

# Army dismisses two soldiers over killing of Islamic cleric

By PAUL MICHAEL

The Nigerian Army has dismissed two soldiers, Lance Corporal John Gabriel and Lance Corporal

Adamu Gideon, for alleged involvement in the killing of an Islamic cleric, Sheik Goni Gashua Aisami in Yobe State. Director, Army Public Relations, Brig-Gen

Onyema Nwachukwu, who disclosed this in a statement during the weekend said the dismissed soldiers shall face civil prosecution. Gen Nwachukwu

said the soldiers were dismissed after facing trial at the Headquarters 241 Recce Battalion, Nguru on Saturday 27 August 2022, having

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AUGUST 29-30, 2022

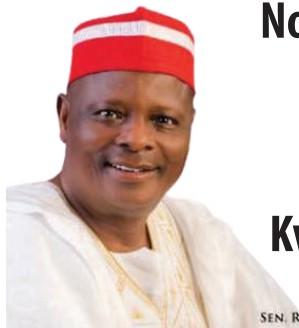
VOL. 1

NO. 090

N200

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Buhari



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# How removal of fuel subsidy can make or break economy

It may not have come as a surprise to Nigerians when the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, recently announced that the Federal Government has finally decided to remove subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) popularly known as petrol. She had disclosed that the government was spending between N5 trillion and N6 trillion on subsidy payments yearly, adding that the payment has been making it difficult for the government to meet its obligations. But what may have come as a shock to Nigerians is President Muhammadu Buhari's decision to push total removal of subsidy to June 2023, immediately after the end of his administration, a decision most Nigerians see as a set up to further impoverish Nigerians and a huge challenge for the incoming government, which begins in May next year, EDU ABADE and JOHNMARK UKOKO write.

Nigeria is among the top 15 crude oil producing countries of the world, highest crude oil producing country in Africa and an influential member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Due to its position in OPEC, it gets an allocation of between 1.6 and 2 million barrels per day (mbpd), but because of several challenges, the country hardly meets its allocation consistently. To compound the challenges, the country has been unable to refine it abundant crude oil and meet local demand for refined petroleum product including Automated Gas Oil (AGO) or diesel, Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) or kerosene and especially, Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) or petrol, in spite of having four refineries in Warri, Kaduna and Port Harcourt.

Failure to refine crude oil for local consumption has been the major cause of products shortage, as the country had continued to depend on imported refined petroleum products, to the extent that it recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Niger Republic—a far less-endowed country in all indices—for importation of fuel.

While the government has completely removed subsidies on Aviation Fuel or JetA1, kerosene, and diesel in Nigeria, it delayed subsidy on petrol, due largely to protests by labour unions, students of tertiary institutions and Nigerians against total removal of subsidy.

It is common knowledge that petrol

is sold for less in the 1980s and 1990s, but successive governments had gradually increased its price from the early 2000s to its current price of between N170 and N200 per litre depending on filling stations and locations.

Over the years, filling stations owned by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), now Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited across the country usually sell the product at the lowest price of N165 per litre, while private filling stations and retail outlets of International Oil Companies (IOCs) such as Mobil, Elf, Total, Texaco and others sell at higher prices.

In spite of the fact that petrol currently sells for between N165 and N200 per litre, the Federal Government insisted that it was paying subsidy on the product, as its landing cost was said to be estimated at N500 per litre as of July 2022, no thanks to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Recently, the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, said the government was spending between N5 trillion and N6 trillion on payment of subsidy yearly.

But reacting to the issue in an interview with The Trumpet, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre for Private Practice Enterprise (CPPE), Dr. Muda Yusuf, said total subsidy removal was long overdue.

Yusuf, a development economist said, if the figures being quoted were actually being used to subsidise fuel on a monthly basis, the country does not have the wherewithal to fund the humongous amounts.



Ahmed

He said although the issues were knotty due to the way organised labour, civil society groups and the masses would react to the development, the government does not have the means to continue the subsidy payments.

Yusuf, who cautioned the government to implement the removal gradually, added that if the removal was done in one swoop, unprecedented protests might follow its implementation, especially in 2023, for which the Federal Government had planned its full commencement, a situation that might constitute a huge challenge distraction for the incoming administration.

He argued that the Federal Government ought to have removed the fuel subsidy long before now, adding that if payment of subsidy continues, the country's economy will collapse.

Yusuf pointed out that the ultimate solution to the problem is for the Federal Government to fix the country's comatose refineries and build new ones to enable it to refine the petroleum products and meet domestic needs.

"If the refineries were functioning properly and we were refinancing our petroleum products locally, there would not have been the need to talk about petrol subsidy for or other petroleum products. We have enough crude oil in the country. Why it has become so difficult to fix the refineries is the issue. The truth is that we cannot continue to pay the huge amount

for most people still depend on cheap fuel for their cars and generators.

Adeosun, who was represented by Chief Executive Officer of MOMAN, Clement Isong, stated this at the National Association of Energy Correspondents (NAEC) conference in Lagos at the weekend, under the sub-theme: Energy Transition, Petroleum Industry Act, Petroleum Pricing And Way Forward For The Downstream Sector.

"It will remain extremely difficult to wean Nigerians away from cheap petrol. It is something that must be done as there are no more viable options. We are told that this year the subsidy bill to the Federal Government may be between N5 trillion and N6 trillion. Clearly, Nigeria cannot afford that.

"To wean Nigeria off this subsidy, a lot of investment must be done to sensitise Nigerians in convincing them and finding alternatives. We need to begin to remove the subsidy and mitigate the pains Nigerians will feel when petroleum prices begin to manifest their true value.

"The regulator has an important role to play in guiding our future but ultimately, the best regulator is the market. The market regulates prices if you are too expensive people would not buy from you. The market regulates quality as well as customer service. The market also rewards the best-in-class," he stated.

A respondent, Tony Imoh, who expressed reservations about the subsidy figures, maintained that the NNPC and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) were just throwing up unsubstantiated figures as a way of coercing the Federal Government to completely remove the subsidy.

Citing the various probes on fuel subsidy by the House of Representatives, Imoh said such probes have shown that the subsidy payment had been fraught with irregularities, adding that the Ministry of Petroleum

Resources, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning did not know the actual number of litres of petrol being imported or consumed in the country.

He alleged that the government's claims of subsidising fuel over the years was induced by corruption, adding that the NNPC was riddled with corruption, insisting that the minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning is not knowledgeable enough about the figures she has been displaying.

Does the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timiprye Sylva, know the actual litres of petrol being imported or consumed in the country? Does the CBN governor know the amount of real figures of PMS imported into the country? Why is the government waiting to end its tenure and create problems for the incoming administration? He asked.

Speaking on the plan earlier on Wednesday, August 24, 2022, Minister of State for Transportation disclosed that the government has put measures in place to provide mass transit buses to alleviate the transportation challenges the people will face as a result of the planned subsidy removal.

The minister said government will hand over the buses to the transport unions to manage, but

it is left to be seen how the mass transit buses the government hopes to put in place will reduce the pains Nigerians will go through when fuel subsidy is finally removed.

By and large, subsidy removal may help the government to generate more revenue and meet its obligations, but the fact remains that ordinary Nigerians still do not feel the positive impact of government policies just as it is feared that President Buhari's decision to delay total subsidy removal till the end of his administration shows a high level of perfidy capable of distracting the next President of the country in 2023.





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# Over 5000 NSCDC officers, men get promotion

By PAUL MICHAEL

**C**ivil Defence, Correctional, Fire and

Immigration Services Board (CDCFIB) has promoted/upgraded 5,010 officers and men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) across board.

NSCDC's Director, Public Relations, DCC Olusola Odumosu, who disclosed this during the weekend in a statement, said the promotion is part of efforts to improve the welfare and conditions of service for officers and men of the Corps.

According to Odumosu, "The promotion list comprises of personnel from the rank of Inspector of Corps II to

Deputy Commandant of Corps (DCC), including officers upgraded/converted with effect from 01/01/2020 and 01/01/2021 respectively."

He further disclosed that from the approved list of promotion, a total of 116 Assistant Commandants of Corps (ACC) got promoted to the rank of Deputy Commandant of Corps (DCC), 362 Chief Superintendents of Corps (CSC) were promoted to the rank of Assistant Commandant of Corps (ACC).

"Also promoted are 399 Superintendents of Corps (SC) to the rank of Chief Superintendent of Corps (CSC) and 550 Deputy Superintendents of Corps (DSC) to the rank of Superintendent of Corps.

"Another 888 Assistant

Superintendents of Corps I (ASC I) are now Deputy Superintendents of Corps (DSC), 1191 Assistant Superintendents of Corps II (ASC II) got promoted to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Corps (I) while 988 Inspectors of Corps II (IC II) were also promoted to Assistant Superintendents of Corps II (ASC II)," he added.

He said a total of 516 personnel got upgraded/converted to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Corps II (ASC II).

Meanwhile, the Corps helmsman, Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi said the promotion of officers and men of the Corps is part of his administration's drive to encourage hard

work, promote the culture of merit and award excellence.

"As the man occupying the drivers seat, I have resolved to ensure that deserving personnel, most especially dedicated ones are promoted accordingly, to increase their level of productivity.

"From a total of 5010 upgraded personnel, 4494 were promoted while 516 got upgraded by conversion" he explained.

The Commandant General charged the newly promoted officers to justify their promotion by contributing to the growth of the Corps through hard work, renewed zeal, vigour, loyalty to service and patriotism to the nation.

While appreciating the Minister of



Audi

Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, who also doubles as the chairman of the CDCFIB, for his unwavering support to the NSCDC, Dr Audi

assured that the Corps under his watch will continue to deliver on its mandate in the interest of peace and progress of the country.

# NAF to support NGO in tackling child terrorism, exploitation

By PAUL MICHAEL

Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has pledged to support the curbing of child terrorism and exploitation in the country.

Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, made the pledge when he received the Federal Capital Representative of the Nigerian Children's Parliament, Miss Splendour Joe-King and members of her entourage recently at NAF Headquarters, Abuja.

Joe-King said the Nigerian Children's Parliament has visited to solicit support in its quest to minimise the vulnerability of children and protecting them against all forms of terrorism.

Appreciating Joe-King for her efforts, Amao stated that the timing of her project, which seeks to transform the lives of vulnerable children could not have come at a better time considering the myriads of security challenges and other sensitive issues confronting the nation.

In a statement signed by NAF's Director

of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, the CAS was quoted to have said, "It is commendable that as a young lady, you have focused your attention on helpless children bearing in mind that sustenance of peace is key to nation building."

He advised Miss Joe-King to look beyond her current focus on assisting school-attending children but to also focus on out-of-school children and women who according to him, bear the brunt of conflicts and are more vulnerable to being recruited as terrorists.

Amao further urged that the awareness campaign initiated should be intensified especially in rural communities to educate school children on the implications and effects of child terrorism and other social vices.

He also promised to inculcate the peace club initiative in all NAF Schools nationwide.

"I will also lend my voice to yours on the best way possible in the fight against child terrorism," he stated.

Earlier, Joe-King, who also doubles as a National Peace Ambassador, stated that

her ongoing campaign, "Nigerian Children Call for Peace Project" aims at propagating the doctrine of peace, unity & sustainable development in Nigeria, as well as the establishment of Peace Clubs in schools across the country.

The initiative, according to her, intends to mainstream children into peace development and peace building to achieve a zero violent

society.

Miss Joe-King added that the urgent need to integrate terrorism education into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools was her inspiration for writing a book titled, 'Effects of Terrorism on Children'.

She noted that the book was an opportunity to educate and carry all children along on matters concerning

terrorism.

According to her, the book will inculcate positive ideas in children and youths because they are an integral part in the fight against terrorism. She then solicited for NAF support and encouragement for the campaign to succeed and make remarkable impact towards national development.

Ambassador Splendour Joe-King,

who is 16 years old, is a human rights advocate for the National Human Rights Commission and an award holder of the Duke of Edinburgh International Award for Young People.

She is also an author having published a book titled, 'Effects of Terrorism on Children', at the age of 9 years. Currently, she is the lead convener of the Nigerian Children Call for Peace Project.

## Army dismisses two soldiers over killing of Islamic cleric

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been indicted in a report of a Board of Inquiry set up to investigate the unfortunate incident.

"Both soldiers were charged and summarily tried for failure to perform military duties and conduct prejudice to service discipline, punishable under Section 62(a) of Armed Forces Act CAP A20 and Section 103(1) of Armed Forces Act CAP A20 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004.

"Both of them were found guilty and awarded reduction of rank from Lance Corporal to Private and Dismissed Regiments.

"The two dismissed

soldiers will be officially handed over to the Nigeria Police, Yobe State Command in Damaturu for civil prosecution in the court of law," he said.

It could be recalled that the Army had pledged to institute a Board of Inquiry to unravel the circumstances surrounding the incident and speedily bring the suspects to justice, if indicted.

"Once more, the NA wishes to commiserate with the family of the victim and the good people of Yobe State. May the soul of the deceased rest in perfect peace," Nwachukwu added.

Sheik Goni Aisami was allegedly murdered after

giving Gabriel a lift.

Gabriel, who was dressed in mufti and had his rifle concealed in a camp bed was said to have requested a lift from the Cleric who was travelling alone from Kano to Gashua in his Honda accord car with Reg. No KBT 31 AE upon his arrival at the military checkpoint at Nguru.

It was alleged that Gabriel who said he was going to Jaji-Maji, asked the Cleric to stop before reaching Jaji-Maji town that there was an unusual noise at the rear tyre.

Unfortunately, when the cleric came down to check the tyre, the suspect allegedly brought out his rifle, shot and killed him.

The suspect was said

to have dragged the body and hid it in the bush and took possession of the vehicle with the intention of taking it away but the vehicle refused to start after several attempts.

Therefore, the suspect called his accomplice Gideon from the same military battalion and an auto-electrician from Jaji Maji town to assist in starting the car.

However, nemesis caught up with the culprits when a passerby going to his farm early in the morning saw the corpse, a vehicle and some people and alerted the police from Jaji who promptly mobilised to the scene and arrested the suspects.



# Okowa greets Azinge on CSAT appointment

## •Thanks God on Delta's creation anniversary

Governor of Delta State and Vice-Presidential Candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa, has congratulated Prof. Epiphany Azinge on his appointment as President of Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal, sitting in London.

Okowa, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Olisa Ifeajika, in Asaba, said that Azinge's appointment was well-deserved, considering his antecedents as a distinguished academic and quintessential legal luminary.

He urged Azinge to bring his wealth of experience to bear on his new job, and lauded him for his achievements as an eminent "learned gentleman"

Okowa expressed confidence that Azinge would use his office to ensure that the essence of CSAT was realised.

He said: "On behalf of the government and people of Delta, I congratulate our illustrious son, Professor Epiphany Azinge (SAN), on his appointment as President of Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal.

"Given the antecedents of Prof. Azinge as a brilliant and cerebral lawyer, I have no doubt that he will bring his wealth of experience to bear in improving activities at CSAT."

He wished Azinge a successful tenure.

Meanwhile, the governor has said that the state has achieved a lot in peace and unity since it was created 31 years ago.

He said this at the interde-

nominal thanksgiving service to mark the 31st anniversary of the state's creation at Government House Chapel, Asaba at the weekend. He noted that the state had passed through tough times, but had pulled through and became stronger and prosperous because God had been with it.

Okowa, represented by Deputy Governor Kingsley Otuaro, said his administration faced a lot of challenges in its first few years and thanked God and the people of the state for standing with the government over the years.

"Since 2015 when we came into office, it has been God all the way and I recall how tough it was for the state when the price of crude oil went down for a long period.

"To make matters worse, we also had attacks on our oil production facilities which took a toll on our production quantum.

"We went to God in prayers and also took certain actions like the setting up of the Peace Advocacy Committee Against Oil Facility Vandalism.

"Not too long, God showed up and we started doing things and I can dare say that we have satisfied our God given conscience by executing people-oriented projects across the state," he said.

Okowa acknowledged that critics had their rights to criticize his administration, but declared that he was proud of the laudable achievements of the administration in infrastructure and on the lives of

citizens.

"I know that we are in a season of politics and politics would have to be played but we are focused and with God helping us, we will keep being focused to achieve the remaining targets we have set for ourselves.

"We have continued to deepen our reforms in job and wealth creation, educational development, rural and urban development and in other sectors.

"Delta is working as one indissoluble state under God

and irrespective of the divide we belong to politically, we must preserve the unity and cooperation that God has given unto us," he stated.

Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Delta State Chapter, Apostle Sylvanus Okorote, in his sermon, called on Deltans to continue to strive for excellence as the state marched on towards sustainable development.

He said that May 29, 2015 marked a turning point for the state, recalling that Okowa declared it as annual thanksgiving day.

The cleric, who is the governor's Special Adviser on Religious Matters, urged

Deltans to arise and shine for its light had come, saying "no matter where you have gotten to, there is always a place to aspire to".

He called on Deltans irrespective of political inclinations to support Okowa to enable him achieve his vice-presidential ambition for the country, adding that only a united state would deliver the position for the people.

The thanksgiving service featured prayers for the governor and his family, and the government and people of Delta, the economy, peace, unity and security of the country and for a successful general elections in 2023.



Olori Omoyemi Aniyi (left); Obaleo of Erinmope-Ekiti, HRM Oba (Dr) Sunday Aikuirawo Aniyi; Ekiti State First Lady/Honouree, Erelu Bisi Fayemi; Dr. Kayode Fayemi and Ooni of Ife, Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II; during the coronation of the monarch and installation of the governor's wife as Yeye Oba of Erinmope-Ekiti ..at the weekend.

## 'Presidential candidates violated electoral law at NBA Conference'

Convener of Unity House Foundation (UHF), a good governance and social justice advocacy group, Kingsley Wenenda Wali, has chastised the presidential candidates for the 2023 polls present at the 2022 Annual Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), for turning the venue of the event into a campaign ground, in contravention of the electoral law.

Wali, a Port Harcourt-based businessman, said it was extremely appalling and nauseating to see people who are seeking to lead the country openly campaigning in such a gathering watched by the whole world, when the electoral umpire has not blown the whistle for the com-

mencement of electioneering campaigns, as required by the laws of the land.

Speaking in an interview, the UHF Convener, disclosed that the group was working towards embarking on a crusade for violence-free campaigns ahead of the 2023 general election.

His words: "Let me start by saying that the Unity House Foundation which I am a member of, will from the second week of September, embark on a campaign for a violence-free electioneering in both the campaigns and the election proper. We intend to engage the public and the political class on the need to be civil, the need to focus on what the issues are and the need for them to be law-abiding too.

"But I won't fail at this point to mention that I'm a bit disappointed with the fact those who intend to lead Nigeria have started their campaign by breaking the laws of the land. A man who is lawless is unlikely to offer quality service to the people.

"If you don't have regard for the laws of the land, I don't know how to expect that you are going to obey the law or you are not going to circumvent the law or even suppress the law of the land when you become President, Governor or whatever.

"INEC has not lifted the ban on campaign based on the electoral law. The ban on campaign will be lifted on the 28th of September. But those

who are pretending to be leaders or those who want to get into power to lead Nigeria have started very badly by disobeying the laws of the land. I was very disgusted when I saw politicians openly violating the electoral law by campaigning for votes at the NBA Annual General Conference. It was as disgusting, as irritating and as despicable as you can imagine, that some people who are going to be the number-one defender of the laws of the land if elected President are violating the laws of the land by openly campaigning for votes very much against the law that is governing the electoral process.

"It is an indication of the kind of characters that want

to lead the country. If you cannot obey the laws of the land, how do I believe that you can hold the laws of this country in trust for the Nigerian people. So, these are the kinds of things that scare me. If you cannot obey the laws of the land and you say you want to be a president and you started by flouting the laws and guidelines for the electoral process, why should I trust you with power? And it wasn't something that was done in some inconsequential gathering, but such a platform where the international community were watching and you saw people recklessly campaigning for votes when the ban on campaigns has not been lifted."



# Sanwo-Olu urges youths to take charge

## •Nigerians to shun division •Cleric tasks FG, ASUU on union's strike

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu at the weekend implored Nigerian youths to take charge of the future now

He admonished the youth to participate actively in different activities that are geared toward nation-building, saying leadership is not only achieved when people are elected as governors or president but from various roles assigned wherever they find themselves such as in the church.

The Lagos State helmsman noted that serving in the house of God is a good foundation for greater career service.

He stated this during the Year 2022 Children and Youth Harvest Thanksgiving of the Our Saviour's Church, Diocese of Lagos (Anglican Communion) at Tafawa Balewa Square (TBS), Marina, Lagos, with the theme "Harvest of Restoration and Divine Satisfaction."

He said: "What the church stands for is to give you (youths) the foundation and space for you to be able to do those things you want to do and fly to whatever height. Because indeed, you are not just the future of the nation,

you are indeed the future of the world and the future is now. And so you need to be partaker of it and take full charge of it."

Sanwo-Olu also urged Nigerians to unite, shun division and make the right choices to create a tomorrow that everybody will be proud of.

He said his government will continue to be responsible and responsive to the people of Lagos State, adding that his administration will ensure development in every part of Lagos State in line with the Greater Lagos Development agenda.

He said: "Let us hold ourselves together. Whatever is dividing us as a country are the little things that can also unite us as a country. Let us make the right choices. Let us create a tomorrow that all of them can be proud of.

"We have that responsibility to continue to make this place (Lagos) safe. We have that responsibility to continue to make sure that we will not divide ourselves. We will continue to create opportunities for every one of our citizens. And we will continue to make it home to all for as long as they want to be

peaceful and law-abiding."

Vicar of Our Saviour's Church, TBS, The Ven. Ife Okupevi, urged Sanwo-Olu to intervene in the ongoing strike by the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) by speaking to President Muhammadu Buhari, the Minister of Education and

other stakeholders for quick resolution between the Federal Government and the association to end the industrial action that has grounded tertiary education for many months.

Okupevi also praised Sanwo-Olu for taking necessary action against COVID-19 and the security

being enjoyed in Lagos State, as well provision of infrastructures.

In his sermon, the Preacher, The Revd Emmanuel Mordi, urged Christians to use their resources for God and urged those in positions of authority to be merciful to the people and ensure justice.



Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu flanked by officiating ministers of Our Saviour's Church, TBS, Diocese of Lagos (Anglican Communion) during their Y2022 Children and Youth Harvest Thanksgiving, at Marina, Lagos on Sunday.

## Quack engineers responsible for building collapse – NSE

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) has attributed the increase in building collapse in the country to quack engineers.

Engr. Rasheed Babalola, who represented the President of NSE, Engr. Tasiu Saad Idari-Wudil, stated this at the 2022 Engineering Week of the Akure branch of NSE.

Babalola urged society to do away from patronizing unqualified engineers, adding that the body is advocating

government and other institutions in ensuring that ethics are upheld in all ramifications.

"The failures are not from the professional Engineers and to make our society better, the Society of Engineering are advocating government and other institutions to ensure that the ethics of the profession are upheld in all ramifications."

He commended the Akure branch of NSE for their great work in moving society forward and its sensitization programs for the youths and young engineers.

Lauding the management of the Ondo State Radiovision Corporation(OSRC) for always patronizing Professional Engineers, the chairman of the Akure NSE, Engr Ezekiel Oloruntola, urged Nigerians and other companies to do the same.

Oloruntola added that being over-dependent on fossil fuels to generate energy had caused much havoc to the country and stressed the need for the embracement of other alternative environmental-friendly technologies such as water, solar among others.



Engr. Tasiu Saad Idari-Wudil

## Group urges N/Delta govs, NASS to reject proposed water resources bill

By **ISAAC JOB**, Uyo

A socio cultural group in AKwa Ibom under the aegis of Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio has urged governors of the Niger Delta, the National Assembly and other coastal areas across Nigeria to ignore the planned water resources bill now before the federal legislature.

In a communique signed by the International President of the group Akparawa James Edet at the end of Central Working Committee meeting held on Sunday and made available to newsmen in Uyo, the Socio Cultural Organisation described the proposed Water Resources Bill as evil, repressive and misplacement of priorities.

The group insisted that the Bill is aimed at depriving the people of Niger Delta region and other coastal states of their God given resources and impoverished them.

The AKwa Ibom socio cultural group; founded in 1987 in the state therefore warned leaders from the areas to shun the planned bill now before the National Assembly for consideration despite their political affiliations.

"The communique reads in parts:

The meeting deliberated on several issues affecting the organization and also reviewed the state of the nation. Arising from the deliberations the CWC resolved as follows :

"That it urges all governors and national assembly members from the Niger Delta region and other coastal states in Nigeria to rise against the proposed Water Resources Bill being put forward for consideration at the National Assembly, irrespective of political party affiliations;

"That the bill is evil, repressive, a complete misplacement of priorities and an attempt to deprive the people of the Niger Delta region and other coastal States resources freely given to them by God and by such action, further impoverish them"

The group alleged that the water resources bill was also meant to confer ownership, control and management of surface as well as underground waters on the federal government just as it empowers the same government to monopolize petroleum resources.

He said such moves through

the bill was an affront to sensibilities of the people and must be rejected vehemently with all peaceful and constitutional means to ensure that it does not see the light of the day.

President of the socio cultural group warned members of the National Assembly and the federal government to resist every temptation by promoters of the obnoxious bill to exacerbate already smouldering schism which has generated mistrust fueled negative policies and one sided appointment to key positions in favour of a particular section of the country.

The group threatened to mobilize the people of Niger Delta region and partner with other coastal states and wage strong resistance against the Water Resources Bill

" That working with other ethnic nationality groups in the Niger Delta region and sister coastal states, Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio will mobilise strong resistance to the Water Resources Bill and hopes that other patriotic Nigerians who desire the unity and cohesion of the country will lend their voices as well, as injury to one is injury to all". he said



# Skills acquisition for special schools in Edo

Edo Government has introduced the teaching of skills acquisition in special schools across the state.

Governor Godwin Obaseki, after a guided tour of facilities at Ihogbe College in Benin City, mandated the Ministry of Education to commence the programme to promote enterprise among youths.

The governor disclosed that the Ministry of Education is working on disarticulating Ihogbe College, so as to create junior and senior school levels.

He stated that the school is also preparing special children to take classes with regular students at the resumption of

academic session in September.

Obaseki noted that his administration is working on a strategic policy decision which the Ministry needs to undertake immediately, adding, "We are here to look at what is available in terms of physical infrastructure on ground, and look at how to fix it into our new design in terms of where we are going in our education policy."

"We are working to see how to take care of the children with special needs in this our disarticulation efforts," the governor said.

Commissioner for Education, Dr. Joan Oviawe, said the

skills programme will enable the special pupils to become self-reliant.

"In the area of special education, we have been mandated by the governor to introduce skills acquisition in all our special schools across the state when schools resume. This will enable the special students to be trained on life skills that will enable them earn a living even while getting their academic training."

"The state government is implementing a policy to improve the school system in Edo State as the governor will unveil further plans to move the education sector forward on Friday September 2nd, 2022.

"On Monday 29th of August 2022, the Ministry, working with the Post Basic Education Board, will be training 3,000 teachers out of which 1,000 are the newly recruited EdoStar teachers. This is in addition to the already existing 3,000 EdoStar teachers that we got approval from the governor to recruit," she remarked.

According to her, the new timetable for the new academic session will provide learning opportunities for Edo Students, adding, "We are sure to see tremendous changes in the education system in the State as the changes will certainly be visible for all to see."



Gov. Godwin Obaseki

## A'lbom ex-militants give FG ultimatum, threaten to shut oil flow

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

There is palpable tension in oil communities as a group, Akwa Ibom Ex-Militants Forum, has issued a seven days ultimatum to the Federal Government and threatened to shut down oil production in the state if the N48 billion pipeline surveillance contract awarded to Chief Government Ekpemuopolo (aka Tompolo) is not terminated., *The Trumpet* has gathered.

In a petition addressed to President Muhammadu Buhari signed by the leader of the ex militants, Johnson Solomon and Secretary, Comrade Godwin Edohoagya made available to newsmen in Uyo at the weekend, the group said that it was wrong for the Federal Government to award contract for the surveillance of oil pipelines passing through Akwa Ibom without engaging youths from the state.

The militants observed that youths whose communities have suffered environmental degradation over the years as a result of oil exploitation and exploitation would have been involved in the deal.

The Federal Government had on Monday last week renewed a N48b monthly contract for the surveillance of oil pipelines to the former leader of the movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

The petitioners urged the



Tompolo

federal government and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) to revoke the contract or review it to accommodate former Niger Delta agitators from Akwa Ibom State as most of the oil and gas pipelines pass through their communities.

The petition reads in parts : "In 2015, when President Goodluck Jonathan was about to hand over to President Muhammadu Buhari, Ex-Militants from Akwa Ibom State in our numbers protested to the National Assembly against similar contract which did not accommodate us."

"Leadership of the National

Assembly with Heads of security agencies received our protest letter and assured us that Akwa Ibom Ex-Militants will be accommodated in future contracts.

"We are giving the Federal Government a seven day ultimatum to address the situation or we will embark on a marathon protest that will shut down Oil and Gas production in Akwa Ibom State.

The ex militants noted youths from the state have refused to be involved in oil theft and pipeline vandalism because of their patriotism for Nigeria and agreement they signed with the Federal Government during Amnesty. They warned that such a disposition should not make the youths to be marginalized in the award of such a contract..

The group advised the Federal Government to award the contract in sections to accommodate youths of all the oil producing states in the region to avoid renewed agitation, hostilities and possible negative actions that will defeat the purpose of government intentions.

"We are familiar with the terrain and pipeline routes running across the state and only youths from Akwa Ibom can protect the pipelines better than a visitor. If our youths are engaged in such a project, the rate of unemployment will reduce," they added.

## EDTF harps on training of teachers for professionalism in Bayelsa

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, Yenagoa

Executive Secretary of Education Development Trust Fund (EDTF) in Bayelsa, Dr. (Mrs) Alice Atuwu, has stated that the body is funding the training of teachers that came into the profession from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the state.

Bayelsa State Government, in one of its reform programs, had drafted civil servants with education qualifications such as National Certificate of Education (NCE), Bachelor Degree in Education (B.Ed) to the schools to complement the teaching staff in the sector and to enhance professionalism.

Atuwu, who stated this while speaking to *The Trumpet* in her office in Yenagoa, further explained that the state believes in the training and re-trainings of teachers and that informed the establishment of the Teachers Training, Registration and Certification Board (TTRCB) and the EDTF has been supporting it as part of its mandate.

According to her, the trainings which also include updating the knowledge base of headmasters of primary schools and other teachers, is done in batches, hinting that the on-going training for 300 Head Teachers at the University of Africa, Toru-Orua is the 2nd batch for this year. She also pointed out that the bulk of the funds of the Board goes into funding of the Model Schools which are located at the Local Government headquarters emphasizing that the total number of the model schools are now eleven.

She noted that the policy trust of the present leadership at the Board is to ensure that the Trust Fund is judiciously and

transparently run with primary focus for the sustenance of the Model Schools which according to her is intended to restore qualitative education for the overall development of the state. Dr. Atuwu further reiterated that there is adequate consideration for merit and accountability as only the best students across all the public schools are carefully chosen and admitted into the Model Schools which EDTF funds, particularly from the senior secondary level which is purely for boarding except the Ijaw National Academy which has the full complement of Boarding for the junior and senior secondary education.

She disclosed that this educational program started in 2016 but the Board was inaugurated in 2017 and handed the responsibility of supporting the running of the re-introduced Boarding Schools by the immediate past administration and continued by present administration under the leadership of Gov. Douye Diri. In her words "the Model School Boarding programme started in 2016 with 330 students and it has grown to over 4000 students including those at the Sports Academy, Assoama."

Responding to whether parents pay tuition fees, accommodation and feeding of their children in the schools, she stated that the schools are completely free as the children are under a scholarship program of the Bayelsa State Government. The EDTF Executive Secretary used the opportunity to express appreciation to the Gov. Douye Diri led Prosperity Administration for continuing the policy, positing that lack of continuity in government policies is always the bane of all round development of any society.

## Police raid Edo coastlines, make arrest, discoveries

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Edo State Police Command at the weekend continued raids of criminal hideouts and cultist's enclaves including coastline and maritime settlements. Consequently, one Lawrence Yambo and his gang, who have been terrorising the Okomu riverine community in Ovia South West Local Government Area of the state have been nabbed. The state Commissioner of Police, Abutu Yaro, directed an intensive raid of the community.

Operatives of the command attached to the intelligence and rapid

response squad, the Command's crack team and the Marine Police mobilized and swung into action. On arrival at the community, the other miscreants terrorizing the community on sighting the operatives took to their heels into Agbede forest in Ovia South West Local Government Area abandoning their loots.

On the spot house to house search conducted within the community led to the recovery of the following items: Two AK 49 rifles; one AK 47 rifle; two locally made revolver single barrel; one locally made single barrel; one locally made double barrel; one

locally made cut to size barrel; 128 pieces of AA cathridges; 12 pieces of 9mm ammunitions; two telephone handsets; two army shirts; two high pressure gas cylinders and bag of charms.

CP Abutu Yaro applauded the professionalism of the men in leading the onslaught. While reassuring the public that the command would not rest on its oars to ensure that Edo State is peaceful and crime in the state is been reduced to its barest minimum. He also appeals for continuous collaboration from the good people of the state including security stakeholders.



# Suspected PDP agents disrupt LP solidarity rally in Enugu

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE,**  
Abakaliki

A solidarity rally for the Presidential Candidate of Labour Party (LP), Mr. Peter Obi, and his running mate, Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, at the weekend was disrupted in Enugu State.

It was gathered that they were allegedly sponsored by a former governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) who, had allegedly in cahoots with some stakeholders of the ruling party in the state, deceptively convened a conference tagged "Charity Begins At Home," using the platform of the Obedient Group and the LP.

The rally which started with a road walk, attracted both the young and old, who were dressed in various T-shirts and caps, with a bold inscription: "Obi-dients", commenced peacefully at Michael Okpara Square, to the Kobb Event Centre, Polo Park, where leaders of the party addressed the supporters.

The hall was however decorated with Labour Party logo and inscription "Charity Begins At Home", powered by "OPM",

Odegene's political pressure group. Close observation also showed that there was a handful of known PDP members already seated in the hall, with the women wearing yellow browsers.

The event took off peacefully with excitement and enthusiasm, and people were hailing Peter Obi and Datti as men who are coming to change the narrative in Nigeria.

The event began to turn sour when it was observed that the brochure for the "Charity Begins at home" had the picture of Evaristus Nnaji (Odengene), as Labour Party gubernatorial candidate for Enugu State. The bubble got burst when the Master of Ceremonies introduced Odengene as "the next Governor of Enugu State."

Instantly, supporters of Chijioke Edeoga, Labour Party gubernatorial candidate, rose in unison and started chanting in solidarity: "Edeoga K'anyi ga eso, Ma ona Eje-eje Ma Ona Ana-ana, Edeoga K'anyi ga eso."

They asserted that Edeoga is the only Gubernatorial Candidate of the Labour Party in

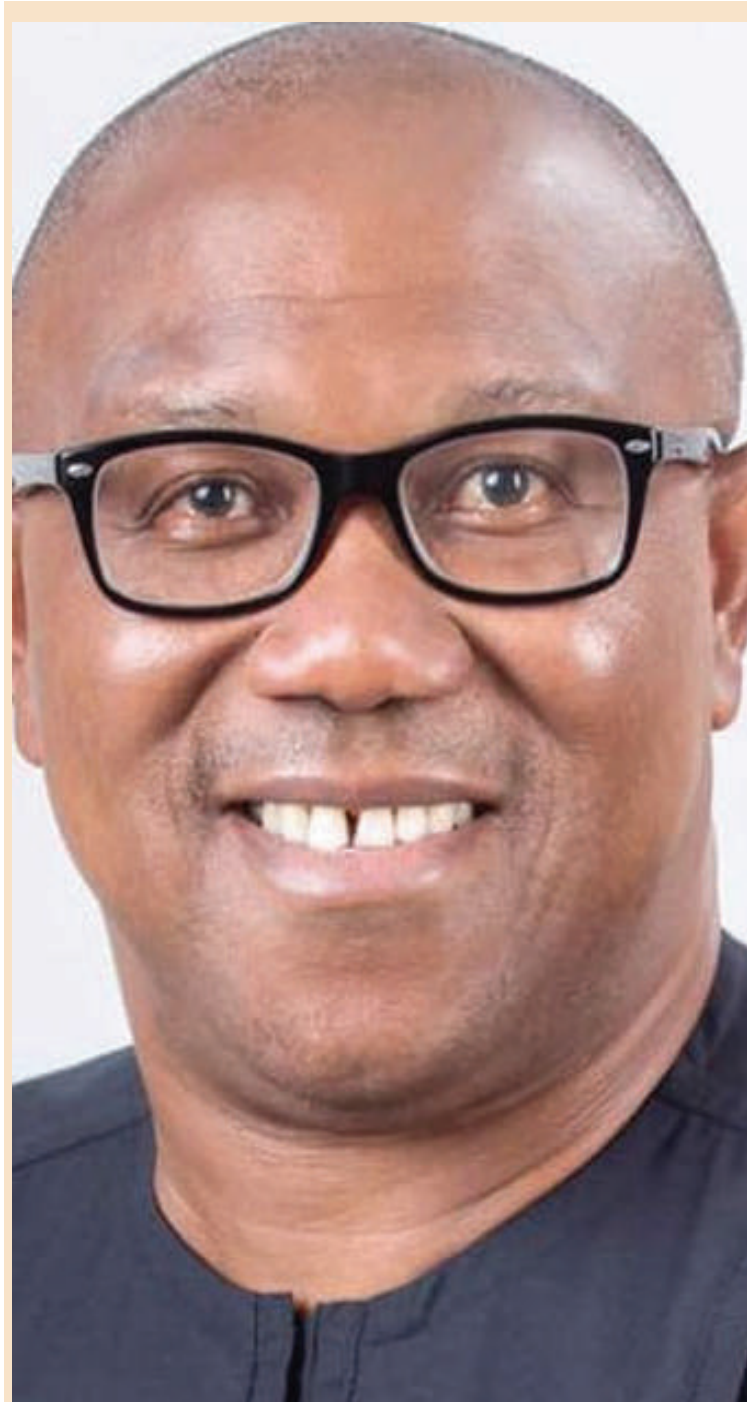
Enugu State, and that any other person is an impostor. For over forty minutes, activities at the Event Centre were grounded as Edeoga's supporters refused to beat a retreat, insisting that nothing would take place until the anomaly was redressed.

It took the intervention of security officials and other party leaders to placate the supporters, who moved in their numbers, out of the hall to continue their protest.

When normalcy returned, leaders of the party explained that the event was organized to shore support for Obi and Datti, and not for endorsement of any governorship candidate.

They urged the people of the South East to support Peter Obi, because he is the best presidential candidate that can fix the country. They stressed that Nigeria's healing was about to become permanent, and that the thrust of that healing is Peter Obi.

They added: "Today peace has eluded the North because one man wanted to rule at all cost in 2015. They could not manage the bandits they imported, but in Peter Obi, we are sure the country is secured."



Peter Obi

## Obi's supporters hold mega rally in Onitsha

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE,**  
Abakaliki

Supporters of the presidential candidate of Labour Party (LP), Mr. Peter Obi, on Sunday held a rally in the commercial city of Onitsha in Anambra State, shutting down most streets in the city.

Young men and women donning white polo shirts with Obi's picture and inscription of his party started gathering at Zik Avenue at about 11:30am, from where they moved to other parts of the town.

The group held banners with several inscriptions supporting Obi and marched peacefully along most streets, terminating at Chinua Achebe's Stadium, Fegge, Onitsha.

Convener of the rally, Mr Chibuikwe Akpotue, who addressed supporters said: "We just want to show the world that Obi has our support, he was born in Onitsha, he grew up in Onitsha, his businesses are here. So, we decided today to show him solidarity because we were told he does not have structure, we want to tell them we are his structure.

"This is not about the Labour

Party. The most important thing is that we want someone that can change the economy of this country. Since I graduated, I did not find any job to do and I went into business, which is not a bad idea.

"We know the amount it cost us to load one truck in 2010 and the amount it is costing now. We know the amount it costs us for the upkeep of our families before 2015 and the amount it is costing us now. So, no one can say that the economy is comfortable for him.

"We are looking for a person that can turn around the economy of this country for good and not a party. Check out Obi's record as Anambra governor, you will see that he is the only governor that served eight years and yet never had any issue with the EFCC and he goes out without any escort."

What the groups tagged 'Onitsha mega rally: The mother of all rallies' caused a gridlock with many motorists diverting to other routes as the supporters sang Obi's praise during the long trek.



Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed



## SERAP writes Buhari on \$23m Abacha loot, seeks copy of agreement with USA

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has urged President Muhammadu Buhari to direct the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN) to provide the organization a copy of the agreement that the Federal Government recently signed with the United States for the repatriation of \$23 million stolen by a former head of state, the late Gen Sani Abacha.

The United States government had last week signed an agreement with the Federal Government to repatriate \$23 million Abacha loot to Nigeria.

In the letter dated 27 August 2022 and signed by SERAP deputy director Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation said: "By the combined reading of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended), the Freedom of Information Act, and the country's international obligations, there are transparency obligations imposed on your government to widely publish the agreement on the \$23 million Abacha loot.

"Providing us with a copy of the agreement with the US, and publishing the agreement would allow Nigerians to scrutinise it, and to monitor the spending of the repatriated \$23 million Abacha loot to ensure that the money is not mismanaged, diverted or stolen.

SERAP expressed concern that the repatriated \$23 million Abacha loot is vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement.

It further argued that substantial part of the estimated \$5 billion returned Abacha loot since 1999 may have been diverted, re-stolen or mismanaged, and in any case remain unaccounted for.

The letter reads in part: "The Nigerian Constitution, Freedom of Information Act, and the country's anti-corruption and human rights obligations rest on the principle that citizens should have access to information regarding their government's activities.

"Your government has a responsibility to ensure transparency and accountability in how any repatriated stolen funds are spent, to reduce vulnerability to corruption and mismanagement.

"SERAP also urges you to provide details of the transparency and accountability mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure that the repatriated funds are not mismanaged, diverted or re-stolen.

"We would therefore be grateful if the recommended measures are taken within seven days of the receipt and/or publication of this letter. If we have not heard from you by then, SERAP shall take all appropriate legal actions to compel your government to comply

with our request in the public interest.

"Publishing a copy of the agreement signed with the US would also promote transparency and accountability in the spending of public funds. Nigerians are entitled to their constitutionally and internationally recognized human right to information.

"Publishing a copy of the agreement would ensure that persons with public responsibilities are answerable to the people for the performance of their duties including the management of repatriated loot.

"The Freedom of Information Act, Section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution, article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and

article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantee to everyone the right to information, including to a copy of the agreement on the repatriated \$23 million Abacha loot.

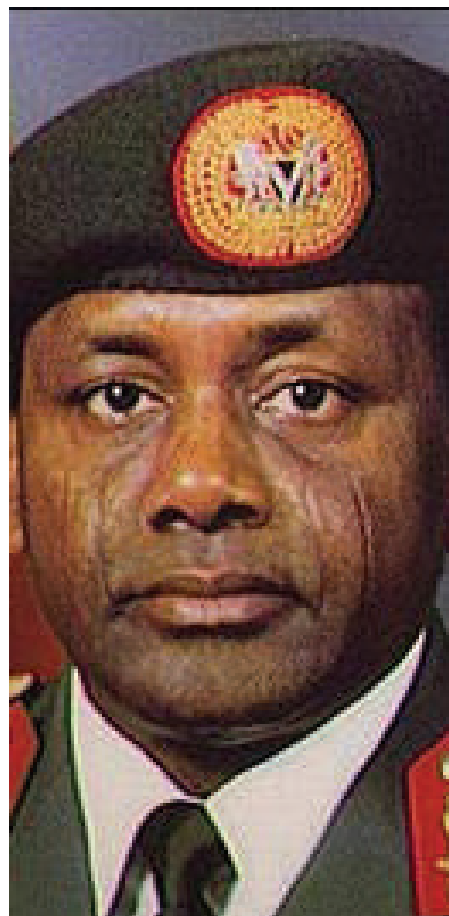
"According to our information, the US government recently signed an agreement with the Federal Government to repatriate \$23 million Abacha loot to Nigeria.

"The agreement was signed on behalf of your government by Mr Abubakar Malami. This repatriation brings the total amount of funds repatriated in the Abacha case by the US to more than \$334.7 million."

A copy of the letter was also sent to Mr Abubakar Malami.



President Muhammadu Buhari



Late Sani Abacha



Abubakar Malami

## CISLAC blames Customs, Immigration for arms proliferation

BY PAUL MICHAEL

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), has called on Nigerians to hold the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) accountable for the massive influx of arms

and ammunition into the country.

The Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), made the call during a one-day media workshop on 'Defence Anti-corruption Reportage, Civic Space and Oversight', which was held in Lagos.

He also called for the forensic audit of defence weapons.

Musa, who lamented the high level of banditry in the country, stated that the constitutional mandate of both the Customs and Immigration included checking of goods and persons into the country at the different

seaports and land borders.

He stated that if the two organs of the government dedicated half of the energy used in running after smugglers of rice and frozen poultry to checking the inflow of arms and illegal aliens, the war against banditry would have been a thing of the past.

## SUBEB warns school contractors not to compromise standards

BY PAUL MICHAEL

Sokoto State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has warned contractors handling various construction and renovations of classrooms to desist from compromising work standard and ensure timely completion of the projects.

Chairman of the Board, Alhaji Altine Shehu Kajiji gave the warning shortly after inspecting some of the ongoing projects in the state capital.

Alhaji Kajiji said the call became necessary as the state government/UBE 2019 intervention projects were aimed at providing improved learning atmosphere

thereby reducing congestion in all the basic schools across the state.

According to him, those handling the renovation exercise have two months, while the new ones have three months to complete the work.

Alhaji Kajiji said the board under his watch was committed to go round all the areas where the contract was awarded to monitor the speed and quality of the work being executed by contractors.

He, however, warned contractors against using low quality materials, saying the board would not accept shoddy job from any contractor.

Places visited are renovation of one

block of three classrooms at Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa Model Primary School, construction of two blocks of three classrooms each at Yakubu Mu'azu Science Model Primary School, construction of one block of three classrooms and renovation of another block of three classrooms at Muhammad Zako Model Primary School Runjin Sambo area.

Others are construction of one block of three classrooms and renovation of another at Madawaki Abubakar Nizzamiya Primary School Gandu, renovation of one block of three classrooms at Sultan Ward Primary School as well as renovation of one block of three classrooms at Rijiyar

Dorawa Primary School.

Meanwhile, while on his way to Muhammad Zako Model Primary School, Alhaji Kajiji made a stop over at Sultan Abubakar College where he directed the immediate repairs of damage part of a roofing of a story building classroom.

The SUBEB boss was also at FGN/UBE Direct Intervention Skills Acquisition School along Tashar Kura Road, which would be handed over to the board after its completion.

He was accompanied by the Deputy Director Project Development, Alhaji Bello Umar and Zonal Project Inspector, Central Zone, Alhaji Sanusi Umar Bunu.



## Airport cleaner who allegedly leads drug syndicate nabbed

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have arrested a cleaner at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) Ikeja Lagos, who allegedly leads a drug syndicate there.

The suspect, Sunday Ohiagu, was nabbed following the arrest of an intending passenger, Osita Jacob Obinna, on a flight to Dubai, UAE, spokesperson for the anti-narcotics agency, Femi Babafemi said on Sunday.

Osita was said to have been arrested with two bags containing eight blocks of cannabis sativa weighing 4.25kg concealed in cassava product (garri) and crayfish.

Babafemi said one other member of the airport syndicate who works with Ohiagu has also been arrested while operatives are after another suspect.

"Investigations revealed that a Dubai-based drug dealer recruited Obinna, a 42-year-old native of Oyi Local Government Area, Anambra State to traffic the drugs and equally



contracted Ohiagu, a 34-year-old airport cleaner from Orlu West Local Government Area of Imo State to create access for the unhindered passage of the trafficker.

"The drug syndicate bust, which is the first drug arrest at the new terminal of the MMIA comes on the heels of the seizure of a consignment of bottles of viju and fearless energy drinks used to conceal skunk for export to Dubai, UAE through the NAHCO export shed on Monday

15th Aug. A freight agent has already been arrested in connection with the seizure," the spokesperson said.

In a similar development, attempt by a syndicate to export illicit drugs through the Lagos airport was foiled during an outward clearance of passengers on Ethiopian Airline to Oman via Addis Ababa.

"A suspect Jonah Chukwuemeka was arrested with a total of 1,995 Tramadol tablets with a gross weight of 900 grams hidden in locust beans

in his luggage. The bag containing the illicit substance was handed over to him at the airport by one Olagunju Abbas who was promptly arrested," Babafemi said.

He further disclosed that packs of Tramadol 225mg containing 119,500 capsules were Thursday 25th August transferred to NDLEA by the Nigeria Customs, cargo wing of MMIA, saying the consignment had come in through Ethiopian Airline from Pakistan.

Meanwhile, NDLEA operatives at the weekend raided a car shop, Bolak Motors at Ewenla bus stop, Oshodi where bags of 615.2kg cannabis were recovered along with nine vehicles.

"Efforts are ongoing to track the car dealer, Alhaji Ismail who is currently at large," Babafemi added.

He further stated, "No fewer than eight suspects were arrested and bags of illicit drugs seized from them when Akerele area of Agege, Shogunle and Mafoluku areas of Oshodi, Fagba area of Ogba, Ipodo area of Ikeja and Iyana Ipaja park were raided in the state.

"In Yobe state, two suspected fake

security agents taking 14kg cannabis to Maiduguri, Borno state were intercepted along Potiskum-Damaturu road. While Adetula Olarenwaju was arrested with four blocks of the substance on Thursday 25th August on his way from Lagos, Sadiq Garba returning from Gombe was nabbed with 22 blocks of the substance on Saturday 27th August.

"In Edo, Abu Segun Sunday was arrested with 48.4kg cannabis at Idk quarter, Ibilu, while Rosemary Afekhuai was caught with 1,130 tramadol caps, among others at Oluma quarters, Otuo, Owan East LGA.

"In Delta, Mustapha Isah, was arrested at Oko Market with 9, 800 Tramadol caps weighing 6.4kg while NDLEA operatives in Kaduna also nabbed Chinedu Onnuka, at Narayi Kaduna with 33,000 tablets of Bromazepam."

While commending men and officers of the agency for the seizure and arrest, Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), charged them not to rest on their oars.

## Police kill hoodlums, arrest suspect with India hemp

By PAUL MICHAEL

Delta State Police Command has neutralised a suspected armed robber in a gun duel at Warri.

The casualty and his co-travelers, a team of four suspected armed robbers, were said to be in operation at the area when the police operatives were alerted.

Police spokesperson in the State, DSP Bright Edefe, who made the disclosure Weekend in a statement sent to The Trumpet, said the hoodlums engaged the operatives in gun battle on their arrival. However, luck ran out on one of them as he was fatally injured and gave up while receiving treatment.

In a similar development, police

officers on stop and search duty along Urhobo road killed one hoodlum after he and another opened fire on police officers in their duty post.

Edefe said one locally made gun, one expended cartridge, and one live cartridge were recovered during the operation.

Also, one Demilola Adefuwa has been arrested allegedly with nine bags of India hemp also known as weed.

Adefuwa was arrested on 25th August by operatives of the Eagle-Net Special Squad while on patrol duties along Benin-Sapele road.

The suspect was said to have concealed the illicit substance with plantain leaves in a Sienna bus.

Edefe said, "On 26/8/2022, Police

operatives attached to 'B' Division Warri, while on Surveillance Patrol along Okere market junction, received a distress call that a four-man armed robbery gang were operating around Miramble guest house along same Okere Road.

"The team raced to the scene where the hoodlums on sighting the Police engaged them in a gun duel. In the ensuing gun battle, one of the hoodlums was fatally wounded while others escaped.

"One locally made double barrel cut-to-size gun and a live cartridge were recovered. The injured suspect was taken to the hospital where he gave up the ghost while receiving treatment.

"Similarly, on 23/8/2022, Policemen attached to 'A' Division Rapid response squad were on routine stop and search duty along Urhobo road when they sighted two young boys on foot approaching them, the men were at alert owing to the fact that, they could be out to play a fast one and attack them.

"Unsurprisingly, one of the suspects brought out a gun from his hand bag and fired at the Policemen but missed his target. The team returned fire forcing the suspects to a retreat, unfortunately for them, one of the suspects was maimed while the other suspect escaped.

"The injured suspect equally gave up the ghost before he could get

to the hospital. One locally made gun, one expended cartridge, and one live cartridge were recovered. Manhunt for the fleeing suspects in ongoing.

"On 25/8/2022 at about 1730hours, operatives of Eagle-Net Special Squad while on Aberdeen patrol duty, intercepted a sienna vehicle with reg. no. SAP 889 AA driven by one Demilola Adefuwa aged 42yrs, along Benin-Sapele road.

"As usual, they subjected the vehicle to a search during which nine bags of weeds suspected to be Indian hemp covered with plantain leaves for the purpose of deceiving the Police were recovered. The team arrested the suspect, exhibit recovered and investigation is ongoing."

## NSCDC's CG vows to sanction personnel who connive with oil thieves

By PAUL MICHAEL

Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi, has read the riot act to men and officers of the Service who are allegedly conniving with crude oil thieves to sabotage the nation's economy.

The CG, who spoke with Zonal Commanders, State Commandants and Heads of Anti Vandal Unit of the Corps across the country during a strategic meeting at the Corps' National Headquarters, in Abuja, said any personnel caught will not be spared if investigated and found culpable.

Audi tasked all officers to check their excesses and inappropriate behaviours while warning that his administration will not condone any form of compromise or unethical

conducts from personnel deployed to prevent oil theft and illegal bunkering.

The CG said discreet investigation would be conducted into the activities of the Anti-Vandal Squads across the States, saying those found culpable in criminal connivance will be severely dealt with.

He said "Some people believe that security agencies are part of oil theft in the country, but we must do what is necessary to redeem our image.

"There are indications that some of the Anti-Vandal Units in some State Commands have been found wanting, in the discharge of their duties as the Corps' Management, has received reports of irresponsibility and connivance on the part of some of them.

"This dangerous and rather unfortunate development which

the Management frowns at, is inimical to the image the Corps has built over the years.

"Let me state categorically that the Corps' Management, will not condone any act that could impugn on the integrity of the Corps.

"The import of this meeting is therefore, to draw your attention to some of these observed lapses and shortcomings, in the operations of the Anti-vandal Squad and the need for a total reorganization and overhauling of the entire Anti-vandal Units across board, to reposition the Unit for better performance.

"As heads of Anti-vandal Units, you are expected to display a high sense of responsibility, commitment, loyalty and dedication to duty.

"Let me sound this note of warning that the Corps has no space for mediocrity, laziness, nonchalance,

incompetence and will therefore, not hesitate to appropriately deal with any officer found wanting in the discharge of his duties.

"You must therefore, go back to your various State Commands and redouble your efforts to re-invigorate, re-engineer and reposition your various Anti-vandal Squads for better performance, to justify the confidence reposed, in the Corps, by Government and the good people of this great Country.

"Members of the Anti-vandal Squad must re-dedicate themselves, to our collective goal and objective, to curb and checkmate crime and eradicate incidences of oil theft/oil bunkering and vandalization of oil pipelines and other Critical National Assets and Infrastructure (CNAI)."

Audi said he was worried by the spate of oil theft and illegal

bunkering, which he said has led to huge revenue llos to the Federal Government in recent times despite stringent measures put in place to curtail it.

He explained that the strategic meeting was necessary to reverse the ugly trend. He, therefore, gave marching order to all concerned officials, of the Corps, to buckle up and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to book.

According to him, "We are aware that as far as the nation is concerned, oil is the mainstay of the economy and the massive oil theft and illegal bunkering, in the country is alarming.

"It is in this direction that I have summoned all the high ranking officers of the Corps, to this meeting, for us to sit up and come up with ways of tackling this menace creating problems for us."





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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02	
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61	
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13	
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67	
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62	8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48	8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05	7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18	
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80	
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41	
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	26,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91	
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72	
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84				
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79				
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50				
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79				
			FP 14.5 X 6	460,275.00	594,225.62	FP14.5 X 5	423,373.39	455,126.39				
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Page 5 (Full Page)	1,064,000.00	1,143,800.00	2x6 Under Mast Head	3,990,000.00	4,289,250.00
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# Nigerian invents surveillance drone

The feat of a 22-year-old Nigerian, Ignatius Asabor, who made a surveillance drone gladdened our hearts and dominated the pages of most news outlets recently. Perhaps more newsworthy is the report that Asabor has been employed by a drone making company in Finland. He has thus relocated to from Nigeria. His new employers, Radai Limited based in Oulu, proudly reported this on their LinkedIn platform. The firm believes that Mr Asabor will improve and strengthen Radai's survey team as well as grow the company. A remarkable thing about the feat of this young Nigerian is his use of local materials to manufacture the drone.

This is not the first time a Nigerian has invented game changing technological pieces. Nigerians have variously surmounted the inclement situations of the nation to develop technologies that have gained international attention. Mr Silas Adekunle, is today the highest paid robotic engineer in the world. Since the 1970s, Nigerians have carried out research that ought to make major inputs to human civilisation. University of Lagos Professor late Ayodele Oluwatuminiinu Awojobi successfully converted his personal car, Opel Olympia Rekord from right to a left-hand drive car. He also changed a pre-existing normal military jeep's engine such that it could move both back and front – advance and retreat – without undergoing the usual reverse-gear system. This jeep was named "Autonov 1." Sadly, it is now a mere museum collection for the Nigerian Army. It is also reported that the highly patented Poundo Yam Machine was a Nigerian creation. Also, a Nigerian has designed a pot that has the capacity to cook rice and stew simultaneously to reduce energy consumption.

The long list stretches from agriculture, medicine to software and hardware creations. It is common knowledge that we have local artificial and intelligence companies that manufacture drones capable of tracking

criminals in their hideouts. A few Nigerian companies now manufacture military and other security hardware and vehicles. A Nigerian now converts transport minibuses from petrol into solar driven vehicles. They are now in operation in Bornu State. Another Nigerian-born Professor is driving a similar programme in Kenya for motorcycles.

What is worrying in all this is the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Nigerian State for these landmark feats. No appropriate attention is given to either the creators or created technologies by the relevant authorities. They end up in the pages of newspapers. In fact, the official attitude is that the inventors are "on their own." We cannot but call out the Ministry of Science and Technology on this score. The major work of such a ministry is

to embrace these geniuses, understudy their inventions to further their capabilities and commercialisation. Sadly, it seems the Ministry is nonchalant on reported inventions. It is even more surprising that both the Army and Police have taken scant interest and advantage of such inventions. These inventions could save us huge scarce foreign exchange that is usually expended acquiring similar things.

The consequence of the official dispositions to these feats by the Nigerian state is that the country is losing her creations, geniuses and contributions to other people. Rather than receive the credit and patent rights due to us, Nigerian citizens are short changed. The Trumpet opines that the Ministry of Science and Technology should be tasked to have a monitoring unit charged with registering and interfacing such upcoming inventors. Our research institutes and universities must be given "research outcomes reporting" template. They must register their research outcomes with the relevant ministries. It should not be out place if the ratings and funding of these institutions are tied to their yearly creativity and inventions.

The challenges of our failing economy, insecurity, food crisis and poor health facilities call for improved interventions by everyone that is bothered about national development. In a good society, scientists would be deployed to carry out research on the so-called illegal refineries scattered all over the Niger Delta creeks with a view to modernising them for better production capacity and safety. The same argument can be advanced for our palm oil production and other sectors. Government at all levels in Nigeria, along with the private sector must begin to show more concern on reports of inventions by Nigerians. We cannot but congratulate Mr Ignatius Asabor for his uncommon feat. All inventors like him deserve to be given national recognition and award. Their acts establish a point. The solution to the Nigerian problem is within!



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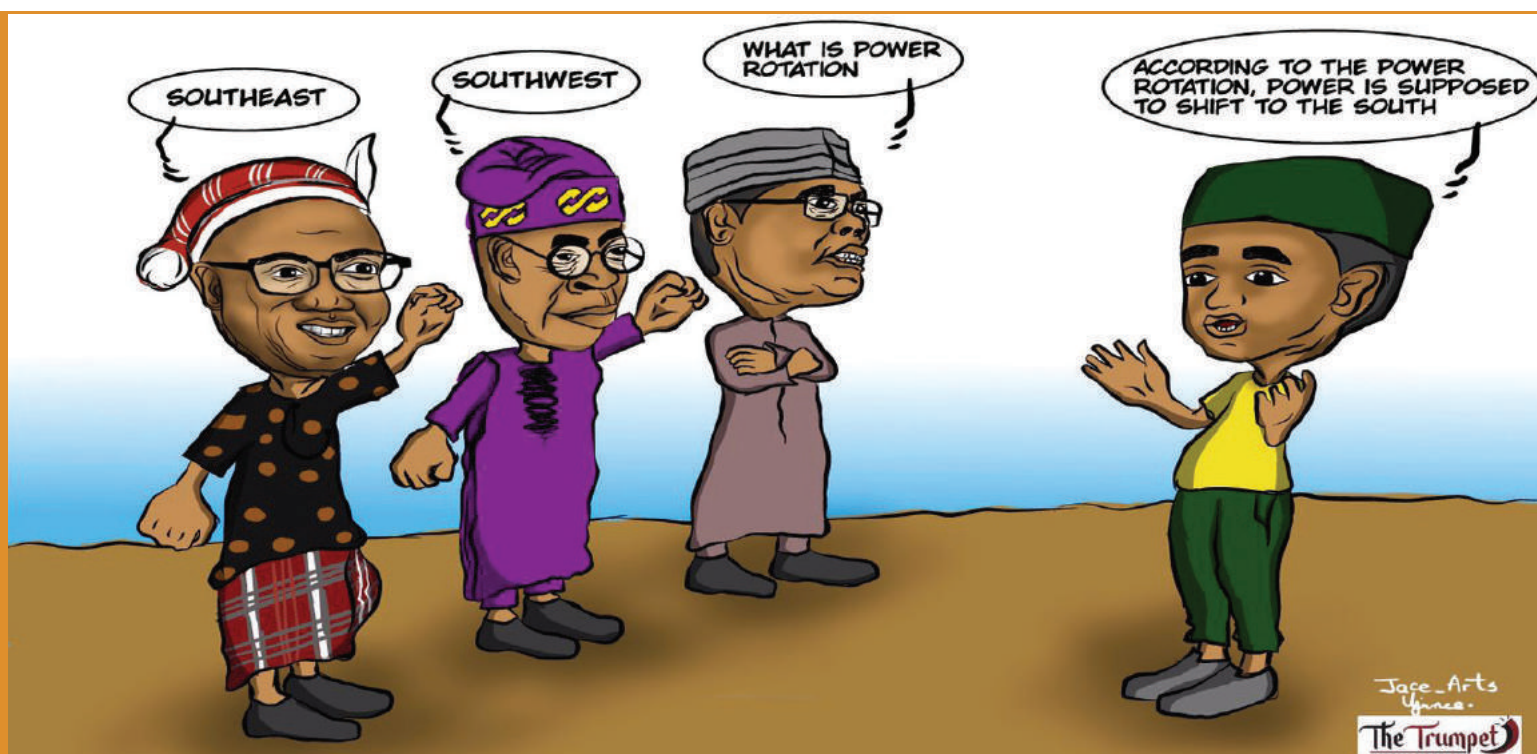
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## All the ways in which Nigeria is lawless

All around us these days we here the expression: "Nigeria is a failed state". Only the proverbial ostrich would disagree. Anybody with a half a brain can see the utter rot that characterizes the Nigeria of today – senseless killings, kidnappings, banditry and terrorism; money rituals and cultism; corrupt politicians and despicable delegates; thieves and robbers in high offices; filthy environments and hungry masses; failed judiciary, failed security, failed military, failed government. Everything that can go wrong with a country is wrong with Nigeria. It's OK if you want to take a moment here to cry; you are not going crazy.

Nigeria's biggest problem? LAWLESSNESS. Lawlessness manifests in several different contexts – in society, in nature or in religion. Google lawlessness and the definitions given for its types and you will see that Nigeria has every item on the menu. Let us take them one by one.

The first is "anomie", a term popularized by the sociologist Emile Durkheim. Durkheim argues that society has a role in regulating the passions and expectations of its members; and the institutions that implement

this social control are education, religion, family and tradition among others. Where these institutions fail, there is no check on the individual's desires, resulting in anomie, a situation in which the individual loses a sense of limits and loses all regard for the concerns of others leading to the breakdown of moral values. Such individuals show signs of derangement and an insatiable will. These two traits are more than evident in Nigeria's looters and thieves; people who use their office without conscience to rob the country blind with no sense of how much is enough. They steal far more than they could ever spend, but they keep at it – keep on stealing – because they suffer from what Durkheim calls "the malady of the infinite".

The second term is more common: "anarchy"; a situation in which a society has no hierarchies and so everyone becomes a law unto himself. This situation is caused by an absence of government or a rejection of an existing government and what it stands for. There is no endeavor to peaceful coexistence and armed criminals roam freely with impunity. Extra-judicial killings, non-state actors imposing curfews, murder videos shared on social media – the killers confident in the knowledge that

nothing will be done because the system is a failed system, rampant kidnappings, a general disregard for law and order, disdain for authority etc. Is this not the Nigeria of today?

A third term is "civil disorder" which is also called "civil unrest", "civil disturbance" or "social unrest". In this case, people who are engaged in civil disorder are those who teach or demonstrate to other persons how to use or how to make firearms or explosives, or any other technique capable of causing injury or death to persons while also knowing that these will be used unlawfully to cause harm or disrupt commerce;

also anybody who transports or facilitates the transportation of firearms or explosives or incendiary devices knowing that they will be use unlawfully to cause civil disorder; and any person who commits or attempts to commit any act to obstruct or impede or interfere with any law enforcement officer who is lawfully engaged in performing his or her duties. This brings to mind all the disturbing cases televised by the Nigerian police of men and women skillfully concealing firearms and other explosives within their goods, under motorcycle seats, on their person, in gutted car seats, etc.;



Ralia  
MAIJAMA'A

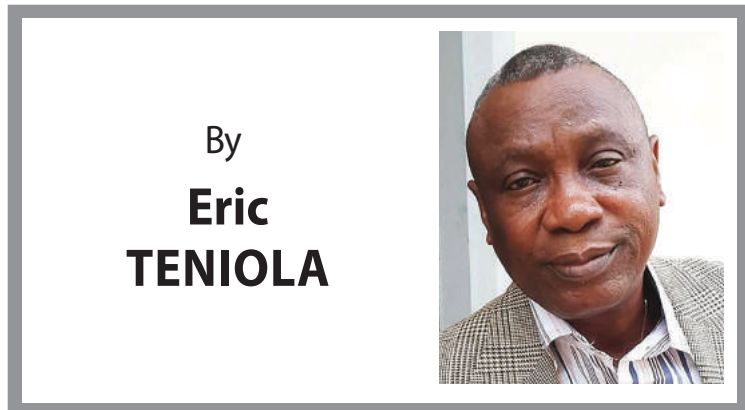
transporting these firearms all over the country. This is not to mention the activities of terrorist groups like Boko Haram, ISIS and militant wings of IPOB.

So, Nigeria checks all the boxes. Our society has degenerated into one without morals. All the cultural values that we used to cherish since ancestral times are slipping away from us. We lack any proper code of ethics – everybody is looking for an opportunity to lie and cheat. What we used to call "common decency" has since packed its bags and fled our shores. We diligently perform the rituals of our religions – praying more than anybody else – without actually living our lives according to our religious teachings. We have turned our back on God and God has, in turn, turned His back on us; and we can only blame ourselves.

Murder, rape, theft, dishonesty, indecency, immorality, unkindness and wickedness coupled with a desperate greed for material things has come to define Nigerians more than anything else. By and by we are losing touch with our basic humanity.

I cry for Nigeria, but we must not give up on our dear country. If we unite, and each one of us makes the conscious choice to become a responsible citizen, we can turn our country around. We all know what is right; we simply need to choose to do the right thing at all times. For, despite everything it has become, Nigeria is still my home and I love it; and as sure as I breathe, I know that Nigeria will be great again! Naija people no be joke.

•Ralia Maijama'a is a member of The Trumpet Editorial Board.



By  
Eric  
TENIOLA

Cont'd from last week Saturday/  
Sunday edition

So close by then were President Obasanjo and Alhaji Atiku that VILLA SCOPE, the official news magazine of the state house coordinated by Chief Tunji Oseni, Chris Mammah, Tunde Olusunle, Steve Itugbu, Musa Aduwak, Justin Abuah, Sule Katsina and Lanre Idowu, described the bond between the two men as a STRONG RELATIONSHIP THAT WORKS.

In the second term, things fell apart. Only the two men can explain what really happened. I still believe till today, that if Chief Mrs Stella Abebe Obasanjo (1945-2005) had not died in Puerto Banus in Spain on October 23, 2005 and if Otunba Oyewole Fasawe, the ASIWAJU of Owo, who was and is still a close friend of the two men was not incarcerated at that time, the relationship between President Obasanjo and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar could not have degenerated so low, during the second term of President Obasanjo in office.

It is wrong to pretend that the rift between former President Obasanjo and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar did not affect the smooth running of the government between 2003 and

2007. Of course it did. Careers of many public officers were ruined by the crack. Most did not recover till today. Some were heartbroken, some even died. It was a difficult period for those close to the two of them. There was the case of Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, former Managing Director of THE DAILY TIMES and a literature guru and friend of the two men. Unaware of the rift, he flew from Lagos and by mistake first visited Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. He was disallowed from seeing President Obasanjo in spite of his scheduled appointment. The complete loyalty of the Secretary of the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette and that of the Chief of Staff to the President, Major General Abdullahi Mohammed (81), CFR, saved the central government, inspite of the numerous travels of President Obasanjo at that time. The carryover of the split has affected President Obasanjo and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and the rest of us till today.

I do not know what the incumbent Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo is going through. But talking generally of the office, it is a dead end job. I was in Ikenne, the hometown of Professor Osinbajo in Ogun state recently and I watched

## The vice-presidency is incurable frustration (2)

the projects sited in Daura on television, the home town of President Buhari, there is a lot of difference. THE POWER OF THE PRESIDENCY has transformed Daura while there has not been a change in Ikenne in the last five years. Ikenne is not just the hometown of the legendary Chief Obafemi Awolowo (6 March, 1909 - 9 May 1987), GCFR, it is also the headquarters of Ikenne Local Government in Ogun state.

The 1979 Constitution never gave the Vice President any defined schedule nor the decree No 24 of May 5 1999, which we now know as the 1999 constitution. The only responsibility the Vice President has is in the third schedule of the constitution which makes him the Chairman of the National Economic Council. In that capacity, the council itself is to "advise the President". In all other bodies, the constitution bestowed on him ordinary membership or in some cases Vice Chairman. He is not a member of the Nigeria Police Council while he is the Vice Chairman of the Council of State, National Defence Council and National Security Council. Section 130 of the Constitution states that there shall be for the federation, a President who shall be the head of state, chief executive of the federation and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation. Section 141 states that there shall be for the federation a Vice President. The Constitution never crowned the Vice President as deputy head of State or deputy Chief Executive of the Federation or deputy Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation. The Constitution is ill to the office of the Vice President yet it coronated the President a King and a god. However cordial they appear to

the outside world, there cannot but be conflict between the office of the President and that of the Vice President. It is true that the Decree Number 25 of 1978 which is referred to as the 1979 Constitution was produced by Justice Egbert Udo Udoma (1917-1998) from Ikot Abasi in Akwa Ibom state. It is also true that the Decree Number 24 of 1999 which we refer to as 1999 Constitution was produced by Justice Nikki Tobi (1940-2016). The 1979 Constitution was in fact signed into law by General Olusegun Obasanjo on September 21, 1978 as the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (enactment decree) of 1978. As for Decree Number 24 which we refer to now as 1999 Constitution, it was promulgated and signed into law on May 4, 1999 by General Abdusalam Alhaji Abubakar, GCFR.

One could see that the two Constitutions were engineered and approved by the military. In the structure of the military command, there is no provision for a deputy. In a military context, the chain of command is the line of authority and responsibility along which orders are passed within a military unit and between different units. In more simple terms, the chain of command is the succession of leaders through which command is exercised and executed. And that is why the military transferred all the powers in this country to the Office of the President of Nigeria, who was also named as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

The two Constitutions—1979 and 1999, were not approved by referendum or a plebiscite, unlike in most countries of the world.

The fate of the Vice Presidents is equally similar to the fate of deputy

governors. Of all the thirty-six deputy governors elected in 1999, only four of them became governors eventually. They are Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR, from Bayelsa state, who became governor and later became President, Alhaji Aliyu Mahmud Shinkafi from Zamfara state, Alhaji Umar Abdullahi Ganduje (72) from Kano state and Alhaji Aliyu Mugatakarda Wamako(68) from Sokoto state, who is at present a Senator. There are others who later became Senators including Otunba Iyiola Ajani Omisore (64) from Osun state, Chief Chris Stephen Obong Ekpeyong(65) from Akwa Ibom, Chief Enyinnaya Abaribe (65) from Abia state, Mr. Seleh Usman Dambayi (1955-2015) from Taraba and Alhaji Sefiu Adegbenka Kaka (69) from Ogun state.

The rest are today not around politically while some of them have died. They include Bello Tukur (Adamawa), Prince Chinedu Emeka (Anambra), Alhaji A. Mahmoud (Bauchi), O. Ajene (Benue), Alhaji Al A. Jato(Borno), Chief John O. Akpa(Cross Rivers), E. Oko-Isu(Ebonyi), Chief Paul O. Alabi (Ekiti), O. Itanyi (Enugu), Barrister Joshua M. Lidani(Gombe), Engr. Udeagu (Imo), Ibrahim S. Kwatalo(Jigawa), Engr. Stephen R. Shekari(Kaduna), Alhaji T.A. Jikamsi(Katsina), Alhaji A.A. Argungu(Kebbi), Patrick Adaba(Kogi), Deacon (Chief), S.A. Sayami(Kwara), Senator K. Bucknor(Lagos), Onje Gye-Wado(Nassarawa), Barrister Iyiola Oladokun(Oyo), Chief Michael Bot-Mbang(Plateau), Sir G.G. Toby(Rivers) and Alhaji A.S. Bagare(Yobe).

To be continued next edition



# Again, controversy trails Buhari's appointments into INEC

● *CSOs, opposition, accuse President of appointing APC members, sympathisers*

● *Don't deny appointees right because of affinity with politicians, says party's chieftain*

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, POLITICS EDITOR

President Muhammadu Buhari forwarded to the Senate via a letter dated July 25, 2022, names of 19 persons nominated as national commissioners of the nation's apex election management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Out of the 19 nominees, five were reappointed for a second and final term of five years while the remaining 14 are fresh appointments.

Reappointed are Ibrahim Abdullahi (Adamawa); Obo Effanga (Cross River); Umar Ibrahim (Taraba); Agboke Olaleke (Ogun); and Samuel Egwu (Kogi).

The 14 fresh nominees are; Onyeka Ugochi (Imo); Muhammad Bashir (Sokoto); Ayobami Salami (Oyo); Zango Abdu (Katsina); Queen Elizabeth Agwu (Ebonyi); and Agundu Tersoo (Benue).

Others include; Yomere Oritsemlebi (Delta); Yahaya Ibrahim (Kaduna); Nura Ali (Kano); Agu Uchenna (Enugu); Ahmed Garki (FCT); and Hudu Yunusa (Bauchi);

The rest are Uzochukwu Chijioko (Anambra); and Mohammed Nura (Yobe).

The nominees were yet to be confirmed before the Senate proceeded on its recess but has passed the responsibility of screening them to the Committee on INEC.

However, a coalition of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Abuja at the weekend called on the Senate to halt the confirmation process due to some irregularities, particularly because of allegations that some of the nominees are political apologists.

They argued that if the nominees are confirmed without resolving questions surrounding their appointments, the 2023 election may after all not be credible as promised by President Buhari.

Among other concerns raised by the CSOs is the recent redeployment of Resident Electoral Commissioners and other top management staff by INEC. There are insinuations that movement of RECs few months to a major general election is questionable and may be part of a grand plan to compromise the election process.

Even, INEC was accused of gender insensitivity, alleging that the Commission failed to apply the 35 percent affirmative action provision in its appointments.

At the Friday convergence of the CSOs, Lanre Arogundade, the Director, International Press Centre alleged that some of the nominees are partisan and of questionable past.

Specifically, he alleged that Muhammad Bashir, the nominee from Sokoto State, was a governorship aspirant under the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 general election.

Sylvia Agu, the nominee for Enugu State, he said, is believed to be the younger sister of the APC Deputy National Chairman, South-east.

He pointed out that the nominee for Imo State, Pauline Onyeka, who is a former Head of ICT at INEC in Imo state, has been accused of alleged corruption and connivance with politicians to fraud the electoral process.

Faulting the nomination of Queen-Elizabeth Agwu, a former Accountant-General in Ebonyi State, he said, she was suspended



**President Muhammadu Buhari**

allegedly on the grounds of incompetence and corruption in 2016.

Summing these up, he said the appointments if confirmed, cast doubt on the credibility, independence and capacity of INEC to deliver credible, transparent, conclusive and acceptable elections in 2023 and beyond.

Mr Arogundade also said their appointments will significantly undermine the neutrality and impartiality of the Commission and will increase mistrust in Nigeria's electoral process.

"By the combined effect of Section 156(1)(a) and Third Schedule, Part 1, Item F, paragraph 14(1), these individuals are constitutionally prohibited from any appointment as members of INEC.

"It will be against the sacred spirit of the Constitution to accept their nomination. Given their antecedent and close affinity with political parties, it is improbable that they will remain neutral and objective if successfully screened as INEC REC," he submitted.

Harping mostly on what he described as perceived lopsidedness in the appointments, Jake Epkelle of the Albino Foundation, expressed worries that the appointments did not reflect the principles of non-discrimination and inclusivity – with regard to Persons with Disability (PWDs).

While he stressed the need to make the electoral process more inclusive, he argued that the appointments failed to recognize the provisions of the Discrimination Against Persons Living with Disabilities Act, 2018, and other legislations and guiding principles in that regard.

Other organisations that lend their voices to the call for a review of the nominations are Yiaga Africa, International Press Center, Center for Media and Society, the Albino Foundation, Elect Her, Nigerian Women Trust Fund, Partners for Electoral Reform, Inclusive Friends Association and the Kukah Centre.

In summary, the CSOs while rejecting

the appointments called on President Buhari to withdraw their nomination in the public interest and in furtherance of his commitment to leave a legacy of a truly independent electoral institution.

They also called for a thorough examination and background checks of the credentials of the nominees.

They asked the Senate to reject the nominees that fall short of the threshold of non-partisanship and impeccable character.

"In making nominations into INEC, President Buhari should be guided by the judgment of the Federal High Court on affirmative action wherein the court directed that all appointments must comply with the 35% affirmative action for women.

"In the same vein, the President should ensure the representation of Persons with disability (PWDs) and young people in the appointments," the CSOs concluded.

In the same vein, another body, the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) condemned the nominations of persons with political affiliations as Independent National Commission, INEC, Resident Electoral Commissioners, RECs.

Auwal Rafsanjani on behalf of TMG frowned at the danger that surreptitious nominations of card-carrying members of the ruling party, All Progressive Congress, into the Commission (INEC) portends for credibility of electoral process and acceptability of election results.

Referencing the provisions of 1999 Constitution are clear on the compositions, and major appointments into structure of the Electoral Body, Rafsanjani said "we are displeased by the apparent partisanship and favouritism reported through the nominations of the party's card-carrying members as INEC Commissioners and State Resident Electoral Commissioners."

He equally noted posers raised by concern Nigerians on the recent promotions and strategic deployments of top ranking INEC officials including RECs across the country and the fear that it might be part of a grand

plan by the APC administration to "upturn votes or create inconclusive situations" that will be exploited by unscrupulous politicians in forcing or rigging their way into power.

"We are more concerned by the potential impact of such a major push from the Presidency on the overall credibility, transparency and integrity of the upcoming elections in 2023.

"Just as we condemn in totality the appointments of card-carrying members of any political party as a controlling strategy that can compromise the competence and objectivity of INEC, under which the independence and integrity of the Commission cannot be guaranteed to deliver free, fair and credible elections.

"TMG on this note call on President Muhammadu Buhari to in the spirit of his administration's commitment to anti-corruption and transparency, withdraw all names of political party chieftains or card-carrying members contained in the nominations; and consider for immediate replacements, persons of integrity and unquestionable character, to demonstrate non-partisanship in the selections and nominations.

"We call on the National Assembly to reject confirmation of all nominated party chieftains and insist on transparency and non-partisanship in the selections, to uphold democratic value and electoral integrity, while proving respect for the sanity and sanctity of the rule of law.

"We also call on INEC to give detailed and verifiable positions of the nominated persons and rationale for their selections as well as prerequisite for the recent adjustments in the Commission's structure and compositions at all levels," Rafsanjani said.

The Deputy National Youth Leader of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Hon. Timothy Osadolor though not speaking on behalf of the party aligned himself with the call by the CSOs for the rejection of such nominations.

He commended the insistence of Nigerians, particularly the CSOs for standing by the PDP during what he described as "fraudulent attempt" to sneak in Lauretta Onochie into INEC despite obvious evidence of her partisanship.

He said "Nigerian of all shades have no choice than to identify with our party when we raised the alarm over Onochie's nomination and upon the party's consistency with press conferences, protest matches and activities of the CSOs and activist lawyers, we prevailed and the Senate rejected her nomination through a face saving ground of federal character".

Hon. Osadolor said it is not too late for President Buhari to withdraw names of nominees with question of partisanship.

"The President can easily find other eminently qualified Nigerians without baggages of partisanship as replacement, so that they can be screened and confirmed to fill existing vacancies in the Commission," he said.

But a chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Hon Tajudeen Olabisi Abioye said it is not enough to ask for rejection of the nominees without thorough probe of such blanket allegation of partisanship.

Continue online at [www.thetrumpet.ng](http://www.thetrumpet.ng)



## Council chiefs brainstorm on repositioning local government administration in Nigeria

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Chairmen of local council areas in the country are currently in Abuja to brainstorm of how to reposition administration at the third tier of government.

The three - days workshop organised by the Association of Chairmen of Local Government Service Commissions in Nigeria commences today and run through Wednesday at the International Conference Centre.

Top government functionaries and politicians such as the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Boss Mustapha; the Minister of Special Duties

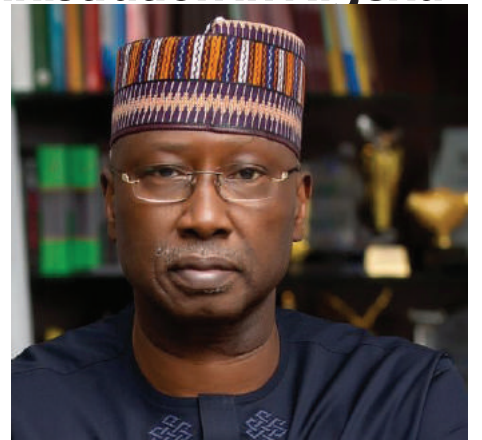
and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Dr. George Akume; and two state governors; Dr. Samuel Ortom of Benue and Engr. Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa are expected at the national workshop.

National Chairman of the Association, Dr. Bemsem Melladu, said the theme of the workshop is "The Imperativeness of the Local Government System as Agent of Democratic Consolidation and Grassroot Development in Nigeria (the Sustainability Approach).

According to the chairman, papers billed for presentation by Resource Persons on Day 1 include: Leadership and good local government service delivery; the importance

of an Effective and Efficient Local Government System; Developing the Appropriate Work Values and Ethics in the Local Government Bureaucracy; and the Imperative of Monitoring and Evaluation in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Local Governments.

"Papers to be delivered on Days Two and Three include: The role of Anti-graft agencies in fostering compliance in the management of local government funds for good governance; Transparency and Accountability in the Local Government System and Participatory Social Planning and Policy Change."



Boss Mustapha



Peter Obi

## Reject campaign by proxy, Obi tells Nigerians

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Ahead of the 2023 election, the electorates have been advised to shun campaign for votes by representatives and mouthpieces of candidates.

Rather, Nigerians are enjoined to engage candidates personally to extract commitments from them as they present their agendas for the country.

Presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi said the electorate should not consider any of the presidential candidates speaking through proxies.

He addressed Nigerians who came to welcome him in Frankfurt, Germany at the weekend, where he specifically advised electorates to do background checks on all presidential candidates before listening to their campaign promises.

A foremost support group of the Labour Party candidate, the Peter Obi Solidarity Network (POSN) in a statement Saturday quoted Obi as saying "when you listen to us, go and check our background, this is not a time for somebody to show us his qualifications, I live in Nigeria and I know Nigeria and what Nigerians need. I am not a stranger to Nigerian problems.

"I am a trader but I have a privilege to go to some of the best of schools like Oxford, Cambridge, and other ivy league institutions, but I always say to people that educational qualification is not the same as integrity. Listen to all the presidential candidates not through proxy. Let anyone who wants to be your President come forward himself and speak to you directly, because he is the one you will hold responsible for whatever happens to Nigeria under his care.

"This campaign is not a campaign you are going to speak through somebody, that person needs to come and directly tell us what he is going to do for our country and we must take note of whatever he says and hold him by his words."

"We also don't want that would be carried to this place in a wheel chair, but must consider his capacity, competence, integrity and commitment.

Talking about racism, Peter Obi said, "I don't see any country as racist. If you think your host country is racist you can go back to your country. The reason why you are here is because your place is not working.

"So, it is our duty to turn things around in Nigeria for the good of our country.

"Somebody asked me a question about going to look for foreign investors, I said Nigerians outside are going to do what China and India did.

"It is good for us to go back and fix our place, we need to secure it and it is important for our place to have proper leadership that is visionary, there is nothing happening in other countries that is rocket science, a country is measured by its productive capacity.

"Somebody asked me what are we going to do to stabilize the naira and I said it is very simple; production, because the more you produce goods and export, the more your currency becomes stronger, if you are looking for dollars and Euro, just go and sell something to somebody that has euro and dollar and your currency will become strong."

Assuring Nigerians home and abroad of policy thrust of his government if he wins the 2023 presidency, Obi said "we will ensure security of lives and bring stability to governance.

"Our human capital today is low, we have 200 million people with barely ten percent productive capacity. You also need to reduce the cost of Governance and have zero tolerance for corruption. People cannot continue to do what they are doing with government resources."

Externally, he said that Africa will remain the centrepiece of Nigeria's foreign policy as it will improve diplomatic sphere of influence via peacekeeping, trade, and investment initiatives.

## North want to retain power in 2023, says Kwankwaso

● No, northerners are backing Obi, Ohanaeze affirms

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Presidential candidate of New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Senator Musa Rabiu Kwankwaso, has disclosed that the northern part of the country really wants to retain power after President Muhammadu Buhari's eight years tenure in 2023.

He said this stark reality was responsible for breakdown of alliance talks with Mr. Peter Obi, presidential candidate of Labour Party, because the northern agenda will not allow him to be on the ballot as running mate to the latter.

Despite the support by some northern politicians for the presidential ambition of the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, he said the mood of the North does not support a Southern presidency.

Kwankwaso, who spoke with a private television station, said he rejected serving as running mate to Obi for fear of negating the body language and wish of the north to retain power.

He said "at the moment, the mood in the North today is that the presidency should be in the North. That is why I couldn't accept to be his running mate", despite doing "everything possible for that alliance to work for many obvious reasons".

Speaking further of the political permutations in the country, he said: "In 2007, I could have tried to contest to become president because I was better qualified than almost everybody that contested at that particular time. I was a civil servant for 17 years; I was deputy speaker for the House of Reps; I was at the time the elected delegate for the Constitutional Conference of 2004-2005.

"I was governor of Kano for four years; I was Minister of Defence and to become president, is to become the president and Commander-in-Chief. This aspect of Commander-in-Chief is very important even in the military, to establish relationships with them and know them.

"We have already done that at that time. We were very close to each other and respect ourselves. But I was not in a hurry and I said I wanted to go back to Kano while many of

my colleagues that were governors between 1999 and 2007 were all contesting to become president, I said I wanted to go back to Kano to finish that one term.

"After doing all that, the next thing was to contest for presidency and that was what I did in 2015 because I was in the game and of course, in any business you want to progress. Our people who know our value and capacity were putting all sorts of pressure that we should go and take it".

"The issue at that particular time was that in Northern Nigeria, there is what we call 'mood' at any election cycle. In fact, if you look at it in 1992/1993 when MKO Abiola contested to be president of this country, the mood at that time was for us to support the South and that was exactly what we did.

"Coincidentally, I came from Kano and Bashir Tofa, the NRC presidential candidate also came from Kano and we are from the same polling booth and he was defeated there and in the ward, local government, state and Northern Nigeria.

"In 1999, I was governor-elect when Obasanjo, Ekwueme and others contested. Abubakar Rimi was there and he wanted to become president. We all believed that he was qualified but the mood was for the presidency to go to the South. We went to the Jos convention and we voted 100 percent for Obasanjo. The same thing in 2003."

However, the apex Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, claimed that Obi's candidacy has now received the backing of northerners because his candidacy is a 'national project'.

According to the socio-political body, Obi's presidential bid which started as a regional project has been exported to other parts of the country and that it has taken a pan-Nigeria outlook and acceptance.

It is on the strength of the spread of Obi's popularity that some Igbo elders recently visited the Sultan of Sokoto and the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Sa'ad Muhammad Abubakar.

Spokesperson of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief Alex Ogbornia, said: "it is clear that the candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, is no longer an Igbo project. He is now a national project. Ohanaeze has pushed out the matter to the rest of Nigeria."







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Director-General, Nigerian Insurers Association (NIA), Mrs. Yetunde Ilori; President, Nigerian Council of Registered Insurance Brokers (NCRIB), Rotimi Edu; outgoing Chairman of NIA, Ganiu Musa; incoming Chairman of NIA, Segun Omoshin; Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, NCRIB, Tope Adaramola and Treasurer of NCRIB, Ayo Akande during a visit to NIA in Lagos.

## AXA Mansard emerges most innovative insurance firm 2022

AXA Mansard, a member of AXA, the global leader in insurance and assets management, has emerged the Most Innovative Insurance Company of the Year 2022.

It received the award from the World Economic Magazine, a United States (U.S)-based business publication that recognises contributions from businesses across the global financial ecosystem in terms of innovation, strategy, sustainability, compliance to regulatory standards and leadership.

According to the organisers, the award highlights AXA Mansard's spirit of industry disruption, leadership and vision in the marketplace.

Speaking on the award, Chief Executive Officer of AXA Mansard Insurance, Kunle Ahmed, said: "This award, once again, speaks to our vision of moving from a player to partner and our purpose to act for human progress by protecting what matters to our clients.

"It recognised our leadership in innovation and sustainability, but the real foundation of these innovations is our vision and purpose. They are what drive us to continue to innovate in ways that position us as our customers'

partner every step of the way."

"Our customers' needs are dynamic, therefore, our response to this recognition by a reputable organisation like World Economic Magazine is to continue to innovate, create new solutions and enhance our service delivery in ways that empower our customers to live a better life," Kunle added.

On her part, Chief Customer and Marketing Officer of the company, Jumoke Odunlami, thanked AXA Mansard customers for the award, saying that the company could not have been recognised without its customers, who gave it the opportunity to serve them.

She said: "We dedicate this award to our esteemed customers who inspire us to continue to innovate and re-engineer our processes, to the end that we deliver exceptional services."

AXA Mansard offers life, property and casualty insurance products and services to individuals and institutions across the country. It also offers assets and investments management services and health insurance solutions through AXA Mansard Investments Limited and AXA Mansard Health Limited.

## NCRIB, NIA partner on growth of insurance industry

Insurance operators have expressed the need to forge more synergy towards growing the industry by accelerating its contribution to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). President of the Nigerian Council of Registered Insurance Brokers (NCRIB), Rotimi Edu, stated this intention at a meeting when its delegation visited the Nigerian Insurers Association (NIA) in Lagos.

He noted that the industry's quest for cohesion and professionalism for effective service delivery to members of the public could only be achieved if insurance brokers, who are members of the NCRIB, accelerate their collaboration with underwriters under the NIA.

"Revitalisation of the various joint and technical committees of the industry is being put at the front burner to facilitate effective sharing of information between our professional divides in the industry," he

said.

He stressed the need for the insurance industry operators to always see themselves as cooperators rather than competitors to project an acceptable front before the insuring public.

Earlier, outgoing Chairman of NIA, Ganiu Musa, pledged

the association's readiness to cooperate with the NCRIB to strengthen the Joint Technical Committee, noting that no effort should be spared in exchanging information with a view to making the industry more vibrant to boost its contribution to the national economy.



Rotimi Edu



# How to curb oil theft, pipeline vandalism, by NLNG ex-spokesman

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

To effectively check oil theft and pipeline vandalism in the country, the Federal Government and relevant stakeholders should endeavour to show empathy to host communities and award pipelines surveillance and protection contracts to members of the communities who understand their domains better.

A former Public and Community Relations Manager with the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Limited (name withheld), stated this while reacting to the vexed issue of oil theft and pipelines vandalism in the country. According that the routine of government and oil industry players to award such contracts to politicians in Abuja and other places, who use the police to carry out the duties.

He cited the recent pipeline surveillance and protection contract re-awarded to former

Niger Delta militants' leader, Government Ekpomukpolo, popularly called Tomopolo, insisting that such contracts are better managed by members of the host communities, who understand the complexities of their localities.

He said: "In the case of NLNG, we ensured that the surveillance and grass cutting contracts were awarded to land owners. We did this knowing that the owners of the land know how best to protect it, otherwise it would not have remained in their ancestry since God knows when and as owners they, more than any other parties, were entitled to its revenue.

"The contract guaranteed them income in the duration of the project and pipeline. This simple move proved very radical. Security agents in the police, SSS and military advised against it, because it alienated them. Politicians and community leaders opposed it, saying they were in charge of security in



Timipre Sylva

their villages and should naturally be the contract holders. We stood our ground, despite the intimidation, harassment and sometimes physical assaults."

He explained that based on that decision, there was no single case of vandalism on NLNG pipelines for over 16 years, except in the swamps, bogs and marshes and such cases were usually reported promptly by

the land owners, who survey the 217 kilometers pipeline traversing Bonny to Kalabari, Ogba, Ikwerre, Abua and Ekpeye in Rivers State in canoes daily.

"No land owner would permit any militant to vandalise a pipeline under his care, because the contract prescribes no payment for any landlord that allows any portion of pipeline under his jurisdiction to be vandalised.

"Till date, the NLNG has little or no worries regarding its pipelines while the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Shell, Agip and other multinational oil companies sometimes record up to 5,000 breakages. Showing empathy for the voiceless goes a long way! That, I dare say, is the answer to oil theft, which I consider the work of karma," he added.

He also explained that even more effective ways of resolving pipeline vandalism and oil theft epidemic in the country was to pay compensations to land owners for cash crops felled along the way, adding: "It was a difficult job in every sense of

the word, because some desperate local manufactured shrines overnight to claim payments for their gods.

"In that role, I regularly appeared before magistrates in Ahoada and other courts in Rivers State to defend the company from aggrieved villagers. My heart was with the villagers because most of them got only N5,000, N10,000, N20,000 or N30,000 at the most for their cash crops, the result of enumeration from consultants."

He maintained that the Nigerian Land Use Decree of 1978 was a brutal law, as it took ancestral lands free of charge from their owners and only paid for cash or economic trees.

"Observing and supervising and in some cases, enforcing (with Mopol and military officers) the law left a wound on my conscience and those of some of my colleagues. I watched helplessly as the villagers were being economically raped, but helpless in the face of an almighty Federal Government," he lamented.

## Increased revenue generation will reduce Nigeria's borrowing, says DMO

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Nigeria's Debt Management Office (DMO) has declared that a stronger and comparable revenue base will reduce the Federal Government's need for relatively large amounts of new borrowings.

Director-General of DMO, Ms. Patience Oniha, who stated this recently in Abuja, while interacting with journalists, insisted that the country needed to earn higher revenues and manage its debt profile more efficiently to further reduce borrowing.

Oniha stated that statistics had shown that relative to other countries, Nigeria's revenue remained low, adding: "The World Bank's World Economic

Outlook for 2020 showed that Nigeria with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio of 6.3 per cent was ranked 194 of 196 countries covered by the research."

She added that more taxes and other revenue base would reduce the need for relatively large amounts of new borrowings, as Nigeria had witnessed and would also reduce the debt service-to-revenue ratio.

"The DMO has repeatedly stressed the need to grow revenues significantly for debts to be sustainable. It is advisable for the media, members of the public and analysts to begin to focus attention on Nigeria's revenue shortfalls now and again. Nigeria has been running budget for decades it is about time to

shift to balanced budgets and even surplus budgets," she stressed.

She also pointed out that the need for the Federal Government to address the recurrent issue of petroleum subsidy payment, so as to further address borrowings, adding that the DMO has continuously maintained its position on the need to raise revenues.

"One issue that requires urgent attention is the petrol subsidy payments, which has significantly increased annual budget deficits and ultimately increase the level of new borrowings and public debt profile.

"There is a need to raise oil production and reduce crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism to meet oil revenue targets, especially in the light of rising crude oil prices.

"Other structural issues such as insecurity, inflation, infrastructure deficit affecting the business environment need to be addressed. Foreign exchange (Forex) shortages and other issues affecting the business environment need to be resolved," she added.

Oniha also noted that the above steps would create an avenue for efficient tax collection and wider tax base and that the DMO would play advisory role to the government in relation to public debts which cover new borrowings, debt negotiation and debt management strategy.

She noted that public debt has continued to grow in the last years as the government borrowed to meet major revenue shortfalls, increased spending on security and infrastructure, as well as funding on health due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

## Verve partners PUMA for VerveLife 5.0

Leading payment and card technology brand, Verve has announced a partnership with global sportswear brand, PUMA for the fifth edition of the annual VerveLife fitness event.

Inaugurated in 2017 to encourage healthy lifestyle among Verve cardholders and fitness enthusiasts, Verve Life has grown to be West Africa's biggest fitness platform, attracting thousands of fitness enthusiasts from Nigeria and beyond every year.

Highlights of the VerveLife fitness platform include exciting workout sessions and dance routines led by renowned fitness experts and dance instructors, fitness challenges and immersive master classes on nutrition, mental health, and other related topics, in addition to a multi-city train of satellite fitness events across Nigeria, touching over seven cities in 2022.

The collaboration with PUMA emanated from both brands' shared passion for fitness and is expected to bring about numerous benefits for members of the VerveLife and PUMA communities including free PUMA merchandise, product discounts, access to exclusive events and brand equity consolidation, among other benefits.

Speaking on the collaboration with PUMA, Executive Vice President, Marketing and Communications, Interswitch Group, Cherry Eromosele, restated VerveLife's focus on promoting fitness, healthy living and general wellness.

"We are pleased to welcome PUMA on board as one of our partners for VerveLife 5.0. Last year, we successfully delivered an event that left participants demanding more. This year, we

are set to up the ante, working with key partners like PUMA, as we jointly advocate a healthy lifestyle for Nigerians," he said.

Commenting on the collaboration with Verve, Marketing Coordinator of PUMA Nigeria, Ladun Bamgbose, said: "This partnership allows PUMA to promote the brand in what is arguably Sub-Saharan Africa's largest annual fitness event.

"We believe that fitness and sports have the power to transform and empower individuals and societies at PUMA, which is why VerveLife 5.0 is an ideal partner for us as their 'Never Stop' theme aligns with our brand mantra, Forever Faster."

Similarly, Group Head, Brands and Communications at Interswitch Group, Tomi Ogunlesi, said Verve's partnership with PUMA underscores its determination to treat members of the VerveLife community to an enriching experience. He said, "The partnership complements our efforts to deliver the best VerveLife experience year-on-year, exceeding the expectations of our growing community."

The buildup of events for VerveLife 5.0 commenced recently, with satellite events in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State and Asaba, Delta State. Other cities billed to host VerveLife satellite events are Enugu, Port Harcourt, Benin, Ibadan and Abuja, ahead of the highly anticipated grand finale in Lagos on November 5, 2022.

The event is also expected to make its debut in Kenya, with its first event scheduled to hold in Nairobi in October.

Beyond the provision of seamless, secure, and innovative payment solutions, Verve continues to support the lifestyle needs of Nigerians by nurturing their appetite for fit and healthy living.



Ms. Patience Oniha



## Customs blames CBN forex policy for decline in cargo volume

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) has stated that the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) forex prohibition list and the crashing of the naira has been responsible for the decline in volume of cargoes at the nation's ports.

Acting President ANLCA, Dr. Kayode Farinto, made the assertion in Lagos at the weekend, stating that the apex bank was encroaching on government's fiscal policies, which led to the decline in the importation of cargoes to the country.

Farinto asserted that several factors including bureaucracy, inconsistent policies and continued depreciation of the naira hinder the importation of cargoes to Nigeria.

"We have over 48 items on the forex prohibition list and people are still going through the black market, bringing these items is a problem and even when issues of declaration are considered.

"That is why I said there is a decline and not an increase. If it

is not a decline, we can say that 40 per cent of the containers are made up of raw materials from multinationals and producing companies like the Nigerian Breweries Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc and Unilever Plc, among others," he stated.

He said to address the situation, the Federal Government needed to look into the country's maritime policy to have a clear-cut way of harnessing the industry potential, which he insisted, has remained largely untapped.

"Before now, Nigeria had lost 45 per cent of its cargoes to Lome in Togo, because the country has a deep seaport, but with the coming of the Lekki Deep Sea Port, we will witness berthing of large vessels in Nigeria," he said.

He urged the government to establish a ministry to monitor the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) with a view to preventing Nigeria from being turned into a global dumping ground, stressing that having such a ministry to manage the pact would guarantee the nation's readiness for e-commerce.



Kayode Farinto

## Expert highlights challenges of manufacturing sector

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

A local manufacturer, Dan Osakwe, has lamented that local manufacturers were grappling with several challenges, which have made manufacturing very difficult in the country.

Osakwe disclosed this in an interview with The Trumpet in Lagos, maintaining that the increasing cost of energy had dealt a heavy blow on the real sector and that the local manufacturing industry was panning out.

"Rising energy prices have more than doubled the cost of production in the country. Nigeria has one of the highest costs of production globally due to government's inability to provide stable power supply," he said.

Lamenting that local manufacturers spend huge amounts of money to power their plants, he said: "About 50 per cent of all the costs most manufacturers incur were due to lack of stable power supply. The high cost diesel is putting pressure

on the revenue base of local manufacturers as against their counterparts outside the country that rely on stable public power supply."

Osakwe, who is a small-scale industrialist, also argued that the scarcity of foreign exchange was impacting negatively on local manufacturing, adding that multiple-taxation was also eating deep into the yearly turnover of most Nigerian businesses.

He further pointed out that the activities of revenue agents of local government areas, as well as the police and other security agencies constitute a major challenge to local small businesses.

"Lack of long-term credit facility and high interest rate of commercial banks are some of the challenges facing local manufacturers. The Bank of Industry (BoI) is not ready to give local businesses credit facilities, while the Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN) that was established to cater for small businesses has not lived up to expectations," he lamented.



Godwin Emezie

## Foreign airlines urge early release of \$265m by CBN

Stories by EDU ABADE, Business Editor

Association of Foreign Airlines and their representatives in Nigeria have urged the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to promptly release the promised \$265 million of its members' trapped funds in the country.

President of the association, Kingsley Nwokeoma, who made the plea in an interview at the weekend, said it was commendable that the Federal Government promised to release part of the funds, but the money should be released without delay if the crisis in the aviation sector must be averted.

The Trumpet recalled that Emirates Airlines threatened to suspend flights to Nigeria from September 1, 2022 over its trapped \$85 million, while some other foreign airlines gave the government till December 2022 coupled with fears that they might also suspend flights.

Also, British Airways on Friday, August 26, 2022, barred its travel agents in Nigeria from selling tickets amid the difficulty of foreign airlines in repatriating the \$464 million proceeds of ticket sales to their home countries.

Earlier, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) stated on August 18, 2022 that foreign airlines' funds being withheld in Nigeria increased from \$450 million in May to \$464 million in July.

The trapped funds have made foreign carriers to increase air fares, reduce flights, while some suspended operations due to their

inability to repatriate funds to their home countries.

To avert the impending crisis, the CBN announced the release of \$265 million on Friday. A breakdown of the figure indicated that \$230 million was released as a special foreign exchange intervention, while another \$35 million was released through the Retail SMIS auction.

Director, Corporate Communications Department of CBN, Osita Nwanisobi, said in a statement that Governor of the apex bank, Godwin Emezie, was not against any company repatriating funds from Nigeria, but that the bank favoured orderliness.

"With Friday's release, it is expected that operators and travelers will have some relief, as some airlines had threatened to withdraw their services due to the unremitted funds for outstanding sale of tickets.

"The development is still unfolding and the airlines have not changed their stance until we see what the government plans to do in this regard. We need to be explicit on how much the CBN has released, how much will still be released, the time frame for the payments and repatriations to be made. We should have the exact figures and statistics because many airlines are involved.

"What is even more important is the meeting being convened by the House of Representatives. However, we don't need to get to this point for the intervention to happen, because there is now panic. The airlines need the money, as some of them have long payment schemes with Boeing,

Airbus and others," the statement reads.

The operators further lamented that if other countries were like Nigeria, the airlines would not be able to service their debts and other obligations, adding that if they don't service their debts or maintain their aircraft that will jeopardise safety in an industry in which safety remains crucial.

"Remember, Qatar has cut frequencies before Emirates gave the September 1, 2022 date, while the rest are asking the Federal Government to do something between now and December. That is why government is trying to look around to see what can be done. It doesn't make business sense for the airlines if they can't move their money to run their business," he said.

Nwanisobi canvassed a holistic review of the situation so that Nigeria would not be seen in bad light, noting that the issue had been recurring for the funds to have risen to as much as \$464 million.

"We know how much is being owed, so we need to know how much is being released to the different airlines. We need to have all the figures and timeline when the full funds will be released. It will be a continuous process and how we overcome the challenge that has been there over the years is important.

"These are the issues that should be considered to effectively resolve the issues. So, it is not only about releasing the money, but also about discussing critically and finding the best ways of going about it," the statement added.

## Naira crashes to N698 per \$1 at parallel market

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Information from several black market Foreign Exchange (Forex) traders in some locations, at the weekend, indicated that the exchange rate between the naira and dollar fell to N698 per \$1.

The naira fell further against the dollar from N696 to \$1, as against its value on Thursday, August 26, 2022 representing 0.29 per cent depreciation as Forex traders attributed the fall of the currency

to sustained scarcity of the dollar and increased demand.

The exchange rate had recovered from the fall recorded in late July, 2022 when the naira dipped as low as N715 to the dollar, but averaged N672 to \$1 in the first week of August and maintained stability for most part of the month.

However, surging demand for Forex and liquidity crunch drove the rate upward and depreciated the local currency at the unofficial market.

Similarly, at the crypto currency peer-to-peer exchange, the naira fell to N598 to the dollar during early Friday trading, while the exchange at the official Investors and Exporters (I&E) window also depreciated in the last trading session, falling marginally by 0.08 per cent to close at N483 to \$1 on Friday 26, August 2021.

Meanwhile, a total of \$131.3 million in foreign exchange value was traded at 25.39 or 25.3 per cent lower than the N175.67 million traded in the previous session.



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## ValueJet Cup22: Rivers United fire blank against Gateway United

By OVIRI KELVIN, Sports Editor, Abuja

**N**igeria Professional Football League (NPFL) champions Rivers United have, against Gateway United, recorded their second draw in the ValueJet Cup 2022.

The Pride of Rivers, who are yet to break even in their second match after playing a goalless draw against Kwara United at the Remo Stars Stadium, still found it difficult to break even.

Despite dominating the opening stages of the match, the NPFL champions were blunt to get one past the Gateway goalie including a 20-minute off-target freekick by Farouk Mohammed.

Still forcing its way to break the resilient Gateway United, Paul Acquah won a freekick in a dangerous



spot but Ekeocha Chukwudi's effort was deflected for a corner kick in the 22nd minute.

Stanley Eguma's side had tried to lead the scoreline before halftime but were denied on several attempts.

After the break, coach Eguma made substitutions

7 minutes into the second half with Nyima Nwagwa and Malachi Ohawume coming in for Adebayo Olaolu and Igbudu Alfar.

In the 64th minute, further substitutions were made with Bolaji Sakin and Azeez Godswill replacing Paul Acquah and Chigonum Ihunda but

Gateway United were firm to allay any threat from the NPFL champions till the game ended in a barren draw.

Following the result, the Pride of Rivers have only earned two points in Group B and will have Ottasolo FC to contend with in their final group match.

## Cramp threatens Murray's US Open outing

Andy Murray may undergo an unfavourable outing in the US Open following an underlying cramp issue that is bedeviling the former world number one.

A series of tests to unravel the cause of the persisting problem that hindered his performance in recent weeks, including a loss to fellow compatriot Cameron Norrie in Cincinnati Masters, has been carried out but the root cause is still shadowy.

Reportedly, the 35-year-old, who can easily acclimatize to any weather condition has not found it easy to nip the cramp issue in the bud.

He has undergone a sweating test, and blood test but the results were perfect.

Why the tests revealed that Murray had no illnesses, he was uncomplacent, adding it would have been better if the result had given a clue.

"It was all good. Sweat test was good. Blood test was good. No illnesses," Murray said.

"I think it would be nice if you were one thing, you were deficient in something, maybe it is because of that," he added.

However, the player believes hydration and conditioning may be the cause of the cramp and has decided to take more water and also control his food intake.

He continued: "But at least I know now it is more down to either conditioning or hydration or food-related. That is something I can obviously

control a little bit as well

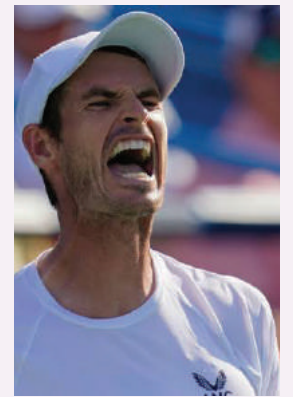
"But I feel like I am in decent shape so that is why it is concerning. I don't really know why it happened.

"Last few days in practice, I have actually felt a bit better in the conditions and everything so hopefully, I will be alright on Monday," he added.

Murray begins his US Open campaign on Monday against Francisco Cerundolo, who is ranked 27 in the ATP ranking.

Cerundolo, whose best performance in any Grand Slam event was an exit in the first round, recently lost 6-7(5-7), 6-4, 6-2 to Spanish Roberto Bautista Agut in the Cincinnati Masters' first round.

Currently ranked 47, Murray, who had lost in six Grand Slam finals, five times to a familiar foe, Novak Djokovic and once to Roger Federer, aims to win another Grand Slam title after he last won it 6 years ago.



## Algeria 2023: Black Galaxies beat Eagles B in Ghana



Ghana's Black Galaxies shot into the driving seat in their 7th African Nations Championship final qualifying fixture against Nigeria after a 2-0 win over Super Eagles B at Cape Coast Sports Stadium on Sunday evening.

After an evenly-balanced first period, during which goalkeeper Adeyinka Adewale quickly redeemed

himself after dropping the ball with a Ghanaian forward lurking, Daniel Barnieh shot the Galaxies ahead in the 50th minute from the penalty spot as Beninoise referee Issa Mouhamed punished a Nigerian infringement in the eighteen-yard box.

The Super Eagles fought valiantly to get even as the game wore on, to no avail,

and were then open to a sucker punch as Seidu Suraj unleashed a shot from close range that Adewale could only punch into his net with four minutes left.

The result leaves the Super Eagles B with some work to do ahead of the return leg, as both teams square off again at the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abuja on Saturday evening.

## WAFU-B CAF Qualifiers: Bayelsa Queens thump USFA 3-1 in Yamoussoukro

Nigeria Women's Football League (NWFL) champions Bayelsa Queens, fired up a 3-1 win against USFA Girls, on Sunday, in Stade de Yamoussoukro in Côte d'Ivoire.

The high flying Bayelsa Queens were quick to shrug off the barren draw against the Ghanaian side Ampem Darkoa to resume their quest to qualify for the Women's CAF Champions League on winning terms.

Two goals in the first-half

gave the Prosperity Girls a 1 goal advantage after Lala Traore had canceled Flourish Miracle's 5-minute opener for the Burkinabes in the 15th minute.

The extraordinary Etim Edidiong, who scored four in the Prosperity Girls' 5-0 thrashing of Athleta FC, netted the second goal in the 38-minute to hand Bayelsa Queens the lead.

However, Aderemy Mary finally got her name in the scoresheet with her



69-minute finisher to round the impressive group outing for the Nigerian side.

Moreover, goal-poaching Edidiong now has five goals to her name.

## Liverpool scoop summer window for late reinforcements

Following the series of injury problems bedeviling Premier League club Liverpool, they have intensified efforts to snap some midfield reinforcements before the summer window draws its curtain on September 1.

This new development contradicts coach Jürgen

Klopp's earlier statement that the club do not wish to sign any player before the summer window ends.

With the number of options in the midfield now limited, including Naby Keita's recent predicament that has exacerbated the already precarious state, the Reds

look to bolster the midfield to complement their season's campaign.

Liverpool this summer had their interest in Monaco defensive midfielder, Aurelien Tchouameni slip away as Real Madrid snapped the teenager to Santiago Bernabeu for €80m. Consequent to the insufficient

midfielders in the squad, the Reds started the season poorly.

Aside from Keita, other players in the retinue of injuries include Thiago and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, paving the way for Klopp to start James Milner and Harvey Elliott in the first defeat this season to Manchester United.

## I'm here to turn things around, Haaland roars

Erling Haaland has assured Manchester City he is here to turn things around after establishing his stripes in the Premier League over the weekend with a 19-minute hat-trick against Crystal Palace.

The striker, who was unable to convert a golden opportunity in the 3-1 loss to Liverpool in the Community Shield at Wembley Stadium, has practically settled well to do exactly what he is known for.

In a post-match interview, the elated 22-year-old, who reiterated that as a striker it is obligatory to score goals, noted that the mentality of the squad played a vital role.

"It was a proud moment for me and my family," Haaland said.

"Happy... amazing feeling to score three, a hat-trick, an even better feeling!" he continued.

"These games are why I'm here - to turn things around when there is a difficult time.

"In the end, it was about small adjustments. We were almost there sometimes in the first half so it was about getting it done.

"This is what we do. A good feeling. It's really important to have this kind of mentality and we should get it even more." the hat trick hero

added.

Meanwhile, Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola has showered encomiums on the striker admitting that the Norwegian is incredible.

He added that Haaland has settled well in the team which can be justified by the numbers he has netted so far.

"He came for that [scoring important goals], what he has done all his life. The numbers of this guy are beyond," Guardiola acknowledged.

"The most important thing is he settled perfectly, an incredibly humble guy. He chats more with guys from the academy players and it means a lot.

"What I like about Erling is we are still knowing each other. Still need more time. I saw his body language at 0-2 down how he encouraged his mates. I had the feeling that maybe he was not involved in the game but he was always there.

"He didn't run from the game, always he is there. As a striker he is incredible, he didn't touch the ball but had a feeling the ball was there and he was always involved," he added.

Haaland has scored in almost all the Premier League games and presently tops the goal chart with 6 goals.



# Usyk defeated Anthony Joshua mentally, admits Garcia

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

In the build-up for the heavyweight rematch between Anthony Joshua and Oleksandr Usyk in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the Brit changed his long-time trainer Robert McCracken with Robert Garcia and Angel Fernandez.

He was eager to reclaim his belt and did everything he could to outclass the Ukrainian, who has maintained an undefeated boxing record.

Despite the push and resilience exhibited with more improved performance compared to their first meeting in September 2021, Joshua was unable to stop Usyk, who outpointed him to retain the WBO WBA and IBF heavyweight belts.

However, Garcia has stated that the British-born Nigerian was defeated mentally before the result was announced.

According to Garcia, during a media chat with Izquierdazo, if Joshua had



sustained the pressure to the last round, there was every likelihood that he could have won the fight.

He noted that in the 10th round, Joshua, who was practically doing out all he was trained in the build-up to the fight, was unable to dish out tenacious jabs.

"In round 9, we tightened up, and almost closed the fight, when he got stronger by hitting the body and putting a little more pressure. (If he had) two or three

rounds earlier than that, maybe it would have been a different result," Garcia explained.

"(Regarding) the work we did in the gym, and because of how the fight was going, I think that Joshua was doing what we trained for.

"He used his distant punches well like the jab, the reach. I would have liked him to throw the jab a little more solidly. Sometimes he just used it to keep him at a distance.

"But there were a lot of opportunities where the jab would have been a little bit more solid, it wasn't that way, but I think we were still doing well until round 10 when everything changed.

"The fight was going well, but in round 10 he changed the fight.

"The last three are the ones that change, until the 9th we were about to win even by knockout."

Garcia reiterated that the mental defeat of Joshua and the great heart of the Ukrainian was the decider of the bout.

He, however, praised Usyk for being a formidable fighter, who possesses the grit of a true champion.

"It was decided in the last rounds," he underlined.

"Usyk is a great champion, a fighter with a tremendous heart, he knows how to finish strong as champions do," he acknowledged.

Garcia also took responsibility for Joshua's outing adding that he could have expected his fighter to throw more solid jabs.

## Umar Sadiq fires up Almeria against Sevilla

Super Eagles striker Umar Sadiq, over the weekend, sent Sevilla to the cleaners with his 55-minute strike to hand La Liga newcomers Almeria a vital 3 points at Estadio Mediterraneo.

Almeria fell by a goal after Oliver Torres slotted in an assist from Alex Telles in the 30th minute.

Undeterred, the home side who lost their opening match against Real Madrid before playing a one-all draw against Elche at Manuel Martínez Valero Stadium, courtesy of the in-form Sadiq's 23-minute goal, levelled the scoreline from Belgian Largie Ramazani in 42-minute.

As usual from the goal poacher, who was a key figure in the return of Almeria to the Spanish topflight division, Sadiq powered in a strike to hand Rojiblancos their first La Liga win of the season.

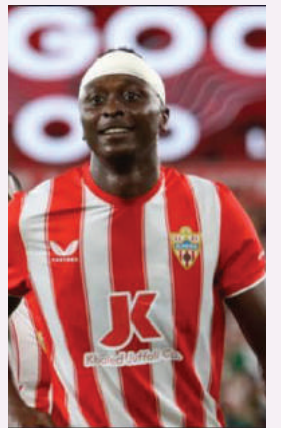
The prolific goal poacher valued a €30m by Almeria, following the persistence from top European clubs to snap the 25-year-old Nigerian international, has netted two times in three outings for the Andalusia-based side.

Almeria now have four

points from three games having lost the first, drawn the second and recorded their first win against Sevilla.

Moreover, Sadiq is on the radar of Sevilla that have targeted the Almeria star as a qualitative buy for the season and with the Super Eagle on target against them on Saturday, there is every course that coach Julen Lopetegui would have a rethink to force Los Nervionenses to enter into a negotiation with Almeria.

Almeria's next fixture is against fellow promoted side Real Valladolid where Sadiq will look to assert his consistency in front of goal at José Zorrilla Stadium on Monday, September 5, 2022.



## Don't get carried away, Arteta warns players

It is indisputable that Arsenal have been the most impressive side since the season started with a 100% performance record to sit at the top of the Premier League table.

With four games played including a 2-1 win against Fulham on Saturday, the Gunners ensured it maintained a two-point lead against last season's champions Manchester City.

This is a good record for Mikel Arteta who has seen his side flourish despite being tested by Fulham yesterday, came from a goal deficit to seal a 2-1 victory at the Emirates Stadium to the amazement of the ecstatic fans.

Exuding the qualities of title contenders for the season, Arteta has cautioned his players not to get too overwhelmed with the success as it is a marathon race to clinch the title.

"This is a long, long marathon. Everybody has to suffer at some stage. We're on

a good run and we have to try to maintain it," Arteta told the British media in a post-match interview.

"Absolutely not [getting carried away]. Be humble and hungry," he added.

Arsenal started the season with a 2-0 win against Crystal Palace and went on to thump Leicester City 4-2 at the Emirates Stadium where Gabriel Jesus got his first brace since he joined the Gunners this summer from Manchester City.

Penultimately, Arteta led the team to the Vitality Stadium where they plummeted Bournemouth 3-0, courtesy of Martin Odegaard's brace and William Saliba's finisher.

Despite the smooth ride, Arsenal will be tested in September and October where they will have to face Manchester United in Old Trafford, Tottenham, Liverpool and Manchester City, including a host of underdogs.



However, Arteta has insisted they will continue to prepare for every game which according to him is so demanding.

"But now it's onto the next one. We have games this week so we have to prepare and recover well and be ready because every game in this league is so demanding. You can see the results. We need to be ready," he said.

Nevertheless, the Arsenal manager brushed aside talks linking Arsenal as title

contenders for the season adding that the Premier League is still in the preliminary stage.

"No, I think it's just the start of the season," he added.

Arsenal's next fixture is against Aston Villa at Emirate Stadium on Wednesday. According to the head-to-head record in their last 20 meetings, Arsenal have won 14 times, drawn 1 and lost 5.

In addition, last season, Arteta led the team to secure a home and away victory against Steven Gerrard's side.

## Late football administrator, Oyo Orok Oyo, honoured in Calabar

The family of Nigeria's first member of the FIFA Executive Committee and a former Secretary General of then Nigeria Football Association, late Etubom Oyo Orok Oyo, at the weekend honoured the former football administrator of repute in his hometown of Calabar, Cross River State.

The occasion, with the support of the Nigeria Football Federation, fell on the very day that the honorary Life Vice President of the Confederation of African Football would have turned 100 years old if he were alive.

Tagged 'Posthumous Centenary Birthday/Immortalization of Etubom Oyo Orok Oyo (Mr Football)', the day's programme started with a memorial service at the Duke Town Presbyterian Church, Eyamba Street, Calabar at 10am, with the

train to immediately after, moved to the unveiling ceremony of the tombstone.

The launching of a book containing the essays of the late sage on Nigeria football and Nigeria sports, in general, was held after the unveiling of the tombstone.

The late Etubom Oyo Orok Oyo was the longest-serving Secretary-General of then NFA, was the first Nigerian ever to be elected into the CAF Executive Committee (1972-1998) and also the first Nigerian ever to be elected into the FIFA Executive Committee (now FIFA Council) where he served between 1980 and 1988.

He was also the first Nigerian to be made honorary Life Vice President of CAF, and was awarded the FIFA Order of Merit in Gold at a ceremony in Zurich, Switzerland in the year 2000.

## Bayelsa United return to NPFL after seven years

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Bayelsa United returned to the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) after seven years with a deciding 2-0 victory over Abakaliki-based side, Cynosure FC at Samson Siasia Stadium, Yenagoa, on Saturday.

The match which was graded

by the wife of the Bayelsa State Governor, Dr Mrs Gloria Diri, saw the likes of Timitimi Ineikade and Robert Mizo netting two vital goals in both halves to hand Bayelsa United a crucial win.

Having failed to take the lead a few minutes into the game, following a vital miss by Daniel Ekpo whose shot went wide from the target, Ineikade capitalised on a low cross from Alex Oyawah to rattle in a

goal past Cynosure goalie Akwari Franklin for the Prosperity Boys before half-time.

On return for the second half, Bayelsa United almost got a double after Robert Mizo's cross found substitute Tonyemiete Owugha in 66 minutes but the latter failed to take advantage of the defensive slack by the visitors.

Unfortunately for the Prosperity Boys, a penalty that was awarded

to them after Robert Mizo was fouled in the 18-yard box in the 73rd minute was poorly played by Ezema Ifeanyi which was parried by a goalie Franklin.

When it looked like the Prosperity Boys were going to end the game 1-0, substitute Robert Mizo compounded the woes of the visitors as he intelligently curled the ball into the net in the 76th minute to send the ecstatic crowd at the Samson Siasia

Stadium into celebration.

The victory moves Bayelsa United into the promised land having failed on three occasions, 2017, 2019 and 2020 before the appointment of the current board.

The return of Bayelsa United to the NPFL was also a fulfilment of Governor Douye Diri's drive to see that the Prosperity mantra of his administration is achieved with sports and ensuring that Bayelsans witnessed topflight

football.

An elated technical adviser of Bayelsa United, Diepreye Teibowei in a post-match interview said he was happy to guide the team back to the elite division, pointing out that the intensity of the match affected the quality of play.

While appreciating Bayelsans for their support, Coach Teibowei explained that Robert Mizo was kept on the bench due to a minor injury that he has been nursing.



# Nadal, Raducanu, Williams, Alcaraz, others, target US Open triumph

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

With the year fast coming to an end, tennis stars will hope to round the 2022 season on a remarkable note, and when they reminisce on the season's performance years after, would be impressed with what they achieved.

The Australian Open was the first of the Grand Slam events that was held, where Rafael Nadal clinched his 21st Grand Slam title before extending it to 22 in the French Open.

Though the Spaniard was eager to extend his Grand Slam title to 23 at Wimbledon 2022, an abdominal injury forced him out of the competition which was eventually defended by former topmost ranked player Novak Djokovic.

Djokovic encountered a lot of barefaced challenges during the 2022 season following his refusal to take the covid-19 jab.

Firstly, the Serb, who made headlines after he was denied entry into Australia to defend



the Australian Open title he won in 2021, has withdrawn from participating in final Gram Slam event of the year over his covid-19 status.

The US Open will play host to top-ranked tennis players with Emma Raducanu expected to defend her title in the event.

Ranked number 11 in the world, the teenager never thought she could defy the odds to win the title as she played through the qualifying stages at Flushing Meadows in 2021.

The British kickstart her title defence on Wednesday, August 31, 2022, at the Louis Armstrong

Stadium, against world-ranked number 44 Alize Cornet in the first round after losing to Jessica Pegula 7-5, 6-4 in the final of Cincinnati Masters.

In another vein, Serena Williams will aim to spectacularly ice her retirement from the sport with a 24th Grand Slam win.

Williams, who recently indicated her intentions to retire from tennis, would seek to equal Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam wins after it has become clear that the American, who turns 41 next

month, can no longer upset the record.

Moreover, the women's draw which was highly dominated by Williams during her active years has become unpredictable with 14 women winning a Grand Slam singles title since her last title in 2017.

Also in the women's draw, spectators will watch out for Dane Clara Tauson and the Chinese triumvirate of Zheng Qinwen, Wang Xiyu and Wang Xinyu while 18 years old Coco Gauff, a proven performer, will hope to make it through the first round against French Leolia Jeanjean at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Meanwhile, teenage sensation Carlos Alcaraz of course leads the charge for the teenage men, backed up by 19-year-old Dane Holger Rune and Britain's 20-year-old Jack Draper.

The Spaniard kickstart his run for a US Open triumph against Argentine Sebastian Baez in the first round at the Arthur Ashe Stadium on Tuesday, 30 August, 2022.



## Leon Balogun signs for QPR

Nigeria international Leon Balogun has signed a one-year deal with English Championship side Queens Park Rangers to finally end rumours linking him with a move to rejoining Rangers after he left Ibrox at the close of last season.

Reportedly, Balogun who has been on the lookout for a new club after his contract expired in Rangers, finally sealed to move to reunite with Michael Beale at Loftus Road Stadium.

Speaking after completing the deal, the 34-year-old said it was a huge relief to return to action and looks forward to his new challenge.

"It is a big relief to know I can get back to action and I am looking forward to it. We have been speaking for some weeks so I am happy we got it done," Balogun said.

Balogun, who won the Scottish Cup and Scottish League during his two-year spell at Ibrox underlined that the influence of Beale convinced him to join QPR.

Beale had worked with Balogun as Steven Gerrard's assistant when the White and Blues won the Scottish League title in the 2020-2021 season.

He continued: "The manager is one of the main factors for me. When he left Rangers I messaged him and said in terms of a football brain he is one of the best I have worked with.

"He is obsessed with football and what I always admire about him is the way he treated the players and the way he got ideas into your mind.

"I am more than delighted to work with him again and to be part of this project here, and hopefully leave a

great mark," Balogun added.

Beale in his remark praised the 34-year-old whom he has been chasing all this while.

He noted that Balogun had offers from several clubs but QPR were lucky to secure the signature of the player who is one of the key figures in the Rangers' squad.

"I am delighted with this one - I have been chasing him all summer," the QPR boss said.

"He had a lot of offers so it is great we have been able to get him. He comes here on the back of two years at Rangers.

"He was absolutely fantastic in the season we won the league and last season he made 37 appearances in the team that won the Scottish Cup and reached the Europa League Final," Beale added.

Balogun last season played 37 matches for Rangers who narrowly missed clinching the Europa League title against Eintracht Frankfurt at Seville and Beale was quick to highlight the Super Eagle's outstanding qualities.

"He has got huge amounts of experience, has played in the Premier League and Bundesliga as well and I am delighted now with the strength we have defensively," He said.

"I like the way he carries himself. He is a very special person in terms of his personality.

"He has got elite standards and I have seen that first hand," he added.

Balogun spent most of his footballing career in Germany before switching to Brighton in 2018 through a free transfer and tested a four-month loan spell at Wigan in 2020, the same year he joined Rangers.

## Man City comeback, Liverpool's 9-0 win, light up Premier League weekend

Manchester City pulled an extraordinary fightback against Crystal Palace at Etihad Stadium to comeback from 2 goals down to seal a 4-2 win at regular time.

In the spotlight for Pep Guardiola was newbie Erling Haaland who was stunning to record his first hat-trick for the club in the second half.

Surprisingly, the Eagles doubled their lead against last season's Premier League champions when Joachim Andersen slotted in an assist from English-Nigerian Eberechi Eze in the 21st minute.

However, City in the second

half, became more aggressive, dominating the play to get the first goal from Bernardo Silva which heralded the end for coach Patrick Vieira's team and the crack of the flood of goals for the Norwegian.

Still trailing behind by a goal difference, Haaland responded squarely to tally the scoreline for City and kept his eagle eyes open to capitalise on rare opportunities.

With much alacrity, the striker turned the game around with a 70th and 81st-minute goals to hand City a comfortable 4-2 win.

At Anfield, Liverpool shrugged off a 2-1 defeat

to Manchester United on Monday at Old Trafford to demolish Bournemouth 9-0 in an impressive win.

Luis Diaz, who netted the opener in the first 3 minutes, got his brace in the 81 minutes after Roberto Firmino had netted the first double.

This victory comes as a huge relief to coach Jurgen Klopp, who was yet to win a game following the series of injuries that have affected his midfielders.

Other results saw Tottenham win at Nottingham Forest 2-0, West Ham defeat Aston Villa 1-0, Wolverhampton play a 1-1 draw with Newcastle United,

Chelsea win Leicester 2-1 in Stamford Bridge, Brighton beat Leeds 1-0, Brentford played a 1-1 draw against Everton and Arsenal maintained its impressive form to defeat Fulham 2-1 at the Emirates Stadium.

Meanwhile, coach Erik ten Hag seems to be getting things right at Manchester United having secured his second Premier League win at Saint Mary's Stadium against Southampton.

Bruno Fernandes, in the second half, handed United a 1-0 victory through an assist provided by Diogo Dalot in the 55th minute.

## Manchester United agree €100m deal for Antony

Manchester United and Ajax have finally reached an agreement for Antony after several refusals of the Red Devils' bids by the Dutch club.

According to transfer expert Fabrizio Romano, Manchester United agreed to a €100m fee for the Brazilian, who would sign a contract until 2027 with an option of an additional year.

Preceding the above, Ajax forward Antony had appealed to the management of the club to accept offers from the highest bidder to allow him leave to face new challenges in his career.

The right-winger, hellbent on leaving Eredivisie to the Premier League to reunite with Erik ten Hag at Old Trafford, lamented he had requested to move since February.

Reports revealed that Manchester United tendered a bid of €90m to the Dutch league

giants but have seen their offer rejected for failing to meet Ajax's asking price.

According to reports, the Brazilian attempted to force his way out of the club by exhibiting truancy and avoiding training but never had any of his antics yielded fruitful results.

In an interview with transfer expert Fabrizio Romano, Antony stressed his desire to leave Johan Cruyff Arena with several clubs already lined up for his signature.

"Since February of this year, my agents came to Amsterdam to inform Ajax of my desire to leave the club to face a new challenge, and that some of the interested clubs would arrive and with them a great offer," Antony told Romano.

"In June of this year, I interrupted my vacation and came personally to inform the managers of Ajax, including

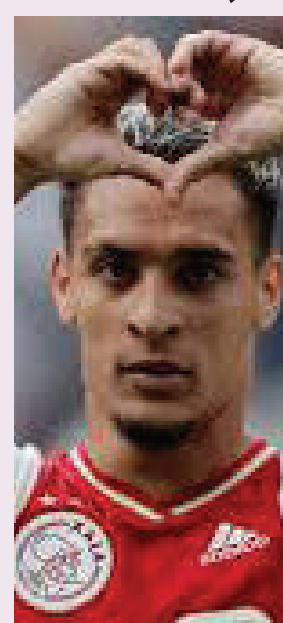
the new coach, about my wish to leave and that they should consider this possibility. Because when I started in Amsterdam, it was a project for two seasons.

"During the window months, meetings concluded, including a proposal from Ajax for a contract renewal. I made it clear once again - 'I want to leave the club'," the Brazilian continued.

"Today, in a meeting with the club's board of directors, I expressed my old interest in leaving the club, only this time with a considerable offer on the table.

"Others had already arrived [but] Ajax always refused and hinders the argument that they only have to replace [me].

"I'm not asking [Ajax] to release me, I'm asking Ajax to sell me as the highest bid received by a player who plays in the Eredivisie in history.







## Obasanjo visits Babangida, Abdulsalami, says 'I have no preferred presidential candidate'

Recent consultations and meetings with presidential candidates across parties at home and abroad, notwithstanding, former President Olusegun Obasanjo has refused to pledge his support for any of them.

Rather than having preference, he said his interest lies in the agenda of the Nigerian project.

Chief Obasanjo made this disclosure on Sunday in Minna, Niger State capital where he paid familiarization visits to two past

military president of the country, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida and Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar.

He said his recent hobnobbing with some candidates and political parties does not portend that he has a preferred presidential candidate for the 2023 elections but rather a national agenda for the unity of the country.

He said as an Elder Statesman, he has no anointed presidential candidate or a preferred Political Party but an Agenda for the country.

"I don't have a special candidate for the 2023 presidential election but rather, I have a

national agenda," he declared.

The former president was said to have visited first General Abdulsalami in whose residence he had a closed door meeting for about 30 minutes.

He told journalists after meeting General Abubakar, Obasanjo said he had come to visit his "brother"

"I have come to see my brother who was indisposed and when he was abroad I had wanted to visit him but unfortunately, I missed him because the day I arrived in London to visit him was the day he left.

"So I said since I

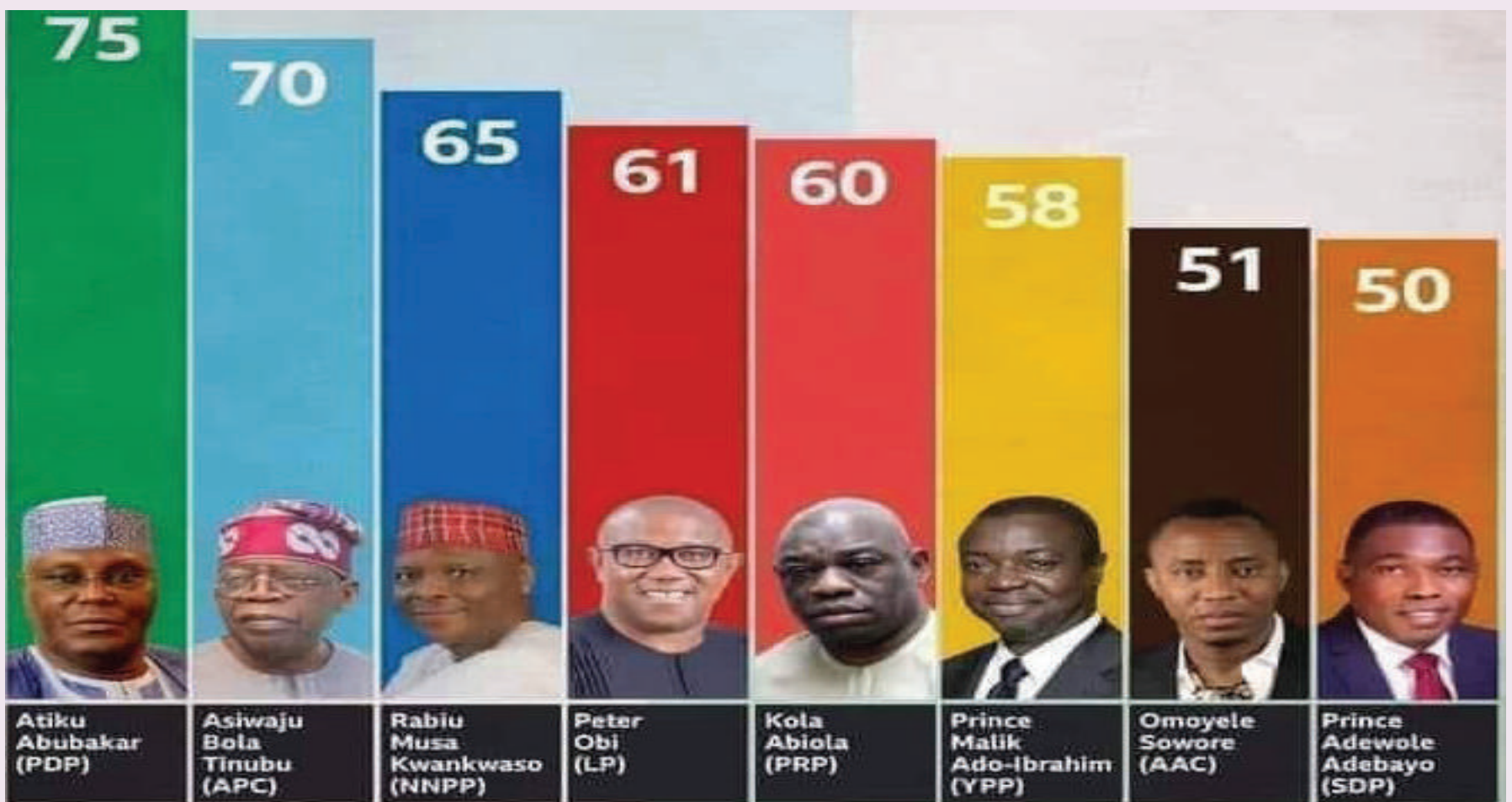


Obasanjo and Abdulsalami

could not see him in London, I will come to see him in Nigeria and so, that is what I have

come to do." Obasanjo, thereafter, immediately drove to General Ibrahim

Babangida's residence too where he held another closed door meeting.



Ages of some presidential candidates.