit myself to a particular genre of acting. Yes, I started as a comic actor, but that is not all I want to be known for. I may be a comic actor, but I am an actor in general. There is something about comedy, it gives you the opportunity to evade people's lives and find a way in between to generate happiness. So everything that you can do to evoke that feeling gives you joy. That is why it seems like I love comedy. The situation in the country is brutal, and the only way we can survive is to be happy. In Nigeria, you must force that happiness. That is why I seem to pay more attention to comic roles. Wherever I go, I radiate the feelings of people, I bring in life. People see laughter and joy, and so if my presence alone can stir such feelings and emotions, then I am doing great since this is my profession.

Q: Will it be right to say you are fulfilled as an actor?

A: In all sincerity, I will say yes. As a little boy, I grew up with so many aspirations. I wanted to become a doctor because my uncle is a doctor. After I had some encounters in secondary school, I wanted to become a lawyer. But aside, I nursed a love for acting. It, however, wasn't a part of my dreams. I always knew that I could do those things I watched on TV. As a little boy, I did not believe



that anything was impossible. I always had the belief that if I tried I could do it, even though I may not have the financial capability to achieve it. I had a lot of wild pool of ideas. Looking back, I'm glad I took to acting and I am beyond fulfilled.

Q: What happened to your law ambition?

A: I was denied admission into law because I didn't get the JAMB cut-off mark. I accepted to study Mass Communication at the Institute of Management & Technology (IMT) in Enugu after my sister-in-law persuaded me to. I took up Mass Communication in a polytechnic with the thought that it was part-time so that I would sit for another JAMB exam so I can try Law again. I tried JAMB and got Law, but at that time I had already fallen in love with Mass Communication so I rejected the admission. The moment I fell in love with Mass Communication I began to see a path to Nollywood and I grabbed it.

Q: In many ways, your popularity was recently renewed with the advent of memes on social media with your face on it, even as far as global Twitter. Do people ever send those memes to you?

A: Yes. A lot of times, many of the memes and gifs are mostly culled out of movies that I have done. You would also be surprised to learn that most of them are from India.

Q: How do you handle constant, distract-

ing attention from fans and movie lovers who simply want to hang around you?

A: It can be distracting but you can't run away from it, it has become part of my life. I live with it, so I can't deviate. There is something about managing human beings that I learned from one of my psychology lecturers. He used to say that the most difficult species to manage are humans, not even animals. He would say that if you can stay with three people in a house for one year without fighting, then you can live with anybody. Even when there is a problem and you argue, so far as you can make up and move on, then you can be with people. When I was in school, in my first and second years, we were six in a room. It wasn't even a room; it was a kitchen. We lived amicably and there were no issues. Whenever we had arguments, we settled them without anyone knowing anything was wrong. I always tell people that even when I am not in a great mood and people approach me, I must be courteous. There was a day I was almost in tears and people came greeting me; they didn't know what I was passing through, but I managed to squeeze out a happy face because these people were unaware of what I was passing through emotionally. I see them the way I see myself, and I relate with them the same way. I try to let that relationship exist because if you begin to act like they don't exist, you make things worse for yourself. Without them, there would be no me.

'I have never raped before'- actor Moses Armstrong cries out



Nollywood actor Moses Armstrong has denied the rape allegations levelled against him.

The embattled movie star made this known

via his Facebook page stating, "Nothing Pass God. If you believe, you will receive. Nothing Pass God. I did not rape anybody. I don't rape...I have never raped..."

And I will never rape. I'm back stronger and better...I'm happy I went to prison, God went with me," he wrote.

"The experience is awesome. You will hear it soon. Blessings to all of you Angels that believed in me. Love you all deeply. #ONELOVE #AkwalbomFinest."

Armstrong was arrested by men of the Akwa Ibom State Police Command in June for allegedly defiling a 16-year-old girl.

Reacting to the news at the time of his arrest, the president of the Actors Guild of Nigeria, Emeka Rollas, described the case as "a very serious one."

"To get involved with a child as young as 16yrs is not something I and the association I do not represent, would not stand for. This is a very sad development involving a member of ours, but I wouldn't want to comment any further on this case," he said.

Rollas revealed that the case is being handled by the first lady of Akwa Ibom State, Martha Udom Emmanuel through her Family Empowerment and Youth Re-Oriented Path Initiative. He was then charged with the rape of a minor and supplying abortion drugs.

His counsel Emmanuel Pantaleon drew the court's attention to his bail application filed on behalf of his client on July 25 and sought the leave of the court to proceed to entertain it.

The prosecution, I.U. Robert, an assistant state counsel, while opposing the bail application, cited relevant judicial authorities and urged the court to dismiss the application which he described as an "abuse of court process."

The Judge, Ntong Ntong, after hearing submissions from both counsels, upheld the defence counsel's application and granted bail to Mr Armstrong in the sum of N5 million.

Singer, Deb China, announces EP project

Following a successful dancing career, Deb China is making a steady inroad into the music terrain and has announced her first EP in commemoration of her birthday next February.

The Imo State-born dancer and singer took many of her fans by surprise earlier this year when she dropped a song titled 'Maradona', a move many never thought she couldn't accomplish, having been recognised as an accomplished dancer over the years. Talks were still on as to whether her release of the said song was just a fluke, but few weeks after, the curvy and light-skinned diva unleashed another single on her teeming listeners and fans.

Then, it was a mid-tempo song she titled 'High Me' and which has since travelled as far as the United Kingdom while debuting on radio chart shows in Europe.

The soon-to-be-released EP, according to the 'Maradona' crooner born Deborah Nkemjika, promises to serve every interest; from dancehall to RnB, amapiano, and other genres in the five-track EP.

Deb China, loved for not just her dance and music skills, is also being admired for what is seen as 'bodily endowment'. She was spotted recently in Lagos with some top industry captains as speculations are rife that she just might be up to some of the strong collaborative projects in the industry. Although, before the release of the forthcoming EP, she has promised to deliver two singles within the remaining part of the year 2022.

She's arguably one of the shining female singers to look forward to in the industry and the new year in particular.



Mo Abudu makes debut as a director with two short films



Mo Abudu, CEO
EbonyLife group

Nigerian film producer and CEO of EbonyLife Group, Mo Abudu is about to see one of her cherished dreams come true. Beginning late August 2022, she will direct two short films, and be in charge of the whole filmmaking process for the very first time. Since her first full-length feature, Fifty, in 2015, she has guided the storytelling process as an executive producer and visionary, but always sought experienced directors to helm each project.

Ms Abudu attended London Film School in 2017 and completed the course in directing, with the aim of improving her filmmaking skills. However, she enjoyed the experience so much that she decided she would direct

when the time was right.

In a statement, Mo Abudu said, "I believe in learning and understanding any major assignment I undertake. Directing is an art form that takes years to master, so I'm beginning with baby steps. I have written two short films that I will be directing - 'Her Perfect Life' and 'Iyawo Mi (My Wife)', a predominantly Yoruba language film.

"Although these stories are fictional, they highlight the mental health challenges, hardly spoken about in Nigerian society that many people deal with all over the world. Mental health issues can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, income or social class, and they are on the increase."

As CEO of EbonyLife TV, Mo Abudu oversaw the production of more than 1,000 hours of content annually. As an executive producer, she has created some of the biggest blockbusters in Nigerian cinema, including The Wedding Party, Chief Daddy, Your Excellency and The Royal Hibiscus Hotel. As part of a major deal with Netflix, her successes include Castle & Castle, Oloture and Blood Sisters.

'Her Perfect Life' stars Pearl Thusi and Joseph Benjamin, supported by Omawunmi Dada, Uzo Osimpka, Christian Paul and Mary Lazarus. The cast of 'Iyawo Mi (My Wife)' includes Adedimeji Lateef, Bolaji Ogunmola, Segun Arinze and Jude Chukwuka.

Africa Film Academy 'Film-in-a-box' Alumni selected to join Toyin Abraham team

Award-winning Nollywood actress, Toyin Abraham has announced the selection of Abiola Oyetunde, one of the students that participated in Africa Film Academy's (AFA) 'Film-in-a-Box' training as one of the writers to work with her on her new project. The selected student is an alumni of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu sponsored 'Film in a box' training and project for emerging filmmakers in Lagos.

The Film-in-a-Box training is a flagship project of AFA that offers immersive and residency training to young aspiring filmmakers. Through the support of the Lagos State Government, over 400 students have been trained in different areas of filmmaking by top professionals in the field.

The selected student, Abiola Oyetunde recently completed a screening training with the first cohort at the just concluded training which was held in Alimosho area of Lagos State. Abiola Oyetunde who was selected by the 'Alakada' star to join her

team is one of the 13 finalists selected by Toyin Abraham-Ajeyemi.

He expressed his delight at the selection. Abiola said he was glad to have been chosen from the thousands of writers who applied across the country. He further expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to learn from expert faculties that was afforded to him by the Lagos State Government and Africa Film Academy.

"I was really glad to have been a part of the Film in a box training. Learning about synopsis, situations, and treatment has helped me to take hold of this opportunity. We get to do the same thing here as a team. I am grateful to Mummy Toyin Abraham for this opportunity," said Abiola while sharing the news with the AFA team.

The 'Film in a box' project and training is one of the projects commissioned by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu under the THEMES agenda through the Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf led Ministry of Tourism,

Culture and Arts. The project is scheduled to hold in Epe, Badagry, Ikorodu, and Alimosho areas of Lagos state.

On her part, the founder of Africa Film Academy and AMAAs, Peace Anyiam-Osigwe said she's delighted about the move. She further said the adoption shows that the Governor Sanwo-Olu supported project is making landmark strides among youths in the Lagos metropolis.



Relationship

Things you do that frustrate your spouse

Have you ever experienced the plight of not being understood? There are certain things you do in your relationship that can get your spouse frustrated and tired of the relationship and you wouldn't even know it. In some cases, all your partner thinks about is how to get out of the relationship and probably move on with their life. One of the worst things that can happen to anyone is remaining in a frustrating relationship and finding it difficult to amend or come out from. So today, we took it upon ourselves to pinpoint 5 things you do consciously or unconsciously that tend to frustrate your spouse

1. Never listen

It gets boring when you do the talking all the time and never give room for listening, it then gets frustrating when you never allow your partner to listen to them speak. This isn't a good attribute of a healthy relationship. When you have laid out or stated your case in front of your partner, wait for them to digest the information or issue and lay their opinion out before you can open up yourself to talk again. You can't have a complete communication chain if it is only you that is doing the talking. Make the relationship conducive for both you and your partner and listen as they talk.

2. You don't care

When you don't care about your relationship, it hurts. And when you show no concern for your partner, it also hurts. If you tend to show no emotion, it is a sign that you probably don't care about what is happening in their lives. If you never show care for your partner, you would never know it when they are overwhelmed by challenges, and somehow, if you get then frustrated by the attitude, their challenge(s) would be waiting somewhere to take a toll on them. As a partner, you are in that relationship to love, hold and support the other party. You shouldn't keep mute concerning your partner. As a guy, if you see your lady is awfully quiet, open up to her and let her know that you are there for her and you are ready to help her through whatever it is. As a woman, you should be able to build up your man. He is not complete without you. So be there for him and complete him.

3. You never want to understand

Have you ever experienced the plight of not being understood or misunderstood? Well, it is one hell of stress that no one wants to constantly experience. Imagine experiencing this almost every day of your life in your relationship, Frustration is just around the corner, please save yourself the unnecessary stress and go for someone that would easily understand you and you also should be ready to understand them. Don't fall head first into a relationship and



come to find out later that you can't understand the guy or the girl in the relationship.

4. Nag/complain

You could get frustrated when you are always nagging or complaining, trust me, the receiver of your complaints will also get tired of it, if not now, then very soon. Reduce or completely stop nagging and complaining too frequently, it's not healthy for your relationship. This does not mean you shouldn't speak up

when you need to. And don't get me wrong, speaking up is way different from nagging. You can speak up and be understood and you can lead the other party to change. But nagging would just cause the other party to walk away from the relationship.

5. You don't play your role

In a relationship, both parties should be able to play their part without hesitating. Imagine a man playing the role of his wife every day of his life, it would become frustrating and soon he

would explode either by transferring aggression or doing something crazy. The relationship gets interesting and enjoyable when everyone performs their roles accordingly. Help yourself and your partner enjoy the relationship by playing your role. Don't leave roles unattended.

There is no point in making the relationship frustrating for your partner. If you're tired, quietly get out of it peacefully if you don't want the relationship anymore.





Diamond League: World champion Tobi Amusan set to defend title in Zurich

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

World 100m record holder and Commonwealth champion Tobi Amusan joined other top athletes in Lausanne to compete in the Athletissima on Friday as the Wanda Diamond League continues towards its crescendo.

Amusan, in a quick return to action after upsetting a world record in Oregon and displaying an uncommon feat at Birmingham in the recently concluded Commonwealth Games, will challenge Puerto Rico's Olympic champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn, world silver medallist Britany Anderson and former world record-holder Kendra Harrison, plus home star Ditaji Kambundji.

The Nigerian-born African champion who catapulted to chatter Kendra Harrison's record with a 12.12s run in the semi-final at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon 2022, should be ready to defend her Diamond League title in Zurich.

Moreover, the 25-year-old gold medallist would thrive to ensure her performances in Lausanne secures her spot



in the Diamond League final back in Switzerland at the Weltklasse meeting in Zurich from September 7-8.

Meanwhile, in the women's 100m which looks like a rerun of the recently concluded World Athletics Championship in Oregon, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Shericka Jackson and Elaine Thompson-Herah, three medallists, battle themselves for a qualifying spot to the crescendo of the Diamond League in Zurich.

Speaking at the pre-event

press conference in Lausanne, 14-time global gold medalist Fraser-Pryce said she was shocked to have ran 10.6s in Kenya this season despite travelling an exhaustive journey from Kingston.

She noted that the key to running fast and sustaining a feat is consistently sticking to a reliable and applicable technique.

"When I started the season I ran 10.6 in Kenya and I was shocked because I travelled all the way from Kingston and I was a bit tired, but then my execution was good," the

global champion said.

"I realised that the key to running fast and having consistent times is making sure that I practice my technique.

"To have that consistency is wonderful and it shows that hard work and staying true to your technique actually works," Fraser-Pryce asseverated.

The 2022 Athletissima meeting is the 45th year of the Swiss event since its inception and was awarded World Athletics Heritage Plaque in this regard.

How Benzema was crowned UEFA 2022 Men's Player of the Year

■ Ancelotti, others, scoop UEFA awards

It is irrefutable, that Karim Benzema, the ace in the 2021-2022 season was extremely instrumental to the success of Los Blancos in the UEFA Champions League last season.

The Real Madrid talisman being crowned the UEFA's Men's Player of the Year for his outstanding and unrivalled performances to seal victories for games that have been written off were one of a kind. His goal-scoring exploits both in the domestic league and Europe were stunning.

Inarguably without distorting facts, Benzema merited the award with overwhelming reasons and stats, including a haul of 15 goals in the UEFA Champions League campaign to hand Los Blancos a fourteenth Champions League trophy.

Shortlisted with his teammate goalie Thibaut Courtois and Manchester City forward Kevin de Bruyne, the Frenchman's performances surpassed the duo's distinctively, pipping them to claim the coveted award.

On the other hand, Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti was awarded the Men's Coach of the Year Award after leading his team to a UEFA Champions League and Spanish La Liga triumph last season.

At 34, Benzema defied age constraints to take off the crown from Jorginho, Chelsea's midfielder whose performances last two seasons ago, complemented the Blues' success in conquering Europe.

Last season, Benzema's hattrick and a goal in the first and second leg respectively in the UEFA Champions League quarter-final, sent Chelsea packing and later went on to win the trophy in France.

Synonymously, both

Madrid's Benzema and Ancelotti took the crowns of Chelsea's duo, Jorginho and Tuchel, UEFA 2021 champions.

During his speech, coach Ancelotti described the Los Blancos talisman as a fantastic striker with a great football attitude.

"Karim is not only a fantastic striker, he is a fantastic footballer with a great attitude," Los Blancos manager said.

Despite being a good friend to the Italian gaffer, Benzema has improved in knowledge and commands leadership in the dressing room.

Ancelotti continued: "This year, he improved his knowledge. His leadership... he is a strong leader in the dressing room.

"He is a good friend of mine... this is not the reason he is going to play, he is going to play the best! We are lucky to have Karim."

Meanwhile, Barcelona's Alexia Putella retained her crown after edging England and Arsenal sensational star Beth Mead to the Women's Player of the Year award.

While Mead was pipped by the Spanish sensation to the Women's crown, Lionesses coach Sarina Wiegman, who guided England to a continental triumph against the Germans in the final, was crowned the Women's Coach of the Year award.



Remarkable Sadio Mané admits to a handball before VAR's call

Since Sadio Mané left Liverpool to Bayern Munich, he has settled invariably well to record his name consistently in every game as the Bundesliga champions kickstarted their season on a classical level.

Mané, like in the preseason tour, scored his first Bundesliga goal for Bayern in the 6-1 thumping of Eintracht Frankfurt at Deutsche Bank Park. Although the prolific striker was unable to get his second against VfL Wolfsburg, refutably, he saved it for VfL Bochum where he netted a brace.

The Senegalese was impressive in the 7-0 routing of Bochum to allay any resultant regret Robert Lewandowski's



exit would have caused the Bavarians.

Former Manchester City's forward Leroy Sané got

the opener before Matthijs de Ligt headed Joshua Kimmich's corner kick into the net.

The third goal for Bayern came from Kingsley Coman, who provided the assist for the Sané's opener, with a powerful right-footed shot to beat Bochum's goalie, Manuel Riemann.

However, something remarkable happened which is worthy of emulation as Mané got the fourth for Bavarians but signified to the referee that it was a handball before VAR made a review to cancel the goal.

Sportsmen, like an established fact, will exploit any advantageous means to defeat their opponents but Mané chose to defile the odds to display honesty and discipline in the game.

Recall that Diego Maradona had utilised this means which was tagged "The hand of God" to edge out England in the 1986 World Cup quarter-final match.

Although the Argentine and Partenopei legend was celebrated, his action invariably questioned the discipline of the game.

Aside from Maradona's, Lionel Messi also repeated the same thing against Espanyol 15 years ago in a La Liga match when Frank Rijkaard was in charge of Barcelona.

Consequently, Mané, having admitted it was a handball, did not waste time as it only took about 2 minutes before he netted Bayern's fourth in the 42nd minute and in the 60th minute, he got his brace.

Covid 19: Novak Djokovic to miss US Open

Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic is set to miss the US Open over his unvaccinated status and would lose the opportunity to tally Rafael Nadal's 22 Grand Slam record.

This is the second time the Serbian is missing out on a Grand Slam contest after he was denied entry in January into Australia to defend the Australian Open title he won

in 2021.

Djokovic has hoped to compete in the US Open and applied for a visa but forgot that the USA since October last year, banned non-vaccinated visitors from entry into its boundaries.

Despite his eagerness to feature in the championship, which he won four years ago for the third time, the 35-year-old posted on his

Twitter account to announce his withdrawal from the title.

"Sadly, I will not be able to travel to NY this time for US Open," he tweeted.

"I'll keep in good shape and positive spirit and wait for an opportunity to compete again," Djokovic added.

"See you soon tennis world," he added.

This decision goes contrary to his statement on July 30

when he said "I am preparing as if I will be allowed to compete."

Nevertheless, the Serb's withdrawal confirms that despite the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) having reviewed some of its rules for unvaccinated citizens a couple of weeks back, certain stringent constraints still persist.

Algeria 2023: Super Eagles B land in Cape Coast

The delegation of Super Eagles B to Ghana for Sunday's African Nations Championship qualifying match against the Black Galaxies has arrived in the Ghanaian coastal city, Cape Coast.

Head Coach Salisu Yusuf is at the head of a contingent that includes 22 players, who will prosecute the home-and-away games against the Galaxies.

The Eagles B and their officials travelled aboard Asky Airline flight from Abuja and landed in Accra after a stop-over in Lome, before a road trip to Cape Coast.

Nigeria and Ghana clash at the Cape Coast Sports Stadium on Sunday evening in the first leg of a final qualifying fixture for a spot at the 7th African Nations

Championship to be staged in Algeria early next year.

Salisu is in Cape Coast with a total of 22 players, including three goalkeepers, eight defenders, six midfielders and five forwards.

SUPER EAGLES B IN CAPE COAST

Goalkeepers: Adeyinka Adewale; Olorunleke Ojo; Kayode Bankole

Defenders: Tope Olusesi; Kazie Enyinnaya; Ebube Duru; Temple Emekayi; Faisal Sani; Samson Gbadebo; Isah Ali; Tosin Adegbite

Midfielders: Babatunde Bello; Morice Chukwu; Chiamaka Madu; Joseph Onoja; Afeez Nosiru; Zulkifli Rabiu

Forwards: Adamu Abubakar; Chidiebere Nwobodo; Chijioko Akuneto; Ossi Martin; Andy Okpe

Mané, Lewandowski to clash in UEFA Champion League group stage

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

UFEA Champions League draws have been made with clubs selected to face each other for a tight contest in the group stage to pip others for the top qualifying spot.

Rangers, who last featured in the UEFA Champions League 12 years ago and qualified after pipping Dutch topflight PSV Eindhoven to the ticket, will face Liverpool, Ajax, and Napoli in Group A.

Exciting is that of Bayern Munich and Barcelona where Robert Lewandowski will return to Allianz Arena after leaving unceremoniously in the summer to face Bayern's new bride, Sadio Mané in Group C.

The former Bayern talisman Lewandowski, who forced his move to unite with coach Xavi Hernandez at Barcelona should expectantly be ready for a loathsome reception.

In another vein, Erling Haaland will face his former club Borussia Dortmund in a reunion after Dortmund, Sevilla, FC Copenhagen and Manchester City were drawn together in Group G.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GROUP-STAGE DRAW IN FULL

Group A: Ajax, Liverpool, Napoli, Rangers.
Group B: Porto, Atletico

Madrid, Bayer Leverkusen, Club Brugge.

Group C: Bayern Munich, Barcelona, Inter Milan, V Plzen.

Group D: Frankfurt, Tottenham, Sporting, Marseille.

Group E: AC Milan, Chelsea, Salzburg, Dinamo Zagreb.

Group F: Real Madrid, Leipzig, Shakhtar Donetsk, Celtic.

Group G: Man City, Sevilla, Borussia Dortmund, Copenhagen.

Group H: PSG, Juventus, Benfica, Maccabi Haifa.

DATES FOR THE GROUP STAGE GAMES

Matchday 1: September 6/7
Matchday 2: September 13/14

Matchday 3: October 4/5
Matchday 4: October 11/12

Matchday 5: October 25/26
Matchday 6: November 1/2

DATES FOR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ROUND-OF-16 DRAW

The round-of-16 draw will take place on November 7 at 12pm CET in Nyon, Switzerland.

ALL KEY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE DATES

The 2022/23 Champions League final will take place on June 10, 2023, at the Atatürk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, which was the venue for Liverpool's famous comeback victory over AC Milan in 2005.



Semi-finals: May 9/10 & 16/17, 2023
Final: June 10, 2023, Atatürk's Olympic Stadium (Istanbul, Turkey)
Quarter-finals: April 11/12 & 18/19, 2023

Ogunbote plays down 3SC loss to Vandrezzer

The newly appointed technical adviser of Shooting Stars Sports Club (3SC) of Ibadan, Gbenga Ogunbote, has taken positives from the loss to Vandrezzer FC in Lagos.

Ogunbote attributed the loss to insufficient time to adequately prepare 3SC for the game.

According to the football gaffer, who is fondly dubbed the "Oracle", the 1-0 loss to the Lagos-based club in a Group A match by Oluyole Warriors in the Value Jet Cup Preseason Tournament held at the Remo Stars Stadium, Ikenne, was taken in good faith.

"We only trained for two

days before coming for this match and all I can say is that we are going to take the positives from this game as we progress in our build-up to the season," the ex-Remo coach told the media in a post-match interview.

"We had a decent game in the first half but the second half was a bit low. We take the positive out of the game and come out good in the next game," he added.

Vandrezzer netted in the 53rd minute to secure a narrow win over 3SC. However, the latter aim to improve on their performances while taking positives from the loss to tackle Jebu-United on Saturday.

NIKE contract extension, wake-up call for sponsors, claims Pinnick

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick has called on sponsors of Nigeria football to follow the footsteps of renowned kit manufacturers, Nike, and brace up to expectations.

Pinnick called on more corporate bodies to support Nigeria football.

In a statement by the NFF President on Thursday, after Nike extended its contract with the NFF until December 2026, he commended the members of the NFF Executive Committee and the Secretary-General, Dr Mohammed Sanusi, adding that Nigeria Breweries PLC have also extended theirs by a year.

Pinnick added that before the deal was signed with Nike, certain gray areas were addressed.

"We talked about several areas they needed to look into and we finally got a deal and extension of the contract until December 2026," he said.

"I give the credit for this to Members of the NFF Executive Committee and the General Secretary. The new agreement lends credence to NIKE's faith in Nigeria Football and what

we are doing as a Federation. It is a wake-up call for our other sponsors and partners to extend their agreements and for more players in Corporate Nigeria to support the Nigeria game.

"We have also succeeded in getting our partners Nigerian Breweries PLC to extend their contract with the NFF by one year. Initially, their relationship with the NFF was due to end this year.

"We got talking and met several times, and finally they agreed to extend by another year after which they will perform a review of the relationship," Pinnick added.

The NFF President divulged that the negotiations took about a month before an agreement was finally reached with Nike to extend its contract.



Kamaru Usman accepts to challenge Leon Edwards in England

Former pound-for-pound welterweight champion, Kamaru Usman, has accepted a challenge that results in a trilogy with Leon Edwards in England for the UFC 278 rematch.

Usman on Saturday, August 5, 2022, lost the title to Edwards just a few seconds to end the final round, was struck with a powerful kick that knocked him out completely.

The 35 years old Nigerian was rushed to the hospital but recuperated quickly to brush off any insinuation he was badly injured.

However, the organisers of the championship are inclined towards completing a trilogy and have picked England as the venue where Edwards will have to defend the title before Usman.

Dana White, the UFC President, added that the first title defence for Edwards will take place in England.

Following the above resolution, Usman has accepted that challenge that will see him compete with the Brit, adding that the country is a home to many Africans.

"I wanna go to England. I feel like England is my second home. You know, England is half African, people don't know that," Usman told the media.

"It's time to go over there and entertain my English people," he assured.

Edwards, the reigning UFC 278 welterweight champion, who turned his imminent defeat to victory within a pace of seconds, is prepared to defend his title in Wembley, England.

While Edwards

acknowledged the opportunity to fight in Wembley, praising the UK Mixed Martial Art for being on the rise, his team is confident that the champion will defeat Usman in the third round.

"To have the opportunity to headline a card at Wembley in the UK, in a sold-out arena, with all the other UK guys would be amazing," he said.

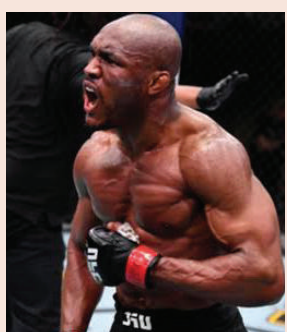
"UK MMA is on the rise and I'm happy to now be the front runner and to motivate the guys and show them that we can do more," Edwards added.

Responding to claims by Edwards team that he will fall in the third round, Usman said the UFC champion dished out his best performance while he performed his worst.

"That was his best performance, that was the best he had to offer," Usman said.

"And that was the worst I had to offer. So if we do have a rematch, it'll be a totally different story," Usman added.

Usman first defeated Edwards in 2015 in a unanimous decision but was handed a revenge that knocked him out.



NFF Elections: Electoral Committee rolls out roadmap

The NFF Electoral Committee 2022 on Wednesday rolled out the timetable for the elections that have been scheduled for Friday, 30th September 2022 in Benin City, capital of Edo State.

The process for a new NFF Executive Committee to replace the Amaju Pinnick-led board that has served for eight years will commence properly on Monday, 29th August with the sales of nomination forms, endorsements and return of

forms. This particular process will last until Thursday, 8th September 2022.

The screening of candidates will be within two days – Friday, 9th and Saturday, 10th September. On Monday, 12th September, the names of candidates that scaled the screening procedure will be released by the Electoral Committee.

Between Monday, 12th September and Thursday, 15th September, candidates not satisfied with the

screening procedure can elect to submit protests while the hearing and determination of the appeals will be done on Friday, 16th and Saturday, 17th September by noon daily.

The Electoral Committee will release the final list of successful candidates for the elections on Monday, 19th September, with campaigning by the successful candidates to commence on Tuesday, 20th September and end by midnight on Thursday, 29th September 2022.



AITEO Cup: Three quarter-final matches hold Saturday

The cities of Jos, Kaduna and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, will witness top-class football action this weekend as the quarter-final matches of this year's AITEO Cup competition (men's version) take place.

Niger Tornadoes and Lobi Stars are the combatants in Jos to determine a slot in the semi-finals while top-tier teams Wikki Tourists and Nasarawa United clash in Kaduna.

Kogi United, the surprise team of this year's competition, are up against Kano Pillars at the Area 3 Stadium, Abuja.



It would be recalled that the Executive Committee of the Nigeria Football Federation, at its meeting on 18th August adopted the resolutions of a peace meeting of Club representatives with NFF officials that agreed to a

rebooting of the AITEO Cup Competition 2022 (men's version) from the quarter-final stage.

A notice to Football Associations of the States hosting the quarter-final matches has clarified that

the fourth match between Heartland FC of Owerri and Katsina United FC is determined to have been won and lost, with Heartland FC the winners and already in possession of a semi-final ticket.

AITEO CUP COMPETITION 2022 QUARTER-FINAL FIXTURES (MEN)

Niger Tornadoes Vs Lobi Stars - 27/08/22 – Jos – 4pm
Wikki Tourists Vs Nasarawa United - 27/08/22 – Kaduna – 4pm
Kogi United Vs Kano Pillars - 27/08/22 – Area 3, Abuja – 4pm



Nigeria hockey team get automatic qualification to 2023 All African Games

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

Nigeria men's national hockey team have secured an automatic qualification to the 2023 All African Games in Ghana.

This is coming on the heels after one of the national teams slated to battle for one of two qualifying tickets withdrew from the qualifiers supposedly to hold on Thursday at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Three national teams, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, were grouped to battle for two qualifying tickets to the All African Games in the North-West African Qualifier scheduled from 25-30 August.

However, on Thursday, August 25, the African Hockey Federation (AfHF), who had already constituted

a nine-man technical panel including three Nigerians, Agabo Edigo, Itawansa Peter, and Kolo Jibril as AfHF representative, technical official and national umpire respectively for the qualifiers, have canceled the North-West African Qualifier outrightly.

In a statement by the continental governing body, in which Nigeria and Ghana Men's National Hockey teams have been handed a wildcard entry to the 2023 All African Games, Sierra Leone's withdrawal was instrumental to the AfHF's resolve.

"Due to the late withdrawal of Sierra Leone Men's Team, this tournament was cancelled by the AfHF. Ghana (Men) & Nigeria (Men) are automatically qualified for the AAG 2023 in Accra, Ghana," AfHF stated.

On the eve of the qualifiers, Sierra Leone filed a withdrawal from the qualifiers.

As coach assures on selecting best hands



Why Tuchel was handed a match ban and Conte exempted



Following the scuffle between Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel and Tottenham manager Antonio Conte in the 2-2 draw on Saturday at Stamford Bridge, the independent regulatory commission has explained why a one-match ban was handed to Tuchel and Conte was exempted.

Aside from the one-match ban handed to German, he was also fined 35,000 pounds while Conte was fined 15,000 pounds.

On that fateful day, both managers resolved to antagonise themselves in the London derby raising tension

in Stamford Bridge. It was a fierce cracker between both teams on the pitch why on the sidelines, after the final whistle, Tuchel and Conte aggressively shook hands which almost led to a fight.

In its report, the independent regulatory commission explained that from its investigations, Tuchel was responsible for engineering the open confrontation with Conte with his aggressive handshake.

The independent regulatory commission added that if the German coach had abstained from gripping

Conte's hand the incident would not have occurred.

"It was quite clear Tuchel instigated the confrontation between himself and Conte by choosing to grip the latter's hand and jolt him back after he had passed him by," the report stated.

"Had he not gripped Conte's hand the confrontation between the two and the subsequent melee that followed would not have occurred. Tuchel gripping Conte's hand for the reason he gave was simply not justifiable," the independent regulatory commission continued.

"Cursory handshakes are a common occurrence at the end of highly-charged football matches and there exists no obligation for one person to look the other in the eye whilst shaking hands.

"Tuchel telling Conte to look him in the eyes whilst gripping his hand and not allowing Conte to move away was a highly provocative act.

"Conte was unwillingly pulled, literally, into the confrontation with Tuchel. Conte did react aggressively to those actions but the commission

did not consider him to have hugely overreacted given the circumstances.

"Conte did remain irate after he had extricated himself from Tuchel's grip and others had separated the two. Conte appears to enter into a brief but heated verbal exchange with the Chelsea player, Cesar Azpilicueta, before leaving the pitch.

"The confrontation between Tuchel and Conte caused a mass gathering of staff, players and stewards that could easily have escalated the situation.

"Whilst certain aspects of Conte's behaviour could be considered as being improper, indeed he admitted as much, the commission considered Tuchel to be largely culpable for the incident and unanimously felt that this ought to be clearly and definitively reflected in the level of sanction imposed on them," the report added.

Consequently, Tuchel, in Chelsea's match against Leicester City at Stamford Bridge on Saturday, will sit at the dock with assistant Arno Michaels expected to take charge of the team.

Chelsea eye Leverkusen's Edmond Tapsoba as Fofana's replacement

Following the refusal of Leicester City to part ways with Wesley Fofana below anything that falls from the target of a record sale, Chelsea have pencilled down Leverkusen defender Edmond Tapsoba as the next option before the transfer window ends on September 1.

The Blues' prime target Fofana, who is keen to join Thomas Tuchel's side and avoided training with Leicester City, was withdrawn from the Foxes' first team squad to train with the U23 squad.

Chelsea are not deterred despite Leicester City rejecting several of their offers for the former Saint-Etienne teenager with their latest bid of £70million outrightly turned down.

Reportedly, Leicester City are targeting to sell the 21-year-old for a price that surpasses the record sale of Harry Maguire to Manchester United in 2019.

However, with the limited top-class defensive option before Thomas Tuchel to process the 2022-2023 season, Chelsea would likely swoop for the 23-year-old Bundesliga defender if the Foxes continue dilly-dallying with the Frenchman's negotiations.

Tapsoba has four years left in Leverkusen and may cost Chelsea far less than Wesley but Leverkusen may not heed Chelsea's demand since the Burkinabe has a pretty long time to spend at BayArena.

Notwithstanding the resolve by Leverkusen, Chelsea can leverage Callum Hudson-Odoi's loan move to the BayArena to fast-track negotiations for Tapsoba.

The winger, according to reports, has earlier informed Chelsea of his desire to leave Stamford Bridge in a bid to get regular football and is already in advanced talks with the Bundesliga club.



Fury to challenge Usyk for heavyweight titles

Tyson Fury has allegedly rescinded his earlier decision that saw him retire from boxing to challenge Oleksandr Usyk for the heavyweight titles after the Ukrainian defended WBO, WBA and IBF belts against Anthony Joshua on Saturday, August 20, 2022.

Fury, fondly called Gypsy King, told his team he is interested in a heavyweight unification bout against the undisputed heavyweight champion.

This will be a welcome development for Usyk, who said after the win against Joshua, he will

fight no one except Fury.

According to Daily Mail, the fight scheduled to hold on December 17, will be hosted in Saudi Arabia, a night before the FIFA World Cup kicks off in Qatar.

In a statement, Saudi Arabia sports minister, Prince Mohammad

Abdulaziz, said they are eager to host the unification bout that would likely be held in Riyadh.

"We are very interested in the fight for the undisputed heavyweight title," he confirmed.

"We are looking to do that in the city of Riyadh," Abdulaziz stated.

Meanwhile, Frank Warren, a boxing promoter, has played down any purported interest of the United Kingdom being the venue for the bout.

Warren said the place that can generate a lot of revenue would be given the nod to host the bout.