

Gani Adams raises alarm over increasing terrorists' camps in southwest

By **OVIRI KELVIN** (Abuja)

The Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Gani Adams has raised an alarm to draw the attention of the federal government over the increasing number of terrorist camps in the

southwest region with the plot to attack the Yoruba people.

He said a reliable intelligence report gathered that the terrorists are setting up camps in Oyo, Osun and Ogun states' forests.

Gani alleged that there are plans by the terrorists to attack specific places

like Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Oyo states.

In a statement issued through his Media Assistant Kehinde Aderemi, on Monday, August 1, 2022, he said, "We are aware of their plans to strike in Lagos, Ibadan, Oyo State and

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IGP Alkali Baba



Men of the Nigerian police on patrol

IGP deploys more manpower, assets over rising security threats, tensions in FCT

By **PAUL MICHAEL**
(Abuja)

In a bid to reassure residents of its determination to ensure security of lives and properties, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has deployed additional manpower and assets to provide security for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Recall that there have been heightened tension and fears over frequent terrorist attacks in the nation's capital city.

Security reports indicated that bandits and terrorists have concluded plans to launch terror attacks in the FCT and other

major cities and states of the federation.

In July, terrorists took the nation by surprise after attacking Kuje Medium Correctional Centre, Abuja in an operation that lasted about 3 hours, thereby freeing over 600 inmates including 64 members of Boko Haram.

While the nation was still in shock and wondering what must have happened to the nation's security agencies, the terrorists again ambushed the 7 Guards Brigade of the Nigerian Army in Bwari Council Area of the FCT, killing several of them.

Few days after the attack, bandits



IGP Alkali Baba

reportedly launched an attack on soldiers at a checkpoint close to Zuma Rock along Zuba/Madalla road, Abuja.

Following the attacks and the fears they have generated, the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba on

Tuesday ordered massive deployment of additional police operatives and operational assets within the FCT and its environs to solidify the security and protection of lives and property of its residents, critical national assets and vulnerable facilities as well as road users plying routes in and around the FCT.

Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, disclosed this in a statement made available to newsmen, saying the IGP assured FCT residents and Nigerians of safety and protection from security threats.

He further stated

that the IGP has strongly cautioned against the spread of false rumours to further create tension within the nation's capital city.

Adejobi said, "The IGP made the charge during the Force Management Team's meeting at his office on Monday, August 1st, 2020 while receiving general security updates on the nation.

"He has equally charged the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Department of Operations, DIG Bala Zama Senchi, to supervise and manage the deployment to ensure maximum security in the FCT as well as surrounding states with a high risk of attacks resonating from the threats being speculated on the news, as the Force does not and will never handle any information with kid gloves.

"The IGP however cautioned members of the public, especially citizen-journalists, on the dangers of spreading false alarms, misinformation, and disinformation as they could be detrimental and counter-productive to national security.

"In the same vein, the Inspector-General of Police has assured Nigerians in general, and residents of the FCT in particular, of their safety and security, while urging them to go about their lawful duties without fear of attacks.

"He equally reiterated the firm determination of the Police leadership to continue to explore avenues to enhance the security architecture in the country, through intelligence gathering, operational deployments and application of cutting-edge technology to decimate the activities of criminal elements across the country.

Gani Adams raises alarm over increasing terrorists' camps in southwest

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Abeokuta in Ogun State, however, I implore all the governors in the South-West to recruit local security service structure in their various local governments."

According to Gani, the level of insecurity and the state of the economy under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration have virtually collapsed.

He said, "We now have a situation in which family members are being forced to raise N100 million naira to pay as ransom. The money is delivered to these terrorists to buy more weapons and the government is merely watching.

"The information reaching me today is that the terrorists are in-between Osu forest and Ile Ife, Osun state, fully armed with various ammunition and they are present in the forest between Abeokuta and Ibadan planning to attack us in the southwest. This is one piece of information that we need to act on in order to avoid a possible calamity.

"Yoruba aren't cowards. So, let everybody in the southwest be vigilant and be watchful in checking these insecurity scourges that are already stiff-necking Nigeria and could not let the nation breathe," Gani advised.

The statement tagged, 'Insecurity: Nigeria already sleepwalking into avoidable Decline' read in part: "On the economic front, it is another sad story. A dollar

is now more than N700. This is an administration that met dollars at less than N200 in 2015.

"Economically, if this is not scary enough, we wonder what is.

"We now have a situation in which family members are being forced to raise N100 million naira to pay as ransom.

"The money is delivered to these terrorists to buy more weapons and the government is merely watching.

"After every abduction, the President will summon Service Chiefs to a meeting, a statement will be issued and that is the end of it. What we will hear next is another abduction or series of kidnappings.

"The insecurity situation has reached its peak with the threat by these terrorists to kidnap the President, governors and lawmakers.

"Presidential advance team was attacked in Katsina and even soldiers guarding the president were attacked in Abuja. Some of them were killed. It looks as if this administration has decided to force Nigerians to seek self-help.

"The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives declared that he read more than 40 security reports from the DSS, warning of an impending attack on Kuje Correctional Centre in Abuja.

"The attack did not only happen which led to killings but pitifully, nobody

has been punished for dereliction of duty.

"Painfully, Nigeria is going down because it looks as if there is no government in the country. Millions of Nigerians are in pain, they are suffering.

"In the Abuja-Kaduna train passengers video released by the terrorists, it is heartbreaking to watch fathers, mothers, and children being flogged, tortured and humiliated. The terrorists must have data to be able to send the video out. So, what is the job of Nigerian Communications Commissions and intelligence units of security agencies?

Is it a crime for Nigerians to move from one place to the other?

"Mass abductions go on every day, yet not one victim has ever been rescued, except when a ransom is paid.

"The horrendous humiliation of Nigerians in their country by these terrorists should stop immediately.

"President Buhari can use his executive powers to allow the immediate establishment of state police with a mandate to flush out all the terrorists stationed in strategic places in the country.

"Nigerians' silence is being misconstrued for foolishness. By the time President Buhari and other government officials realize that Nigerians can rise like Sri Lankans, it will

be too late for them.

"The President has about 10 months left in office. This is the time to redeem his image. Nigerians believe, and rightly so, that without high-level conspiracy with these terrorists, the blood-thirsty maniacs will not have the audacity and insolent boldness to be attacking Nigerians everywhere.

"Somnambulation and hate actions from the government against Nigerians must stop now"

"Now that Abuja has seemingly lost the battle to terrorists, the southwest region has been the next target of these destroyers of hope.

"But, we will never allow them to destroy our land. Therefore, we urge the six governors in the southwest states to hold an urgent emergency security meeting with stakeholders across the region so as to address the impending implosion.

"We are aware of their plans to strike in Lagos, Ibadan, Oyo state, and Abeokuta in Ogun state, however, I implore all the governors in the southwest to recruit local security service structures in their various local governments.

"At least 150 people in each local government. This local security architecture would be given stipends as salaries as their job is to assist and complement the efforts of operation Amotekun that had been



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NNPP raises alarm over APC's plan to ambush INEC for fresh nomination in Akwa Ibom

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

Akwa Ibom State chapter of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) has raised the alarm over a plot by the All Progressive Congress party (APC) to use the court and return to the nomination process after the exercise has been concluded by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Addressing a press conference in Uyo on Tuesday, the governorship candidate of NNPP senator John James Akpan Udoedehe said such a dubious attempt by APC to use the court and stampede INEC for fresh nomination to favour their preferred

candidate will invite anarchy ahead of the general election.

"Any political party that never met the requirements by law with regards to election guidelines and timetable for all political parties should not use the court to ambush the commission and Akwa Ibom, people.

"Any attempt to use the court to rewind the nomination process which has been rounded off by the electoral umpire will be resisted vehemently"

Udoedehe explained that police have established a prima facie case of forgery against the purported state chairman of APC in Akwa Ibom Mr Stephen Ntokekpo adding that it was obvious that



Udoedehe

APC does not have a governorship candidate in the state.

Udoedehe who spoke in the media briefing through the state Publicity Secretary of NNPP Mr Solomon Johnny recalled that the

process to quit PDP in Akwa Ibom started in 2007 when he was with the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) party.

He maintained that NNPP remains strong in her determination to sack PDP from Akwa

Ibom State Government House and warned APC not to thwart the effort to realize the said plan.

He mentioned the economic stimulus plan as the strategy of NNPP to stamp out unemployment, hunger and starvation in the state.

Udoedehe further explained that the economic stimulus agenda of the party will include giving out N1m each to 30 persons across the 31 local government areas in the state on a monthly basis to enhance self-reliance.

He said such a gesture will serve as first aid to unemployment in the state as many people would be touched by the sincerity of the government to end poverty.

Security: Obaseki finalises documentation, audit of Edo forests, to begin recruitment of forest police

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Plans by the Edo State Government to secure the lives and properties of residents are in full gear as Governor Godwin Obaseki, has said the government has finalized the documentation and audit of the state's forests and is embarking on the recruitment of new forest police as part of a renewed effort to enhance security across the state.

Obaseki disclosed this at a Special Security Council Meeting with relevant stakeholders in Edo South Senatorial District, held at the Government House, Benin City.

The governor held similar meetings with stakeholders in Edo North and Edo Central Senatorial District to review security strategies and mechanisms to tackle insecurity in Edo.

Obaseki said the government in partnership with relevant stakeholders is strengthening the security architecture and adopting various measures to sustain security in the state, including bush combing, registration of motorbikes and marketplaces, signing of the anti-grazing laws, and residents' registration, among others.

He said, "The responsibility of any government in any society is to guarantee the security and safety of the people. No government can call itself a government if it cannot protect and secure the lives of the people that it oversees.

"That is why for us in Edo, given what is going on in the country today, we have decided that security is now our number one priority. In the area of our forests, we have completed documentation and audit of all our forests in Edo State, particularly in Edo South.

"We have done a flyover of all our forests and as we speak, we have set up a new forestry commission. Our forestry laws that have not been updated in more than 50 years now have been updated. And part of the provisions of the law is that we will now reenergize the institution of forest guards."

The governor added, "We are currently in discussion with the Federal Ministry of Environment and some other stakeholders to begin the recruitment of the first set of the new forest police as we will call them to support the activities of all the other security agencies."

On strengthening local governments to support the government's efforts at sustaining security across the state, Obaseki noted, "In terms of squatters in markets, we are going to enforce the local government laws which stipulate that it is only the local government that is entitled to register markets and shut down illegal markets.

"Any place where trading is currently taking place today and such a place has not been registered will be immediately shut down," the governor warned.

Impeach Buhari, Osinbajo now, Ohanaeze tells National Assembly

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE (South-East Bureau Chief)

The leadership of apex Igbo socio-cultural organization Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide has asked the National Assembly to urgently kick start the impeach proceedings of Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo and President Muhammadu Buhari.

The Body said both Buhari and Osinbajo have failed woefully in their primary responsibility of protecting Nigerians.

In a statement signed by its Secretary-General, Okechukwu Isiguzoro, said Buhari and

Osinbajo's inability to protect Nigerians shows their failure of leadership in governance.

Isiguzoro, Recall that Senators had threatened to serve an impeachment notice on Buhari over his inability to tackle insecurity in the country.

According to him, the Senate minority caucus gave Buhari a six-week ultimatum to tackle insecurity in the country.

On Bola Tinubu, Ohanaeze said the All Progressives Congress (APC), presidential flag-bearer, stands the chance to benefit if Osinbajo is exempted from the impeachment process.

The apex body warned the National

Assembly that "if the impeachment threats served to President Buhari should be taken seriously, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo must be part of the impeachment process, as both of them have failed Nigerians.

"The exemption of the Vice President, from the impeachment threats, shows that APC Presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu stands to be a major beneficiary."

Ohanaeze said Osinbajo may create loopholes that would favour Tinubu in the 2023 election if he becomes president.

"Ndigbo reminds the National Assembly that

attempts to initiate the impeachment process against President Buhari without Vice President Osinbajo are an incomplete process and will create windows and loopholes for the Vice President to play an ethnic card for the West.

"Irrespective of running against Tinubu in the APC primaries, he will use the power of incumbency in favour of Bola Tinubu's victory which is a contradiction with the body language of the Mr President, who is likely reluctant to influence the 2023 elections for anyone but whoever Nigerians want at the polls.

Four burnt to death as minivan rams into truck in Delta

By KELVIN OHOROR

Four persons were, in the wee hours of Monday, burnt to death in an auto crash that occurred at the popular Ekiugbo Junction along the East-West road, Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Sources confirmed to The Trumpet Newspaper that a Toyota Sienna space bus conveying suspected illegally-refined diesel lost control and rammed a parked

Dangote truck.

The minivan was said to be escaping from security operatives who had mounted a roadblock when it lost control and rammed the parked truck, causing an explosion.

Video footage from the scene obtained from witnesses revealed some of the victims were burnt beyond recognition and others lay on the ground and covered with leaves.

Meanwhile, the

portion of the road where the accident occurred, it was gathered, has been barricaded from road users.

Unit Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Ken Ikechukwu, confirmed the tragedy, saying it occurred at 6:15 a.m.

Narrating to journalists, he said: "There was this Toyota car coming from Warri end towards Ughelli and the Toyota was carrying

diesel.

"On the way because of the speed violation, the driver went and hit a parked truck and got in flames.

"As a matter of fact, four people were consumed, burnt beyond recognition at that point," he noted.

He reiterated that besides the impact, the vehicle was carrying illegally-refined diesel which caused the inferno.

He added that the four persons who died included

the Toyota Sienna driver and the occupants of the truck who were inside the truck as of when the accident occurred.

Ikechukwu further disclosed that the Hausa community in the area came and took possession of their corpses.

The FRSC officer has, however, advised drivers and commuters to abstain from carrying inflammatory liquid inside their vehicles and eschew speeding.

Delta 2023: Concerned Isoko Elites endorse Joel-Onowakpo for senate

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

The leadership of Concerned Isoko Elites has registered their support for Hon. Joel-Onowakpo Thomas, All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate for the Delta South Senatorial District for the 2023 general election.

The president of the group, Comrade Mayor Blessing (aka Civilian General) who spoke

to newsmen on behalf of the group on Sunday after their endorsement, said that, Hon. Joel-Onowakpo has been a philanthropist across the state, especially in areas such as scholarship programmes for the youths, youth empowerment programmes, and human capital development.

The group calls for the unflinching support of the people from Delta Ijaw, Itsekiri, Isoko

and Warri-Urhobos for Hon. Joel-Onowakpo irrespective of political party affiliation.

Comrade Mayor further said that history shows that, the very high elective positions held by the senatorial district when Itsekiris had Governor (2007 -2015) and Ijaw had senate (2003 till date) are from other ethnic nationalities except the senator representing Delta South Senatorial District held by the Isoko nationality for

four years (1999 -2003) hence they are appealing that Hon. Joel-Onowakpo be supported for equity and fairness.

The group also opined that, Hon. Joel-Onowakpo performed credibly well as Chairman of the Delta State Board of Internal Revenue during his tenure, that at that time workers across the state duly received their salaries before the end of each month.

They further emphasized that

during the last eight years of this dispensation, the Isoko people have been grossly marginalized in high political positions such as the Deputy Governor and Senate positions held by Ijaws in Delta South Senatorial District; Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly, Delta Central Senatorial District and Secretary to the State Government, Delta North while the Isoko are left with nothing.

NDLEA arrests two drug barons, one chemist in Lagos, Anambra labs raids

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has busted and dismantled two major clandestine laboratories in Lagos and Anambra States where dangerous illicit drugs, crystal methamphetamine, called Mkpuru Mmiri in local parlance, were produced for distribution across Nigeria and beyond.

This was disclosed on Tuesday by the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) while addressing the media at the agency's headquarters in Abuja.

Marwa noted that the outbreak of the abuse of crystal methamphetamine was in the last quarter of 2021, predominantly in the South East.

He said following the cry for help from many communities in the region because of the devastating effects of the distribution and abuse of the dangerous stimulant drug were having on their youths and others, the Agency deployed all available assets to find the primary source of manufacturing of the drug in Nigeria and arrest the barons behind it.

Marwa said efforts in the past seven months against the cartel behind the Methamphetamine scourge, have led to the arrest of four kingpins and a cook.

"Now, we have added two barons and another cook. This no doubt is a

loud statement to those involved in the criminal illicit drug trade that

it's time for them to quit or risk losing it all; that is losing their freedom, investment and assets acquired through proceeds from the illegal business," he added.

According to him, "I am pleased to inform the public today that, after months of painstaking intelligence gathering, diligent tracking and coordinated offensive action, we recorded a breakthrough on Saturday, July 30, 2022, when officers and men of the Agency successfully busted two methamphetamine manu-



Buba Marwa

facturing facilities, called Meth Laboratories.

"The first one, located in Victoria Garden City (VGC) Estate of Lekki, Lagos is owned by a baron, Chris Emeka Nzewi, while the second, in Nise Community of Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State was owned by Paul Ozoemenam. The owners of these two illicit meth laboratories were successfully arrested alongside Sunday Ukah from Aba, Abia State, the cook or chemist that produced the drugs for them.

"The laboratory in Lagos was set up inside the Boys' Quarter building of a four-bedroom duplex. From there, we recovered a total of 258.74 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine and various precursor chemicals used for the production of the toxic drug. The complete paraphernalia of laboratory equipment such as gas cylinders, giant gas burners, industrial face masks, industrial gloves, tubes and flat-bottomed conical flasks, among others, were also found."

Marwa said he's addressing the public about the weekend busts to raise people's awareness of the danger that meth production constitutes to public health and the modus operandi of the barons involved in the unwholesome activity.

"The owner of the labora-

tory in VGC, for instance, was producing this highly unstable and toxic drug in a house where he lived with his

family. This speaks volumes about his insensitivity to the consequences

of exposing his family, which includes a three-month old baby, to the danger of hazardous chemicals. If that is the case, that is an indication that public health was of no concern to him.

"In this particular case, aside from the laboratory being close to the

kitchen of the main house, the waste from the laboratory was channelled into the septic tank and soak-away in the compound, with a high risk of contamination of the water table of the entire neighbourhood.

"On average, the lab produced 50 kilos of methamphetamine every week with plans underway to increase the capacity of production to at least 100kg per week. Where do these drugs end? From our preliminary interrogation, we now know the drugs from this lab were both for export and local consumption. We also know there is a supply chain of distributors and buyers for export and the domestic market.

"When you consider the fact that the price of this dangerous drug was going for as high as US500,000 per kilo in the

international market in recent time, you will understand why Nzewi cared less to put the lives of his own family at risk by producing this in the same house where they live. Hence, taking these two labs out of operation is a major feat in our continuing effort to curb the meth problem," he stated.

The NDLEA boss said the busting of the labs has exposed the interconnectivity among syndicates involved in meth production, adding that the cook was hired by both producers to produce for the VGC lab, as well as the lab in Anambra.

Marwa urged members of the public to be sensitive to their environment.

"As we step up the offensive against drug traffickers, we want the public to be more vigilant and be aware of the fact that producers of methamphetamine always chooses unsuspecting environments with tight security, like the VGC estate, in this case. And the reason is not far-fetched: They choose secured estates to prevent law enforcement agents from monitoring their activities. They also locate meth labs in remote unsuspecting communities where residents would not be aware of their activities.

"It is very important to note that the waste from methamphetamine production is dangerous to the ecosystem. The chemicals are toxic and once they seep into the soil, they contaminate the water table from which surrounding wells and boreholes draw their water. And citizens who unwittingly consume the water from such sources are exposed to heart and kidney ailments and other organ diseases.

"Neighbours, too, who inhale gases from the lab, are also susceptible to the same risk. What makes it worse is that the production usually takes place in the middle of the night, between 11 pm and 4 am, and therefore, unsuspecting neighbours could have been exposed to the hazards for months or even years," he added.

Marwa commended the professionalism of the intelligence-led special

units forensic experts and the 200-man strike assigned the task.

Akeredolu Extends Enforcement of Compulsory Installation of CCTV in Public Places

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure**

Ondo State Governor, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, has extended the enforcement of compulsory installation of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) devices in all public places in the state to September 1, 2022.

According to a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Richard Olatunde, the extension was sequel to appeals from churches, mosques and other public centres to enable them put in place necessary measures as contained in the State Executive Order.

Recall that Akeredolu had earlier directed the compulsory installation and use of the close circuit television (CCTV) device in all public and private institutions in the state.

The Governor signed the Executive Order on June 22, 2022, to mandate owners, occupiers, managers and operators of public/private institutions within Ondo State to install, use and maintain CCTV devices and other secret cameras to monitor and keep surveillance on the daily activities in their premises.

According to him, all security agencies in the state shall enforce the Executive Order as from September 1, 2022, immediately after the one-month extension ends.

The Senior Advocate of Nigeria added that the violators of the order shall be prosecuted in accordance with Section 203 of the Criminal Code (Cap. 37) Laws of Ondo State of Nigeria.

Governor Akeredolu further reiterated his administration's commitment to the security of lives and property of the people, describing it as top priority.

Kogi gov orders brothels' shutdown, bans facemask use

The Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello, has ordered the closure of all brothels harbouring prostitutes in the state.

He also banned the wearing of facemasks in public places to ensure the proper identification of persons in the state.

This is sequel to a series of security breaches being experienced in the state in recent times.

He gave the order on Tuesday in Lokoja during a meeting with all first and second-class traditional rulers, including local government council chairmen in the state.

Bello also ordered the removal and demolition of shanties in Lokoja, Osara, Zango, Itobe, Obajana, and all other areas in the state.

He urged the State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Local Government Chairmen, union leaders, and security agencies to meet with tricycle and motorcycle riders for proper documentation.

Governor Bello also urged all traditional rulers to guard their domain and ensured all the nooks and crannies of their areas were cleansed.

"Ensuring peaceful coexistence in your domain is your exclusive responsibility. You have the exclusive responsibility to ensure that all nooks and crannies of your areas are free from the criminality of all sorts," the governor said.

He also sympathized with the family of the killed security agents in Ajaojuta Local Government Area last Saturday.

While admonishing all local government council chairmen and security agencies to continue to do their jobs without fear or favour, Bello sent a strong warning to politicians not to be involved in anything that could disrupt the peace of the people and the security they presently enjoy.

"Let me sound a note of warning to all politicians irrespective of political persuasions to desist from anything that could disrupt the peace we are currently enjoying in the state," he added.



Gov. Yahaya Bello

Ondo Amotekun nab 30-year-old for killing girlfriend, parade 44 others

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure**

A 30-year-old man, Seun Ojo, has been arrested by the Ondo State Security Network Agency codenamed Amotekun for killing his girlfriend for not giving him attention. The suspect said he killed his girlfriend, Enny when she started ignoring him and giving attention to other men.

The incident happened in Owo, Headquarters of Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. Ojo, who was paraded with 44 other suspected criminals at the Amotekun headquarters in Akure, the state capital, accused the late Enny of engaging in prostitution. He said that he had been having issues with Enny for some time before the incident happened.

"My girlfriend's name is Enny,

she is a prostitute who always comes to Ikare Junction in Owo. I shot her after I noticed that she gives other men more attention than me.

"We have been having issues for a while now. That particular day she repeated what I warned her against and I became furious and I shot her. But she did not die. I learnt that she is in hospital.

"I'm not a cultist, and I have never shot anyone in my life. The gun that I used on her belongs to my father who is a hunter. My father uses the gun to hunt and kill animals."

The Operatives also paraded forty-four criminals for different offences who were arrested for different offences ranging from kidnapping, armed robbery, illegal possession of fire arms, attempted murder and rape

among others. Among the forty-four were six members of a gang who specialise in kidnapping in Ore area of the state.

The Amotekun Commander, Akogun Adetunji Adeleye, revealed that in the course of cleansing the Sunshine State of crimes, the corps arrested suspected armed robbers, kidnapers, and rapists among others. Adetunji said the six suspects who specialise in kidnapping normally hypnotize their victims before kidnapping them. He added that two suspects who attempted to kidnap a businesswoman in the Akoko area of the state were also paraded, adding that some suspects were also paraded for allegedly snatching of motorbikes and attempted murder in Oba-Akoko area.

According to the Corps Commander, the suspects usually killed their victims after snatching their motorbikes and subsequently dismantle the same for onward transfer to Ogun State and other neighbouring states as spare parts. He reiterated that Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu led-administration would not relent in its determination to rid the state of undesirable criminals.

He further implored the people of the state to join hands with all security agencies in the state to rid the state of criminals, announcing that the current slogan is "See something, say something." He emphasized that the suspects will be charged to court as soon as investigations on them have been concluded.



Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Lawrence Ewruhadjakpo (left); Governor Douye Diri; General Overseer, House of Grace Church, Apostle David Zilly-Aggrey and Archbishop Willy Bunting during the one-day Prayer Summit and Dinner of Ijaw Christian Ministers at the DSP Alamiyeseigha Memorial Banquet Hall in Yenagoa.

Unpaid salaries force Oyo judiciary workers on strike action, says JUSUN

By **OVIRI KELVIN, Abuja**

The Oyo state chapter of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) has said that its members went on strike on Tuesday after the Oyo State Governor, Oluseyi Abiodun Makinde failed to pay the July monthly salaries.

JUSUN said the judiciary workers complied with a sit-at-home order issued by the association.

In a statement by the spokesman of the Oyo state chapter of the association, Obafunso

Okulaja, he said that the judiciary workers had not received salaries while other state government agencies had their salaries upset on July 25.

Okulaja, who said the resolve by the union to embark on a strike was agreed upon in its congress meeting on Friday, was to repudiate the norm where their salaries have always been delayed since December last year.

"Our members do not have money to come to work so we directed them to sit at home.

JUSUN is yet to receive July salary in the state and this delay in salary payment has been like this since December 2021," the spokesman said.

"We call on the state government to put us on the priority list as the third arm of the government.

"If the executive and legislative arms are given priority, the judiciary should also be given the same. The sit-at-home will continue until we receive our July salary," Okulaja added.

The strike action embarked on by the union led to the

closure of the gates of Iyaganku magistrates' court and the state high court.

Also, a worker who pleaded anonymity appealed to the government to salvage the precarious incident because the workers were undergoing hard times.

"We urge the government to urgently do something about it," he said.

Aside from the magistrate and high courts whose premises are deserted, the gates to the customary court of appeal have also been locked.

Nigeria pharmacists flee country, seek opportunities abroad, laments AHAPN

By OVIRI KELVIN, ABUJA

The Association of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists of Nigeria (AHAPN), has revealed that some of its members have left the country to seek better career opportunities because of several issues including the heightened level of insecurity.

AHAPN said that most of the members have exploited the option of going to Canada and other developed countries.

In a statement by the President of AHAPN, Olabode Ogunjemiyo, during its 23rd Annual National Scientific Conference with the theme 'COVID-19 Experience: Expanding the Role of Health System Pharmacists' in Lafia, he recounted how a friend of his was kidnapped en route to Benin, Edo State.

Ogunjemiyo said, "I remember a colleague of mine who was travelling from Owo, in Ondo state where we practice to Benin in Edo state. He was kidnapped along the way. As soon as he was released, he immediately left

the country with his family. So those are the major reasons.

"Within the last one year, we have lost about 200 pharmacists to brain drain. Most of them have gone to Canada and other developed countries," he lamented.

The President of AHAPN stressed that the outflow of Nigerian pharmacists has created an imbalance in the system with top-level pharmacists outnumbering the pharmacists in the lower cadre because the latter have resorted to exploring opportunities in the developed countries.

Ogunjemiyo said, "The association expected over 1,000 pharmacists across the country from the rank and file within the hospital and administrative positions, and those from other areas of pharmacy practice to attend the conference which kicked off today.

"It is worthy of note that Nasarawa state is hosting the conference of any professional group of this magnitude for the very first time since its creation.

"It is indeed a great honour for the government and the people of Nasarawa state as the name of the state will be

included in the pharmaceutical lexicon," he commended.

Furthermore, the Ogunjemiyo outlined that AHAPN as part of the activities listed for accomplishment, will visit dignitaries in the state, create an awareness campaign against drug abuse through health walk, health outreach for indigenes at the Emir of Lafia's palace, town hall meeting and plenary sessions.

He continued: "This is part of our corporate social responsibility carried out regularly and during conferences of this magnitude. It is meant to complement the efforts of the Nasarawa government in improving the people's health.

"Malaria, blood pressure check, height and weight check, blood glucose are some of the issues to be looked into. They will also get free consultation and counselling," AHAPN President explained.

Ogunjemiyo expressed that about 1,000 indigenes are expected to benefit from the medical outreach and they will enjoy pharmaceutical care, free of charge.



Olabode Ogunjemiyo

UN, Nigeria, others, form alliance to end AIDS in children by 2030

By OVIRI KELVIN, ABUJA

Nigeria has joined other countries to partner with agencies of the United Nations (UN) to end HIV infections among children by 2030.

The new Global Alliance for Ending AIDS in Children by 2030 was announced by leading figures at the International AIDS Conference taking place in Montreal, Canada.

In a report by the World Health Organisation, (WHO), on Monday, August 1, 52% of the children living with HIV globally have access to antiretrovirals which is far below that of the adult's 76% according to data by UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022.

With this wide difference existing between children and adults, UN agencies thought it imperative to form an alliance to provide the avenue for more children to get access to these antiretrovirals.

Aside from Nigeria and the UN agencies, the alliance includes civil society movements, such as the Global Network of People living with HIV, national governments in the most affected countries, and international partners, including PEPFAR and the Global Fund.

Twelve countries that have also joined Nigeria in the first phase include Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire has promised to create a system in the health sector that will provide an avenue for children living with HIV to get the proper care.

The Health Minister, who was at the event in Canada to reiterate Nigeria's commitment to combating the infections, announced that the country will host the alliance's political launch in Africa at a Ministerial meeting in October 2022.



Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire

Earlier in her address at the conference, a representative from Lesotho, Limpho Nteko from Lesotho shared how she had discovered she was HIV positive at age 21 while pregnant with her first child.

Nteko said this led her on a journey where she now works for the pioneering women-led mothers2mothers programme. Enabling community leadership, she highlighted, is key to an effective response.

"We must all sprint together to end AIDS in children by 2030," she said.

"To succeed, we need a healthy,

informed generation of young people who feel free to talk about HIV, and to get the services and support they need to protect themselves and their children from HIV.

"Mothers2mothers has achieved virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV for our enrolled clients for eight consecutive years; showing what is possible when we let women and communities create solutions tailored to their realities," Nteko added.

WHO added that the alliance will run for the next eight years until 2030,

aiming to fix one of the most glaring disparities in the AIDS response. Alliance members are united in the assessment that the challenge is surmountable through partnership.

Other stakeholders who made contributions at the conference lamented the large disparity in the figures between adults and children.

UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima said, "The wide gap in treatment coverage between children and adults is an outrage,"

"Through this alliance, we will channel that outrage into action. By bringing together new improved medicines, new political commitment, and the determined activism of communities, we can be the generation who ends AIDS in children. We can win this – but we can only win together," he added.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said, "Despite progress to reduce vertical transmission, increase testing and treatment, and expand access to information, children around the world are still far less likely than adults to have access to HIV prevention, care, and treatment services."

"The launch of the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children is an important step forward – and UNICEF is committed to working alongside all of our partners to achieve an AIDS-free future," she stated.

According to WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, "No child should be born with or grow up with HIV, and no child with HIV should go without treatment."

"The fact that only half of the children with HIV receive antiretrovirals is a scandal and a stain on our collective conscience.

"The Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children is an opportunity to renew our commitment to children and their families to unite, to speak and to act with purpose and in solidarity with all mothers, children and adolescents," he added.

New global alliance launched to end AIDS in children by 2030

Globally, only half (52%) of children living with HIV are on life-saving treatment. UNAIDS, UNICEF, and WHO have brought together a new alliance to fix one of the most glaring disparities in the AIDS response.

Globally, only half (52%) of children living with HIV are on life-saving treatment, far behind adults where three quarters (76%) are receiving antiretrovirals, according to the data that has just been released in the UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022. Concerned by the stalling of progress for children, and the widening gap between children and adults, UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO and partners have brought together a global alliance to ensure that no child living with HIV is denied treatment by the end of the decade and to prevent new infant HIV infections.

The new Global Alliance for Ending AIDS in Children by 2030 was announced by leading figures at the International AIDS Conference taking place in Montreal, Canada.

In addition to the United Nations agencies, the alliance includes civil society movements, including the Global Network of People living with HIV, national governments in the most affected countries, and international partners, including PEPFAR and the Global Fund. Twelve countries have joined the alliance in the first phase: Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Consultations by the alliance have identified four pillars for collective action:

1. closing the treatment gap for pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and women living with HIV and optimizing continuity of treatment;
2. preventing and detecting new HIV infections among pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and women;
3. accessible testing, optimized treatment, and comprehensive care for infants, children, and adolescents



Olabode Ogunjemiyo

exposed to and living with HIV; and 4. addressing rights, gender equality, and the social and structural barriers that hinder access to services.

Addressing the International AIDS Conference, Limpho Nteko from Lesotho shared how she had discovered she was HIV positive at age 21 while pregnant with her first child. This led her on a journey where she now works for the pioneering women-led mothers2mothers programme. Enabling community leadership, she highlighted, is key to an effective response.

"We must all sprint together to end

AIDS in children by 2030," said Ms Nteko. "To succeed, we need a healthy, informed generation of young people who feel free to talk about HIV and to get the services and support they need to protect themselves and their children from HIV. mothers2mothers has achieved virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV for our enrolled clients for eight consecutive years—showing what is possible when we let women and communities create solutions tailored to their realities."

The alliance will run for the next eight years until 2030, aiming to fix one of

the most glaring disparities in the AIDS response. Alliance members are united in the assessment that the challenge is surmountable through partnership.

"The wide gap in treatment coverage between children and adults is an outrage," said UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima. "Through this alliance, we will channel that outrage into action. By bringing together new improved medicines, new political commitment, and the determined activism of communities, we can be the generation who end AIDS in children. We can win this – but we can only win together."

"Despite progress to reduce vertical transmission, increase testing and treatment, and expand access to information, children around the world are still far less likely than adults to have access to HIV prevention, care, and treatment services," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. "The launch of the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children is an important step forward – and UNICEF is committed to working alongside all of our partners to achieve an AIDS-free future."

"No child should be born with or grow up with HIV, and no child with HIV should go without treatment," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "The fact that only half of children with HIV receive antiretrovirals is a scandal, and a stain on our collective conscience. The Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children is an opportunity to renew our commitment to children and their families to unite, to speak and to act with purpose and in solidarity with all mothers, children and adolescents."

Dr Osagie Ehanire, Minister of Health of Nigeria, pledged to "change the lives of children left behind" by putting in place the systems needed to ensure that health services meet the needs of children living with HIV.

Nigeria, Dr Ehanire announced, will host the alliance's political launch in Africa at a Ministerial meeting in October 2022.

NCDC confirms monkeypox in 15 states

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), yesterday, confirmed 15 new confirmed positive cases of monkeypox in Epi Week 29 from 10 states – Ondo (three); Taraba (two); Lagos (two); Bayelsa (two); Rivers (one); Kogi (one); Imo (one); Delta (one); Anambra (one) and Abia (one).

The latest Update on Monkeypox in Nigeria published by the centre showed that there were 19 new suspected cases reported in the week under review, spanning July 18 to 24, from 12 states, namely Ondo (four); Bayelsa (three); Taraba (two); Lagos (two); Rivers (one); Kogi (one); Kano (one); Imo (one); Delta (one); Anambra (one); Akwa Ibom (one) and Abia (one).

It noted: "From January 1 to July 24, 2022, there have (89 males, 44 females) from 26 states – Lagos, 17; Adamawa, 11; Delta, 11; Rivers, 10; Bayelsa, 10; Ondo, nine and Edo, eight.

"Others are Nasarawa (seven); Plateau (six); Federal Capital Territory (five); Anambra (five); Taraba (five); Imo (four); Cross River (three); Kwara (three); Borno

(three); Oyo (three) and Kano (two), Katsina (two), Gombe (two), Kogi (two), Niger (one).

"The rest consists of Ogun (one); Bauchi (one); Akwa Ibom (one) and Abia (one).

"Three deaths were recorded from three states – Delta (one); Lagos (one) and Ondo (one). Overall, since the re-emergence of

monkeypox in September 2017 and up to July 24, 2022, a total of 869 suspected cases have been reported from 35 states."

The centre continued: "Of these 869 suspected cases, there have been 359 (41.3 per cent) confirmed (237 males, 122 females) from 30 states – Rivers (62); Bayelsa (53); Lagos (47); Delta (40); Edo

(18); Cross River (17); Imo (12); FCT (11); Adamawa (11); Ondo (nine); Nasarawa (nine); Oyo (nine); Plateau (nine); Akwa Ibom (eight); Anambra (seven); Taraba (five); Enugu (four); Abia (four); Kwara (three); Borno (three); Benue (two); Ekiti (two); Kano (two); Niger (two); Ogun (two); Katsina (two); Gombe (two); Kogi (two); Ebonyi (one) and Bauchi (one).

"In addition, from September 2017 to July 24, 2022, a total of eleven (11) deaths have been recorded (CFR= 3.0 per cent) in eight states – Lagos (three); Edo (two); Imo (one); Cross River (one); FCT (one); Rivers (one), Ondo (one) and Delta (one).

"The ongoing efforts to strengthen surveillance at national and sub-national levels increased awareness from global news headlines and our investments in risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) have contributed in part or whole to this observed increase in cases, which we have seen this year. The NCDC will continue to monitor the situation even as we sustain ongoing response efforts."



Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire



Political Dynasties: How Nigerian leaders plant children as successors

By TUNDE JOSHUA, POLITICS EDITOR

Political dynasties exist around the world. In the United States in 2001, George W. Bush became the first modern president whose father (President George H.W. Bush) had also been elected president. (The sixth president, John Quincy Adams, served from 1825-1829 and was the son of the second president, John Adams.) Bush also became the first U.S. president to hold the position for longer than his father. In East and South Asia, there have been many daughters of heads of state who have been elected to the same position, such as South Korean President Park Geun-hye, former Philippines President Corazon Aquino, and former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In Pakistan, in a rare occurrence, a husband took over from his wife, Benazir Bhutto.

Africa has a more mixed experience. Seven countries on the continent have had both father and son (and one brother) lead the country: Botswana, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Gabon, Togo, Mauritius, and Malawi. These are different from Morocco and Swaziland which are kingdoms.

In each of these cases, the succession process has been different, as has the interim between father and son.

However, to guard against the creation of birthright dynasties as opposed to merit-based family political dynasties, recent events suggest that countries should and must have clear constitutional processes for succession as well as open transparent freely contested elections.

In Nigeria, political leaders are fast planting their children in political offices using their influences, resources and political party platforms.

First Republic federal lawmaker, Chief Saburi Barkole saw his son Dimeji elected member of the House of Representatives and emerged Speaker apparently due to his brotherhood fraternities with the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

Even Obasanjo's daughter, Ifyabo after serving as a Commissioner in Ogun State went ahead to represent the state as a Senator.



late General Sani Abacha

Second Republic Senate Leader, late Dr Olusola Saraki handed over his political dynasty to his children, Dr Bukola Saraki who became Senate President in the 8th Senate. Also his daughter, Gbemisola Saraki went as far as contesting the Kwara State governorship election on the platform of the Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN) but lost to the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

His father, a military President of Nigeria, Muhammed, son of late General Sani Abacha recently emerged as the governorship candidate of PDP in Kano. He had previously contested the governorship election in Kano on the platform of CPC and lost.

Apart from Abacha, whose son is being propped up to become a state governor due to his father's influence, a former governor of Jigawa State and PDP chieftain, Alhaji Sule Lamido succeeded in making his son the governorship candidate of the PDP in the state ahead of 2023.

Like an anointed candidate, Mustapha polled 829 votes to defeat former Minister of Power, Hon. Saleh Shehu Hadejia, who scored 0 votes out of a total of 832 votes



Muhammed Abacha

cast.

Strongman of Ibadan Politics, late Lamidi Adedibu after successfully mentored many politicians, fielded his son, Kamorudeen in senatorial elections and he represented Oyo South in the 7th Senate.

Educationist and activist, late Chief Lam Adesina was Oyo State governor from 1999 to 2003. After his demise, his political groups within the APC compensated the family by giving his son Dapo a House of Representatives ticket to represent Ibadan South East/ North East federal constituency.

One-time Senator and former Nigerian Ambassador to Ghana, Senator Musiliu Obanikoro had his son elected lawmaker to represent Eti Osa State Constituency in Lagos State.

Former governor of Oyo State, late Otunba Christopher Adebola Alao- Akala's son, Olamijuwonlo recently won the APC ticket for Ogbomoso North, South and Oriire Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

As a preferred candidate, Olamijuwonlo, a former chairman of Ogbomoso North local government area, polled all the 150

votes to clinch the ticket of the APC.

Daughter of the Delta State governor, Ifeanyi Okowa, Marilyn Okowa-Daramola, won the Ika North East ticket for the Delta House of Assembly.

Also the daughter of former governor James Ibori, Ms Erhiatake Ibori-Suenu clinched the PDP House of Representatives ticket for Ethiopia West federal constituency by defeating the incumbent in a rerun election.

Umar Ganduje, son of sitting Kano State governor, Abdullahi Ganduje, emerged as the flag bearer of the APC for Dawakin Tofa/Tofa/Rimingado Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

Umar Ganduje was the only contestant as the stakeholders from the constituency chose him as a consensus candidate following the withdrawal of his opponent, Junaidu Yakubu, after a reconciliation meeting arranged by the senator representing Kano North, Barau Jibrin, and the House of Reps member representing Bichi Federal Constituency, Abubakar Bichi, before the primary election.

Governor Ganduje paid the price by rescinding his senatorial ambition for the incumbent Senator Jibrin in a reconciliatory effort to prevent the lawmaker from dumping the APC.

Idris Abiola-Ajimobi, son of late former governor of Oyo State, late Abiola Ajimobi, emerged the APC candidate for Ibadan South-West II State Constituency of Oyo State House of Assembly. He emerged as the consensus candidate in honour of his late father's position in the party.

Another sitting governor, Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State had his son, Bello El-Rufai, emerge winner of the APC ticket for the House of Representatives in Kaduna North Federal Constituency.

Former Ekiti State governor Ayodele Fayose's son, Joju emerged the winner of the PDP House of Representatives ticket for the Ekiti Central Federal Constituency I comprising Ado and Irepodun/Ifelodun.

Another former governor of Ogun State, Chief Olusegun Osoba got his son, Olumide the APC third term ticket for the House of Representatives seat for Abeokuta North /Odeda/Obafemi-Owode federal constituency.



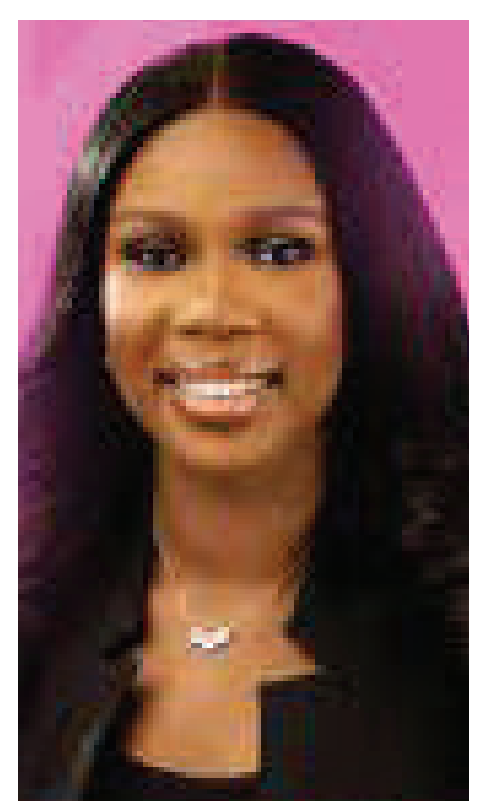
Olusegun Obasanjo.



Ifyabo Obasanjo.



Ifeanyi Okowa



Marilyn Okowa-Daramola

PDP crisis festers as Ayu's camp insists National Chairman will not resign

● *Damagum tip to act pending 2023 polls*

● *Party will not break, said BoT chair as body, NWC meets today*

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, POLITICS EDITOR

Party members loyal to the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are insisting that Dr Iyorchia Ayu will not resign his position.

They argued that there is no justification for the call for Ayu's resignation in the face of the ongoing crisis rocking the opposition party following the outcome of its presidential primary and selection of vice presidential candidate.

Ayu's loyalists believed that efforts to save the polarization along Atiku and Wike factions would yield results.

The national chairman was said not to be folding his arms while the crisis lingers but striving behind the screen to galvanise leaders across regions and zones to both actors, Atiku and Wike together.

A member of the party's National Working Committee (NWC) said the reported clamour by the Wike's camp that Ayu must step down is not feasible.

He told The Trumpet that the situation in the party has not warranted such call for Ayu's resignation.

Speaking anonymously, he said "there is no justification for such call as such call will further trouble the party. I wonder what such demand is set to achieve in this pre-election year.

"I heard someone saying they want the chairman to resign on the grounds that both the national chairman and the presidential candidate cannot come from the same region. But they forgot that such can come into play after our candidate Atiku emerged the winner. Then it will be mandatory for the chairman to step down.

He was reminded of an agreement that Ayu needed to resign if Atiku picked the presidential ticket but said he was not aware of such agreement.

Buttressing his position that Ayu has not been so docile about the crisis, he said "was it not the national chairman that worked on the Saraki's reconciliation committee that has been going round lieutenants of the two major actors.

"The national chairman will sit over the reconciliatory efforts and two will be reconciled. All aggrieved members will be brought together and we will have a united house ahead of the election. Let me shock you, this issue will top discussions at our meeting on Wednesday and our elders, the BoT is also meeting the same day to discuss the same issue.

"Results of the underground efforts by Ayu and other leaders will be manifested in the list of the national campaign council that will be composed soon.

He acknowledged that a meeting of the majority of NWC members was held at Ayu's private residence in Abuja on Monday, he said it was not a face saving meeting but a meeting to put certain things in order before today's meeting.

The tension in the party is being fuelled by strong words across the fence and the national chairman, Dr Iyorchia Ayu caught in between, prompting the call for his resignation.

Also, a former chieftain of PDP, Senator Abdul Ningi who is a staunch supporter of Atiku was critical of alleged foot dragging by the NWC in resolving the crisis.

He spoke on Channels Television on Monday.

He accused the national chairman Iyorchia Ayu of improper handling of the issue



Iyorchia Ayu

because of his personal interest.

According to him, a proactive leadership should have mended fences between Atiku and Wike but lamented that Ayu left the task to the presidential candidate and his men to sort out.

He said it shouldn't be Atiku's men that will be looking for a way to broker truce between the two over lingering issues but the leadership of the party should have taken the initiative.

Ningi also expressed optimism that all issues will be resolved amicably.

Members of PDP who are aggrieved that the governor of Rivers State was short-changed in the race for vice presidential race accused the national chairman of sabotaging the process leading to the primary and influencing the choice of Delta governor, Ifeanyi Okowa as Atiku's running mate.

Wike personally accused Atiku of not speaking the truth about circumstances surrounding recent events in the party after having kept mute for a while.

In an attempt to defend Atiku, reactions from his support rather stretch the fight.

Wike's loyalists accused Atiku's supporters of aggravating the crisis through uncomplimentary comments.

Former Governor Sule Lamido was quoted to have uttered statements that can further pitch the two actors against one another.

Comrade (Engr) Igbini Odafe Emmanuel, National President, Vanguard for Transparent Leadership and Democracy (VATLAD) said the totality of what Lamido said about Governor Wike is even more unfair and lies than the unfair and unjust treatment Atiku Abubakar meted on Governor Wike.

He faulted Lamido for saying that on the claim that what transpired at the PDP National Convention and that the outcome of the Process (Primary) was the Decision of PDP and should not be seen as personal?

"as Sule Lamido told the Truth about the process that led to the choice of Governor Okowa as the Vice Presidential Candidate of Atiku instead of Governor Wike?

"Has Sule Lamido told the Truth that the Presidential and Vice Presidential Ambitions of former Governor Peter Odili were stopped or truncated by the Party (PDP) which went on to nominate late Governor Musa Yar Adua of Katsina State as its Presidential Candidate and

then Acting Governor Goodluck Jonathan of Bayelsa State as its Vice Presidential Candidate? The obvious answers to these questions are, NO, NO, NO. Sule Lamido has deliberately misrepresented Truth and told Untrue.

"How then does anyone who deliberately distorts the truth and tells lies, want to be described in the English Language? A "Liar" is an English Word which by its dictionary meaning is: "a person who tells lies". Governor Wike only spoke in English and used the appropriate English word. How then does this amount to insulting Atiku or anyone for that matter who told lies?

"If Atiku Abubakar or Sule Lamido did not want this English Word, "a Liar", to be used on them by Governor Wike or any lover of the Truth, they should not have embarked on telling what is not true about what happened or deliberately misrepresenting Truth and proven Facts of what transpired at the recent National Convention of PDP where Atiku narrowly garnered more Delegate Votes than Governor Wike to be declared the Party's Presidential Candidate.

"Was it the decision of the PDP of which Wike is a leading Chieftain and Presidential Aspirant, that Alhaji Atiku Abubakar is adopted as its Presidential Candidate? Is this what Sule Lamido is trying to tell Nigerians and the whole world as the Truth?

"Is Sule Lamido pretending not to know that what transpired at the venue of the PDP Presidential Primary which saw Governor Aminu Tambuwal allowed to go back to the podium to renege on his earlier decision to contest in the Primary and his call on his Supporters (Delegates) to cast their votes for him and instead, went to step down for Atiku and asked his Delegates to cast their votes for Atiku? Did this not run against the agreed procedure adopted by the PDP for the conduct of a Free, Fair and Transparent Presidential Primary?

"Did this not amount to Electoral Fraud and a valid legal ground for Wike to seek Judicial Intervention to nullify the entire outcome and the nomination of Atiku as Presidential Candidate?

"Yet, the same Governor Wike who is now vilified by Atiku, Sule Lamido and

some other few PDP Chieftains, deliberately chose not to nullify the fraudulent process of the Primary for the greater good of the Party ahead of 2023 General Elections. Shouldn't he be commended?

"Is Sule Lamido pretending not to know that well-meaning Chieftains and members of the PDP were the ones who went to appeal to Governor Wike to accept to be Vice Presidential Candidate to Atiku in order to heal the wound caused by the Injustice done to him at the National Convention? "

Meanwhile, there is agitation that the Deputy National Chairman (North), Ambassador Ilya Damagum should be allowed to take charge as acting chairman should the plot to impeach Ayu scale through.

However, the chairman, Board of Trustees of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Sen. Walid Jubrin on Monday said efforts are on the way to resolve the lingering crisis in the party, as a special reconciliation body and members of the BoT are set to reconcile Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Governor Nyesom Wike and other aspirants in the last presidential primary of the party.

This is as he said that a reconciliatory agenda will be set at today's meeting of the BoT in Abuja.

According to the BoT chairman, the crisis which was consequent upon the outcome of the presidential primary and the selection of the PDP vice presidential candidate.

Jubrin said "I notice with great concern that the PDP primary elections of Atiku Abubakar and the appointment of Chief Okowa as president and vice president is unnecessary causing confusion among some PDP members.

"May I point out very strongly that there is no problem as envisaged by some people in our great party the PDP. I want to assure everyone that all plans are on ground to bring all members together as one and united.

"As what is happening in PDP can never be compared with the situation in APC especially their plans in trying to bring religious issues of Muslim-Muslim president and vice president.

Speaking on efforts on ground at finding a solution, the BoT chairman said "I have also noted that some groups are coming up trying to solve the issues of Okowa as vice-president. The latest group include some former governors of the party and the current governors, some BoT members and elders including Prof Jerry Gana, the chief spokesman of the Wike group, that is Dankwambo, governors of Enugu and Abia states, and former governor Ibrahim Idris of Kogi State.

"The aim of the group is to reconcile the aggrieved, especially Wike.

"Interestingly the BoT, the highest advisory body and the conscience of the party is meeting on Wednesday 3rd August to discuss the issues accordingly and we will be coming up with strong recommendations for the special committee set up for reconciliation of aggrieved members, especially Governor Wike.

"After the BoT meeting, we will meet with Atiku and Wike and all aggrieved members and all past presidential aspirants.

"It is my prayer as Chairman of BoT that the PDP will remain strong and win all elections in 2023.

Both camps anxiously await the outcome of today's meeting of the two organs of the party, the NWC and BoT.

EFCC arraigns father, son over illegal banking activities in Lagos

● *As Surety bags five years for impersonation in Kaduna*

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Lagos State has arraigned one Emmanuel Jayeoba and his son, Ademola Jayeoba Wales, before Justice I. Nicholas Oweibo of the Federal High Court sitting in Ikoyi, Lagos on a two-count charge bordering on illegal banking activities.

A statement by the EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, said the suspects were arraigned on Monday, 1st August 2022.

According to the statement, one of the counts reads, "that you, Wales Kingdom Capital Limited sometime between October 2019 to December 2020 in Lagos within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did carry on banking business without a valid license and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 2(2) of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act, Cap B3, Vol.2, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004."

The second count reads, "that you, Adewale Daniel Jayeoba, Emmanuel Jayeoba And Wales Kingdom Capital Limited whilst being

Directors of Wales Kingdom Capital Limited sometime between October 2019 to December 2020 in Lagos within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court knowingly consented to the carrying on of banking business without a valid license by the Company and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 2(2) and 49(1) of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act, Cap B3, Vol.2, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004."

The suspects were said to have pleaded not guilty to the offence when the counts were read before them.

Following their pleas, the prosecution counsel, Chinenye Okezie asked the court for a trial date and their remand in a correctional facility.

However, counsel to the defendants, Olaniyi George informed the court of a bail application and prayed that his clients be remanded in the custody of the EFCC pending the hearing of the application.

Justice Oweibo adjourned the case to Wednesday, August 3, 2022, for a hearing of the bail application and ordered the remand

of the defendants in EFCC custody.

Meanwhile, the Kaduna Zonal Command of the EFCC on Monday, August 1, 2022, secured the conviction and sentencing of one Ali Sani Yaro before Justice Daruis Khobo of the State High Court Kaduna, on a one-count charge.

Sani allegedly posed as a Grade Level 12 staff of Soba Local Government Area to secure the bail of a suspect under investigation by the EFCC. But the documents he presented were found to be forged in the course of verification by the Commission.

The charge against him read, "That you, Ali Sani Yaro sometime in February 2022 in Kaduna within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, pretended to be a staff of Soba Local Government Council on Grade Level 12 before Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, when you stood surety to one Charles Fred and in such assumed character and you thereby committed impersonation, an offence contrary to and punishable under Section 142 (1) of the Penal Code Law, 2017 of Kaduna State."



Abdurashed Bawa

He pleaded guilty to the charge. Consequently, the Prosecuting Counsel, Y.J Matiyak, urged the court to convict the defendant accordingly.

In his ruling, Justice Khobo convicted and sentenced the defendant to five years of Imprisonment.

Court admits evidence against defendant for impersonating EFCC

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The trial of one Ladeji Babatunde before Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos for offence bordering on obtaining money by false pretence to the tune of N2.9 million continued on Monday, August 1, 2022 with the trial judge delivering ruling on his trial-within-trial as the court admit in evidence the statement of the defendant.

Babatunde who was first arraigned in December 2021, is being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on a four-count charge.

According to the EFCC, one of the counts reads, "Ladeji Kelvin Babatunde on or about 19th - 22nd February 2021 at Lagos within the Ikeja Judicial Division of this Honourable

Court with intent to defraud obtained the sum of N1,500,000 (One Million Five Hundred Thousand Naira) only from one Chijioke Mmadubue and his syndicate of internet fraudsters based at Chevron axis of Lekki, Lagos under the false pretence that you will protect them from arrest by the operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which representation you knew to be false."

Another count reads, "Ladeji Kelvin Babatunde on or about 18th March 2021 at Lagos within the Ikeja Judicial Division of this Honourable Court with intent to defraud obtained the sum of N800,000 (Eight Hundred Thousand Naira) only from one Jacob, an internet fraudster under the false pretence that you will help with his case at office of the Economic and Financial Crimes

Commission (EFCC) which representation you knew to be false."

The defendant, however, pleaded "not guilty" to the charges when read to him.

In the course of the trial, when the prosecuting counsel, Nnaemeka Omewa, sought to tender in evidence the statement of the defendant through the prosecution's witness, Bot Dachung Toma, the defence raised objection arguing that the statement was made involuntarily.

The objection necessitated the need for a trial within trial.

Delivering ruling on the trial-within-trial, Justice Taiwo held that "no act of torture was established"

The court thereafter admitted the statement as Exhibit C1 to C13 as the EFCC closed its case against the defendant.

Continuing with his testimony, Toma, told the court that the EFCC received a petition against the defendant alleging that he was going about posing as an official of the EFCC and using the guise to extort money from suspected internet fraudsters.

"We investigated the petition and found out that he was actually impersonating EFCC officials and going around the city collecting money that he will help them not to get arrested," he said.

He further testified that money was traced to his bank account and that it is believed that the extorted funds formed part of the money he used to build a house in Ogun State.

The prosecution thereafter closed its case. The matter has been adjourned till August 16, 2022 for the defence to open its case.

Court sends fake America actor, five others to jail for internet fraud

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Efe Ikponmwonba of the Edo State High Court sitting in Benin City on Monday, August 1, 2022, convicted and sentenced six internet fraudsters to jail for fraud.

A statement on Tuesday by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) identified the convicts as Emejom Jude Chinomso, Okolie Collins, Hezekiah Oghenekume, Musa Dauda, Akinselure Adebayo and Obafemi Oluwatosin.

They were arraigned by the Benin Zonal Command of the EFCC on a separate one-count charge bordering on impersonation, intent to defraud and making false statements to the EFCC.

The charge against Akinselure Adebayo reads, "that you, Akinselure Adebayo on or about the 8th day of June 2022 at No 1 Court Road, GRA Benin City, Edo State within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did make a false statement in writing to an officer of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in the course of his duties as an officer of the Commission as to the ownership of a 2008 Toyota Camry with registration number: ABU 219 GF which you knew to be false and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 39(2)(a) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act,

2004 and punishable under section 39 (2)(b) of the same Act."

The charge against Okolie Collins reads, "that you, Okolie Collins between 2020 and 2021 in Abudu, Edo State within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did with intent to defraud represent yourself to be Alex Lougwin, an actor and American citizen on the Facebook platform and thereby committed an offence contrary to and punishable under section 484 of the Criminal Code Law Cap 48 Laws of Bendel State of Nigeria (as applicable in Edo State) 1976."

The defendants pleaded guilty to the charges

preferred against them by the EFCC prompting the prosecution, Francis Jirbo, I. N. Elodi and K. U. Udus to pray the court to convict and sentence them accordingly.

However, counsel to the defendants, Emmanuel Okorie, pleaded with the court to temper justice with mercy as the defendants have been remorseful for their actions.

In his ruling, Justice Ikponmwonba convicted and sentenced Collins and Chinomso to two years imprisonment with an option of N200,000 and N300,000 fine respectively.

The Judge sentenced the duo of Adebayo and Dauda to one-year imprisonment with

an option of N150,000 fine each.

Meanwhile, Oghenekume was sentenced to two years imprisonment with an option of N150,000 while Emmanuel got one-year imprisonment or a fine of N100,000.

Justice Ikponmwonba also ordered that a 2008 Toyota Camry car recovered from Adebayo be forfeited to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Other items forfeited include mobile phones and Laptop computers recovered from the defendants. The defendants are also to undertake in writing to be of good behaviour henceforth.

ICPC, OGP to partner in developing the 3rd National Action Plan

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has said that the Commission will partner with the Open Government Partnership (OGP) to develop the 3rd National Action Plan (NAP III).

Speaking during a courtesy call by OGP, the ICPC Chairman, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN), commended the team for recognising the work of the Commission and for their support to the country. He further assured the team that the Commission will support the development of the 3rd National Action Plan.

Prof Owasanoye, who was represented by a Board Member, Hon Justice Adamu Bello said, "I am delighted that OGP rated Nigeria high especially in areas of budget processes and anti-corruption. As an anti-corruption agency, we assure you that ICPC is doing everything possible within its mandate to see that corruption is brought down to the barest minimum."

The OGP Co-Chair, Mr Aidan Eyakuze, commended ICPC for her doggedness and commitment to the fight against corruption. He said that the OGP team was very proud of the agency for checking corruption and

ensuring various measures are put in place to ensure a transparent government.

"ICPC is seen as the eyes and ears of the Nigerians in promoting and protecting the use of public resources for the benefit of all Nigerians. Your struggle is real and deep. It can be difficult, but you are making some good progress. The OGP pledges to be your partner and support," Eyakuze stated.

He further noted that Nigeria joined the partnership in 2016 and is developing her third National Action Plan which seeks to consolidate the progress made in the first and second NAPs.

Uniform cut-off marks for all Unity Schools

The recent ruling by Justice John Tsoho on *Olisa Agbakoba vs the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Education* which put an end to discriminatory cut-off marks for admission into Unity Schools is a welcome development. The learned Senior Advocate of Nigeria Chief Olisa Agbakoba (SAN) had filed a suit before a Federal High Court, Lagos asking the Court to stop the federal government from further using discriminatory cut-off marks for admission into Unity Schools across the nation. With this ruling, the nation could be on the way to proper unity and integration of our dear country, Nigeria.

It is an open fact that the principle behind applying different cut off marks for the 104 Federal Government Colleges, known as Unity schools across the nation based on gender, ethnicity and states of origin is discriminatory at the stage of our progress and development as a Nation.

In retrospect, the reason for all these can be rooted in the North then seen as educationally disadvantaged. It was then appropriate to use the disparity to encourage the affected states to catch up with the others. The recent Court order for all unity schools to stop disparity requiring some states to have as high as 134, and some to have as low as 2 is an anachronism that is out of place at this stage of our development. Justice John Tsoho has put an end or a final nail to the coffin of this controversy. This Court order is in alignment with the fact that like all provisions, to forge unity for a disunited and fragmented nation, there is a need to inject judicial sanity.

This ruling is a clarion call for all students in Nigeria, no matter their states of origin or religion to be prepared for healthy competition in a free and fair enabling environment. The ruling will remove all forms of discriminations prevalent in our unity schools to the shame of the vision and mission of the schools as

enunciated by the nation's founding fathers and past heroes.

Unity can never be built on discrimination, marginalization, and segregation! We can no longer bring our children to the boxing arena of healthy education foundation with some of them blindfolded and ask them to compete with others. To prevent some states from being comfortable in an untenable situation, we must make our Federal Government Colleges, not only centres of excellence for healthy, non-discriminatory competitions, but make them places of our first elevens. This is because it has been indicated that many years after different provisions for the educationally backward states to meet up with their contemporaries

have been practised, such states are expected to grow their educational institutions and personnel through prioritized budgeting for education in their different states. We cannot remain rooted in one spot in the name of educationally disadvantaged.

We cannot continue to degrade our children by making it impossible for them to compete with their compatriots from other states. It is this healthy competition that made it possible for some Northerners to go to Universities of Ibadan, Lagos, Ife, Benin, Nsukka to compete with their colleagues. They were not found wanting. States that are beneficiaries of these skewed provisions must be encouraged to present their first elevens to these unity schools, instead of the present practice of flooding such schools with ill-performing sons and daughters of the rich and mighty. They should do more of mobilization, coaching and injecting of more teaching personnel into their different ill-funded Institutions for the brightest and best to be fed into these Federal Government colleges. These colleges have now acquired a bad name because of disparities in cut-off marks for Unity Schools. How do we justify a cut-off mark of 160 points for candidates from Anambra or Delta States while fixing 2 points for candidates from Jigawa or Borno?

Federal Government Colleges or Unity Schools must be made centres of excellence as originally conceived. In a global village which the world has become, mediocrity should not be promoted over academic excellence. It is repugnant to equity, justice, and fair play.

The Trumpet believes that unity must be built on equity, justice, and fair play and this must be reflected in all facets of the national life! To deny bright students an opportunity to further their academic career in a centre of excellence because some persons could not even score 20% in a competitive examination is tantamount to destroying the ethical foundation of the country.



THE TRUMPET

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2023: Will Nigerians wait in vain?

The waiting game is on. With measured apprehension and nervous presage, Nigerians are waiting for 2023 to arrive quickly. The reason is obvious – they want to extinguish the raging APC inferno misnamed government. Nigeria's ruling political party APC, under the watchful eyes of President Muhammadu Buhari, forced on Nigerians by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has submerged the country beneath a furnace, further into an existential crucible. Yet some people inexplicably want a continuation of the same conditions, an unjustifiable mindset difficult to ascribe to a person of balanced cognition. How on earth would anybody of sane mental capacity want APC to continue to steer the ship of the Nigerian state? How is it possible that someone wants Nigerians to continue in these pathetic, rueful conditions? Although the Holy book admonishes that "affliction shall not arise the second time", some people are invoking the spirit of APC's second affliction on the Nigerian polity. It is unfair.

Nigerians are currently battling with hellfire experience. Those who deny the hellfire experience are deluded, but very soon, the geography of victims will extend to include those who think they are protected by power and money. As the wait for 2023 continues, it appears Nigerians are wasting their time since current events negate the possibility of a safe, conducive atmosphere for the election to take place. Waiting for 2023 inevitably reminds me of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* where two vagabonds Estragon and Vladimir waited in vain for a mysterious Godot that never came. Beckett's play has since become a concise manuscript

for interpreting the Absurdist Theatre which encapsulates the futility of human endeavour.

Presently, politicking has divided Nigerians into different groups with funny appellations coined from the names of the three front runners for the office of the president towards 2023. Those supporting Nigeria's latest political sensation and former governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi of the Labour Party, call themselves Obidients. Those supporting septuagenarian APC leader and former Lagos State governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu call themselves Batists. Those supporting Nigeria's serial presidential aspirant and former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar of the PDP prefer to be known as Atikulated. Of course, the neutrals have keenly and critically looked into the future and, given Nigeria's current exertions, are circumspect about the reality of 2023.

Surely, it can only take the most optimistic person in Nigeria to believe that the 2023 elections will hold. The signs are ominous. It does not portend well that the seat of power Abuja, which ordinarily should be the most fortified and protected, is currently under siege by terrorists. Yet, millions of Nigerians are hopeful that 2023 will witness the installation of a new government elected by the people. Their hopes are valid because there is a huge possibility of the emergence of a New Nigeria under Mr Peter Obi of the Labour Party. Of a truth, never in the history of this country has there been a groundswell of support for a new beginning led by one man. This underscores the value of the Obi Phenomenon. But will election hold next year?

If the activities of terrorists and bandits continue unchecked across

the country, then Nigerians should prepare to kiss 2023 goodbye. Terrorists are daring, bold, and unrelenting. While the APC government watches with paralyzed interest, these goons gradually take over the length and breadth of Nigeria. First, they filed into Abuja in a majestic convoy, unchallenged and comfortably attacked the Kuje Correctional Facility for more than three hours while the commanding heights of the Nigerian Army slept or pretended not to see. Again, they attacked the presidential convoy nearly hurting Mr President in the process. Still, they brazenly attacked the National Guard, one of Nigeria's most sophisticated security arms, killing two soldiers and wounding about six others. Nothing happened. Nobody was queried or sacked. Emboldened by the lack of resistance from any quarters, they threatened to kidnap Mr President and the governor of Kaduna State Mallam Nasri El-Rufai. They also threatened to invade and attack major cities in the country including Lagos, Port-Harcourt, and Enugu. At the moment, the government has shut down all schools, both primary and tertiary in Abuja indefinitely, an open admission that they cannot guarantee the lives of Nigerians. Gradually, terrorists and bandits are taking over the country, just gradually.

If these conditions continue unabated as they are likely to do, will elections take place in Nigeria next year? I flinched after watching a video of some army officers admitting that their superiors instructed them not to go after the terrorists. The all-important question is - will there be an election in Nigeria next year? Is the Buhari APC government committed to hand-

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ing over to a democratically elected government or bandits and terrorists? Why would anybody instruct soldiers not to fight terrorists? On what planet does that happen? That is the same sentiment echoed by a gallant officer Gen. Segun Adeniyi when he made a video complaining that military authorities were sabotaging their fight against terrorists by denying them a supply of ammunition. Well, the army authorities redeployed him for his courage and no one heard anything about him again.

Mr Buhari's attitude to these developments in the country is dispiriting. It is inconceivable that having sworn on oath to protect and defend the integrity of Nigeria, Buhari will capitulate so shamefully before a rag-tag terrorist invasion. Many people have insinuated that Buhari and his government are complicit in the current terrorists' macabre dance of death given the kid gloves with which he treats their excesses. To succumb to such a narrative will be advancing the devil's plot. Yet, there is cause to worry about the future of Nigeria under Buhari. Given the President's recent admission that he is 'eager to go', it follows that he admits his failure as the Commander-in-Chief

of the armed forces Federal Republic of Nigeria. If indeed he is eager to go, one would expect him, as an apostle of integrity, to resign immediately. Of course, Nigerians are also eager to see Buhari go. If the legislature succeeds in impeaching him, it will be good riddance to bad rubbish.

While the Obidients, Batists, and Atikulated square up in media warfare, let them pause and ask - will elections hold next year? In a previous essay titled "2023: To be or not to be" I argued that 2023 is not yet certain. I remember vividly that Pastor E.A Adeboye declared to a bewildered congregation that God has not told him if the election will hold next year. If terrorists eventually take over the reins of power in Nigeria, what options do we have? That Mr Buhari donated \$1,000,000 (One Million US Dollars) in a show of solidarity to the terrorist government in Afghanistan immediately after they sacked a democratically elected government is a testimony of how his mind is working. Let those who know better than us kindly interpret the Nigerian scenario for us because it appears that Nigerians, like Estragon and Vladimir, will wait for 2023. in vain. God forbid.

By
Eric
TENIOLA



The era of lame duck is here

will be made and the era of imperial Presidency is coming to an end. It is a very interesting time we about to witness.

I have witnessed the era of lame duck twice. The first time was the last six months of General Abdusalam Abubakar (80), GCFR, between 1998 and 1999. The second time was the last six months of President Olusegun Obasanjo (85), GCFR, during which President Umaru Musa Yar'adua was elected at the PDP Presidential election in December 2006. At those two occasions, I saw power fading from those in authority.

Suddenly those who wielded enormous power before became human to the extent that they were answering telephone calls and receiving telephone calls by themselves instead of through secretaries. Suddenly they were contacting old friends knowing fully well that they will soon be out of power.

During the lame duck era of General Abdusalam Abubakar, GCFR, he only concentrated on the construction of the Eagle Square, the National Assembly building and devoted much of his time to the transition programme. He dispatched his then Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhaji Gidado Idris, GCON, (15 March 1935 - 15 December 2017) to South Africa and East Africa to sell his transition programme to the leaders of that region. I accompanied Alhaji Gidado Idris on the trips. We met the then South African President, Nelson Mandela (July 18, 1918, Mvezo, South Africa—died December 5, 2013, Johannesburg) in Pretoria and Johannesburg. Present at the meetings with President Mandela was the then Nigeria ambassador to South Africa Alhaji Shehu Othman Malami(88), Sarkin Wormo in Sokoto state and former Chairman of Union

Bank, who was not only a friend to President Mandela and also part of his household. He constantly referred to him as Shehu while Malami referred to President Mandela as Madiba. No doubt President Mandela was very much fond of Alhaji Malami. The affinity between the two men was very strong.

In the various meetings, President Mandela always referred to General Obasanjo as my "friend". He was consoled when Alhaji Gidado told him that General Obasanjo was among those vying for the Presidency and his chances of becoming President were bright.

From South Africa, we moved to Kampala, Uganda where we met President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (77). We also met President Daniel Arap Moi (1924-2020) in Kenya as well as the Namibia President, Samuel Shafiqshuna Daniel Nujoma(93). During the two weeks tour, we met President Benjamin Mkpa(1938-2020) of Tanzania. That was when Nigeria was like a colossus in Africa.

Lame duck era is when ministers rush memos to the CABINET secretariat for approval by the Federal Executive Council. During the Lame duck era of General Abdusalam, THE CABINET secretariat was the centre of activities. Day and night members of the cabinet secretariat were receiving memos on contracts from different ministers. Their Permanent Secretary then, Dr. P.K. Kaigama, along with Alhaji Auwab Abdullahi, Mr. A. Fasan, Mr. O.S. Ogedengbe, Mr. Ibrahim Mahe, Mr Chike N. Agina, Mr. Wuese AI, Mr. T.A. Ajayi, Mr. M.U. Nnaji, Mr Joshua E. Okpo, Mr. K.W. Jibril, Mr. F.F. Ogunshakin, Mr. E.I. Onuoha, Mr. S.K. Ikata, Mr. O.I. Adisa, Miss Charity C. Utok and others were working day and night.

The gossip among the workers in cabinet secretariat was that the memos

were "partying gifts". At that time the media was reporting how our foreign reserve was depreciating daily.

The only thing remarkable about the lame duck era of General Abdusalam was that it was successful, in that he handed over to General Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999.

In January 2005, Chief Audu Innocent Ogbah(74), an Idoma from Otukpo in Benue state, was forced to resign as Chairman of PDP. It was assumed that Chief Ogbah fell out with President Obasanjo on certain principles. Chief Ogbah had earlier taken over the Chairmanship of the party from Chief Bernabas Andar Iyoryer Gemade (73) also from Benue state. Chief Ogbah's resignation took effect from February 28, 2006. Chief Audu Ogbah returned to his Efugo Farms in Makurdi.

He was replaced by Colonel (rtd) Ahmadu Adah Ali(86) from Idah in Kogi state. Colonel Ali has served as Minister of Education between 1976 and 1979 during the era of General Olusegun Obasanjo. Esprit de Corp between Colonel Ali and President Obasanjo is so deep. After Chief Audu Ogbah's removal, the PDP headquarters was being run as a department under President Olusegun Obasanjo. Rumours were circulating that President Obasanjo wanted a third term which was unconstitutional.

On May 16, 2006, the deputy Senate President Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu(February 16, 1947- August 17, 2021) from Gindirin in Manga Local Government Area of Plateau state representing Plateau Central presented a bill to the Senate. The bill was to enable anyone including President Obasanjo to contest election without a limit to his term. The bill was termed THIRD TERM by the media.

To be continued on Monday

With the selection of the Presidential flag bearers by the various political parties for next year's election, the era of lame duck, especially in the Central Government is here. The lame duck definition refers to when a person in power has entered the final stages of their control, and the chosen successor has been elected or soon will be. Lame-duck became the term used to describe politicians, especially the president, who either lost an election or decided to forgo reelection.

For some time, we have been witnessing a weak Presidency, but it is likely going to get worse now. What is about to happen is the deconstruction of the imperial Presidency. Nothing humbles a man or a woman who has been in power to realize suddenly that he or she has to lose the power. Exit date humbles any government official and that is why they say power is transient. We have nothing that is really our own; we hold everything as a loan. The bad news is that nothing lasts forever. The good news is that nothing lasts forever too. People and things will come and go. Everything in this life is transient. Weak men create hard times. Weakness invites aggression. A leader with excessive weakness can

be a danger to democracy. He can even split the country with indecision and failure to act. We need a dynamic leadership with initiative. The danger about weak leadership is that you do not really know who is in charge. Hence we hear of cabal ruling the country. The emergence of a ruling cabal is failure leadership.

The lame duck era will create more confusion for us and it will be like a government on holidays.

Henceforth, the spotlight will shift from THE VILLA to the campaign field. The Presidential flag bearers will make more news than THE VILLA. It will affect the political parties too.

In a Presidential System of government, the Presidential candidate is the leader of the party. The political parties will have fewer roles to play during the campaign. The Chairman of the political parties and the party headquarters' will be mere passengers in the political drive. In some instances the flag bearers will undermine the power and influence of the political parties.

In our own case, Ministers, special advisers, special assistants will be thinking of their own future since all of them will go with the President next year.

In this case fewer appointments

Insecurity: Don't wait for govt, defend yourselves, Masari tells Nigerians

By PAUL MICHAEL, Defence Editor, Abuja

The Executive Governor of Katsina State, Aminu Masari, has asked Nigerians to stop waiting on the government to defend them against acts of terrorism and banditry, saying that the Nigerian Army and Nigeria Police Force (NPF) cannot offer the desired protection.

Governor Masari gave the charge on Monday while speaking during the 2022 special prayer session in commemoration of 'Yaumush Shukur' (thanksgiving) day for Katsina.

According to him, insecurity is a global challenge, so Nigerians need to learn self-defence like the citizens of America and China

"The security challenges we are facing in terms of killings and kidnappings are not only limited to Katsina or Nigeria, but they happen everywhere, even in America and China. But their citizens don't fold their arms and

wait for the government," Masari said.

The Governor, who earlier charged Katsina residents to use their teeth in self-defence against armed bandits, further stated that when citizens defend themselves, the burden of protection reduces on the security agencies and crime will reduce.

"Don't lock yourselves inside and say it is the responsibility of the government or police to defend you: how many people will the police defend? But if you defend yourself, it will reduce the work of policemen and soldiers," he added.

Masari's statement came weeks after Governor Bello Matawalle of Zamfara encouraged citizens in his state to buy guns and defend themselves against bandits and terrorists.

Meanwhile, citizens have criticized top government officials, who have the primary responsibility to protect lives and properties, for shying away from their jobs and transferring such responsibilities to citizens.

In particular, Prof Sunday Ochoche, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nigerian Foundation for the Support of Victims of Terrorism, while presenting a paper recently in Abuja faulted the call by Zamfara State government and Minister of Defence on citizens to take up arms and defend themselves.

He said, "In Nigeria, the insecurity has reached a point that the Zamfara State government is calling on the citizens to acquire weapons to defend themselves.

"The Minister of Defence has made similar calls and I dare say that there is no better promotion for the proliferation of small arms and light weapons than seeing high-level government officials urging citizens to go acquire weapons to defend themselves.

"There is no better acknowledgement of the failure of the State to deliver its primary responsibility to the people than those responsible for the provision of security



Gov Masari

now to begin to call on people to go and acquire weapons to protect themselves."

Also, the Chief of Defence Staff, Lucky Irabor, said Matawalle and other governors lacked the powers to direct police commissioners to issue gun licences to residents as a measure against insecurity.

Tension and anxiety have gripped citizens across the

country over the incessant attacks of bandits and terrorists across the country.

Bandits, in July, opened fire on President Muhammadu Buhari's advance convoy in Katsina, and on the same day, members of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) invaded Kuje Medium Prison, freeing over 600 inmates including 64 terrorists.

FCTA demolishes illegal structures in Kuje over insecurity

By PAUL MICHAEL, Defence Editor, Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) on Monday commenced a week-long massive demolition of illegal structures at Kuje to rid the satellite town of crime and mitigate the proliferation of illegal structures, purportedly obstructing human and vehicular movements in the area.

A few days after the terrorists' attack on the Kuje Medium Security Prison, the demolition followed after months of sensitisation and the expiration of authorities' notices to illegal occupants to vacate the area.

During the clean-up exercise, which lasted for about seven hours, hundreds of structures ranging from kiosks, containers, attachments to stores and worship centres, shanties and signposts encroaching on the road corridors were pulled down by the authorities.

FCTA officials rolled in the bulldozers and dismantled roadside encroachments from the notorious Tipper Garage to the Kuje main market while some illegal squatters frantically salvaged some of their belongings before the demolition team arrived.

The Senior Special Assistant on Monitoring, Inspection and Enforcement to FCT Minister, Ikharo Attah, said the exercise was approved by the FCT Minister, Mohammed Musa Bello and was under the guidance of FCT Police Commissioner, Sunday Babaji and other security heads in the territory.

According to him, the minister was displeased with the extreme violations at Kuje, noting that the multiple contraventions like illegal settlements, extreme road encroachment, roadside trading, and encroachment of rail corridors made Kuje a very unsafe area.

He said the clean-up would be a week-long exercise, as Kuje had been very worrisome in some areas of insecurity.

"Today, we have been able to address the issue of roadside encroachment from Tipper Garage to the main market. We also touched the fruit market. Tomorrow, we will be claiming the rail corridor, the entire rail corridor and keep it safe, and children can use it for recreation," Attah said.

He added, "We marked Kuje about four months ago. And we have been waiting for a long, so the word of caution is what they have seen today."

Bayelsa police parades murder suspect, 13 others

By PAUL MICHAEL, Defence Editor, Abuja

The Bayelsa State Command of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has paraded a murder suspect, Joseph Fekala, 27, who allegedly strangled 25-year-old Kate Ogwoh and buried her in a shallow grave at his apartment in Okaka, Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State.

Also paraded were suspected sea pirates who have been terrorizing Southern Ijaw and Ekeremor Local Government Areas, as well as other suspected criminals engaging in

kidnapping activity across the state.

Public Relations Officer of the Command, Asinim Butswat, a Superintendent of Police (SP) disclosed this on Monday while briefing reporters during the parade at the Command's headquarters in Yenagoa.

Butswat said that investigation has revealed that the murder of Ogwoh was linked to a certain amount of money that the suspect owed the deceased.

"We called you today to intimate you with recent developments in our effort in fighting crime in Bayelsa

State.

"One of the most disturbing reports received over the weekend was a case of murder involving a young man and a lady of 25 years old.

"Precisely, on Friday, 29 July 2022 we received a disturbing report from the Okaka community that a young man named Joseph Fekala, 27 years old murdered one Kate Ogwoh, 25 years old by strangling her to death and buried her in a shallow grave in his apartment at Okaka.

"Our operatives were mobilised to the scene with the help of some medical

experts, the corpse was exhumed and deposited at the Federal Medical Centre mortuary for autopsy.

"We have other reports which involve cases of kidnapping that happened at Ekeremor Local Government Area, Aleibiri community ransom was collected by the kidnappers and they have been arrested.

"We have another report from the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, Korokorosei community where about four suspects were arrested over the weekend in the case of sea piracy which attacked

a passengers' boat," the spokesperson stated.

Meanwhile, the murder suspect, Fekala in an interview with newsmen said the deceased was his sister's friend who begged to stay in his two-bedroom apartment to get some privacy.

According to him, he was feeling very bad for murdering Ogwoh, saying the act would have been avoidable if he had not allowed her to stay in his house and that both of them would not have had any business together, which was the cause of their argument that led to her death.

US drone strike kills Al Qaeda leader, Ayman Al-Zawahiri in Afghanistan

By PAUL MICHAEL, Defence Editor, Abuja

United States media reports have stated that Al Qaeda leader, Ayman Al-Zawahiri has been killed by a US airstrike in Afghanistan.

According to the reports, the US conducted a counterterrorism operation against Al Qaeda, leading to the death of Al-Zawahiri. Sky News quoted a

senior official in President Joe Biden's administration to have said, "Over the weekend, the United States conducted a counterterrorism operation against a significant Al Qaeda target in Afghanistan.

"The operation was successful and there were no civilian casualties."

Biden was due to speak from the balcony of the White House Blue Room

as he remained in isolation in the residence while he continued to test positive for COVID-19.

The death of Al-Zawahiri would be the biggest blow to Al Qaeda since its founder Osama Bin Laden was killed by the US in 2011.

A US official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said a drone strike was carried out by the CIA in the Afghan capital Kabul on Sunday.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that a strike took place and strongly condemned it, calling it a violation of "international principles".

Speaking on 31 August 2021, after the last US troops left Afghanistan, Biden said the US would not let up on its fight against terrorism in that country or elsewhere.

"We will maintain the fight against terrorism in

Afghanistan and other countries," he had said.

"We just don't need to fight a ground war to do it," he added.

Previewing the strike that would occur 11 months later, Biden had said at the time: "We have what's called over-the-horizon capabilities, which means we can strike terrorists and targets without American boots on the ground - or very few if needed."



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1 x 2	12,448.80	13,382.46	1 x 2	11,294.45	12,141.54	1 x 2	9,174.94	9,863.07	1 x 2	7,573.97	8,142.02	
2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02	
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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	
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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				
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Air fares soar as Lagos-Abuja-Kano route, others hit N135,000

By **EDU ABADE** Business Editor

Air travellers continued to lament the incessant hikes in ticket prices on the domestic routes, especially from Lagos to Abuja, Abuja-Kano and Port Harcourt-Lagos-Abuja, as airlines now charge as much as N125,000 and N135,000 for one-way domestic flights.

Subsequently, most intending air travellers have had to cancel their planned trips to parts of the country due to the sharp increase in the air fares and are opting for road transport.

Airlines have blamed the development on the incessant increase in the price of aviation fuel, otherwise called Jet A1 and other operational costs, which kept rising.

The Trumpet recalled that aviation fuel, which was sold for less than N200 per litre last year now goes for over N800 and there are fears that it could hit N1000 amid the falling value of the naira and the Russia-Ukraine war, which had disrupted supply chain in the oil industry.

This was exacerbated by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority's (NCAA) suspension of flight

operations of Aero Contractors and Dana Air by

Following the development, some stakeholders have advised airlines to sell tickets to reflect the current price of Jet A1, even as some sources also revealed that the airlines had to do so to remain in business.

Reports indicated that most airlines have reviewed their prices upwards with the lowest ticket selling for N80,000, as against N50,000, which the airlines introduced recently in light of unfolding events in the aviation industry.

A passenger of one of the local airlines told The Trumpet he wanted to travel to Lagos from Abuja for a programme on Thursday last week and the only available flight he got was N125,000 and he had to suspend the trip.

"I found that quite exorbitant, which means I would be spending over N200,000 for a return trip. Where will I get that kind of money? It is quite absurd and unsustainable, especially for businesses," he said.

Checks on Ibom Air on Monday showed that Lagos-Abuja flight for Wednesday indicated that most

seats have been fully booked but the ticket costs N78,000, Air Peace flight from Lagos to Kano now cost over N80,000, while Abuja-Kano flight costs N135,000 on Max Air.

However, booking 48 hours ahead of the flight costs N78,000 per passenger, just as Azman Air's flight from Lagos to Kaduna cost N100,000 in the last few weeks. Also, its Lagos-Kano flight costs between N95,000 and N105,000 depending on the travel date and time.

It was also learnt that flight from Lagos to Abuja on Green Africa Airlines, which used to cost between N27,000 and N35,000 with the tag of low-cost carriers at a time other operators were charging N50,000, has virtually dumped low cost fares in their inventory and selling Lagos-Abuja flights for N80,000.

It also selling its Lagos-Abuja and Abuja-Ilorin flight tickets for N54,000 to N70,000, as against the usual N25,000.

Responding to the development, an aviation analyst and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TopBrass Airline, Captain Roland Iyayi, said while the current fare hike was unsustainable, airline operators have no option but to



Captain Roland Iyayi

review their prices upward to recover costs.

He said as part of the solution to the current challenges facing the airlines, the NCAA should review the five per cent Tickets Sale Charge (TSC), adding: "The immediate solution is for the Federal Government to import and subsidise Jet A1 before the refineries become functional again."

Oyerinde emerges new DG of NECA

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Following the death of its former Director-General, the late Timothy Olawale early in the year, the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA) has announced the appointment of Adewale Oyerinde as its new Director-General effective August 1, 2022.

NECA is the umbrella organisation of members of the Organised Private Sector (OPS) and the leading voice of businesses in the country.

Before his appointment, Oyerinde, who was Deputy Director and Head of Membership Service of the association, joined NECA in 2010 and has worked in various capacities in the Socio-economic and Labour Affairs Department, as well as the Learning and Development of the association.

Before he joined NECA, he worked as Human Resources analyst at Rosequeen Consulting in 2005 and later joined Nagpde Group of companies with interests in healthcare, logistics, chemicals and allied products and construction, among others as Head of Human Resources Administration.

He has over 16 years experience in industrial, human resources and administration, business development, stakeholder management, key areas of employers, federation and management of business membership organisations.

He is a Human Resources (HR) thought leader, an International Labour Organisation (ILO) trained master trainer and also United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) trained International Standards Organisation (ISO) 1400-2015 lead auditor.

He holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management from the University of Lagos. He is an alumnus of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM).

Stanbic IBTC partners Bento Africa on value-added services

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Stanbic IBTC Bank PLC, a subsidiary of Stanbic IBTC Holdings PLC, has announced its partnership with Bento Africa to offer more value-added services to Nigerian businesses of all sizes.

Bento Africa is a payroll and Human Resource Management (HRM) company with a mission to meet work wherever it happens, expand broader access to a wider range of financial services and drive inclusion across the continent.

Speaking on the rationale behind the partnership, Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Bank, Wole Adeniyi, stated that the bank was committed to delivering more digitised value-added services to businesses and SMEs.

He said: "All the businesses

we serve pay their salaries of their employees through the provision of a world-class technology platform that enhances how they relate with our bank, which drove this strategic partnership.

"We are delighted to partner with Bento Africa, who currently serve over 1,000 businesses in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda, with plans to expand 10 other countries by the end of the year. Bento Africa is modernising the payroll and human resources management market in Africa, which has traditionally relied on laborious, manual processes to handle payroll. The start-up helps businesses of all sizes to automate the disbursement of salaries and other statutory remittances, including taxes and pensions with a single click.

"Stanbic IBTC customers can access Bento's services through

our digital platforms, including payroll and human resources services, detailed financial data analytics and seamless payment of employees in the formal and informal sectors, while staying compliant with local laws."

He further explained that the Bento platform was embedded in the Stanbic IBTC SMEs internet banking portal, where customers could access the website and get registered, adding: "Customers can access the Bento platform by clicking the Bento digital icon on our SME internet banking, which will redirect them to the Bento web portal for registration.

"The service will be free for Stanbic IBTC customers for the first three months and is a welcome development for businesses that spend hours every month manually processing payroll and calculating and submitting statutory remittances,

which is not only laborious but often leads to errors and the problem of ghost workers.

Speaking on behalf of the Bento Africa team, its founders, Egun Okubanjo and Chidozie David Okonkwo, said: "We see this as the beginning of much deeper partnerships with established institutions and start-ups. We are not surprised that Stanbic IBTC was the first on the table, as the bank is grounded in innovations and we have enjoyed working with the management. We are excited about the future of salaries and benefits and what that will mean for the employer, the employee and society in general."

Stanbic IBTC and Bento Africa expressed the view that the spirit of innovation that gave birth to the partnership would inevitably lead to more value-added services for Stanbic IBTC customers.



Wole Adeniyi

NIMASA, NITT sign MoU on research, training

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Institute of Transport Technology (NITT) Zaria, Kaduna State on research and training towards enhancing maritime safety and security in Nigeria.

Director General NIMASA, Dr. Bashir Jamoh signed the MoU with the Director-General of NITT, Dr. Bayero Salih Farah, explaining that the agreement was hinged on research and training with a view to enhancing local content and boosting the quality assurance

of the institute.

This is a follow up on earlier agreements reached between both Agencies of government in their quest to further domesticate specialized training programmes at management cadre in the maritime sector.

Jamoh described the MoU between both parties as a mutually beneficial partnership, aimed at supporting the core mandate of the NITT, while also in line with his administration's commitment to capacity building for NIMASA staff.

According to him the MoU is aimed at formalising and strengthening the existing relationship between NIMASA and the NITT in the areas

of research, training and general capacity development. We appreciate your visit to NIMASA sometime ago and we are glad that much progress is being made in terms of our collaboration.

"We hope that your institute will conduct detailed research to determine gaps in the implementation of our core mandate and develop training programs to close such identified gaps."

On his part, Farah thanked NIMASA for its longstanding support to the institute through direct financial assistance and by using the training services provided for the staff members of the agency over the years, adding that the NITT

will work closely with NIMASA to ensure that the Institute provides training and research services that conform with global standards.

NITT provides trainings to personnel employed in all modes of transportation, leading to the award of diploma, advanced diploma, postgraduate diploma and masters degree certificates in transport and logistics.

NIMASA had continued to embrace capacity building as a tool to enhance maritime development in Nigeria, while also engaging in several viable collaborations towards achieving its mandate, which cuts across shipping development, maritime safety and security.

AMCON returns Standard Company to Imo state government

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

As part of its strategy to partner, support and help revitalise businesses in its portfolio over huge debt, the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) in Abuja recently.

The corporation handed over the original title documents of Standard Shoe Company Limited, a factory co-founded by the Imo State government to governor Hope Uzodimma.

This fact is contained in statement made available to The Trumpet recently and signed by its Public Communications Manager, Jude Nwauzor.

The statement said the handover of the asset to the Imo State government following the full resolution of the indebtedness of Standard Shoe Company Limited to AMCON, ever since it took over the factory.

The statement said AMCON had continued to engage the government of Imo State, because the government of the critical impact of resuscitating such a massive factory would make in the manufacturing sector of Nigeria's economy.

Executive Director in charge of Assets Management, Dr. Eberchukwu Uneze, who presented the documents to Governor Uzodimma on behalf of the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of AMCON, Ahmed Lawan Kuru, said the corporation was happy that the Imo State government under the leadership of Uzodimma finally resolved the indebtedness with AMCON.

He said this will lead to improvement in the internally generated revenue of Imo State, which is in line with AMCON mandate.

Uneze commended Governor Uzodimma for making efforts to resolve the outstanding loan obligation owed AMCON, saying: "We appreciate your effort because other governors in Imo State have come and gone, but none of them had made this much effort to resolve the debt issue. You have made an impact to boost the state's economy."

In his acceptance speech after signing and receiving the documents, on behalf of the government and the people of Imo State, the governor, who recounted the pleasure he had with AMCON through the negotiation process, encouraged other obligors to approach AMCON freely and willingly, as the corporation was not hostile, adding that it was only interested in their recovery mandate and genuine growth and overall development of the country.



Dr. Eberchukwu Uneze

eTranzact grows profits by 128.7%, eyes holding structure in 2023

By EDU ABADE, Business Editor

Nigeria's leading electronic payment system company, eTransact International Plc, has announced a profit before tax (PBT) of N536.4 million for the 2021 financial year.

The figure represents 128.66 per cent improvement over the N1.87 billion loss the company recorded in the comparative period, which the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the company, Olaniyi Toluwalope, described as "impressive performance and the beginning of a glorious future."

It also achieved a 124.13 per cent growth in its profit before tax (PAT), which rose from a negative region of N1.89 billion to N455.75 million.

It replicated a similar performance, which the shareholders adjudged as outstanding on its top line. The shareholders' fund increased by 252.5 per cent from a loss of N1.58 billion to N2.41 billion, while turnover recorded a modest growth of 3.79 per

cent, up from N22.72 billion to N23.58 billion.

At the firm's annual general meeting (AGM) in Lagos, its Chairman, Wole Abegunde, who said the 18-year-old financial institution had commenced a journey to sustainable profitability, disclosed that eTranzact had developed a roadmap for restructuring its operations in line with the new regulatory framework for the payment system industry.

At its previous AGM, it disclosed its plans to embrace a holding structure to retain its leadership position across critical areas of the ecosystem for which Abegunde said the process of transitioning to a holding company was on course.

Also speaking, Toluwalope said the transition process would be completed before the end of the year or the first quarter of 2023, adding that "the scheme of arrangement" would be submitted to the regulators in the coming weeks.

On the completion of the process, eTranzact will operate



Olaniyi Toluwalope

its switching and mobile money as spate entities under a holding company.

Toluwalope said the company has embarked on a range of initiatives to consolidate its hold on the market and support electronic payment growth.

"The company commenced the implementation of its expanded Tech Stack initiative in 2021, which will invariably boost the company's capacity, speed and security in processing transactions. Significant progress has been made in the implementation process and the company will ensure that the implementation is completed within the project framework," he said.

He said eTranzact remained committed to the country's financial inclusion drive, which is evident in the increase of its agents across the country.

The company had won several awards for its contribution to the growth of the country's electronic payment system among which is Mobile Money Operator of the Year 2018, an honour the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) conferred on it.

Fidelity Bank rewards customers with N10m in GAIM promo

Fidelity Bank Plc has rewarded no fewer than 10 loyal customers with N1 million each in the eighth edition of monthly draw of its Get Alerts in Millions season five promo (GAIM 5).

Chairman of the promo and Executive Director, Lagos and South-West, Dr Ken Opara, said at the prize presentation in Lagos that the promo was aimed at promoting financial inclusion in Nigeria, maintaining that the bank introduced the GAIM bank to support the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) financial inclusion drive across the country.

"Today, we will be presenting N1 million each to Victor Chimela Ohanmuo and Sampson Onwunali, who emerged winners in the eight GAIM 5 monthly draw held last week and beside

them, eight other winners will receive their cash prizes of N1 million at similar events at their branches across the country.

"I congratulate the winners for emerging winners in our July monthly draw; a million naira is a lot of money and I urge them to put their winnings to good use. As a bank, we have taken it upon ourselves to help them make the best use of their cash prizes so that it continues to yield bountiful rewards for them," he said.

He urged the winners to visit any Fidelity Bank branch for necessary guidance from the bank's dedicated team of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) advisors on how best to make use of their money.

Opara, who was represented by Osita Ede, Divisional Head,

Product Development, Fidelity Bank Plc, encouraged those who were yet to open a Fidelity Bank savings account to do so to avoid missing out on the millions of naira to be given away in this month's grand draws.

He said: "As we have said previously, we would be giving out the sums of N2 million, N5 million and N10 million each to three lucky customers in the grand draw scheduled for August 2022."

Responding, Sampson Onwunali, one of the winners from Fidelity Bank Trade Fair Complex, Badagry Expressway, Lagos branch, thanked God for using the bank to bless him with the prize, saying: "My heart is full of joy and I thank God for His mercies. When I got a

call from the bank that I won something, I didn't believe it until I went to my branch to confirm.

"I didn't even know that there was a promo going on, although I heard about it sometime ago, but I had no interest in participating, not to talk of even being one of the winners. I urge Nigerians to start banking with Fidelity Bank to be among the winning team, because Fidelity Bank is a good bank and the save and win promo is real."

All the customers need to qualify for the promo is to save a minimum of N2,000 and activate a virtual or physical debit card to get a ticket for the promo. The more tickets one gets the more chances to win and the bigger the amount that could be won.

CBN assures Nigerians on foreign exchange crisis

•As policy threatens aviation sector

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Following rising demands for foreign exchange by individuals and businesses in Nigeria and the unprecedented crash of the naira, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has asked stakeholders to resist the urge of accepting speculators' gimmicks and manipulations in the foreign exchange market.

Director, Corporate Communications of CBN, Osita Nwansobi, who made the call in Abuja, recently said the apex bank remained committed to resolving the foreign exchange crisis confronting the nation, as it has been working to manage the demand and supply sides of the market.

The CBN spokesman, however, admitted that there was actually huge demand pressure for foreign exchange to meet the needs of manufacturers as well as payment of tuition, medical fees and other invisible items.

He said the bank was con-

cerned about the international value of the naira, adding that the monetary authority was strategising to help Nigeria earn more stable and sustainable inflow of foreign exchange in the face of dwindling revenue from the oil sector.

Nwansobi noted the RT200FX programme and the Naira4Dollar rebate scheme, as well as other initiatives undertaken by the bank have helped to increase foreign exchange inflows into the country.

He said the bank's records showed that foreign exchange inflow through the RT200FX programme in the first and second quarters of 2022 increased significantly to about \$600 million as of June 2022, adding: "The Naira4Dollar incentive also increased the volume of Diaspora remittances during the first half of the year."

According to him, interventions such as the 100-for-100 policy on production and productivity,

Anchor Borrower Programme (ABP) and the Non-oil Export Stimulation Facility (NESF), among others, were also geared toward diversifying the economy, enhancing inflow of foreign exchange, stimulating production and reducing the pressure of foreign exchange demands.

The bank will continue to make deliberate efforts in the foreign exchange sector to avert further downward slide in the value of the naira fuelled by speculative tendencies," he said.

He stressed CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele's advice to Nigerians to adjust their consumption patterns by looking inwards and finding innovative solutions to the country's economic challenges.

Nwansobi added that monetary policy alone would not solve all the changes surrounding foreign exchange demand and supply in the country, adding: "It is our collective duty as Nigerians to shore up the value of the naira."

Meanwhile, stakeholders of the aviation industry have expressed concern that more airlines could follow suit if the CBN, which

restricts access to foreign currency to tackle the severe dollar shortage, failed to adequately address the challenges facing airlines in the country.

It would be recalled that aviation fuel, also known as Jet A1 currently sold for about N1,000 per litre, while the naira is currently exchanging for about N710 to \$1 in the parallel market.

Nigeria, which gets roughly 90 per cent of its foreign exchange from crude oil sales, is struggling to produce due to pipeline vandalism and crude oil theft, in addition to years of underinvestment and official mismanagement of proceeds from crude oil sales.

It would also be recalled that amid similar foreign exchange restrictions in 2016, several airlines reduced their flights and carriers, while Iberia and United Airlines stopped flights to Nigerian.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in June this year that Nigeria was withholding hundreds of millions in revenue that international carriers operating in the country had earned.

Port users vow to resist planned increase in wharf landing fees

Stories by **ADAKU WALTER**

Clearing agents and freight forwarders have flayed plans by the Lagos State Wharf Landing Fee Collecting Authority to increase fees on imported goods through the seaports in the state, insisting they will resist the move.

It would be recalled that the agency had last week, disclosed that it had approached the state House of Assembly to review the 13-year-old law, which empowered the state to collect N300 on vehicles, N500 on buses and N1,000 on trucks coming into the country through the Lagos ports.

But reacting to the development, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Association of Registered Freight Forwarders of Nigeria (AREFFN), Taiwo Fatomilola, accused the state government of crippling businesses at the ports through the imposition of multiple taxes, levies and fees.

Fatomilola challenged the state government to publish details of the money it has been receiving in the last 13 years, which it claimed had been domiciled with the local government areas and local council development areas (LCDAs) in the state.

"They are not sharing any money with the councils. They should provide details of the money being given. The roads under the local governments are in terrible conditions

and have not been repaired, so if their claim of giving the landing fees generated from the wharf to the councils in the past 13 years is true, why are the roads not in good shape?"

"We will resist and fight the state government with all our strength. Importers do not give freight forwarders money for wharf landing fees. Rather, the freight forwarders that pay from their pockets. Of the whole states in the country, only Lagos State has been collecting the fee. Why do they want to increase it now that the 2023 general election is close? He asked.

Also, Deputy President of the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Dr Segun Musa, who said the wharf landing fees was the most unfortunate thing that has ever happened to the maritime industry, accused leaders in the freight forwarding and customs brokers for being responsible for the development.

"Unfortunately, the silence of the leaders in the freight forwarding and customs brokerage in the face of oppression is a direct indication that they are only interested in themselves without considering the impacts of the hardships on innocent and upcoming practitioners and the industry at large.

The maritime sector is dominated by self-interest leaders that are

careless about the future of our industry, but only express concerns when it affects their interest," he said.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the International Freight Forwarders Association (IFFA), Port and Terminal Multi-Services Limited (PTML) Chapter, Sunny Nnebe, queried what the money the state government has been collecting over the years was used for.

He described the wharf landing fee as illegality and wickedness on importers making use of the Lagos ports because stating that such fees are not collected in other ports.

Nnebe queried the rationale behind the Lagos State Government's review and the increment of the fees based on the rising exchange rate, asking: "Does the state government use the money to repair port roads? Do they use dollars to do that? Why is the Chairman talking about the exchange rate and if there are no ports in Lagos can they come up with this wicked demand?"

"Before former Governor Babatunde Fashola implemented the forcible collection, had the local government not been funded? A demand for an increase in this regard amounts to wickedness and mockery of other states whose residents do the importation, but don't have ports in their states," he said.

On his part, a Youth Leader of the Association of Nigeria Licensed



Babatunde Fashola

Customs Agents (ANLCA) at Tin Can Island Port, Remilekun Sikiru, said an increase in the fee at this time the economy is not stable, would not be tolerated by the agents.

He debunked insinuations by the Wharf Landing Fee Collecting Authority Chairman that some clearing agents collect as high as N50,000 from their importers under the guise of paying the fee maintaining

that the agency stationing its officials on port access roads to chase after cleared vehicles to collect the fee is tantamount to robbery and touting.

"Their activities are causing a lot of traffic on port access roads, especially at Liverpool under a bridge and along Trinity bus stop, they have gone as far as recruiting area boys with a lot of weapons damaging vehicles as a result of the collection of the fee.

"What the chairman of the agency, Adegboyega Salvador, said about agents collecting as much as N50,000 from importers for the agency fee is laughable. How can importers, who are hardly able to pay total charges to the agents now give such?"

"As clearing agents, we pay the fee from our pockets and the Chairman has failed to let members of the public know that his men attached with policemen and soldiers, especially under the Liverpool Bridge seize vehicles from us to their premises anytime our members beg them that they have no money. They even towed our vehicles with a towing vehicle, which will be added to your charges as a penalty, which is nothing less than 100,000 for settlement.

He, however, suggested that the Wharf Landing Authority could digitise collection of the fees and remove touts from the port access roads, adding that doing so would be a welcome development.

How Inland dry ports will boost Nigeria's agric exports, generate revenue

Minister of Transportation, Mu'azu Sambo, has declared that the operation of Inland Dry Ports (IDPs) across the country will be a catalyst for improved trade inflows and revenue generation for the Federal Government besides its importance in facilitating international trade and transit cargoes to landlocked countries.

Sambo said the dry ports would also bring shipping activities closer to shippers in the hinterland, increase cargo throughput, boost inland trade and promote export of agricultural products, thereby leading multi-products oriented economy.

He stated this, yesterday, during the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) and Federal Ministry of Transportation (FMOT) one-day stakeholders sensitisation programme and launching of operational manual for Inland Dry Ports in the country Lagos.

Sambo, who was represented by the Deputy Director Inland Container Depot of the ministry, Ewache Victor, stated that the dry ports project would also create employment opportunities that would ultimately stem increasing rural-urban migration, act as source of internally Generated Revenue (IGR) to the host communities and states, as well as boost revenue sources of the Federal Government.

According to him, the inland dry

port project was conceived as part of the government's ports reform programme designed in 2006 to decongest the seaports, while also taking shipping and port services closer to importers and exporters in the hinterland, among other objectives.

He said the project is being developed through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) using the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) Model in Isiala- Ngwa, Abia State; Erunmu Ibadan, Oyo State; Heipang in Jos, Plateau State; Funtua, Katsina State; Maiduguri, Borno State and Dala in Kano State, which would soon be commissioned.

Sambo noted that other inland dry ports are currently being processed in Kebbi, Osun, Anambra, Oyo, Edo, Bauchi and Abia states, adding that the operational manual, which is being launched, would cover activities in the dry ports, which would accommodate container import and export by rail, container import and export by truck, customs controls and empty container storage.

He urged operators and regulators to abide by the operational processes as contained in the manual, which specifically describes the functions, activities and operations of the dry ports as it relates to export and import according to international best practices for standard quality control.

Speaking earlier, Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), Emmanuel Jime, said the inland dry ports project was conceived as part of the reform programme in the transport sector to promote efficient transportation, enhance efficiency at the ports and engender trade facilitation in the country.

He explained that the strategic importance of producing the manual articulates the step-by-step procedures for receiving, storing, handling and delivery of cargoes as well as highlighting the operations and responsibilities of agencies and timelines for discharging such tasks.

He said the operational manual, which was launched in Kano on July 21, 2022, will be launched in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State on Tuesday, August 9, 2022, as it provides detailed

processes and procedures for the main activities of the Inland dry ports.

The manual is based on best international practices adapted to suit the Nigerian context. Indeed, each dry port will have its own specialities, organisational implementation, layout constraints and services offered and would therefore amend aspects of the manual on a case-by-case basis.

Jime stressed that the NSC will work to ensure that the upcoming inland dry ports, particularly those in Dala, Funtua and Jos will avoid the pitfalls that the seaports are currently experiencing by ensuring they are fully compliant with the operational manual and ISPS compliant, as well as operate for every day for seven days a week.

He said: "They are transit facilities fully digitised and served with intermodal transport among others."

On his part, the Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Mohammed Bello-Koko, said the Lagos seaports were operating beyond their capacity, hence, the need to optimize the inland dry ports.

Bello-Koko who was represented by the Assistant General Manager, Operations, Ayodele Durowaiye, said NPA had been working to ensure that the Kaduna Inland Dry Port (KIDP) was linked to the borders of neighbouring countries in the northern part of the country to ensure passage of goods in and out of the country.

He said the effective operations of the IDPs would provide viable options for shippers and consignees outside Lagos State as they would increase the possibility of export cargoes.

Bello-Koko, however, pledged the NPA's support for other government agencies under the ministry of transportation to aid the movement of import and export cargoes as well as boxes in the country.

President of the Shippers Association of Lagos (SAL), Leonard Ogamba, commended the operational manual as a working tool that will enable cargo owners, importers, exporters and shippers to hold the government agencies at the ports accountable for performing their duties efficiently, as well as when they deviate from their core responsibilities.

Uncertainty dogs release of \$3.1b AFC fund for e-customs project

If feelers from stakeholders are anything to go by, there is uncertainty over the status of the \$3.1 billion African Finance Corporation (AFC) funding of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) modernisation project.

This followed as a Federal High Court vacated an earlier order stopping the commencement of the project.

As of press time, the status of the fund could not be confirmed, as the AFC failed to respond to an electronic mail sent to it, but when contacted, Public Relations Officer of the NCS, Timi Bomodi, expressed the hope that the AFC was committed to participation in the project, but was not specific if it had released any funds.

In a telephone interview, Bomodi, a Deputy Comptroller of Customs said: "At this stage, they will release whatever needs to be released to get the project going. And of course, they are working and nothing has stopped."

"There was never a time they stopped from releasing the funds. They have signed an agreement. The \$3.1 billion is not the kind of money you just give to someone, because it is big money. It will be done in phases and they are proceeding with all the phases. We have said from the beginning that the whole process will be done in phases.

"Every phase will have its component and AFC is working. For them to work, they will have funds. They are proceeding with the project whichever way they want to do it."

Prior to vacating the order, the court had restrained the Federal Government from enforcing or giving effect to the Customs Modernisation Project otherwise known as e-Customs initiative allegedly executed by its agents on May 30, 2022.

The agents, who allegedly executed the disputed concession project, are the Nigerian Customs Service, Trade Modernisation Project

Limited, Huawei Technologies Company Nigeria Limited and the AFC.

The court also issued an order of interim injunction against the Federal Government or its agents acting through the Federal Executive Council (FEC) from retrospectively ratifying the decisions to concession the e-Customs project to Trade Modernisation Project Limited, Huawei Technologies Company Nigeria Limited and AFC.

The restraining order issued by Justice Inyang Ekwo shall last till the hearing and determination of a suit brought against the Federal Government by the e-Customs HC Project Limited and Bionica Technologies (West Africa) Limited, which challenged the alleged what they described as the "unlawful and fraudulent concession of the e-Customs project to the AFC."

In a related development, another firm that sought a rejoinder to the suit, Adani Mega Systems Limited, alleged that the Federal Government contravened the law by awarding the project as according to it, as there are several pending suits on the matter before other courts.

In a motion on notice brought before the court by counsel to Adani Mega Systems Limited, Taiwo Abe, the company while seeking to be joined in the matter, listed the cases and described the government's action as subjudice.

The firm averred that it would be affected by the outcome of the ongoing matter while listing some of the pending cases it claimed were on and related, which are concerned with the automation of the NCS.

Adani Mega Systems Limited, through its lawyer, wrote: "The purported Federal Executive Council approval of September 2, 2020, and the signing of the contract award to the Defendants for automation of the activities of the Nigeria Customs Service E-customs when an action is pending is subjudice, pre-emptive of the court's decision, illegal, unlawful and planned to steal a match against the applicant."



Mu'azu Sambo

Adamu commends UNICEF, TRCN for moving to end corporal punishment in schools

Stories by PAUL MICHAEL

Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, has commended the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) for collaborating to end corporal punishment in schools.

UNICEF, an agency of the United Nations that is responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide has collaborated with TRCN to develop a draft national action plan targeted at ending corporal punishment.

While commenting on the initiative, Adamu said the action plan would improve enrolment, retention, transition and completion in education.

The Minister, who was represented by Hajia Binta Abdulkadir, the Director, Senior Secondary Education Department, stated this at the National Awareness Creation Meeting on Ending Corporal Punishment in Schools.

Adamu said the country is beginning to see a global change of how corporal punishment is considered, noting that now it is easier to see that such punishment is not effective and that there are alternatives.

He said, "the Federal Ministry of Education, therefore, endorses this plan to serve as a roadmap for ending corporal punishment in schools in line with the Child's Right Act passed into law in 2003.

"It will help to protect children's right to a life of violence."

Meanwhile, the Registrar, TRCN, Prof Josiah Ajiboye, said that learning and safety could no longer be thought of as separate entities, hence the need to build a safe education to build better and safer children.

Ajiboye harped on the need for a more effort to educate parents and teachers on the implication of corporal punishment as well as the alternatives that were available to them.

He said good school discipline depends on skilled and properly trained teachers, not students' bad

behaviour.

According to him, "Globally, there is a paradigm shift from corporal punishment in schools because of its effect on pupils.

"It has been proven to be ineffective, dangerous and an unacceptable method of controlling and maintaining behaviour and discipline.

"This is because it brings negative rather than positive consequences in the whole process of teaching and learning."

Ajiboye, therefore, said the

campaign was committed to seeing a school culture that ensured a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

On his part, representative of the Technical Working Group of the action plan, Noah Ashibi, said over 62 per cent boys and 59 per cent girls were reported to have experienced some form of physical abuse.

Ashibi, who is also an Assistant Director, TRCN, Cross River Coordinator, further stated that pupils had such abuses as corporal punishment in schools and at home.

He stressed that the findings have huge implications for children's right to education in Nigeria and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4.

He said, "Nigeria is presently struggling with a large number of out-of-school children, a phenomenon largely attributable to the various forms of violence affecting children.

"In a recent survey of learners, teachers, parents and traditional leaders in northern Nigeria, 62 per cent of learners reported experiencing various forms of

corporal punishment such as flogging, slapping, kicking, frog jump and other physical violence.

"Over half of the respondents identified teachers as the main perpetrators of corporal punishment.

"These violent disciplinary practices persist with the large body of research that acknowledged the physical, emotional, developmental and psychological harm that they inflict on children."

However, he called for serious action from all stakeholders to eradicate the practice from schools.

Also, Mrs Odinakachi Ahanonu, the Policy Advisor, Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), called for a strong synergy in ensuring that the plan contributed to ending corporal punishment in schools.

A call to action was placed on federal, state, local governments, and school levels to create awareness on the dangers of corporal punishment, coordinated at all levels.

Stakeholders were also charged to develop and implement a policy framework focusing on ending corporal punishment in schools and homes.



Adamu Adamu

OML assists parents, guardians with Education Protection Plan

The Nigerian subsidiary of Old Mutual Limited (OML) has launched an Education Protection Plan known as EduSure, to assist parents and guardians secure uninterrupted learning for their children/wards.

OML said with EduSure, parents/guardians save towards an educational goal for their children/wards, while Old Mutual provides that assurance of meeting that goal in the event of the policyholder's death.

According to the organisation, a policyholder can elect to save a specific amount of money for ten years towards a child's university education, EduSure ensures that the target sum is paid to the beneficiary should the policyholder, unfortunately, pass away within the policy tenure.

Under the Education Protection Plan, policyholders can choose between N500,000 to N500million cover target, paying the premiums monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.

The policy also provides a refund of premium, delivering 40 per cent of the premium to the policyholder should the beneficiary die before attaining the age of 25 and a cash back option to the policyholder for continuous payment over a 36-month period.

The executive head, Marketing and Customer Experience, Old Mutual Nigeria, Alero Ladipo, while speaking during the launch of the product, said the product is targeted at helping more Nigerian parents/guardians achieve the desired future for

their children/wards no matter what life serves them in the future.

She said, "The launch of the Old Mutual EPP is significant, coming at a time when the World Bank estimates that Nigeria has 11 million children out of school. Research has also shown that a very considerable portion of this population is children who were constrained to drop out of school due to the reversal of economic realities following the death of a breadwinning parent.

"We know that death is a reality for any living being, but we now have the financial tools that insulate the children from the impact of death on their future education."

The Managing Director of Old Mutual Life Assurance Limited, Olusegun Omosehin, also stated that, "investing in an education plan is an intelligent way of ensuring your child gets the best education possible without the exigencies of life interrupting their learning process.

"With our Education Protection Plan, parents/guardians are guaranteed that their children/wards can achieve the future they desire by simply setting aside a target amount for their future educational goals.

"It is smart because if nothing happens with the policy term, the parent would have saved up a substantial amount to meet the financial demands for providing the kind of education they dream for their children," Segun added.

1,261 computers distributed to primary school in Kebbi

The Kebbi State government on Tuesday said it has distributed not less than 1,261 computer tablets to 1,261 primary schools, saying the number represents 65 per cent of public schools in the state.

Executive Chairman, Universal Basis Education Board (SUBEB) in Kebbi State, Prof Suleiman Khalid, disclosed this at the Public Schools Verification Programme held in Birnin Kebbi, the state capital.

The verification tour, it was gathered, was organised by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) to ascertain areas of needs in public primary schools.

Speaking during the exercise, Khalid said, the deployment of technology in the State would help to monitor and track pupils in the State.

"I invite you to note the deployment of technology in our dear state. DLI 7 deals with the deployment of digital attendance and record keeping in schools.

"Under this programme, our pupils in the state will be daily monitored and this will no doubt assist in tracking and monitoring the attendance, check-in and check-out of pupils and teachers in schools.

"Today, classroom attendance

stood at 374,855 pupils representing roughly 67 per cent of the pupils in the primary is monitored digitally across the state," he said.

He further said that the deployment of digital attendance record keeping would assist the School Based Management Committees, Education Administrators, Local Government Education Authorities and SUBEB to act swiftly on the issue of attendance of pupils in schools and ensuring high level of retention of pupils.

According to the chairman, some major achievements of the board include the establishment of 5,400 non-formal learning centres made up of 3,943 Interested Qur'anic Schools, 1,751 Girl Child Centres and 156 Nobody Child Centres with a total enrolment of 790,500 learners.

"We have engaged the services of 15,810 facilitators, we provided shades, two sets of toilets and open dug well and other sources of water to 1,008 Integrated Primary Schools (IQS), we are also providing a monthly stipend of N5,000 to each of the 3,943 IQS proprietors and we have provided centre improvement grant to each centre management committee the sum of N50,000 to 3943 IQS centres," he said.

The Kebbi State Commissioner

for Education, Alhaji Muhammad Magawata-Aliero, in his speech said that in the year 2000, African member nations met in Dakar, Senegal and proposed "Education For All" by 2015 "meaning that by 2015 no member nation will have out-of-school children."

However, he said, Nigeria recorded about 11.4 million out-of-school children by 2015 according to reports, while in many countries there were zero or less number.

Magawata-Aliero said according to reports, in Kebbi State, they have conflicting figures of 501,000 and 914,945 out-of-school.

He, therefore, appealed to NBS to do justice in the course of their verification and assessment exercise.

On his part, the NBS State Officer, Kebbi, Malam Sa'idu Sale, said the exercise was expected to cover 17 states, assuring that of the affected states, "Kebbi has the highest number of schools totaling 7,217 to cover, more than any other states to be covered.

"I want to assure you that all schools will be visited, we are going to conduct a five-day training for our staff, I am assuring you that we have our staff in all the 21 Local Government Areas of the state and we are going to do justice to the exercise."

Meet 5 celebrity's fashion stylists

When top celebrities, socialites and crème de crème step out looking all glammed, one begins to wonder that despite their busy & tight schedules, making a statement on red carpet event is more fascinating to them as they give the burden of their outfit and all glammed look to those whose purview is to incur all the running around for fabrics and sewing. For top celebrities' stylists/designers that includes Mai Atafo, Toju Foyeh, Luminee, Swanky Jerry, Ade Bakare to mention but a few, getting to the top is not quite easy as being consistent has made who they are in the world of fashion today. In no particular order, OMONIYI ALLI gives to you our own 5 fantastic celebrity fashion stylists.



Mai Atafo

This name won't sound strange to anybody familiar with the fashion world, in Nigeria and other African countries. His love for fashion has really made him one of the best fashion designers in Nigeria. Mai Atafo was best known to be designing men's suits before he eventually launched a Bridal Collection he called 'Wedding by Mai'. He designs bridal gowns, little bridesmaids, groom suits, blazers alongside waistcoats.

Aside been a Fashion Designer he also consults as a marketing specialist, he develops concepts, coordinates and produces events and TV shows. Mai Atafo is a fashion artist (MAI), fashion editor (Genevieve), stylist, entertainment consultant and compere. He also designs red carpets gowns and suits for many celebrities, which includes Mercy Johnson, Dakore Egbuson, Stephanie Okereke, Stella Damascus, Gbenro Ajibade, Ramsey Nouah, Ex-Bauty Queens Omowunmi Akinnifesi, Munachi Abii, and Adaeze Igwe, Musicians include Banky W, D'Banj, 2face, M.I., Bez, Waje, and Omawumi and other important clients such as JJ Okocha, Uti Nwachukwu, Ebuka and many more. His creativity and unique way of designing his clothes has won him up to 10 awards over the years and that has made him stand out among others.

Swanky Jerry:

For Jeremiah Ogbodo better known as Swanky Jerry and CEO Swanky Signature, his eyes for details on each outfit made is second to none; popularly known for his slogan 'No swanky!! No styling', he has sure carved a super niche for himself having styled some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry. Despite his young age, his outfits have been rocked in most of the top red carpet events. Here are some of his clients whom he has styled over the year and still counting, they include Juliet Ibrahim, Tonto Dikeh, Majid Michel, Iyanya, Ice Prince, MI, Yung L, Timaya, Don Jazzy, D'Prince, Davido, 2face, Annie Macaulay, Ini Edo, Ik Ogbonna, Toke Makinwa, Waje, Emma Nyra and a host of others



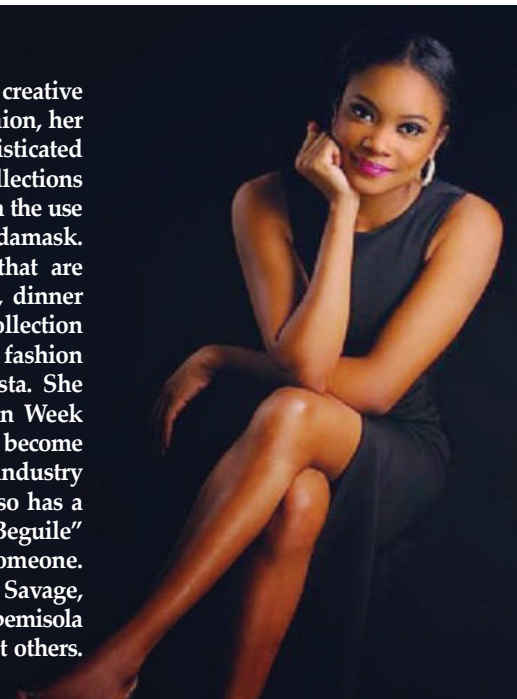
Toyin Lawani

With over 15 businesses to her name; her fashion house stood out dishing out some of the most creative designs. Tiannah Styling pitched her tent not just as a designer but also as one of the leading top fashion consultancy, celebrity photo-shoot boot and music video styling. Having received numerous awards for her contribution to the fashion industry; Tiannah styling boast of clients not just in the entertainment field alone but in all other sectors; some of her clientele includes, Eniola Badmus, Denrele Edun, Beverly Osu, Iyabo Ojo, Fathia Balogun, Mercy Aigbe-Gentry, Kaffy, Adekunle Gold, Ciara, Emma Nyra, Adunni Ade to mention but few



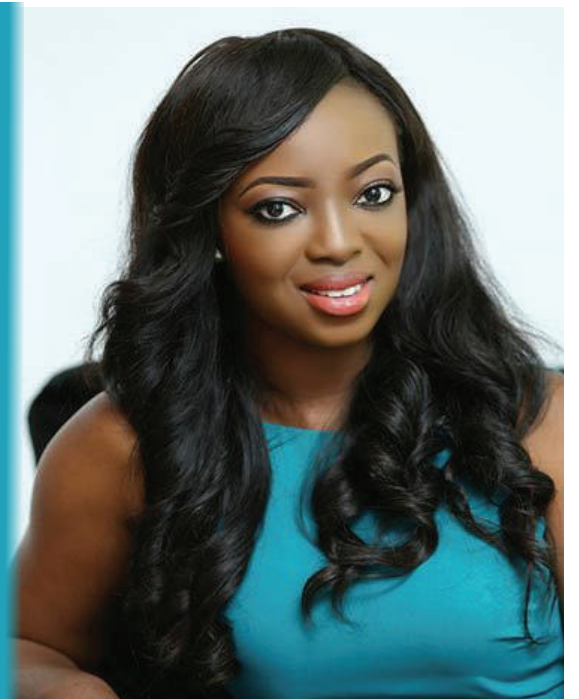
Toju Foyeh

Toju Foyeh Brand is owned by a creative designer that is fully into lady's fashion, her brand is one that celebrities of sophisticated design love to have. Toju Foyeh's collections are beautiful, bold and ambitious with the use of lace, silk, chiffon and enduring damask. She deals with luxurious clothes that are always suitable for a cocktail party, dinner even a red carpet. The Toju Foyehcollection offers well-tailored one-of-a-kind fashion for the modern jet setting fashionista. She launched her brand at Arise Fashion Week in December 2011 and has since then become a style phenomenon in the fashion industry back home and abroad. She now also has a brand new bridal collection called "Beguile" which means to charm or entice someone. Some of her clients include Tiwa Savage, Wande Coal, Funke Akidele-Bello, Gbemisola Olateru-Olagbegi, Chidinma amongst others.



Olakunbi Oyelese (April by Kunbi)

A fashion label that specializes in bespoke and ready-to-wear fashion for women who place a premium on the principles of fashion, fit, and functionality. Founded in the spring of 2010, the brand is the brain-child of Olakunbi Oyelese, a graduate of the renowned Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Inspired by the month of April – the start of the Spring season, APRIL by Kunbi has been built on the philosophies of "newness, freshness and colour". The designer works as a stylist for Tiwa Savage, Toke Makinwa, Omotola and many more.



Wellness

9 home remedies for curing heartburn

Heartburn is something that most adults will experience during their lifetime. It is characterized by an uncomfortable burning sensation right behind the breastbone that oftentimes creeps up the throat, and is a symptom more so than a disease. It is caused by acid reflux, which occurs when the ring of muscle that allows food into your stomach relaxes when it shouldn't. The result is acid from your stomach goes back up your oesophagus, which then causes the sensation of heartburn. Think about it... it's acid burning your throat...ouch! It's actually possible to have reflux without heartburn, but it is not possible to have heartburn without reflux. While over-the-counter and prescription medications are available, if you suffer only from occasional heartburn, lifestyle changes and heartburn home remedies may be the route you want to take.

1. A spoonful of baking soda... A spoonful of sodium bicarbonate, or teaspoon-full to be exact, can help put an end to the burning, sensation of heartburn caused by acid reflux. Baking soda, as sodium bicarbonate is more commonly known, can help your reflux and in turn help your heartburn because it is a base substance. It has a pH higher than 7.0, and therefore neutralizes stomach acid. Neutralizing the stomach acid means that if/when your LES decides to be lazy and acid comes up your throat, you don't get "burned."

You will need...
-1/2 teaspoon or 1 teaspoon of baking soda

-a glass of fresh water
Directions
Mix either a 1/2 teaspoon or 1 single teaspoon of baking soda into a glass of water that is no more than 8 ounces. Give it a good stir and drink all of the mixtures. You can repeat this as needed but should not exceed seven 1/2 teaspoon doses in 24 hours. Also, avoid using this as a remedy for more than a week straight, as it is high in salt and can have side effects such as swelling or nausea.

2. Soothe your stomach with aloe juice... Aloe is a plant used to soothe burns, and people often think of using it to help something like sunburn, but it can do more than that. It may be able to help with heartburn too because it reduces inflammation. This means when your tummy starts getting irritated and inflamed, or your oesophagus is getting eaten away at, a nice glass of aloe Vera juice may be just the thing to help calm it down.

You will need...
-1/2 cup aloe Vera juice

Directions
drink a 1/2 cup of aloe juice, cool or room temperature, before meals. Keep in mind that aloe can act as a laxative, so unless you're looking to fit in a few extra bathroom Sudoku puzzles, look for a brand that has the laxative component removed.

3. Chew gum... The Journal of Dental Research conducted a study that showed people with symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), or chronic heartburn,



experienced relief when they chewed a piece of sugar-free gum for 30 minutes after a meal. This is because chewing gum stimulates the salivary glands, and increases the flow of saliva. Any acid that has built up in the gut is diluted and washed away or cleared out more quickly. The clearance of acid then improves the symptoms of GERD. It is possible that the same school of thought could be applied to occasional heartburn as well. It's our regular saliva that we swallow that actually makes normal bouts of reflux here and there completely painless.

You will need...
-1 piece of sugar-free gum

Directions...
After a meal, pop in a piece of sugar-free gum and chew for 30 minutes to help ward off heartburn.

4. Chin up (and don't lie down) Heartburn tends to get worse at night, thanks to the fact that you're lying down when you sleep. Gravity works against you, and it's easier for the digested contents of your stomach to back up into your oesophagus, along with acid. Try elevating your head about 6 inches when you sleep by placing bricks, books, or blocks under the legs at the head of your bed. You could also try a wedge-shaped pillow under your mattress, but don't simply pile up extra pillows as it's easy to slip off of them at night. Don't lie down within 3-4 hours after eating, because lying down with a full stomach makes stomach contents press harder against your lower oesophageal sphincter.

5. How, what, and when...

Watch how you eat: Don't inhale giant mouthfuls of food. Take smaller bites and

eat slowly, allowing your stomach time to digest and without giving it an excuse to pump out excess acid.

Watch what you eat: You're probably aware that specific foods trigger heartburn, usually foods high in acid (tomatoes or citrus fruits, for example,) or spicy foods. Avoid these as best you can to ward off heartburn.

Watch when you eat: Don't eat within 3-4 hours before bed. Lying down puts more pressure on your LES and increases the likelihood of acid sneaking through.

6. Get more acid... When you have acid-burning your oesophagus, it seems quite counterintuitive to ingest even more acid. In many cases though, acid reflux is caused by having not enough acid in your stomach, rather than having too much, as over-the-counter or prescription "acid blockers" imply (although that can also be the case, among other factors.) It is the acid itself that tells the lower oesophageal sphincter to tighten and close off. If you don't produce enough acid, your LES is going to think it's no big deal to loosen up for a little bit. Then, of course, you get a reflux of acid into your oesophagus. If you think this may be your case, try drinking some pure, raw, unfiltered apple cider vinegar to see if this prevents your reflux, or cuts it off.

You will need...
-3 teaspoons or 1 tablespoon of raw unfiltered apple cider vinegar
-6 to 8 ounces of fresh water

Directions
Mix 3 teaspoons, or up to 1 tablespoon, of apple cider vinegar into 6-8 ounces of fresh water, and drink. You can do this before each meal (probably the most effective.)

before bedtime, or 2-3 times during the day. If you feel it worsens your reflux, do not continue to ingest it. Too much may also contribute to the problem.

7. Eat a banana or an apple... Bananas contain natural antacids that can act as a buffer against acid reflux. If you want to try out the simplest home remedies for heartburn first, try letting a few bananas ripen up nicely and eating one every day. Another option is to try an apple a day. Slice one up and eat it a couple of hours before bedtime to relieve or prevent discomfort.

8. Make gingerroot tea... Gingerroot can help ease up several stomach woes, from nausea to acid reflux. Sipping a cup of fresh tea about 20 minutes before a meal can help calm down your tummy and act as an acid buffer.

You will need...
-3 quarter sized slices of gingerroot
-2 cups of water

Slice up 3 quarter sized pieces of gingerroot and simmer gently in 2 cups of water, covered, for 30 minutes. Remove the ginger pieces, or leave them in, pour them into a glass, and drink all of it about 20 minutes before a meal.

9. Avoid tight-fitting clothes... Things cinched tightly about your waist or middle can worsen heartburn. If you have super tight jeans on, when you sit down, the waistband is going to sink into your abdomen region. The same goes for tight belts-and even shirts can be a problem for some. This is because all of the above puts extra pressure on your lower oesophageal sphincter, which makes it more likely that stomach contents, will push through and you'll experience reflux.



Emulate Mane, Salah, Ikpeba admonishes Osimhen

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

Former Africa footballer of the year, Victor Ikpeba has admonished Napoli centre-forward Victor Osimhen to emulate the likes of Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane if he wants to succeed in his career.

Ikpeba, who is a sports analyst with Supersport said this recently during an interview on Comfort 95.1fm.

The soccer pundit adored the Prince of Monaco during his active days in France, recalling that despite his accolades, he was diligent and respectful to the senior players.

According to Ikpeba, players that followed this path including Italian Balotelli never ended well in their careers, calling on persons close to him to advise him properly.

He said, "I remember when I was a professional footballer many years ago I had my personality and character, I was very outspoken but I had respect for senior players."

Ikpeba had earlier advised the player during the Super Eagles World Cup



qualifier against Ghana in Abuja which led to a heated response from the youngster.

"He is still a young guy. I've said this before and I'm not changing. I don't care what people think about me but this is what is on ground, you know when anything is on social media people will have to take sides," he said.

The Delta-born soccer analyst who was part of Nigeria's 1996 Olympic winning squad, rebuffed insinuations that alleged he has problems with Osimhen.

He claimed that Osimhen had been respectful while

growing up but wondered at the sudden change of attitude after he arrived at Diego Armando Maradona Stadium.

"I honestly don't have any problem with Victor (Osimhen). I've seen him before when he has not gone to Napoli, he used to be a decent young chap," Ikpeba said.

The soccer pundit started his career in the 80s with African Continental Bant FC before switching to Europe to play for RFC Liege in Belgium where he won the Belgian Cup.

He added, "Football can be so unforgiving sometimes, look at the likes of Mario Ballotelli. A lot of Nigerian Footballers have had this same opportunity and lost it. Osimhen is at the right place at the right time so my advice is for him to calm down."

"People have to manage stardom. The Victor Osimhen I saw when he played at Charleroi, Wolfsburg, Lille carried himself decently. Going to Napoli might have changed his mentality and that is why I am saying he has to calm down, he has not achieved anything yet and should emulate players like Mane and Salah," Ikpeba advised.

Osimhen joined Napoli two seasons ago in a big-money move from Ligue 1 side Lille.

Since he made the switch to Napoli, the 23-year-old has found the back of the net 24 times in 51 Serie A matches coupled with 5 assists.

Last season in a match against Venezia at the Partenopei stadium, Osimhen was red carded in the 23rd minute by referee Gianluca Aureliano for violent conduct.

Sanchez leaves Inter Milan

Former Manchester United forward, Alexis Sanchez, has terminated his contract with Inter Milan on mutual consent despite having a year left to run until 2023.

Sanchez joined Nerazzurri before completing a loan move from United in the 2019-2020 season and became the highest-paid player in the club.

However, Simone Inzaghi's plans for the season do not accommodate Sanchez, instigating the club to negotiate a possible termination of the contract as was agreed with Arturo Vidal.

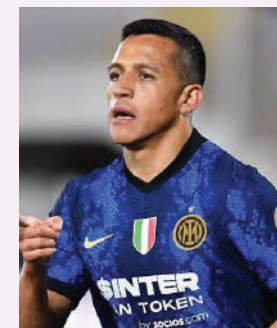
The Chilean representatives have been locked in a discussion with the Italian club for weeks having refused an earlier proposition by Nerazzurri to pay Sanchez, who receives €7m per season, €4m.

Despite the hitches, both parties have finally reached

an agreement of about €4.5m with transfer market expert, Fabrizio Romano adding that clubs are already on standby to swoop in on the 33-year-old.

Sanchez since he left England for Inter Milan, has netted 20 times and provided 23 assists in 108 appearances.

Last season, the player who is obligated to join any club on a free transfer, was featured 27 times for Inter Milan in Serie A and won the Coppa Italian against Juventus.



Ronaldo snubs Ten Hag's debrief

Manchester United forward, Cristiano Ronaldo, was noticeably absent to listen to the debrief by coach Erik ten Hag after the match against Rayo Vallecano on Sunday at Old Trafford.

The wantaway Ronaldo, whose reports have dominated the headlines lately, insisting he wants to explore new challenges away from Old Trafford, was the first time he joined the squad since United kickstarted their pre-season tour.

The 37-year-old according to reports, wants a club where he will be privileged to play in the UEFA Champions League this season following the failure of United to qualify last season after finishing 6th place.

Several clubs have earlier signified their interest in Portugal's national team captain but later distanced themselves from a possible move despite Ronaldo agreeing to forfeit 30% of his weekly earnings.

Chelsea, Atletico Madrid and Bayern Munich were reportedly interested in the player but United kept on reinstating their stance that their prized assets, who scored 24 goals in all competitions last season, is not for sale.

Undeterred by the decision from adamant United, Ronaldo still kept on pushing, slating a meeting with the club's management with Sir Alex Ferguson and Jorge Mendes, his representative, present.

All through the time the melodrama ensued, Ronaldo was avoidably absent from the club's pre-season tour and Carrington training base.

However, the forward returned to the squad in a

1-1 scoreline against Rayo Vallecano where he was substituted after the first half.

Prior to his substitution, Ronaldo had a tiff with Ten Hag on the sideline which speculatively resulted in the player leaving the pitch 10 minutes before the match ended.

Reacting to the incident, a source in the club who condemned the action by Ronaldo said he disappointed several people that wanted to see him.

"It is not a good look to leave early when you have been involved in the squad," the source told the media.

"It is different if you are up in the stands and not involved.

"You would expect someone who has played in the game to be in the changing rooms at the end to listen to the manager's thoughts.

"Also a lot of people were there to see him and he was not even involved in the clapping of the fans after the final whistle," he added.

Manchester United open the Premier League season against Brighton on Sunday at Old Trafford but it is not clear if Ten Hag will list Ronaldo in the starting lineup having failed to feature in all but one pre-season game.



How gold medalist Folashade set a new record in 59kg weightlifting

Folashade Lawal of Team Nigeria has set a new record in the women's 59kg weightlifting in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Team Nigeria did extremely well in weightlifting with a gold medal by Olarinoye Adenike Adijat in the women's 55kg weightlifting category and a bronze medal by Edidiong Joseph Umoafia in the men's 67kg category already in the kitty.

Folashade's surge towards success not only culminated in winning a gold medal to increase the medal haul of Team Nigeria but also saw the Ibadan-born weightlifter

setting a new record in the Commonwealth Games.

In her bid to attain this rare feat, Folashade whose medal has increased Team Nigeria's medals to three, comprising two gold and bronze medals, lifted a total of 206kg to top the podium.

The 25-year-old Nigerian trailed by other contenders for the coveted gold medal, dislodged the likes of Jessica Gordon Brown of Team England who lifted a total of 197kg and Canadian Talu Darsigny's 196kg.

Folashade, however, has dedicated this medal to her family in Ibadan.

"I dedicate the award to my Ibadan family," she said on receipt of the medal.



In her first attempt, she lifted 110kg and went on to improve in her second attempt, lifting 115kg to set a new record.

However, when it was largely believed that

Folashade had exhausted her stock after setting a new record, the star-studded weightlifter lifted 116kg in her third attempt to break and set the new Commonwealth Games world record.

Napoli await Chelsea on Kepa's loan move

Italian club Napoli are on the verge of bringing Spanish goalie Kepa Arrizabalaga to Stadio Diego Armando Maradona but await Chelsea to accept their loan offer.

Kepa, an option to Senegalese Edouard Mendy, the Blues' first goalkeeping choice, would seek a move elsewhere to be availed of more playing time.

Napoli aimed for Kepa after David Ospina joined Saudi Arabia club Al Nassr on a free

transfer and Nikita Contini is close to a switch to Sampdoria.

The Italian club president, Aurelio de Laurentiis has held talks with Kepa's representative and expects Chelsea to accept their propositions.

According to reports from Italy, the Blues are not opposed to a loan deal for the 27-year-old but their request has been a hitch in finalising the deal.

Chelsea proposed that Napoli will pay €1.5 million if they qualify for the knockout stages

of the UEFA Champions League and another €1.5 million if they end their Serie A campaign in the top four.

While Napoli is opposed to Chelsea's request, the Italian club have opted to pay €1.5 million in total for both options. The Italian club proposed to pay €750,000 if they qualify for the knockout stage of the UEFA Champions League and another €750,000 if they finish in the top four of this season's Serie A campaign.

More so, Napoli's proposition

is an adjustment of their earlier offer when they requested to pay €1m if they qualify for the UEFA Champions League and €500,000 if they finish the season in the top four.

However, while Napoli await Chelsea to consider their offer for Kepa who made a switch to London in 2018 from Athletic Bilbao, they have targeted 35-year-old Keylor Navas of Paris Saint-Germain and 32-year-old Kevin Trapp of Eintracht Frankfurt as alternatives.

Losing Aribo, Bassegy will disrupt Rangers 'rhythm'

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

Rangers were busy in the summer transfer window to cash in on two of their vital players, Joe Aribo and Calvin Bassegy.

To the Scottish club, the deal was a good one having brought both players to Ibrox for less than £1million and sold them for about £30million to Southampton and Ajax.

While the Gers relished their gains as they travelled to Belgium to face Union Saint-Gilloise in the third-round UEFA Champions League qualifiers, Christian Burgess claimed that the Scottish club will be affected tremendously by the departure of the Nigeria internationals.

Comparatively, he said that the effect of the departure of both players from Ibrox will surmount the amount made from their sales.

Burgess, who plays in the Belgium topflight for Union Saint-Gilloise, exemplified Aribo as a good player who both played together in the



English Championships.

The 30-year-old centre-back joined Union Saint-Gilloise last two seasons from Portsmouth on a free transfer and also played for Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Peterborough.

"Ideally, losing these guys might disrupt Rangers' rhythm. I played against Aribo when he was at Charlton, just before he moved to Rangers, and he was a really good player even then," Burgess said in the media.

"Obviously Bassegy has gone too so there has been a bit of disruption where last season's side is concerned. It's similar to our own situation. When a

team does so well it attracts a lot of attention and you end up having your best players cherry picked," he added.

Union Saint-Gilloise pipped Belgium topflight clubs, Club Brugge and Anderlecht to clinch the title last season, a quirk in the Belgian Pro League.

Relatively, Burgess revealed that Les Unionistes are presently engulfed with issues that emanated from the departure of one of their key players, Casper Nielsen.

He said, "We have just lost Casper Nielsen who was one of our best players last season so we are dealing with the same

sort of issues. That was a big blow to us as we were hoping he would stay around a bit longer."

Furthermore, the Englishman pointed out that the Gers with the depth of their squad will provide replacements which, however, will definitely affect the rhythm of their game.

Burgess continued: "But that's football. Rangers might have lost some key guys but they should have enough depth in their squad to cope with that. But, from our point of view, hopefully, that gets in the way of their flow and slows them up a little bit.

"I know what it's like when you lose a key player and someone else has to step up into that position and fill their boots. It's really tough for that person to assimilate themselves quickly. So that's going to be a challenge for Rangers," he added.

Aribo and Bassegy were key figures for the Gers last season to reach the final of the Europa League against Eintracht Frankfurt in Seville.

Nimrod NVBF board grooms championship teams

■ U21 boys will make a bold statement- Coach

The Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) led by Engr Musa Nimrod has expressed with delight the achievement recorded since they took over the helm of affairs.

The NVBF said the federation has created teams that triumphed in Africa tours.

In a statement by the federation on Monday, they noted that among the teams assembled, two national U19 boys' teams went ahead to win the African Championship title successively.

The Nimrod-led NVBF board highlighted that aside from producing teams in other categories, they are grooming prospective players who would play on the international stage.

The statement tagged, 'Developmental Programs', read: "Since the inception of the Engineer Musa Nimrod led Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) board, Nigeria have produced two National U19 Boys Team winning the African U19 Boys title back to back.

"Nigeria is on the verge of producing another National U19 Boys Team. They'll participate in next month's African U19 Boys Nations Championships in Morocco.

"Nigeria have produced a National U18 Girls team that finished second place at the last U18 Nations Championships held in Abuja

but could not make it to the FIVB U18 Girls Championship in Mexico.

"New sets of National U19 Girls, U21 Girls and U21 Teams are in the making and hopefully produce players that will play professionally outside the shores of the country.

"It is our prayers that these teams succeed at their various African Championships later this month," the NVBF said.

Meanwhile, the head coach of the Nigeria U21 Boys' Team, Sani Mohammed has vowed that the squad will make a bold statement at the forthcoming African U21 Boys' Nations

Championships in Tunisia. Mohammed hinged his confidence on the players who he said are aware of what is at stake for them.

"These set of players are ready to make a bold statement at the African U21 Boys Nations Championships in Tunisia," the coach stated.

"They played at the last U19 Nations Cup and won; now it is time for them to prove themselves at the U21 Championship," Mohammed reiterated.

The national U21 coach, who was appointed recently to pilot the U21 boys' team to a continental triumph in this month's African U21 Boys Nations Championships,

stressed that the players with varying abilities know that their mission in Tunis is to qualify for the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) U21 Boys Championship.

He claimed that most of Nigeria's opponents in the event are afraid because of the players' pedigree over time.

Mohammed continued: "All the players have their own abilities, they know that the only mission we have in Tunisia is to qualify for the FIVB U21 Boys Championship.

"I know most African teams are afraid of this team because of their pedigree; the players have been consistent and in top form for the last three years," he added.

Coach Amakapor departs Abia Warriors

Head coach of Abia Warriors, Imama Amakapor, has parted ways with the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) club at the expiration of his contract, The Trumpet reports.

Explicably, Amakapo in the first year of his two-year contract, led the club to a fourteenth place finish, two steps above the 2019-2020 season's 16th position before he took over the squad.

A statement by Nwosu Chigozie, Media Officer of the club, confirmed that the management parted ways with the football gaffer on the expiration of his two years contract.

He said, "The management

of Abia Warriors Football club has announced that it has parted ways with Coach Imama Amakapor after the expiration of his two-year contract."

"The club has thanked him for the services rendered and wish him well in his future assignment," Chigozie added.

Abia Warriors last season, finished in 13-place, having maintained a five-match unbeaten run following a loss to NPFL champions Rivers United on June 12, 2022.

Following the club's last season's performances in the 38-match fixtures, they won 13 games, drew 11 and lost 14 to garner a total of 50 points.



Men's round 64, women's 32 Aiteo Cup weekend results

Bayelsa United 4 Osevan FC 1
EFCC 0 Green Beret 3 (W/O)
Enyimba International 1 Ijebu United 1 (2-1 penalties)
Dreams FC 1 Niger Tornados 2
Apex Crane 0 Doma United 0 (2-3 penalties)
ABS FC 0 Lobi Stars 1
Nnewi United 1 Akure City Academy 1 (4-5 penalties)
Insurance Feeders 1 Dannaz FC 0
Rangers Int'l 4 ABJ FC 1
JM Liberty 0 Heartland FC 1
FRSC FC Vs Adoration FC (Both teams failed to show up)
Rivers United 0 Dakkada FC 3 (W/O)
Sunshine Stars 0 Osun United 0 (5-4 penalties)
Rovers FC 0 Gombe United 0 (4-2 penalties)
Mailantarki FC 1 Cynsure FC 4
Saki United 2 Katsina United 2 (3-4 penalties)
Remo Stars 4 PCM FC 1
Essien Ayi 0 Akwa United 3
Mighty Jets 2 Kogi United 3
Kanta United 0 Kebbi United 0 (4-2 penalties)
Plateau United 0 DMD FC 3 (W/O)
Housing Corporation 4 Jigawa Golden Stars 2
Zamfara United 1 Gamji Eaglets 1 (5-4 penalties)
Kano Pillars 2 Junior Niger Tornados 1
Fulfil FC 3 Olukismet FC 0 (W/O)
El-Kanemi 2 Kun Khalifat 0
Yobe Desert Stars 0 Kwara United 2
Wikki Tourists 6 Junior Pillars 5
Bendel Insurance 2 Junior Katsina United 1
Ottasolo FC 2 Abia Warriors 1
Ekiti United 0 Sokoto United 3 (W/O)
Eaglets FC 0 Nasarawa United 4

Castmog FC 0 Delta Queens 10
Sunshine Queens 0 Heartland Queens 1
Crystal Stars 1 Dannaz Ladies 2
Moje Queens 1 Osun Babes 2
Joy FC 0 Royal Queens 3 (W/O)
Ibom Angels 0 Edo Queens 1
Awka Angels Vs FC Robo Queens (01/08/22)

ROUND OF 32 FIXTURES (MEN)

Bayelsa United Vs Green Beret-Enugu - (03/08/22) - 2pm
Enyimba International Vs Niger Tornados- Ijebu-Ode - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Doma United Vs Lobi Stars- Jos - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Akure City Academy Vs Bendel Insurance Feeders- Nnewi - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Rangers Int'l Vs Heartland FC- Benin City - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Sunshine Stars Vs Rovers FC- Aba - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Cynsure FC Vs Katsina United- Makurdi - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Remo Stars Vs Akwa United- Enugu - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Kogi United Vs Kanta United- Minna - (03/08/22) - 4pm
DMD FC Vs Housing Corporation - Abuja - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Zamfara United Vs Kano Pillars - Kaduna - (03/08/22) - 2pm
Fulfil FC Vs El-Kanemi Warriors- Gombe - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Kwara United Vs Wikki Tourists- Abuja - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Bendel Insurance Vs Ottasolo FC- Ilorin - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Sokoto United Vs Nasarawa United- Kaduna - (03/08/22) - 4pm
Dakkada FC already qualified for Round of 16

ROUND OF 16 FIXTURES (WOMEN)

Bayelsa Queens/Kada Queens Vs Niger Amazons - 04/08/22 - 4pm (Venue TBD)
Abrika Queens Vs Abia Angels - Benin City - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Naija Ratels Vs Nasarawa Amazons - Jos - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Immaculate Queens Vs Confluence Queens - Makurdi - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Honey Badgers Vs Delta Queens - Owerri - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Heartland Queens Vs Dannaz Ladies - Warri - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Osun Babes Vs Royal Queens - Abuja - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Edo Queens Vs Awka Angels/ FC Robo Queens - 04/08/22 - 4pm (Venue TBD)

ROUND OF 32 (WOMEN) RESULTS

Bayelsa Queens Vs Kada Queens (01/08/22)
Brave Heart Ladies 0 Niger Amazons 3 (W/O)
Abrika Queens 6 Paragon Soccer Academy 0
Abia Angels 4 Ekiti Queens 3
Naija Ratels 3 Rivers Angels 0 (W/O)
Imo Angels 0 Nasarawa Amazons 4
Immaculate Queens 3 Maureen Madu FC 0 (W/O)
Salem City 1 Confluence Queens 2
Gallant Queens 0 Honey Badgers 1

Immaculate Queens Vs Confluence Queens - Makurdi - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Honey Badgers Vs Delta Queens - Owerri - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Heartland Queens Vs Dannaz Ladies - Warri - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Osun Babes Vs Royal Queens - Abuja - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Edo Queens Vs Awka Angels/ FC Robo Queens - 04/08/22 - 4pm (Venue TBD)

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Heartland Queens Vs Dannaz Ladies - Warri - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Osun Babes Vs Royal Queens - Abuja - 04/08/22 - 4pm
Edo Queens Vs Awka Angels/ FC Robo Queens - 04/08/22 - 4pm (Venue TBD)

Aaron Ramsey signs for OGC Nice

Juventus midfielder Aaron Ramsey has joined French Ligue 1 club OGC Nice on a free transfer after leaving the Old Ladies on a mutual agreement to terminate his contract.

Reportedly, the player who received £400,000 per week in Turin, accepted a £3.4m from Juventus to terminate the last year left in his contract.

The ex-Arsenal player, joined Juventus in 2019 and won a Serie A title and an Italian Cup to herald the beginning of a new era in his career in his first two seasons but failed to live up to expectation after being plagued with injury intermittently.

Last season, the player having featured five times for Juventus, joined Scottish club Rangers in the second half of the season where he made

thirteen appearances while netting only two goals.

After his brief spell with the Gers, the Welshman failed to secure a place at Ibrox and was one of the players that lost their penalties in the Europa League final at Seville against Eintracht Frankfurt.

However, at the end of his loan deal, Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri excluded Aaron Ramsey alongside Federico Chiesa, Mattia de Sciglio, Kaio Jorge, Arthur Melo, Marko Pjaca and Adrien Rabiot from the club's pre-season tour to reveal that they are no longer part of his plans for the new season.

Consequently, the Welshman has finally moved to Nice, boycotting moves to return to England to join either Cardiff or Nottingham Forest.

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

— Leo Tolstoy



Enugu Govt reiterates commitment to reposition technical colleges

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE** (South-East Bureau Chief)

The Enugu State Government has reiterated its commitment to reposition all technical and special colleges in the state to lead in scientific innovation in the country.

The state's Commissioner for Education, Prof. Uchenna Eze, gave the assurance on Monday during the Grand finale of the Annual Inter-House Sports Competition of Government Technical College (GTC), Enugu.

Eze, who was

represented by an official of the ministry, Mr Williams Chukwu, said that the present administration had renovated classrooms and technical workshops within technical and special colleges in the state.

According to him, Gov. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, the most educationally friendly governor, has awarded the contract for the total reconstruction of General Woodwork and Radio/Television classrooms and workshops building of GTC, Enugu.

He said: “As a state, we aim at repositioning our technical and special colleges to the best, not only in Nigeria but in

Africa as a whole.

“The state government has aggressively renovated dilapidated structures and has put modern learning and instructional materials and ICT facilities to reposition the colleges to be compliant to modern learning.”

The Chairman, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) of the college, Chief Ferdinand Ude, urged all good spirited individuals, old boys and philanthropists to help the college in any capacity they deem fit to reposition it to be the best.

“Government cannot do it all alone. Parents, stakeholders and philanthropists needed



Gov Ugwuanyi

to assist to get modern and state-of-the-art equipment and gadgets to bring the school to the stage of digitalised learning,” Ude said.

Contributing, Executive Director of Daniel Ukwu Leadership Foundation, Comrade Daniel Ukwu, challenged the students

to be eager to learn as well as set their minds for greater attainment that would prepare them for greater tomorrow.

“A lot of people that are doing very well in the society today started with being sound students whether in academics or sports. Try and put your best in all you do today,” Ukwu advised.

Earlier, the Principal of GTC Enugu, Mr Kenneth Ogili, said that the college had continued to contribute its quota in various competitions, adding: “the college is facing challenges of high electricity tariff and cost of fuel”.

“Just recently, our student, Master Chukwuebuka Udoeye, won Gov. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi’s award on Technology and Innovative (both cash and scholarship was awarded) up to university level.

“We won the best exhibitor in the exhibition organised by National Centre for Technology Management (NACETEM) in May 2021 among others.

“Let me not bore you much with our achievements and problems as you need to relax with us and entertain yourselves as you watch our children compete in various sporting activities,” Ogili said.

Certificates and trophies were presented to the various houses for outstanding performance in the competition.

A’Ibom Human Right group moots conciliatory approach to free jailed lawyer

By **ISAAC JOB** (Uyo)

The Akwa Ibom Human Rights Community (AKHRC), has called for a conciliatory approach over Barr. Inibehe Effiong (Esq), jailed for one month by the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, Hon. Justice Ekaette Obot.

The imprisonment of Inibehe Effiong by Akwa Ibom state Chief Judge Justice Obot has generated controversy among lawyers on the appropriateness of the sentence with regard to what transpired in court on that fateful day.

However, the human rights group has advocated for restraint on the matter, saying the case was a sensitive one that needs to be approached with caution so as not to set a bad precedent.

In a statement signed by the National Coordinator of AKHRC, Clifford Thomas, Esq., the group noted that the action of the Chief Judge could threaten the advocacy duty of lawyers.

“We call on all who intend to intervene in this matter, to exercise restraint. This matter is very sensitive, and the best approach we suggest now would be a conciliatory approach.

“There would appear to be rights on all sides, but caution is necessary. Sadly, we feel strongly that advocacy by Lawyers in courts in Akwa Ibom State would be greatly impacted.

“Lawyers may no longer feel very free to do their advocacy freely. A precedent has been set, and human rights

advocates may end up becoming victims of the process. May God help the legal profession,” he stated.

Meanwhile, members of the Akwa Ibom Civic Space, made up of Civil Society Organisations (CSO), Organized Labour, and Students’ Communities have frowned at the imprisonment of Barr. Inibehe Effiong (Esq).

They described the procedure adopted by the Chief Judge, Justice Ekaette Obot in the matter as “vexatious and obnoxious”, saying it runs against the practice of judicial precedents on the matter.

In a joint press statement signed by Harry Udoh, Chairman, Akwa Ibom CSOs Forum; Comrade Ibora

Ibara, Curator, Akwa Ibom Roundtable; and Mr Peace Edem, Akwa Ibom Youth Advocacy Cluster, the group said the action portrayed the intolerance nature of those in positions of authority.

They called for the intervention of the National Judicial Council (NJC), the human rights community and the public saying if the situation when unchecked, the powers of the court may be used for personal glory.

“The Civic Space, having consulted with sound legal minds, wishes to state with due respect to His Lordship, the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State that the procedure adopted in committing the learned counsel

to jail for contempt is vexatious and obnoxious to all tenets of justice and liberty.

“This development is indeed sad feedback on the worsening national scenario of intolerance of State actors to dissenting opinions of citizens. That the Chief Curator in the hallowed temple of justice would for whatsoever reason, fail to keep the arms of justice on equal balance for all citizens, is most unacceptable in a democratic society.

“Our people may become prisoners wherever they may be, by the mere word or touch of an agent of State, if our jurisprudence becomes such where the powers of the court are deployed for personal glory,” they stated.