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N250 **Weekend**

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Okowa



Ibori



Sheriff



Edebie

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Why Okowa, Ibori feud lingers

By **OBAB SYLVA** and
GABRIEL ELOZINO (Asaba)

The battle for the soul of Delta State between incumbent Governor Ifeanyi Okowa and his political benefactor and former governor of the state, James Ibori has all the trappings and ingredients of self-deceit and betrayal. Both men have their battle axe in Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori and Olorogun David Edegbie for Okowa and Ibori respectively and have vowed not to back down even if it means tearing the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in the state to shreds and allowing the major opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) take the day.

The Trumpet previously reported that the crisis began when Okowa moved against the preferred candidate of his supposed political leader, Ibori in the run-up to the party's 2022 primary in the State. Ibori had anointed seasoned financial administrator, David Edegbie, who was his commissioner of finance in his first term as a potential successor of Okowa. However, Okowa, who was bent on building a political structure of his own, vehemently resisted the much-taunted fearsome political force of Ibori by throwing his weight behind Oborevwori.

The choices of the once political allies, who are now wrestling dirty to claim the soul of the party in the State, have caused a sharp division between members of the PDP with the loyalty of many being tested.

But there seems to be more at stake for the incumbent Governor Okowa, who is yet to settle the dust created by his controversial emergence as the Vice Presidential candidate of the party, than Ibori, who many believe still enjoys the loyalty of the Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, who is the governorship candidate of the APC. Already, there is growing anxiety amongst party faithful of both divides over who flies the PDP flag in the coming days as the battle has moved from political to legal. The matter, which is currently before the Appeal Court, after the Abuja Federal High Court disqualified the nomination of Sheriff Oborevwori and ordered the PDP and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to replace him with

David Edegbie, has left many in limbo.

Many legal experts have questioned INEC's complexity over the matter, following its decision to partially, rather than totally comply with the High Court ruling. Particulars of PDP and its governorship candidate were missing from the INEC's register of governorship candidates in the state, published on the 22nd of July, 2022. Although INEC has come out to clarify that it was only obeying court orders by omitting the name.

The state's Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC Mr Monday Udoh-Tom, said that the PDP in Delta was yet to have a valid candidate for next year's governorship election, adding that there were no details of any candidate for the party. He stated, "We have no particulars of any candidate for the PDP as far as the governorship election is concerned because they (PDP members) are in court. When the matter is determined, we will have the particulars of one of them.

"You will recall that there was a court judgement that disqualified one of them, and he filed for a stay of execution and also appealed the judgement. As a result, we cannot act on the case of the PDP for now until the Appeal Court delivers judgment."

However, to Barrister Erastus Ukorakor (Esq), a rights activist, INEC's total removal of the party from the list was a complete misapplication of what was set out in the judgement. He argued that, since the judgement was not elusive by giving a direct order, what INEC ought to have done was to replace the name of Sheriff Oborevwori with that of David Edegbie or simply ignore and allow Sheriff's name to remain, and then wait for the Appeal Court's decision, rather than engage in partial obedience.

It would be recalled that at the instance of the Abuja Court ruling, there was wide speculation amongst many party stakeholders and opinion leaders in the state, that Okowa had sacrificed Sheriff Oborevwori to get Ibori to support his emergence as Vice Presidential candidate of the party. This position was further heightened when it was alleged that the national body had directed Oborevwori and the State Executive of the party not to institute an appeal against the judgement but rather accept and work for Edegbie.

The Trumpet gathered



Okowa

that National Organizing Secretary of the PDP, Umar Bature, made the position of the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party known during a meeting with party leaders and stakeholders in the state, held at Asaba just a few days after the High Court ruling. But with the last week's re-endorsement of Sheriff Oborevwori by the Delta Political Vanguard (DPV), a body believed to only execute the directives of Okowa and the declaration of the state chairman of the party, Barrister Kingsley Esiso, during a recent mega rally of the party held in Ozoro, that the party will defend its gubernatorial primary that elected Sheriff Oborevwori till the end, the position of Okowa has been made very clear, "he is not going down without a fight."

Speaking exclusively to The Trumpet, a notable chieftain of the PDP in the state, who craves anonymity, absolved Okowa of any wrongdoing by pushing ahead with Sheriff Oborevwori. According to him, contrary to what many have said, that Okowa betrayed Ibori or Okowa is trying to go against any agreement with Ibori, it was Ibori who is actually trying to betray Okowa by still pushing for Edegbie. He said, "personally I feel bad about the way Okowa is being treated. The Edegbie in question, is it not somebody that is pushing him? If Ibori had to ask Edegbie to withdraw that case would it have gone on? The answer is no because Edegbie is counting on the support and structure of Ibori.

"I was a strong supporter of Amori during the primaries, but I know what happened, Amori would not have won that election if not for Okowa's

intervention. I know all that transpired, especially during the primaries. When Ibori's daughter could not win the House of Reps ticket, and the elections was re-scheduled, the same day, Amori's election was to take place, Ibori called Okowa and bargained with him, that he should allow his daughter and Amori to go, then he can have the governorship, provided it's an Urhobo.

"That was the deal, and that was why you saw Sheriff Oborevwori won overwhelmingly in that primary election. Okowa kept his own part of the bargain by delivering Amori and his (Ibori's) daughter. Now you are fighting the man through the back, and you expect him to just give up. Let me tell you, I am a strong member of DC-23 that clamoured for the governorship to come to Urhobo, so whoever becomes governor between Edegbie and Oborevwori, it is DC-23 that wins. We will still be recognized as people that worked for the governorship to come to Urhobo. Okowa has not done anything for me, but I am pained for him. Okowa is a very good person, but the way the Urhobos are trying to treat him, if he had known that he would be treated this way, he would have supported the Ijaws to have it. I know he will be regretting it now."

Another anonymous source, who is a Special Adviser to the Governor of the state, said that Okowa deceived Ibori when the issue of producing a successor came up. According to the source, he said that "a meeting was called by the National Chairman of the party, Sen Iyorchia Ayu with Atiku, Ibori and Okowa in attendance. Okowa was asked to choose either

producing his successor or taking the Vice presidential ticket. Okowa went for producing his successor because he knew that based on the volume of money he had spent on Atiku's campaign and Primaries and his agreement with him, the VP slot was sealed.

"He then deceived Ibori that he was not interested in the VP slot and should be allowed to produce his successor. Immediately after the emergence of Atiku as the standard bearer of the party, Ibori intensified efforts to ensure that he nominates a VP for Atiku, that was when the name of the former governor Emmanuel Uduaghan was on the lips of everyone. Because of this act of deception, Ibori is bent on ensuring that Sheriff does not see the light of the day. I can assure you that if the upper court decides the case in favour of Sheriff, Ibori will pull his weight behind Omo-Agege." He added.

He noted that Okowa, not too sure Atiku will win the presidency, has been advised by his close political

alliance not to make the mistake to trade Sheriff away for a VP slot. The source stressed that this has made the Governor vow that he will do everything within his power to ensure that Sheriff succeeds.

In a related development, Barr. Leberos Osogun while commending the judgement of Justice Taiwo Taiwo which sacked Sheriff, described it as watertight. He stressed that he wondered why PDP will decide to go for a candidate with questionable certificates especially now that it is the turn of the Urhobos.

He noted that in an attempt to correct the issues of multiple names, Sheriff committed a greater blunder with his affidavit, He said "on one face of the documents, which was dated seventh of July, 2011 but was signed by a commissioner for oat in 1979, the same year he claimed he was born. That's not enough, the certificate of FIRS showing payment for stamp duty on the document was issued on the 29th of April 2002. How this is

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ASUP laments Delta salary subvention policy

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), has raised alarm over the salary subvention policy of the Delta State government in the state-owned polytechnics, lamenting that the policy has adverse consequences on tertiary education in the state.

Addressing journalists at a press conference held at Ogwashi-Uku Polytechnic, in Aniocha south local government area of the state, the Zonal Coordinator of ASUP, South-south, Comrade Precious Nwakodo, said the briefing became imperative after several attempts to make the Dr Ifeanyi Okowa-led administration review its position.

Comrade Nwakodo, who also doubles as

the south-east Zonal Coordinator, described the policy as evil and called on the state government to rethink and halt further implementation of the policy in the two state-owned polytechnics.

He stated that they regretted that since the introduction of the policy in April 2022, it has caused delays in the payment of salaries.

"Since the introduction of this policy in April 2022, staff of the institutions now receive salaries two-three weeks into the new month. The economic effects of this on the private lives of these workers who are indigenes of the state as well as their dependents are better imagined.

"This ugly trend has continued to worsen as months pass, management of these institutions are finding it extremely difficult to raise several millions of naira monthly

to augment what the government provides.

"If not checked now, these institutions will start owing staff salaries which may lead to the kind of

situation we have in Abia State Polytechnic, Aba, where staff are owed up to 36 months arrears of salary" Nwakodo, hinted.

It would be recalled that

in April 2022, the State government introduced the salary subvention policy which provides that the management of the Polytechnics contribute

not less than 10 percent of the total monthly wage Bill of all staff in their employment while the government takes care of the other percentage.

Suspected mast vandals, Yobe police command trades word over accusations

By **SURU CHARLES,**
(Damaturu)

No fewer than seven suspects were on Friday paraded by the Yobe state police command for alleged illegal decommissioning of a telecommunication mast.

The State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Dungus Abdulkarim, said the mast in question belongs to the state television.

Briefing media practitioners, at the headquarters of the State CID, the suspect, as stated by him, "were arrested by police detectives of the Dapchi police Division."

"On the 28 July 2022, at about 11.30 hour, detectives from Dapchi divisional

police station, according to him "arrested and brought to CID seven persons who claimed to be hired by a particular company which is named AGN Garun Malam Investment Limited to decommissioned an antenna mast which belongs to Yobe State Television authority."

Giving the names of the suspects as Bello Wanti 52, Abdulminini Jibril, 39, Alhaji Sabiu 40, Saidu Mohammed Bulunkutu 54, Jibril Yakubu 40, Musa Abubakar 20, Habibu Mohammed 30 years, the command, said: "they have commenced an investigation on the seven persons".

According to him, the suspects alleged that the mast was sold to them by the NSCDC and therefore

the police have to investigate to get to the bottom of the matter.

Stressing that "the suspects have said that they bought the masts from Civil Defense" the command said, "they have written to them as part of our investigation to identify their personnel that are involved."

But in a swift reaction, one of the suspects, Bello Wanti, said he is a legitimate businessman who is just a victim of circumstance.

Claiming that he bought four masts in Yobe State located at Dapachi and Gashua, he noted that his men were not aware until after they dismantled the mast when they got information that the mast was initially bought by the Yobe State Government from former NITEL.

"We did not know that the Yobe State Government has bought the mast until after we had dismantled it. But when we got that information, we came ourselves and reported it to the police.

Nobody arrested us. We came ourselves. If this thing were not legally bought, we would have run away from Yobe State but we came and

reported ourselves to the police. We are just victims of circumstance. I don't think when everything is clear but they are making us look like we are thieves," Bello said.

The commandant NSCDC Yobe State Saidu Yakubu Aliyu said he was not aware of what happened at Dapchi nor has he received any correspondence concerning the matter.

Concerning the officer mentioned in the matter, Aliyu said he cannot speak on the officer because he has not reported to the command but stressed that the NSCDC is a disciplined corps that is professional and diligent in doing their job.

Barrister Aliyu Shehu, the counsel to the accused persons, accused the police of disobeying a court order which he obtained from the magistrate courts for his clients to be released on bail or be prosecuted immediately.

Barrister Shehu added that the continued detention of his clients by the police is a breach of the constitution, adding that, "we have filed a motion of notice at the High Court to ensure the compliance of the police to the court order".

Why Okowa, Ibori feud lingers

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possible is better imagined, as it defies all logic.

"With due respect, the court cannot give judicial notice to this. That is one discrepancy in all of this document that he is trying to pull together since the Supreme Court has said that if you have various names just like it happened in the case of the former running

mate to the APC Bayelsa governorship candidate David Lyon. On the other hand, you don't have a situation where the date of birth of the certificate purportedly obtained by the same Sheriff is his date of birth on that certificate is

November 1979. That means the day he was born the same day the commissioner for stamp duty stamped an affidavit that he's going to use to pull his names together and they run for an election. It can only take somebody who is uncoordinated to make all of these mistakes.

"You said you have a certificate and you procured the exam in 1999. And that you sat for the May /June exam 1999 And you were issued the certificate and the date of birth on that certificate is November 1979, but you now went to say no! I was born in June 1963 and your secondary certificate is showing 1979. If you say you were born in 1963. So that means in 1979

you were about 36 years old. We all know that a 36 years old is not allowed to write the May/June examination because it is meant for secondary schools. It is the November /December exam which is called GCE that he can write. It is therefore very clear that in trying to cover up his initial error, he committed even greater errors.

Osogun lamented that with all the intelligent men and women that Urhobo is blessed with, it is a man with questionable certificates that the party is insisting on fielding for governorship.

Meanwhile a former deputy majority leader, Bomadi Legislative Assembly, Hon. Dandy Mulade, has appealed to the leadership of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, in Delta State to save the party from total collapse ahead of the 2023 general elections.

Mulade made the appeal against the backdrop of the internal crisis rocking the party, which arose from the gubernatorial primaries with ensuing court cases and factions.

He noted that with the current sequence of events, the party would face total collapse if the leadership failed to put aside personal interests for the overall wellbeing of the party in the state.

He said: "Today, I cry out with tears calling on

the leadership of our dear party, PDP, in the state to put aside their grievances and personal interests for the sake of the big umbrella to avoid defeat and grace in 2023.

"I also called on the national secretariat of the party to, without delay, intervene to save the party in the state because the situation is getting out of hand with every faction claiming that all is well and no shaking.

"There's is indeed a big shaking in the party and I urge the national secretariat to see Delta State as the party's stronghold in Niger Delta because if it fails in the Big Heart, then the danger is glare in the region.

"I appeal to Gov. Okowa and Chief James Ibori to set aside their differences and interests and settle for a qualified, credible, competent and capable contestant in the governorship primaries for the interest of the party, yes, PDP must act fast before it's too late".

While leaders of the party are making efforts to bring both political blocs together, Okowa has sacked the Delta State Commissioner for Higher Education, Professor Patrick Muoboghare, and replaced him with a new commissioner, Dr Kingsley Ashibogwu.

Muoboghare who is a strong supporter of Edevbie

was recently accused of not supporting Okowa's choice candidate Sheriff. While commending Okowa for the opportunity to serve Muoboghare said: "I have worked with this government for seven years and I cannot complain that I have not been part of this government because I have been part of it for a whole 7 years.

"In the first tenure of Okowa, I was a Consultant on Educational Matters where I was placed actually above commissioner; that's the truth of the matter and for the second tenure I was a commissioner for more than 3 years.

"I cannot say that the man has not done well and I cannot hold a grudge against the governor for that. He kept me for good 7 years; very few persons can survive that. I cannot be angry with the government of Delta State too. I have served 4years as a commissioner in Uduaghan's tenure and in Okowa's first tenure I was a consultant for educational matters and in his second tenure, I served as a commissioner for more than 3years."

It is yet to be seen how the crises rocking the Delta PDP will come to an end. It is even more difficult to understand how the interests of both political blocs will be harnessed to resolve the unending power scuffle.

Edo alerts illegal Taskforce's extortion tactics, unveils whistleblowing platform

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Edo State Government is keen on dealing with extortionists. The State Government has alerted the public to the antics of an illegal task force out to extort unsuspecting members of the public over urban and regional planning infractions in Benin metropolis.

In a statement, Commissioner for Physical Planning, Urban and Regional Development, Isoken Omo, said the state government has established modus operandi and would never collect cash from members of the public, as is the practice of the illegal taskforce.

She said the Ministry has set up a whistleblowing platform for members of the public to report suspicious activities so as to safeguard unsuspecting property owners from fraudsters. The whistleblowing platform can be reached

on: 09150783459.

According to her, "There is an illegal taskforce claiming to be from the Ministry extorting money from unsuspecting people.

"The Edo State Government staff must show a valid government ID card which the public is at liberty to take a photo of. We will also never take cash as the government operates a cashless policy."

She added: "All planning permit/approval transactions must emanate from the issuance of a bill in our office. The public should insist on the issuance of contravention notices where applicable and come to our office for clarifications.

"Please report any officer demanding cash to the Ministry of Physical Planning, Urban and Regional Development Whistle Blowing line: 09150783459. Please be guided."

NPA MD assures improvement in Onne port operations

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**,
Port Harcourt

The Managing Director of Nigeria Ports Authority, (NPA), Mohammed Bello Koko on Friday assured stakeholders in Onne port in Port Harcourt of improvement in all facets of operations in the port.

Bello Koko who spoke while addressing the stakeholders at a meeting held in the conference hall of the NPA, Onne described the port as the future of Nigerian port if the facilities were well harnessed. He called for synergy

among the stakeholders for the benefit of all and to meet the revenue target of the federal government from the port, even as he assured that all identified issues that needed government attention would receive expeditious attention in the 2023 budget.

The managing director frowned at what he described as the increasing cases of detaining containers that have gone through customs clearance inside the port at the exit gate, a development he said is negatively impacting the rating of the nation's ports internationally.

According to the MD, the meeting became necessary to feel the pulse of the stakeholders to elicit feedback from them to ensure optimal utilization of the facilities in the port.

Bello Koko eulogized the Onne Port managing director, Mr Stanley Magaji Yitnoe and his management team for steering the port in the right direction and urged them not to rest on their oars.

In attendance at the meeting were representatives from the customs, Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents, (ANLCA), Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria police, among other stakeholders.

The meeting featured questions and answers which the MD used to clarify issues agitating the minds of stakeholders.



Mohammed Bello Koko

GOC inaugurates projects in 103 Battalion, lauds CO for developmental strides

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**

Maj-Gen Taoreed Lagbaja, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 82 Division of the Nigerian Army has inaugurated two projects meant to improve service delivery within the 103 Battalion, Awkunanaw in Enugu.

The inaugurated projects included a guard house and a block of flats meant for officers' quarters at the Battalion's barrack.

Inaugurating the projects, Lagbaja said that the projects touch the service delivery in terms of security and welfare of the personnel of the Battalion.

The GOC said that the projects were not only well executed, but well furnished with state-of-the-art modern facilities.

According to him, I will want to charge the Commanding Officer (CO) to continue in this trajectory of development strides; while I urge officers that will occupy the flats to maintain them judiciously.

"The Nigerian Army leadership, under the directive of Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt-Gen Faruk Yahaya, is positively disposed to the welfare of personnel.

"The Battalion and its personnel will definitely continue to get its fair share from this welfare trust of the COAS," he said.

Lagbaja urged Nigerians, especially the barrack community, to continue to support Federal Government programmes and the leadership of the army

to continue to provide purposeful and result-oriented leadership.

"I want to especially thank the Commanding Officer as well as other officers and soldiers of the Battalion that have supported in executing these projects.

"I must appreciate the Commanding Officer and personnel of the Battalion for living up to the mandate of internal security duties," he said.

Earlier, the Commanding Officer of the Battalion, Lt-Col Victor Tagwoi, thanked the COAS and the GOC for the various support given to the Battalion leading to its successes in carrying out its mandates.

Tagwoi also commended the GOC for approving the construction of the projects as well as thanked the officers and soldiers of the Battalion for financial and labour assistance to complete the projects.

"We appreciate the GOC for obliging us with the inauguration of these projects even as he is preparing for his redeployment to One Division, Kaduna.

"The Battalion is assuring you that it will continue in all the innovative knowledge and practice we have learnt from you, Sir," he said.

The highlights of the event were a presentation of "Appreciation" plaque to the GOC by the Commanding Officer as well as a group photograph between the GOC and principal officers of the Battalion.

Cowry Asset appoints new directors

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Management of Cowry Asset Limited has announced the appointment of new non-executive directors into the company's board, maintaining that the new appointments are part of efforts to strengthen and deepen its governance standard.

The company appointed co-founder and partner of Primera Africa Legal, an award-winning full-service law firm, Mrs Boma F. Ayomide

Alabi into the board as an independent director.

Alabi also co-founded Sterling Partnership Nigeria and Sterling Partnership England and was a consultant in maritime law, as well as a partner in Cooke Dugan Solicitors and a member of Commonwealth Council of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

A graduate of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology with LLB, she was admitted into the Nigerian Bar after leaving

the Nigerian Law School.

Alabi also bagged an LLB in Maritime Law from the King's College University of London and had held several other positions.

Also appointed to the board is a professor of Economics and Dean, College of Postgraduate Studies at Caleb University, Joseph Segun Ajibola.

He is a fellow of the Institute of Credit Administration of Nigeria, Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) and Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN), among other qualifications and appointments.

The company also appointed Uchenna Joseph Uwaleke, a financial economist and professor of Capital Market at the Nasarawa State University, Keffi, where he is the Head of Banking and Finance Department, as well as director of Quality Assurance.

Managing Director of Annet Integrated Solution Limited, Azubiuke Okonkwo, was also appointed into the board. His experience spans relationship management and marketing operations and financial control. Prior to his appointment, he was Managing Director of Investment One Pen Managers Limited after serving as executive director.

In a statement, the management of the company congratulated the new appointees and expressed confidence that the appointees would bring their wealth of experience and expertise to bear in their new appointment, adding that they will further boost the group's performance and corporate governance.



Azubiuke Okonkwo

Terrorists kill three, injure many, abduct dozens in Katsina

By **JAMES DANJUMA**, Katsina

Suspected terrorists have killed three persons at Dantsauni village in Batagrawa Local Government Area of Katsina state.

Also, terrorists have abducted at least 13 people including women and children, at Natsinata village, in Katsina local government area.

The Dantsauni incident occurred at about 11 am Wednesday morning, with dozens of people said to have been abducted by the ravaging terrorists.

One of the victims, Abdulrahman Abba was killed after he left

the state capital for his farm located in the affected community.

The attack also saw several people sustain injuries, including many that had fled their homes and farmlands when the attack occurred.

When contacted, the spokesperson for the police command in the state, SP Gambo Isah confirmed the incident.

Isah, however, said that the terrorists killed one person and injured two others during the attack.

Also, terrorists at about 9:30 pm on Wednesday abducted 13 people including four married women,

two girls and seven others consisting of boys and men in Natsinata community.

The community is located right beside the 35 Battalion Barracks of the Nigerian Army, and it was learnt the terror-

ists operated without hindrance from security operatives.

A source in the area said the terrorists had gone from house to house and abducted 26 people, but they later set 13 free and went away

with the rest.

The state which has been grappling with security challenges has seen hundreds of people killed or abducted in recent months.

This is in addition to hundreds of farmlands

and dozens of communities that have been abandoned by residents due to the security situation.

SP Gambo Isah was yet to respond to an inquiry on the Natsinata community incident as at the time of this report.

Gunmen abduct 3 children, demand N100m ransom in Ajaokuta

Gunmen have kidnapped three children of an electronic dealer in Ajaokuta local government area of Kogi State.

It was gathered that the incident happened at about 8 PM in Kaduna Estate, Ajaokuta Steel township complex.

According to eyewitness, the fully armed men shot sporadically into the air to scare security agencies and neighbours before kidnapping the three children aged 5, 7 and 10 years.

The incident is coming few days when three policemen and five vigilantes were killed by unidentified gunmen in Jida Bassa, Ajaokuta local government.

A family source who craved anonymity identified the parent of the kidnapped children as Mr Kadiri, an indigene of Edo State.

The source said the gunmen on Thursday morning contacted the family of their victims demanding for N100 Million before they will release the abducted children.

Narrating how the incident happened, the source said "the gunmen came in their numbers fully armed to

the house of Mr Kadiri, our brother that sells television, radio and other electronic devices in the steel township.

"They shot countless times to scare people from coming close. When they could not see their target victim (Kadiri) they decided to pick the three children from the house. As we speak, their whereabouts is unknown. The kidnapers contacted some of our family members and are demanding for N100Million. Where on earth can we raise such amount of money?"

"Here in Ajaokuta, we can no longer sleep with our two eyes close. There is armed robbery and kidnapping everywhere. Recently, we all saw how innocent policemen and vigilantes were killed. Things are already falling apart. Nowhere is safe again".

Meanwhile, residents of Ajaokuta have lamented incessant incidences of armed robbery and kidnapping in the town, saying that they can no longer sleep with their eyes closed.

Policemen on Thursday stormed the popular FFN Market in Ajaokuta, searching for suspected criminals terrorising the areas.



Gov. Admadu Umaru Fintiri

Excitement as Fintiri unveils female running mate

By **SURU CHARLES**, Yola

The joy of the people of Adamawa state, especially women, as noticed by The Trumpet, recently known no bounds, as the state governor, Admadu Umaru Fintiri, unveiled a female as his running mate for the forthcoming general elections.

Unveiling the Vice Chancellor of Adamawa State University, Professor Kaletapwa Farauta, as his running mate for the forthcoming exercise, the decision according to him, has become necessary to give women a sense of belonging.

With this development, the governor who is seeking re-election, will this time around not be carrying his incumbent deputy Crowther Seth.

While breaking his silence on why he decided to go for a female running mate, the choice of Farauta, according to him, was designed to ensure women's participation in politics.

Citing her expertise, bringing her on board as a running mate, he believed, would as well add tremendous value to the campaign of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state.

Admitting that "Farauta's competency and loyalty is exceptional", the Vice Chancellor, as affirmed by him "has been tested severally and proven to be dependable and worthy".

Fintiri who also used the opportunity to beckon the opposition political parties in the state to "join the winning team for the overall interest of our dear Adamawa state" is certain that his party (PDP) will emerge victorious from the polls.

The governor, who also took his time to showered encomiums on his incumbent deputy, whom he described as a loyal deputy governor, vowed to complete the would-soon-to-expire tenure with him.

Aligning his weight

to that of the governor, the state chairman of the party, Barrister Tahir Shehu, also thumbs up the deputy governor, who according to him, made the endorsement of Farauta possible.

Calling on the people of the state to throw their weights in such of Fintiri and Farauta, the party, as made known by him, will not cease from giving women in the state the opportunity to participate actively in politics.

Also on his part, the Pro-chancellor and chairman governing council of the University who doubles as a member of the PDP board of trustees, Alhaji Auwal Tukur described the choice of Farauta as wise, going by her pedigree in the academia.

Visibly elated, Farauta admonished eligible voters especially women who are yet to collect their voter's card, to as a matter of urgency go ahead and collect it.

Some women who bared their minds on the development lauded the efforts of the governor who according to them has not only made Adamawa women proud but the entire women in the northeast and the country at large.

They tasked other governors from the region and in the north as a whole to borrow leaves from Fintiri, by giving women the much-desired attention and opportunities in their state.

The women who were optimistic that Farauta would make them proud vowed to put aside all forms of sentiments and rally around her party to triumph over opposition parties in the elections.

Farauta, as observed by The Trumpet, will no doubt be the first female deputy governor that will emerge from the northern part of the country, if her party eventually come out victorious at the polls come 2023.

Local government is foundation for policy formulation, implementation - Osifo

Dr Isaiah Osifo was a two-time chairman of Ujunwode local government in Edo State, Chief of Staff to former Edo State governor, Prof. Osariemen Osunbor, a public policy consultant and a farmer. In this interview, he lamented how lack of continuity of government policies stunts development in the country, the choice of PDP presidential and vice presidential candidate's party politics and efforts at solving PDP crisis in Edo State. Politics Editor, TUNDE JOSHUA brings excerpts.

Some politicians are into farming, so what about being a politician and a farmer?

Everyone should be a farmer because it will be good for the society. Farming can be taken as a career or an occupation, but I don't think being a politician is an occupation. My farming origin is like a heritage because my parents were teachers and farmers and after retirement, they went into farming full time, my grandparents were farmers too. They were into public policy affairs too so it was more like a family career. My father told me if I want to be an independent man, I should be farming and I have seen the results.

We heard that Malaysia came to Nigeria to take samples of palm fruits and are doing good with what they took from here as a leading palm oil producer globally and we are still where we are.

You were a two-time chairman in Edo State which is government at the grassroots level and with your background what are the investments you made in the agricultural sector while you were in office?

Local government area is the foundation for policy, formulation and implementation. I made sure I did something different from others and I was the first local government chairman to create an agricultural department in the local government area. We are rural councils so I made sure we had a specialized department that addresses agricultural issues, to assist the state government ADP to operationalize agriculture in our field. The local government under my administration had a farm, we had maize farm on a large commercial scale.

Is the farm still functioning?

How will it function, that's the system we have in this country, when the leadership is faulty, there's no continuity and policy. I have listened to the presidential candidates and I have asked them to tell me where they served and made a difference and if they give me an example and what difference they made I'll take them seriously. We had a large maize farm supervised by the agricultural supervisor, new graduates of agric that were employed. It is only the council I worked with that has a full government-owned farm with 100 meters oil plantation farm and the commercial value of this plantation is over 400 million investment worth. I left the council in 2002 and this is 2022, 20 years after and no one has planted one tree in addition to the 15,000 trees I planted. What do they do? The council chairman goes to the office and releases it to those exploring it and they are making money. They don't grow more trees, if I left it at 100 meters, and they are now doing 20, 30 meters then imagine a council that's heading 400-500 hectares of oil production in productive age. They don't need to wait for agricultural revenue. What is the government doing, these things are going into extinction because nobody is



Isaiah Osifo

encouraging agricultural development? We didn't stop there; we are the first Council in Edo State to raise 25,000 oil palm seedlings. I brought it and shared it to the farmers in Edo State free of charge to go and plant in three to four years. They will be making income from it and today they are grateful to me. With this so much knowledge about agriculture, I have been writing papers to the state and federal government that since they have someone that has done something there, they should utilize it but it is a shame that I left the council 20 years ago and we don't have one additional hectare plantation anywhere in the local government.

You're one politician who seems to be very vocal and outspoken but some will argue that it is always against the opposition party. Is it true?

If you're in a political party and that party is in government you have access to the government so you don't need to go to the newspaper to speak against the government because you have access to the government, so what you do is to present your ideas, your criticism, your memo. Right now I belong to the PDP party, I have access to the government so I speak to them and do my documentation for reference purposes so it would be known. I capitalize on the access I have to the government so I express myself to them instead of coming to the TV or media.

You have moved from one party to another, as a member of a party, why not stay with your party and seek ways to resolve issues instead of jumping ships?

We are deceiving ourselves in Nigeria about democracy. We have not started practising democracy. If I am serving a boss and he is not doing well, I don't have the right to leave him? I can't belong to a party where people just believe that the party is now owned by one man who piles names of delegates, puts them on the line and asks them to vote against the right person. Is that democracy? If you violate rules and regulations, people are not bound to stay with you. There is nothing wrong with leaving a party that doesn't follow rules and regulations, a party that doesn't allow one to air his views and when one has left, there's still nothing wrong with coming back when the party has learnt and taken your opinion into consideration. By the time you violate your own party's constitution and ask them to stay with you, it is barbarism. When a party keeps their rules and regulations, they will be a mild movement because nobody has offended you, the system is good and you have not been undermined. I was elected to the council in PDP in 1999 but they started misbehaving and I left, other people left to other parties. When you have been undermined please go to where you can ventilate, it's not a crime.

Still on PDP, the crisis rocking the party, the factional candidates in Edo State, don't you think this will affect the chances of the party in the forthcoming poll?

Of course, it will, it is natural. When you have division in a political party, it will affect their fortunes in the general elections. What is causing the faction is wrong, two cannot be wrong.

What is the leadership of the party doing to settle this issue?

When the leadership is struggling with members or associations that have the tendency to break rules and regulations the leader will have problems. Political party relationships are meant to be leaders relating with the members and members relating with the leaders. The two factions cannot be right, one is wrong and one is right but how do you now know the one that is wrong and right? I believe every party should keep to their rules and regulations. With what the governor has said in the last meeting I hope it will bring a reconciliation committee and it should be able to bring these interests together and reconcile them for the general election so the party can win. Democracy is evolving, you're not bound to one party doing nothing. If one political party can't put their hand together to achieve something, there are other parties. We have 17 political parties. If INEC can do their job to conduct a free and fair election, this noise about the different political parties will be irrelevant. We should forget about parties and look at the credibility of each candidate.

I think we need a reorientation not just for INEC but also the populace?

Yes, Nigerians should rise up without guns or fear and say enough is enough that they want a free and fair election, they should look at the candidates they are voting for and not the party and they should not vote based on party.

Do you think your party PDP has picked the right candidate?

I believe in zoning for fairness and equity. They are credible candidates from the south east but you have to put the demographic into consideration, you have to put the political culture, voting pattern into consideration and that is how PDP got their candidate from the north.

So, this was done all because of winning the election?

It's all about winning the election and doing the right thing. The southeast will be happy to have a northern man who will do the right thing and give them hope that it will be their turn. It will definitely evolve and go to the right person irrespective of where they come from but we are not yet there, and that is why we need a good president to give a structural layout and Atiku is good with restructuring.

What do you have to say about the accusation against Alhaji Atiku Abubakar that he is a wrong choice?

You can't make a wrong choice in two elections in two terms for 8 years. If he was bad he wouldn't have been there to serve for 8 years and after a year you would have seen his character but he wasn't bad. Since 1999 Obasanjo's achievement has not been beaten by anybody, and we are in a democratic government, and in democracy only one man cannot take the credit because it is a collective responsibility. Atiku's government was good, so we want him to build on that foundation and save Nigeria.

Still on the running mate, there were grievances that Wike was to be the running mate to Atiku but he picked governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State.

I didn't speak with the presidential candidate, but what I think is Wike is a fantastic guy, he is a local government man, and Okowa is also good but the difference is that Okowa has an affiliation with the South East. Atiku is a very reasonable man, he felt if he can't pick someone from the South East, he should be able to pick someone who is close to the south-east and Okowa has his right leg in South-South and his left leg in South East which is an advantage for election and representation.

Ahead of the 2023 election, what is your advice for Nigerians and your party?

Nigerians should go out there and tell INEC that they have no choice but to conduct a free and fair election. To my party, I commend them for choosing a candidate who is from the grassroots and has evidence of what he has done, and his certificate.

I want to eradicate poverty as assembly member – Sapere-Obi

Tuebi Sapere-Obi, the chief executive officer of TEOET Global Enterprises, in this interview with AHERHOKE AMOS OKIOMA, bears his mind on why he wants to contest for the Sagbama Constituency 3 of Bayelsa State House of Assembly, why he chooses YPP, his manifesto amongst other issues. Excerpt:

May I meet you, by way of introduction

My name is Tuebi Sapere - Obi. I'm from Elemebiri community in Sagbama LGA of Bayelsa state and my village is under constituency 3 in Sagbama LGA and it is made up of 17 communities.

I'm an entrepreneur, in construction, entertainment, tourism and hospitality. I reside in Yenagoa and also do business here. I'm married to a beautiful wife from Isampo community in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA and we have three children, two boys and a girl. I'm the candidate for YPP in the 2023 general elections.

What informed you of the choice of a political party (YPP) that is relatively unknown?

I believe that the political awareness right now is that the party does matter. It is the personality of the candidate that matters and that is my belief. That is what is going on presently. That's why I said the political climate is getting wider every day, it's not about jumping into one of those big parties or popular parties as the case may be. By the way, there will be no space there. Especially for an upcoming politician picking up the tickets in those parties are not certain except you're called by a Godfather and for me, I wasn't called. I just think it's time to look into the business of leadership because of how it affects my regular business here, so I made the decision of contesting. I'm very certain about contesting. It's not about losing at the primary level and commending yourself. We have 18 political parties registered, why stress yourself into a place you will not pick a ticket? I was so confident in myself and the way I started it and how far I have gone. I started over 3 years ago, I've been going from community to community telling them of my ambition of contesting and some would ask me "why come this early?" The election is still far away and I'll simply reply that I can't come 4 - 5 months or even one year to the time and then bring posters, caps, t-shirts and start sharing and expect to win when I'm not well known to them. So because of that, I needed to start very early, I've gone to all 17 communities over a year ago to tell them that I'm contesting. And also, while I was talking to them I hadn't even joined any political party then, but I felt like it wasn't a problem. I told them that when the time comes, I'd get a political party. Why I started early is because I wanted them to look at me and analyse me, if I'm fit to be given such responsibility to go and represent the constituency, and if they find me worthy I don't have to worry about the political party because it's the people that vote, not the political party. If they accept me then they'd definitely accept the political party that I present to them.

What do your constituents expect from you?

The first thing that should be considered is what you are going to do, not how much you have in your wallet. I'm doing it with the little resources available and maybe the people who believe in the project would support me. So I'm not interested in those big political parties. I cannot beat my chest and say I'm willing to spend millions to secure a party ticket when some parties give me for as low as 200 - 400,000 thousand thereabout, that's what I told them and they were

comfortable with it. I also went further to present the kind of blueprint of empowerment I intend to deliver if I find my way into the assembly.

One thing that spurred me to say I want to contest is the high rate of poverty and unemployment, there is hunger everywhere and I think it's a deliberate act of the political class to keep the masses at that level where they will always be begging for food. So when the election comes they just give a little change and get the people to vote for them. It hurts a lot, I've noticed over the years I've seen these things happen.

If elected, I will keep to my word and eradicate poverty in our communities. I kept focusing on the communities that I'd create employment and all that.

What added value do you intend to bring to change the narratives as a lawmaker?

Right now the world is facing e-commerce, while this is happening people are predicting that very soon agriculture will take the lead.

Looking at agriculture, the ordinary Ijaw man is born a farmer. Growing up, you already know how to farm. And then you find out that that's the major source of survival. They'll use that money to train you, though subsistence, but they'll use that money to put food on the table for themselves and the children. We've been surviving like this for years and now it's time to look into commercial farming. I told them that should I find my way there, we'd go into mechanised agriculture.

What I mean is that the 17 communities would choose whatever kind of farming they wish to have in their community, I've found out that different communities are good at different types of farming systems. I want to use my community, Elemebiri, as an example, from when I was a child I knew that in my community we have a lot of pepper and Okra. Until today, this is still the major type of farming in my community. Though it's a quarterly thing, it has helped so many people build houses and send their children to school.

While going around then, we picked voluntary coordinators that believed in the project we were about to embark on and decided to come to join us on that level and I was able to register a foundation.

So we had two coordinators each from the 17 communities. So whatever type of farming the community chooses, the community will provide us with the land, a land big enough to give us what we're looking for. Then going further, the constituency, in collaboration with me will see how we can clear the land, prepare the land and prepare a nursery bed for the pepper before the time for planting. And the foundation will be on ground to support them at every level until harvest season. When they start coming we will have money on ground to buy the things we're lacking. People come from Onitsha to my village to buy pepper and okra and they determine and fix the prices of these commodities, but what we intend to do is to build a farmhouse. Pepper is a perishable commodity, so for instance, if we end up not selling all the baskets of pepper we could take them back to the farmhouse, dry them, grind them and seal them. So those peppers can now go to the markets outside my community. This will now create jobs because from people that will farm in the village to those who would grind, package and sell the commodities all



Tuebi Sapere-Obi

of them would be put under salaries. So we'll get the account details of these persons working in the farm, they'd be in the village and get the usual or regular alerts at the end of every month. We will set up the accounting/management teams that would run a particular farm and these are people from that community and we will only oversee as a foundation. At the end of the day money realized from the farm would be used to develop that community. The money may be put into other sectors, maybe health, ICT and infrastructures as the case may be because there is money. So we choose to get computers in the schools, so the children in those communities would see and know how to use computers. We can also decide to put the money into education, you know, buy textbooks from the money realized.

Why we're doing this is because I believe the money in the assembly is not big enough to start sharing or to say you want to take care of everything and that is why I'm coming up with ways these communities can develop ways of making their own money. When the so-called constituency money comes, we would now know what to use it for, allow me to say capital project or thereabout. But we will not just fold our hands and wait for them to pay for the constituency projects and then use the money to pay and that is all. So it's the same thing for communities that want to farm cassava. We fix the lands, buy the cassava stems and watch them do the farm. We will build a farmhouse close to the cassava where they will harvest, get a grinding machine to grind these cassavas and fry them, and so Garri bags would just be coming out from the community which they will take to the market to also sell and generate money for the community. So we're looking towards self-reliance and sustenance of these communities before thinking of some other kind of projects.

The basic thing about the assembly is that it's law making, it's to go and make laws. And oversight functions.

But it won't be easy for a single member out of the 24 to make laws that will stand, so we would also know how to lobby our colleagues to make sure that good laws are passed. Because I intend to widen this whole idea, for it to be passed as a law at the assembly level. It will get to the point where the government would vote for a particular figure for this purpose. We know what food is, if you can survive and sustain yourself, you will now look upwards and say okay let me now sell. We're looking forward to even selling food to a neighbouring state and even exporting pepper because we have large amounts of pepper, a nice aroma that we are ready to export, you know, in pepper farming. Likewise, every other product in the seventeen communities. Seventeen different products from seventeen different communities, you know what it is. There would be enough food to eat and you wouldn't just sell everything and besides, it is in your community.

Another thing I'm looking into is paying WAEC fees for very brilliant students or those that don't have the privilege to go to school. We're looking into different aspects with the little resources like I said, I'm a business man and I've been surviving in business for some time now, over six years and I started from nowhere but I have over 30 staff now, you know from the little resources coming in I've been able to manage this whole system and gone into other projects so I feel that if we find our way to the assembly to represent these people bringing like minds together, people who are willing and genuine enough and have the people at heart to work together as young people, yes we can work together deliver something different from what we have been seeing in the assembly level.

You also asked about why I chose YPP, this is because YPP is a small party, it's not about the size of the vehicle that matters, it's the capacity of the vehicle. What I'm trying to say is that YPP is a small party but it's like a family thing where everybody understands the projects in front of us and everybody is working towards them. Nobody dictates and expects others to bend, but you have the right to make suggestions, bring your opinions to the table and people will understand. The meaning of YPP is Young Progressive Party, I see us as young people that want to make a change, young people that are tired of the usual. We want to make a genuine change. That's why I chose YPP, I'm sure I'd get the ticket to make this change and not end up in the primary.

The leadership of YPP in the state and national level have also made it easy for everybody to see this as a project we should all do together to succeed. YPP also slashed the price of the form for youths below 40 years, they gave me the form for half the price.

As you go about your consultations, what has been the reception from these 17 communities so far?

Consultation is still ongoing because we haven't started campaigning yet, for me it doesn't end like I said we started three years ago and we're still doing consultation. The constituency is big, we have to meet with the high and low to share ideas.

So far, the consultations have been going very well. I see myself as what I'll call "the ordinary man". What I thought before going into

consultation was that it was going to be very difficult and tedious because there was no money to throw about. We go as ordinary people to these communities, though we don't have money they welcome us and listen to us attentively. The people in the grassroots are not fools, they understand when people are lying or telling the truth. When we talk to them we tell them very practical things that they can do but haven't been given the opportunity. We make them understand that leadership is not for any set of people called politicians. Leadership is for anybody who understands how to do things properly. A leader is a person who understands that once he's given a task, it's to get it done immediately. So they too can be leaders. I told them that I'm looking at how I could come down home so that I'll be involved in this process because aside from being an assembly member and getting good salaries, we need to be at the grassroots. It's not always about sending people over there and ask them for results, they could tell you that everything is fine while it isn't. I have a business where I have up to 30 staff, but when it's time to clear grass you'll see me holding the cutlass, you wouldn't even know that I'm the owner of the business. Whenever the leader gets involved in the job everybody will be doing the job like a personal thing because they find the leader doing it with them. These are a few things I tell them that make them happy. And then, for the elite class they would tell you that that's how politics should be, most of them know the proper thing to do but it's just that they haven't seen a person who they would trust down there and deliver to their taste. So we've been able to talk with them and make them put us in a position where we are at an advantage because we're not the governor's candidate or Abuja candidate, but I tell them that they sitting down there are my godfathers. My party is YPP, what is YPP without the people? If they believe in the project and also believe in me, they should vote for me when the time comes.

So far the consultation has been going quite well, the people are happy to meet us especially because it's the first time that they're being involved in a thing like this.

I'm very confident coupled with INEC's new development about the newly introduced machines, I would say that is one of the happiest things happening to me since I started this project, I didn't even know that it'll come. This machine has made me believe that all the done PVCs are waste now. As there would be no room for ballot snatching and rigging. All the real voters would not just want to play with their votes. I've been encouraging people to go and register and obtain their PVCs and get ready to vote and protect their votes.

Finally, what is your advice to your constituency?

My advice to the people in my constituency is that they should register and get their PVCs and they should vote and make sure their votes count. Make sure everything goes smoothly, free and fair. They should try to capture any irregularities such as people coming to the pooling units with money to buy votes. They should take down all that information.

I'm very confident I'm going to win and the people are also confident in us as this time around it is not going to be business as usual.

Gunmen abduct traditional ruler, three others in Ondo, as police vow to rescue victims

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Unknown gunmen suspected to be kidnapers have abducted the traditional head of Iku Quarter, the Oniku of Iku Quarters in Ikare Akoko, headquarters of Akoko North-East Local Government Area of Ondo State, High Chief Mukaila Bello, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Hon. Adeniran Adeyemo and two other indigenes of the town.

The other two kidnapped were the former House of Assembly candidate for Akoko North-East Constituency, Yèyè Gbafinro and a community leader, Bashiru Adekile.

The Trumpet gathered that the victims were kidnapped on Thursday night along the Ago Panu axis on the Owo-Ikare Highway while on their way

to Ikare-Akoko from Akure, the state capital.

The victim's driver who is currently receiving treatment at an undisclosed medical centre in Owo was also matcheted by the gunmen. As of the time of filing this report, the kidnapers had not contacted the victim's families for any ransom.

Meanwhile, the Ondo State Police Command has assured that the kidnapped traditional head and three others who were abducted on Thursday around Ago Yeye, Along Owo/Ikare road in a Toyota Corolla Car, Reg. No. KAK 818 AE would be rescued uninjured.

In a statement by the Ondo State Police Public Relations Officer, Funmi Odunlami in Akure said police, local hunters and vigilantes in the area are combing the forest to rescue the victims and arrest

the perpetrators.

The statement reads: "The Police on 4/8/2022 received a distress call that at about 6:30 pm around AGO YEYE, ALONG OWO/IKARE Road, gunmen shot at one TOYOTA COROLLA CAR, REG. NO. KAK 818 AE, while in mo-

tion, the bullet hit the driver on the head and the vehicle came to a halt.

"The other occupants numbering about 4 (identities unknown) were whisked into the bush while the driver was abandoned.

"The police have recovered

the vehicle while the driver was taken to the hospital.

"The driver is currently in a stable condition while the police, local hunters and vigilantes in the area are combing the bush for the rescue of the victims and arrest of the assailants."



Bashiru Adekile

Overhaul security architecture, Delta monarchs tell FG

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Abuja

The council of traditional rulers in Delta State have called on the federal government to overhaul the security architecture in the country to curb the heightened state of insecurity.

The monarchs made this call during the council's monthly meeting in Asaba, the state capital.

According to the monarch in a four-point communique issued at the end of the meeting, the federal government should intensify efforts to nip the spate of banditry and insurgency in the country in the bud.

In a statement by Luke Kalanama VIII, Pere of Akugbene Mien, who is the first vice chair-

man of the council stressed that the council were perturbed by the incessant fiendish attacks that put the life of the citizens at risk.

The monarchs who also condemned the recent killing of three police officers in Okpanam, calling on the Nigeria Police to fish out the perpetrators, tasked the traditional institution to be vigilant to checkmate any impending breakdown of law and order within their institutional boundaries.

With Luke Kalanama VIII, who presided over the meeting, are the second vice chairman and Obi of Ubulu Uno, Agbogidi Henry Kikachukwu I and the immediate past chairman of the council, Dr Emmanuel Efeizomor II, Kalanama VIII.



Pere of Akugbene Mien

Monarch to revive traditional activities neglected, abandoned

•Chides FG for neglect of traditional institutions

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Abuja

A traditional ruler in Ondo State, Oba Pius Akande has promised his people that he will revive all the forgotten traditional activities in the community.

Oba Akande, who is the monarch of Oka-Odo Akoko in Akoko South-West Local Government Area of Ondo State, said that since the throne was ceded in 1904, most of the activities have been abandoned.

The monarch in his statement, during his second coronation anniversary, said his reign on the throne will ensure all religions are given the room to operate freely in the community.

However, Oba Akande chided the federal government for neglecting the traditional institutions in the nation adding that if they could mimic Ondo State Governor, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu SAN, the institution would be much better.

"We are happy. I have to fasten my belt to bring development to my people. The Federal

Government is not performing as regards traditional rulers," the Oka-Odo Akoko monarch said. "If we have somebody like Governor Akeredolu in the Federal Government, it would be better. The government at the central level is not doing well. Money is there but the Federal Government has refused to release the money.

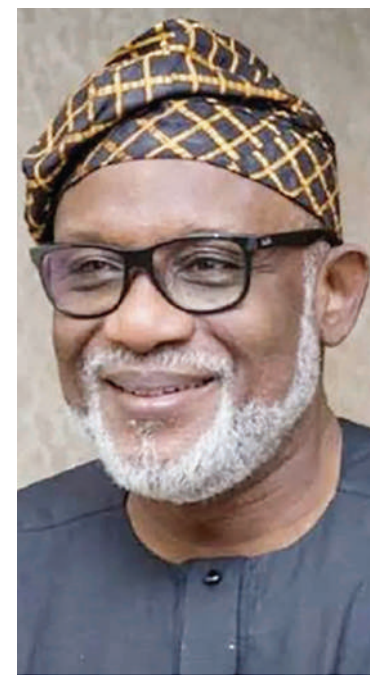
"We have been neglected for a long time. Most of the (traditional) things we have been doing have been neglected. "We just had the throne that was taken from us since 1904. Most of the things we were doing before have been abandoned. We are trying to resurrect them and bring them back.

"I have nothing against masquerade, I have nothing against Christianity, I have nothing against Muslims. All religions will be allowed in my community," Oba Akande stated.

Speaking on the spate of insecurity in the country, the monarch said he was in support of the creation of state policing to

curb the insecurity excesses and also provide effective security.

The community, which also celebrated the new yam festival with the coronation anniversary, resulted in Oba Akande and the people walking to the Okunre shrine to offer thanks for the bumper harvest.



Gov. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu



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7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
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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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11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72	
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Page 5 (Full Page)	1,064,000.00	1,143,800.00	2x6 Under Mast Head	3,990,000.00	4,289,250.00
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IGP warns impostors, fraudsters as Police Academy announces admission

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

The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, has warned all impostors, fraudsters, and other criminal elements who usually take advantage of application processes to defraud innocent and unsuspecting members of the public, saying that anyone found wanting would be arrested and prosecuted.

IGP Baba gave the warning following the commencement of application into the Nigeria Police Force 9th Regular Course Cadet Degree Programme.

The NPF Boss assured members of the public and all applicants that the process will be conducted in the best tradition of transparency and accountability. He advised applicants to be wary of online impostors, scammers, and other criminal elements that would want to defraud them of their hard-earned money.

While announcing the opening of the application process, Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa

Adejobi, in a statement on Thursday said interested and qualified Nigerians are invited to register online for admission into the 9th Regular Course Cadet Degree Programme.

"The online registration process will run for a period of six (6) weeks (from August 1st to September 12, 2022) availing both male and female Nigerians of good character the opportunity of serving the fatherland," Adejobi stated.

According to him, the requirements for admission into the Academy include that the applicants must be a Nigerian citizen by birth and possess National Identity Number (NIN), score not less than 180 marks in the 2022 JAMB, and must have selected the Nigeria Police Academy as the institution of first choice.

He further added that the candidate must possess a minimum of 6 credits in not more than 2 sittings in WAEC/NECO with a credit pass in Mathematics and English and must be between 17 - 22 years by 31st October 2022.

He said being medically, physically, and psychologically fit, as well



IGP Alkali Baba

as not less than 1.67m tall for males and 1.64m for females are part of the requirements for all applicants.

According to Adejobi, all male applicants must have not less than 86cm (34 inches) expanded chest measurement while their female counterparts must not be married or pregnant at the time of admission.

While noting that all applicants must have a valid

email address and phone number, he added that SSCE (WAEC/NECO) Statements of Results or certificates before 2017 will not be accepted.

"The method of application is virtual. All interested applicants who meet the criteria above are advised to visit the Academy's website: <https://www.polac.edu.ng>, and generate a Remita Retrieval Reference (RRR) code which

would be used to make payment of a non-refundable fee of five thousand Naira only (N5,000) through any commercial bank branch in Nigeria," he noted.

The Force spokesperson said that successful payment will open up a form that applicants must fill and upload scanned copies of their results, birth certificate, and state of origin certificate.

"Thereafter, applicants are required to print out completed online forms and guarantor forms to be filled and submitted at designated centres nationwide. Automated physical screening exercise will hold at the seventeen (17) zonal commands headquarters from 19th to 25th September 2022.

"Successful candidates will participate in a Computer Based Test (CBT) and a subsequent Automated Medical Screening Exercise prior to Final Selection of candidates who will undergo a 5-year academic and police training leading to a Bachelors' Degree and commissioning into the Nigeria Police Force as Assistant Superintendent of Police II," he added.

Responding to the US Senators, Ishaq Akintola, Director of MURIC, said on Thursday at a media briefing in Lagos that no fewer than 32,000 Muslims have been killed in the country within three years.

MURIC counters US Senators' claim on Christian persecution in Nigeria

■ Says 32,000 Muslims killed in 3 years

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

The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) has reacted to the claim of five US Senators over alleged Christian persecution in Nigeria, saying about 32,000 Muslims were killed within three years (2015 - 2018) in the country.

The US Senators include Josh Hawley, Marco Rubio, Mike Braun, James Inhofe, and Tom Cotton.

The Senators, while citing the attack on St Francis Catholic Church in Owo, Ondo State, and the lynching of Deborah Samuel, a female student of Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto State, said in a letter written to Antony Blinken, US Secretary of State, to re-designate Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC), noting that there is no "demonstrable improvement in the country's religious freedom conditions".

In December 2020, the US listed Nigeria among the countries blacklisted for "violating religious freedom" under the CPC designation.

In November 2021, however, Nigeria was removed from the list, thus the request of the Senators.

Responding to the US Senators, Ishaq Akintola, Director of MURIC, said on Thursday at a media briefing in Lagos that no fewer than 32,000 Muslims have been killed in the country within three years.

Akintola accused the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) of claiming that only Christians are being killed in Nigeria and of lobbying US politicians until the five senators wrote to Blinken.

He said the claim that the Federal Government of Nigeria is failing to protect the religious freedom of Christian citizens is a "shameless attempt to overturn the facts of history", stating that millions of Muslims have faced harassment in southern Nigeria.

"Boko Haram, in particular, has killed, maimed, and displaced more Muslims than Christians, more Muslim clerics and more Muslim traditional rulers have been killed or kidnapped than Christians.

"Most importantly, more Muslim majority states are under siege by these terrorists than Christian majority states while more Nigerian Muslims have been impoverished by insecurity than Christians. Insecurity in Nigeria has had a greater impact on Muslims than Christians but our Christian neighbours are standing history on its head.

"The US should not encourage Nigerian Christians who are entangled in a cobweb of entitlement syndrome. Christian leaders are taking advantage of the precarious security situation in Nigeria which has been compounded by the Libya factor," he said.

Akintola challenged the US Senators to provide the source of their claim that 4,000 Christians were killed in Nigeria as of 2021, adding that Christian leaders are simply capitalising on the enormity of the security challenges facing Nigeria.

Army confirms policeman beaten to death by its personnel in Lagos

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

The Nigerian Army has confirmed that some of its personnel on Wednesday beat a police officer to death in Ojo area of Lagos State.

It was gathered that the soldiers numbering about thirty, were reported to have whisked two policemen who were working as traffic wardens to their barracks while a third officer managed to escape from being forcefully taken.

A source who narrated the ordeal claimed that the three police officers stopped the lane through which the soldiers were driving in a Coaster bus that was still behind unknowingly to the police officers while controlling the flow of traffic to allow other road users on the other lane.

He said the soldiers got infuriated and insisted on taking one way when an argument ensued.

The source said the soldiers pounced on the policemen and beat them to a pulp, noting that afterwards, they forcefully took two of the policemen to their barracks where the beating continued.

The source further said when the soldiers noticed that the abducted policemen had become unconscious, they decided to take them to their hospital at the cantonment.

However, one of the policemen, Inspector Monday Orube, unfortunately, gave up the ghost on Thursday afternoon.

Another source further disclosed that the soldiers who were going to their cantonment in a Coastal bus, were stopped by the policemen and they got angry and asked why civilians

will be allowed to pass before them.

"One of them was unconscious and they were both taken to their hospital," the source said.

"The officers were kidnapped while their rifles which included two AK-47, with over seventy rounds of ammunition were in the custody of the soldiers since Wednesday when the incident happened," he said.

It was gathered that the soldiers involved in this unlawful act were said to be among the lowest in rank and had only spent four years in service while the policemen are senior officers with over twenty years in service.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Lagos State Command, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, while confirming the incident said, "It is true that an incident occurred between our officers and some

soldiers numbering up to thirty on Wednesday around Ojo area of the state."

He, however, said that the Command and the Army are working together to resolve the issue.

Reacting to the incident, Major Olaniyi Osoba, Acting Deputy Director of Public Relations of 81 Division, in a statement on Friday said the Division is already in touch with the Lagos State Police Command with a view to resolving the matter.

Osoba said the incident was regrettable while noting that the Division has instituted a Board of Inquiry to unravel the circumstances surrounding it.

He assured that anyone found wanting would be dealt with in accordance with the Division's zero tolerance for any misconduct.

"The attention of the 81 Division Nigerian Army has

Shake up in NAF over insecurity, senior officers redeployed

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

In a bid to reposition the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) to effectively tackle the menace of terrorism and general insecurity bedevilling the country, the Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Oladayo Amao has approved the immediate appointment and redeployment of new Branch Chiefs, Air Officers Commanding (AOCs) and other senior officers.

Air Marshal Amao reminded the newly appointed and redeployed senior officers of the need to continually seek effective and efficient means of deploying the

resources at their disposal in line with the reviewed NAF counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategy.

He also charged them to be proactive and synergize with sister services towards eliminating the threats particularly posed by terrorists in the country.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed and redeployed senior officers are expected to assume their new offices on or before Friday, 5 August 2022.

Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, Director of Public Relations and Information, announced the appointment and redeployment in a statement on Thursday.

According to Gabkwet, the

redemption comes 48 hours after Amao directed operational and air component commanders to maximise the deployment of firepower against terrorists and other criminal elements.

"Among the newly appointed Branch Chiefs are Air Vice Marshal, AVM, Jackson Yusuf, formerly Chief of Training and Operations, CTOP, who is now the Chief of Policy and Plans, COPP, Headquarters NAF, HQ NAF, Abuja; AVM Oluwafemi Ogunmola, former Director of Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance now Chief of Communications Information Systems, CCIS; AVM Aliyu Bello, former Chief of Standards

and Evaluation, COSE, is now redeployed as the CTOP, Abuja while AVM Nkem Aguiyi takes over as the Chief of Air Intelligence, CAI," he said.

Gabkwet also disclosed that AVM Hassan Abubakar, former AOC Logistics Command is now the Chief of Standards and Evaluation.

"In the same vein, the erstwhile COPP, AVM Charles Ohwo is now the Chief of Defence Transformation and Innovation, Defence Headquarters, DHQ; AVM Abubakar Liman, former CAI is now the Director of Space Utilization; AVM Hycinth Eze, former Group Managing

Director, GMD, NAF Holding Company takes over as Director of Production; AVM Musa Muktar takes over as the GMD NAF Holding Company while AVM Raimi Salami, the erstwhile CCIS is now the Director of Strategy, DHQ," he added.

He said the newly appointed AOCs are "AVM Precious Amadi, AOC Tactical Air Command, TAC, Makurdi; AVM Abubakar Abdulkadir, AOC Special Operations Command, SOC, Bauchi; AVM Nnamdi Ananaba, AOC Air Training Command, ATC, Kaduna while AVM Emmanuel Shobande takes over as AOC Logistics Command, LC, Lagos."

Tribute to Olu Jacobs at 80

On the 11th of July 2022, veteran actor Oludotun Baiyewu Jacobs turned 80 years. Popularly known as Olu Jacobs, news about the accomplished man of theatre and film dominated various news outlets with encomiums from different people. With an acting career spanning over 50 years, Olu Jacobs has achieved what many people can only dream about. Indeed, the history of the Nigerian mega movie industry Nollywood cannot be complete without a mention of his name. Remarkably, he has blazed the trail in his acting career without any taint or disrepute to his name.

At a time when many celebrities, especially in the entertainment industry, are challenged with conjugal instability, Olu Jacobs and his amiable wife Joke Silver have weathered the storm, remaining a closely-knit couple since 1989 when they tied the nuptial knot. In every conceivable way, Olu Jacobs stands tall as an example of a successful life both in public and private spheres. Having touched lives through his acting, providing a source of inspiration for many people, Olu Jacobs deserves to be celebrated by the world and particularly his country of origin Nigeria.

Oludotun Baiyewu Jacobs was born on the 11th day of July 1942 to Egba Alake parents in the present day Ogun State South-West of Nigeria. He spent his formative years in Kano and attended Holy Trinity School Sabon-Gari where he was an active member of the debating and dramatic society. His professional acting inspiration came when he attended the Hubert Ogunde annual concert party held at the prestigious Colonial Hotel in Kano. After that acting, he decided that he was going to become a professional actor and make a career out of it. In the pursuit of his acting career objectives, he went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. Afterwards, he starred in many international TV shows,

films, soap operas and many more. He acted as one of the augurers when Shakespeare's Julius Caesar came on stage at the Royal National Theatre in London. While he grew in popularity and fame for his distinguished acting prowess abroad, he decided to return to Nigeria to contribute to the development of the country's budding film industry. Many people knew him as Inspector Idafa in the popular television series *The Third Eye*. Besides all the shows and TV series he has featured in, he has starred in more than 120 Nollywood films in Nigeria.

Olu Jacobs, the accomplished actor, movie director and theatre practitioner is down in health. Some news outlets have reported that he is down with Dementia with Lewy Bodies

following an open admission of the illness by his wife. In 2021, it was rumoured that he had died but his wife Joke Silva was quick to dispel the rumour, assuring the world that her husband was hale and hearty. However, Joke Silva was criticised for dragging the sickly Olu Jacobs out to attend his 80th birthday bash held at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos. Although many distinguished personalities in the entertainment industry, business, and politics attended the event, some felt that given the actor's frail condition, there was no need to put him through the rigour and stress of a public appearance. Even without making a public appearance, the world and indeed Nigeria will still celebrate the talented man of theatre who has won many awards including the African Movie Academy Award for Best Actor and AMAA Lifetime Achievement Award. Olu and his wife Joke run the Lufodo Academy of Performing Arts, an institute where young, performing artists are trained.

The occasion of Olu Jacob's birthday celebration offers a good opportunity to celebrate some other theatre and film veterans who have made their mark in the entertainment industry in Nigeria. Usman Baba Pategi, popularly known as Samanja is one of such. Incidentally, he was born in the same year as Olu Jacobs. He turned 80 years on the 20th of May 2022. After working for the Northern Broadcasting Corporation in the 1960s, he joined the Nigerian Army as a volunteer youth to fight in the Nigeria/Biafra War serving under the late General Sanni Abacha. While in the army, he rose to the level of a Captain before he retired in 1985. Upon retirement, he went into acting at the FRCN Kaduna and then went on to TV.

Nigerians must learn to celebrate their past heroes, those who have distinguished themselves in different vocations. That way, other people will be encouraged to achieve success and reach the pinnacle of their career.

Happy Birthday Mr Olu Jacobs.



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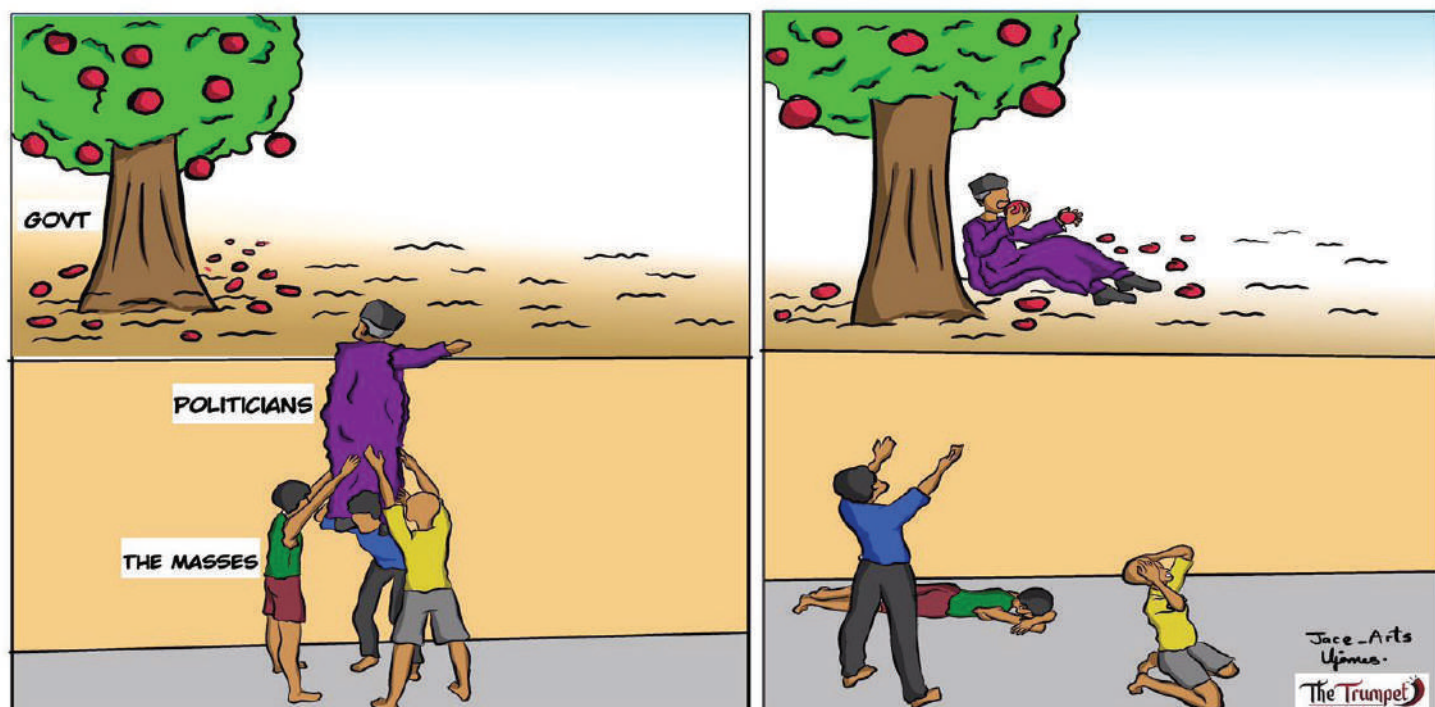
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Settling in locations outside God's will

Then the Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land which I shall tell you" (Genesis 26:2). In many ways, the writings and words of the Holy Bible are cast in poetic language. The instruction of the Lord to Isaac is one of such. Isaac was commanded not to go down but to live in the land where God will show him. We go down if we do things out of the purview of God. We live if we put ourselves in the sight range of God.

Our prayer is that we shall be where God has marked for us as our location. Between Isaac and his father Abraham, there were two famines. Consequently, there is nothing we are undergoing today in terms of hardship and lack or scarcity that the people of God did not undergo in the Bible. However, in all this, our relationship with God matters a lot.

The experiences of human lack and deprivation may lead to desperation. The account of Esau (Genesis 25:29-34) is instructive. Hunger made Esau so weary that his reply to his brother, Jacob's request was "Look I am about to die; so what is this birth right to me?"

Hunger can be 'weaponized.' Why do you think unscrupulous politicians keep their people poor in a state of destitution? In the face of death, shame, failure, and poverty, we naturally become eager and desperate. This state makes us devise human ways that we may figure as the way out. There is nothing wrong with using human reason to solve daily problems that we face. But we must seek the divine face in every situation. Isaac needed to look up to God.

Our human ways should not be outside the divine will of God. Our today's

experience can be

likened to the famine faced by Isaac. In spite of the resources and structures we see everywhere, both human and non-human, we are enmeshed in poverty, unemployment,

dying industries and firms, decaying health and education systems, and even in areas with huge budgetary votes, we are still shamefully in dire need of help. Look at our oil sector, look at our security, etc. People manning these areas cannot complain about the lack of resources and finance. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who builds it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain" (Psalm 127:1). It is not late in the day for us to seek the face of the divine Builder and Watchman in our human affairs.

There are many impediments we encounter in our life's journey. They come in our workplace, family, spouses, children, and businesses. We should strive to be victorious over these challenges and obstacles. Only those who stand up to confront and put these obstacles down are called overcomers and conquerors (Romans 8:37). In our text today and based on the experience of Isaac (Genesis 26:1-33), as a victim of a natural evil – famine - Isaac needed to look up to God. His situation can only be turned around when he could find water. But not water in just any location! The natural place to seek water was Egypt. The Nile was there. But God told him otherwise. In the Bible, Egypt is a metaphor for bondage, slavery, and punishment. Are you living in plenty but in punishment, bondage, and slavery?

Many are in such situations here and



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

outside Nigeria.

God has since delivered His people from Egypt and would not want them to return to this experience again. Isaac became his own barrier. He failed or chose not to follow God's leading. He did not go down to Egypt, but he did not go the way of God either. Isaac went to the land of Gerar. He met Abimelech, the King of the Philistines. But the men of the place 'asked' about his wife (Genesis 26:6). Isaac had to resort to falsehood for the fear of death.

He ran away from one death to another death. The king rescued Isaac from this first disaster.

The story says further that Isaac sowed in this land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold "and the Lord blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous" (Genesis 26:12-13).

Nevertheless, Isaac became an object of envy due to this prosperity and wealth. The same King Abimelech issued Isaac a quit notice. "So the Philistines envied him" (verse 14) "and Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we" (verse 16).

Isaac only got material blessings in a location that was outside the will of God. He had no rest! He opened blocked wells. He had good harvests. His flocks increased. But so were the quantum of envy, hatred, and enemies that surrounded him. At the Valley of Gerer, Isaac opened all the closed wells of Abraham, giving them the same names his father gave them thus: Esek (contention, v. 20); Sitnah (hatred, v. 21), and Rehoboth (there is room, v. 22).

God did not appear to Isaac in any of these places.

We must go to locations where God would appear to us. This will be a place of worship, prayer, and where God gives his people rest. It is in such a place we can chant, "O come, let us worship the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms" (Psalm 95:1-2). God

desires our worship. We cannot be truly blessed where we cannot worship God truly.

God bless and Shalom!

•The Rev'd Dr Karo Ogbinaka, an Anglican priest of the Diocese of Lagos West, lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. He is a member of the editorial board of The Trumpet

Being born again not enough to enter heaven

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ said in the book of John chapter 3 verse 3 that except one is born again, the person cannot see the Kingdom of God talk less of entering it. The book of Matthew chapter 18 verses 1-3 also says that unless one is converted like a little child, the person cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

So, it takes a person being "born again" to see the Kingdom of God and it also takes being converted like a little child to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Let us now look at these issues one after the other.

The first instruction given to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is for those interested in making Heaven and living a godly and prosperous life on earth without sorrow is to be born again. What does it then mean to be born again?

To be born again is to be born a second time in the spirit world. The first birth was when God breathed the breath of life into the nostril of Adam and Adam became a living soul.

Adam had two spirits (two kinds of breath) to keep him alive in the spirit world and on earth. While the normal spirit that keeps the soul of any animal alive kept him alive in the physical world to connect with the earth, the Holy Spirit, the breath of life from God directly was supposed to keep him alive in the spiritual world to relate with God who is a spirit.

Therefore, Adam experienced the first birth of the Spirit of God after God breathed on him the breath of eternal life. The breath of eternal life was however taken away from both him and Eve when they sinned and were driven away from the Garden of Eden.



Dr. Agbodo

And since the first breath of eternal life was taken away from man, the spirit of man did not have access anymore to relate with the Spirit of God, hence the spirit of man was dead in the sight of God.

So, the fallen Adam and his descendants did not have access to God anymore and God was now relating with men through other means like the sending of angels to send messages and instructions. The closest however God related to man before Jesus Christ came into the world was in the time of Moses when God appeared to Moses and talked with him face to face.

But today, once you are born again, you can now have direct access to God Almighty the way Adam had direct access to God in the Garden of Eden.

Therefore, to be born again is not optional but compulsory to inherit the restored

kingdom of God.

Adam was living in the kingdom of God but was driven out after he sinned but today anyone that wants to be in the restored kingdom of God can now have access through Jesus Christ only.

So, what is the process of receiving the breath of God the second time after Adam lost it? Answer: The process is just by accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of the world. The process, therefore, has been made very simple. All anyone who wants this breath of life to become a living soul needs to do is to accept the sacrifice of Christ as the only begotten Son of God who came to restore the fellowship between man and God through His death and resurrection, and declare his or her loyalty to the new kingdom headed by Christ. After this confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, the person also needs to stick to the new ways of the Kingdom by living a holy and righteous life always.

However, as a little child learning to walk may stumble for some time before perfecting the art of walking and even running, the new born in Christ may stumble for some time and fall into sin at times but as soon as he or she masters the tactics of staying holy, he or she will now be admitted to a higher realm of being totally converted, whereby he or she will become truly a new creation in Christ Jesus. So to be born again and be converted

In conclusion, being born again is the first of the processes of getting established in the Kingdom of God. The next in the process is to become converted and be like a little child before Go. As a little child, your business is to remain humble and act on the instructions of God always.

A child, right from the time he or she is born depends solely on the provisions of the parents for sustenance. An infant feeds from the breast milk of the mother until he or she is ripe for regular meals. In the same way, when you are born again and move ahead to be converted, you depend solely on the Word of God in everything you do and your provisions come directly from God, hence you can never be stranded.

It is therefore important to become born again as well as move on to become converted in order to be established in the Kingdom of God.

If you say you are now born again into the Kingdom of God and still take pleasure in sin and the works of the devil, you are not born again. Once you are truly born again according to the commandments of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God will dwell in you and sin will now be smelling bad before you. In fact, you will regret all the years you wasted in life living in sin and sin will become an enemy that must be avoided for you to make good use of your remaining years in life.

All the sufferings today whether as individuals or as a nation are all consequences of sin and the only way out is to regret and repent of your sins, and remain committed to obeying the Word of God always.

If you do a little research on the world today, all nations are either benefiting or suffering from either the past obedience of the Word of God or disobedience to the Word of God. Let us stop here for this week.

God bless us in Jesus Name.

•Pastor ESANEROVO TRINITY AGBODO is a Contributing Editor with The Trumpet Newspaper and can be reached on eagbodo@gmail.com or 08075504012(WhatsApp)

CAN urged to pray for Nigeria unity

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

The Vice-Presidential Candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has urged Christians to pray for “recovery” and unity of the country, and not allow political intrigues to pollute the Church and divide it.

Okowa made the call on Friday when he received leaders of the South-South Zone of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) led by Archbishop Israel Ege at Government House, Asaba.

He said that the time had come for Christians to go on their knees and seek divine direction in the choice of the nation’s leaders that would emerge in 2023 rather than succumb to distraction by politicians.

According to him, it is my prayer that the church will continue to lead us in prayers and we need to be a little cautious as a church.

Okowa said “I am saying this because from the conversations I am beginning to see, I want to be sure that the church will not because of politics divide itself.

“The church in itself must be very prayerful that the will of God be done in 2023. We may have our individual preferences but we must be cautious about the unity of the church.

“Although we are traumatised as Christians we must be careful not to, because of that trauma, take decisions that may not actually be the will of God.”

While attributing the successes of his

administration to the grace of God, the governor pledged to continue to synergize with the church in piloting the affairs of Delta and in his future endeavours.

He advocated for constitutional review to pave the way for devolution of powers, especially giving more powers to states to establish their own police outfit as a way to tackle insecurity, pointing out that the nation was in perilous times.

The governor also stated that it was time for the rebuilding of the nation by giving all segments of the society a sense of belonging in the scheme of things.

He frowned at the continuous stay of tertiary institutions’ students at home due to industrial action by teachers and other workers, emphasizing that drastic steps should be taken to pull the nation out of economic quagmire, worsening insecurity and other heinous crimes taking place in all geopolitical zones of the country.

“There is no doubt that we are very challenged as a nation and it appears that all hope is lost, particularly to the younger ones. But I am one person that believes that all hope is not lost.

“Whatever thing that we have seen in the last seven years, I believe that God has allowed it for a purpose. I believe that there are lessons to be learnt.

“As of today, there is so much insecurity; the economy is going really down beyond what you think and know. Most Nigerians don’t even know how



Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa

huge these challenges are.

“With the things going on now in the Education sector, it’s not what anyone would wish for our country. We need to be very prayerful.

“The church must stay very prayerful and it’s a time for us as a nation to unite and find peace,” he stressed.

Okowa further said that “looking at

the constitution of the security agencies, I think that there is a need to expand it. My principal, the Presidential Candidate of the PDP, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, has always said that it’s not possible to police this nation with the Federal Government police only.

“It is not because of the situation of today but because of the peculiarities of this nation. We need to devolve power and resources to the states to ensure that they can run their own police force.

“If it were so, a lot of things going on at the moment would have been tackled, and so I believe that we need men who have the experience to bring about the change that we need in our nation today.”

Earlier, the leader of the team, Archbishop Israel Ege, had said that they were in Asaba to thank the Governor for his support for Christians in Delta and the South-South and assured him of their support at all times.

He congratulated him on his emergence as the vice presidential candidate of the PDP and for his transformation agenda in Delta and charged him to remain a good ambassador of the church in his political career.

The cleric said that Satan was at war with the church through the use of Boko Haram to kidnap and kill Christians and persecution of believers, and called on Christians to redouble prayers for the nation.

The high point of the event was a special prayer for the Governor, his family, the state and the nation.

Again Oyedepo rains curse of bandit

While the challenge of insecurity perpetrated by bandits in the country continues to linger, anointed servants of God have been talking about it on the pulpit as they have given security advice to their members and prayed for the restoration of safety in the nation. Some of them have also rained curses on them.

The Founder and General Overseer of the Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel), Bishop David Oyedepo has rained curses on bandits in Nigeria and

their sponsors.

In the video, the cleric said: “Bandits, hear me now as you have heard me before; all their gang-ups against the wellbeing of this nation are cursed today. Curse be to all the bandits behind the insecurity in Nigeria and those sponsoring them in the name of Jesus. I curse their roots; it rots today in Jesus’ name”.

Having rained curses on them, he told his members to pray fervently against them and their sponsors so God will visit them with His power.



Bishop David Oyedepo

Be watchful about Islamic infiltration agenda, Apena charges Deltans

By **MONDALE OGBODO**

Deltans have been charged to be cautious about accommodating persons in their homes that might turn out to work in order to actualize the Islamic agenda of a section of the country.

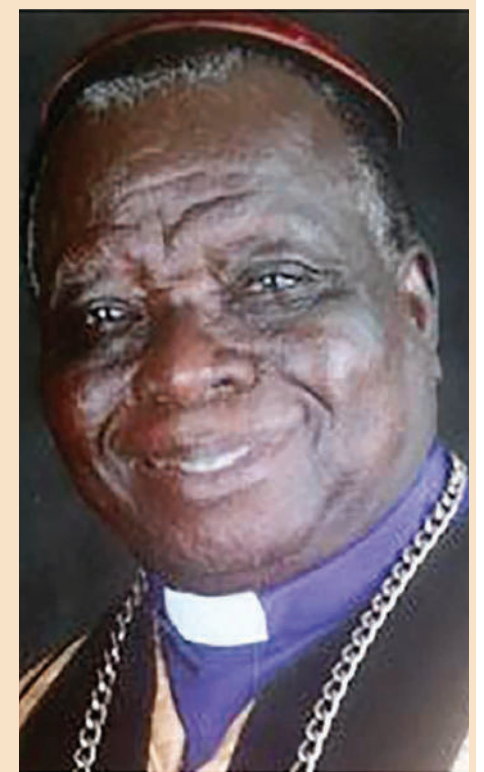
The warning came from a Pentecostal icon and vociferous cleric, Archbishop Christian A.O Apena, when he spoke to the pointer in his residence in Irri, Isoko South Local Government Area, Delta State, yesterday.

The Octogenarian decried what he called an “evil desire to fulanize and Islamize Nigeria”, warning that “unless we are watchful and prayerful we might become victims of the evil agenda”.

“Be careful about who you hire as your day guard, your night guard or your servant. Many of them are out to carry out the Islamization agenda of their paymasters”.

Continuing he said “the other day about 50 Nigerians were killed inside a church in Owo, Ondo state, Nigeria. This is to show you how desperate these people are to actualize their sordid Islamic agenda or are these Christians that killed their fellow Christians inside the church?”

Apena observed that Delta state is culturally, and religiously diverse and



Archbishop Christian A.O Apena

that Deltans love strangers, however, the porous security situation of contemporary times calls for circumspect on who Deltans welcome into their midst stressing that “a stitch in time saves nine”



Rising cost of fish and Nigerians' dilemma

Fish used to be readily available and affordable in time past, as it was considered a necessity for the poor, despite its very nutritious value. While the rich and the middle class prefer cow goat, pig, chicken and turkey meat, the less privileged simply go for fish due to its affordability, but the story has changed, as the price of fish now competes with that of meat in the market. Curiously, while the masses are lamenting that fish has increased beyond their reach, former president Olusegun Obasanjo has canvassed further increase in its price, JOHNMARK UKOKO writes.

As the United Nations (UN), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and their partners are working hard to ensure the availability of fish and investing billions of dollars yearly to ensure availability of fish for the people, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) constantly has met ministers of agriculture to brainstorm on how fish can be made available and more affordable to people globally.

The move stems from their realisation of the importance of fish in the nutritional value and the health of the people, which is why the organisations vote billions of dollars and provide expertise yearly in the fishing industry to increase fish production.

To that effect, they have organised conferences in various cities to further enhance the production of healthy fish for the people and have commissioned several research programmes to boost fish production.

Only last week, the WTO and FAO and their partners converged on Maputo, Mozambique to brainstorm on how best to increase production of fish globally.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government earmarked huge amounts of money to the Ministry of Agriculture and awarded robust funds for fisheries as a major component aimed at further boosting the sector.

But in spite of the huge amounts allocated to fisheries department and government's promises to Nigerians to ensure that the people get affordable fish, it seems achieving the objective is far from reality as the price of fish has more than doubled in the last two years to the extent that most Nigerians are no longer able to afford fish, due to constant increase in its price.

Despite the lamentable increase in the price of fish, a development most Nigerians see as way too expensive, former President Olusegun Obasanjo does not seem to connect with the dilemma of fish consumers.

Recently, the farmers in the South West gathered at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library (OOP) in Abeokuta, Ogun State to address the issues confronting fish farmers in the geopolitical zone.

Speaking at the event, Obasanjo, who was guest of honour and a big farmer himself, bemoaned the difficult times businesses were going through in the country due to the prohibitive cost of diesel.

Obasanjo, who said the price hikes had made enterprises impossible to run, adding that his fish farm was also being negatively impacted, attributed the problem to the cluelessness of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration and cautioned that the rising cost of diesel, as well as the steadily rising cost of fish and other food items could eventually force fish farmers out of business.

He argued that the only way fish farmers could remain in business was to synergise to assure sustainable price of fish, adding: "Farmers can

no longer depend on customers who offer whatever amount that suits them without taking into account the effect of the current economic situation in the country on the production of fish."

He stressed that a kilogram of fish now cost N1,400 to produce due to the present price of diesel, which is above N800 per litre and that the farmers could not afford to sell for less than N1,500 to avoid total loss and generate even a small profit.

Lamenting the hard times facing the industry, he further said: "The price of diesel has increased because of the mismanagement of the country and it is as simple as that. What will happen is that particularly those of us who have to use diesel in producing fish, will completely go bankrupt and when that happens, Nigerians will still have to eat fish."

"Fish production will be out of reach and then people will be producing fish outside Nigeria and dump it in the country and people will go jobless, poor and indigent so, what do we have to do? We must come together to sustain fish production and take care of fish farmers."

Obasanjo, who asked the farmers how many of them were using diesel for producing fish, said: "I am perspiring already. This is the essence of this gathering. We find out that we have come to take our destiny into our hands. We can't continue to produce and be at the mercy of buyers."

"We felt we needed to come around and do something for ourselves. We are starting with the South West and in a matter of time, will be all over the country."

In his presentation, President of the South West Fish Farmers Association, Amo Tunbosun, who said price sustainability remained crucial to the industry, disclosed that Nigeria now imports about 2.6 million metric tons of fish yearly to make up the 3.6 million metric tons needed in the country every year.

Amo alluded to the difficult circumstances Obasanjo highlighted when he said one of the biggest problems facing fish farmers was the constant increase in the price of fish feeds and other inputs used in the production of fish, as well as the insistence of consumers to pay amounts not commensurate with the cost of production.

A cat fish farmer, Mrs Chinyere Nwacukwu told The Trumpet that feeds and other items needed for fish production continue to increase, maintaining that cat fish production does not need diesel and as such, it was not her major concern.

She disclosed that she produces her fish from the dung, blocks and cement to build her fish farms, but that the price of fingerlings and small cat fish have increased, adding: "Cat fish production is very expensive. The price of feeds and cost of labour have increased. To produce big cat fish, one must be ready to feed them well and take good care of the workers."



Former President Olusegun Obasanjo

"Transporting the fish from the farm to the market is also expensive, just as the cost of transporting workers and the fish to the market has consistently increased in recent times."

Speaking in an interview with The Trumpet, another cat fish farmer, Tony Odey said the price of catfish and other items have more than doubled and that as a catfish farmer, he lived by the proceeds of his farming, adding that since the prices of all products have increased, the price of cat fish cannot be left out.

He disclosed that an average sized cat fish that was sold for between N300 and N500 last year ago now goes for between N600 and N1,000 depending on the size and that although he does not use diesel, he uses the money he makes from the cat fish farming to pay his other bills.

"I agree that the price of cat fish has increased, but is there any product, whose price has remained

the same in the last one or two years? The price is further higher because the middle men and women own the market and so, it is difficult for the farmers to take their fish directly to the market."

"I laugh when people say the price of cat fish has risen. Such people think the price they buy the fish at the market is the same price the farmers sell to them. The middlemen do less and make higher profits than us."

"Fish farmers don't have direct access to the consumers. We know how much cat fish is sold in the farms and what it is being sold in the market to the final consumers. Those who do 'point and kill' make more profit with less stress than the farmers who produce the cat fish," he stated.

He said cat fish farmers do not get the needed support from the government, adding that the current inflation rate has impacted the cat fish farming sector and that Obasanjo was right in blaming the Federal Government for failure to refine diesel and other petroleum products in the country.

"Seven years is long enough to have built new refineries to refine diesel and other petroleum products in a major crude oil endowed country. Why has the Federal Government not been able to establish at least one functioning refinery, when it promised to establish one every year?"

If the country has been able to maintain the four old refineries in Warri, Port Harcourt and Kaduna, the story would have been different. If President Buhari has established one refinery every year of his tenure, by now seven new refineries would have been producing diesel not only for Nigeria, but also for other countries and by so doing, Nigeria would have been better and would have generated huge revenue from the Russia-Ukraine war.

Despite Buhari's failings in delivering on his promises, Obasanjo

should also share part of the blame as he had the privilege of leading the country between 1999 and 2007 when crude oil sold for \$100 per barrel, yet he failed to turn around the four refineries in Kaduna, Warri and Port Harcourt.

Nigerians believe that if Obasanjo had built a new refinery during his time as president, things would not have been this bad, while others are of the view that it was wrong for the former president to canvass increase in the price of fish due the hike in diesel price.

They argued that the way things are done in Nigeria, Obasanjo farm in Otta, Ogun State should have a huge depot where petroleum products must have been stored that would last him for decades, insisting that it was not fair for successive administrations to impoverish the Nigerian masses and be denied fish consumption, when they could hardly afford meat and other healthy sources of protein.

"Obasanjo should not be the one to call for hike in the price of fish when the masses have already been over burdened by increases in all items while their salaries have not been increased for years, while millions remain unemployed."

"How can Obasanjo says he was already perspiring? If the likes of Obasanjo can say he was perspiring, what should the Nigerian masses who have been made extremely poor say?"

"Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world, as thousands of our people keep migrating to poverty level and many are losing their jobs, yet they are still pushing on with their lives, so Obasanjo should not rob salt in their injuries, a respondent said."

In all, the months ahead will determine if Nigerians will be priced out of fish as they have suffered from so many injustices in the past. The question now is whether they will be able to afford fish again or simply embrace vegetables.

Naira appreciates after EFCC's raid of parallel market in Lagos

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) raided Bureau De Change (BDCs) operators at various locations in Lagos State over the continued depreciation of the naira, especially in the last two weeks.

The development has partly led to an appreciable increase in the value of the naira to about N630, as against the N710 it reduced to last week.

This prompted most Nigerians to speculate that the naira might exchange for as much as N1,000 to the dollar before the year ends.

Following the development, the Senate summoned Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, to explain the continued free fall of the naira to as much as N710 to \$1.

In one of the raids at Tinubu

Square in Marina, Lagos, the EFCC operators arrested some parallel market operators.

Also, investigation by The Trumpet at Allen Roundabout in Ikeja showed that the value of the naira was gradually stabilising against the dollar, which led to massive losses by the parallel market operators, as they were forced to sell at lower rates, having bought at higher rates.

It was also learnt that most black market operators and BDCs operators were careful to tell foreign exchange buyers the correct rate, as they were unsure if such customers were security operatives.

It would be recalled that following the Senate's threat to summon the CBN governor to explain the free fall of the naira, the apex bank vowed to arrest and prosecute Nigerians, who are

using naira to buy dollars.

Emefiele, who said at the last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in Lagos recently that it was illegal to take money from the banks to buy dollars, cautioned operators that if security agencies arrest anyone doing so, the implication would be grave.

The CBN governor, therefore, urged those illegally exchanging the naira for dollars to stop the practice, adding that the apex bank would conduct investigations and bar those found guilty from doing transactions in Nigeria banks.

"We will investigate the matter to have proof and the operators will not be able to conduct transactions in any Nigerian bank. We will place post no debit (PND) on the accounts of defaulting customers to stop conducting illegal flow of domestic or foreign currencies," Emefiele said.

NDIC cautions against investments with illegal fund managers

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

The Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) has announced that its insurance does not cover investments with illegal fund managers in the country.

It stated this statement issued by the Director Communication and Public Affairs Department, Bashir Nuhu, noting that with the recent increase in investment channels arising from innovative products had created several illegal fund managers.

The NDIC warned that fund managers have been using different platforms in persuading members of the public to invest their funds with them, promising excessive returns on such investments.

"To protect unsuspecting depositors, it has become necessary for the NDIC to continue to sensitise

members of the public on the high risks associated with investing funds with illegal funds managers.

"Accordingly, as the deposit insurer, the NDIC would like to inform members of the public that contrary to claims by some of the fund managers, the corporation does not insure investments with them. The NDIC insures only deposits of financial institutions licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to accept deposits from members of the public.

"All enquiries regarding investment of funds should be addressed to the Director of Communication and Public Affairs Department of the NDIC. Members of the public are also advised to report any entity suspected to be involved in illegal deposit mobilisation to law enforcement agencies," the statement reads.

Nigeria targets 80% reliance on technology by 2025, bans importation of SIMs

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Minister of Communication Technology and Digital Economy, Prof. Ali Pantami, has said that it is not proper for Nigeria to be importing items that could be produced locally in the country.

Speaking in a conference recently in Lagos, he noted that Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards-chips that contain information and enable mobile phone users to connect to their telecommunication operators are produced in Nigeria and therefore, their importation has been banned in the country.

He said: "From now on, all SIM cards sold in Nigeria will have to be produced in the country. The government has banned the importation of SIM cards used in mobile phones.

"The ban was part of the Federal Government's efforts to promote local manufacturing following the launch of a SIM cards factory in

Lagos in June this year."

Stressing that SIM cards are now being manufactured in Nigeria, he stated that the development was a product of the national policy on local content signed by President Muhammadu Buhari.

He added that before the Buhari administration, SIM cards were being imported into the country but today, Nigeria has the capacity to produce SIM cards for the African continent.

It would be recalled that the first SIM card was developed in 1991 by Munich Smart -Card Maker, Giedecke & Devrient, which said the first 300 SIM cards were deployed to the finished wireless network operator radio, but today, SIM cards are ubiquitous, allowing over seven billion devices to connect to cellular networks globally.

Former Minister of Industry, Trade and Investments, Okechukwu Enelamah announced funding support for a local card production firm in Lagos.



Prof. Ali Pantami

OPEC raises Nigeria's production quota as oil price declines

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised Nigeria's crude oil production quota for September 2022 to 1.83 million barrels per day (mbpd), as the price of Brent, the global benchmark for crude oil, dropped on Wednesday, August 3, 2022.

Data obtained from OPEC showed that the 13-member organisation increased Nigeria's oil production quota marginally from 1.826mbpd in August to 1.83mbpd in September.

This followed as industry figures sighted in Abuja indicated a drop in the cost of crude oil, as Brent fell by 2.36 per cent, shedding \$2.37 to close at \$98.17 per barrel as of 5:10 p.m.

It was also observed that the price of crude oil grades in the OPEC basket dropped e, losing \$1.94 or 1.82 per cent to close at \$104.86 per barrel at 5:13 p.m., just as oil prices have stayed above \$100 per barrel for months due to several industry concerns such as the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, Nigeria has not benefited much from the price increase because of its persistent inability to meet its monthly oil

production quota approved by OPEC.

For instance, figures obtained from OPEC showed that while the OPEC quota for Nigeria in June 2022 was 1.772mbpd, the country could only produce 1.158mbpd, but the country's production in June was, however, higher than its production in May 2022 by 134mbpd.

The *Trumpet* learnt that Nigeria's oil production in May 2022 amounted to 1.024mbpd, but increased to 1.158mbpd in June, although far lower than the 1.772mbpd production quota by OPEC.

Meanwhile, the organisation stated that the decision on the latest crude oil production quota for September 2022 was made during the 31st OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting.

"The meeting noted the dynamic and rapidly evolving oil market fundamentals, necessitating continuous assessment of market conditions. It pointed out that the limited availability of excess capacity necessitates using it with caution in response to severe supply disruptions," OPEC stated in its report.

It added that the meeting noted that chronic underinvestment in

the oil sector has reduced excess capacities along the value chain in the upstream, midstream and downstream segments.

"It highlighted with particular concern that insufficient investment into the upstream sector will impact the availability of adequate supply in a timely manner to meet growing demand beyond 2023 from non-participating non-OPEC oil producing countries, some OPEC member countries and participating non-OPEC oil producing nations."

The organisation further said the Declaration of Cooperation on conformity had averaged 130 per cent since May 2020, supported by voluntary contributions of some participating countries.

Stressing the value and importance of maintaining consensus as essential to OPEC's cohesion and participating in non-OPEC oil producing countries and in view of the latest oil market fundamentals, the participating countries reached some decisions.

They decided to reaffirm the decision of the 10th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting held on April 12, 2020, and further endorsed it in subsequent meetings, including the 19th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting of July 18, 2021.

Seplat advocates just energy transition for Africa

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Seplat Energy Plc has said its greatest business opportunities ahead will remain the supply of the right mix of energy to support Nigeria's growth and development in all sectors of the economy.

In doing so, the company said it remained committed to making positive social impacts and will contribute to Nigeria's achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Director of New Energy at Seplat, Effiong Okon, said this while delivering an address at the 45th edition of the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), Nigeria Annual International Conference and Exhibition (NAICE) with the theme: Operationalising a Clean Energy Transition for Sustainable Development in Africa.

Okon, who represented the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Seplat Energy, Roger Brown, said for successful energy transition in Africa: "We must support the goals of the Paris Agreement and align with society's objective to get the world to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, if not before; as lower-emission hydrocarbons, particularly gas has a crucial role to play in energy transition by replacing diesel generators and biomass.

"Though hydrocarbon export will continue to be a mainstay of the Nigerian economy and will fund Nigeria's growth as well as its energy transition, the Oil and Gas Industry has a role to play as a responsible steward of Nigeria's oil and gas assets, including those that might be divested."

He stressed that in the long-term, the reality and threat of climate change would require the decarbonisation of energy systems in Nigeria, but sustainability and transparency must be at the heart of business operations and decision-



Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Seplat Energy, Roger Brown

making.

Speaking on 'just transition,' Okon noted that there was the need to balance decarbonisation with development, adding: "Global warming and climate volatility are existential threats to humanity and nature. The world needs to accelerate efforts to achieve net zero and mitigate warming effects. Africa's climate, agriculture and people will suffer most in the coming decades. The problem has been caused by emissions from developed-world countries that have enjoyed their 'carbon privilege' and built strong economies on fossil fuels.

"However, we need to consider the reality on the continent. Poverty, hunger, unemployment, population growth abound here. Africa contributes just 3.3 per cent of global emissions. About 600 million African lack access to reliable energy, which hampers development. Use of inefficient, costly diesel and petrol generators drains finances, foreign exchange and creates pollution.

"Biomass use for cooking causes deforestation, health problems and

nearly 0.5 million premature deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa yearly. The developed world's drive to impose de-carbonisation on Africa will constrain development."

Brown, who made a strong case for gas, said pressures by the developed world to abandon fossil fuels are being pushed back by recognition of the need to drive development with reliable energy.

He explained that COP27 will focus on how best to achieve balance for the future benefit of 2.5 billion Africans of whom 500 million will be Nigerians, adding that given current low emission levels, Africa can achieve a disproportionate improvement in living standards through a global small increase in emissions from cleaner gas for power and cooking.

He urged players in the continent to leverage oil and gas revenues to cash flow transition, but also tap international transition funding were available, hence the need for good corporate governance.

He, therefore, urged industry operators to focus on quick wins first, including decarbonising the upstream and focus on producing 'advantaged' low-carbon barrels with low Scope 1/2; end routine flaring and redeploy gas to power operations and local communities; deploy renewable energy to power operations where possible, and share with local communities.

"We need to develop gas as a transition fuel from gas-to-power to replace diesel, move along the value chain into power in business parks, large buildings, hybrid gas-to-power, solar offerings and bottled gas products for domestic use.

"In addition, we can expand into renewable energy sources including hydro, wind, geothermal, blue and green hydrogen, as well as develop and monetise carbon capture and storage" he added.



2023 elections: Apathy in real estate sector

By GENESIS ERIRIOMA

Ahead of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, experts in the real estate sector have predicted that things would get worse in the real estate industry due to unfavourable government policies and the high level of inflation in the economy.

The level of inflation has risen to 17.7 per cent in the past six months, with the naira going down against the dollar at N615 in the parallel market and N415 at the international market. The building and construction industry that is heavily reliant on the importation of some important building materials has been exposed to price fluctuations.

The astronomically high costs of building materials forced many developers and independent builders to abandon projects as political actors are putting more funds to electioneering campaigns than investing in critical sectors like housing, while many infrastructural projects initiated by the government are technically stalled, starved of critical funds.

Looking at government at the state level, only a few state governments are still in the pursuit of delivering housing units while others have shifted focus to winning the 2023 elections in order to remain in office.

Since this year began, many developers and institutional investors have slowed down on investment in housing due to political instability and fear of the unknown. The confidence of investors is currently very weak as they await the outcomes of the 2023 general elections.

Buying capacity has drastically reduced as interest rates rise, eroding interest in long-term funds for property development etc. Taking a critical look at the real estate value chain, access to land has been difficult and finance for affordable housing is a big issue as the sector is encumbered by high mortgage rates.

The odds notwithstanding, the real estate sector shows resilience in the first half of the year according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report. The sector contributed 5.34 per cent to real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Q1 2022, higher than the 5.28 per cent it recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2021.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reveals sustained positive growth and an improvement in economic performance for the sixth consecutive quarter since the recession witnessed in 2020 when negative growth rates were recorded in quarters two and three of 2020 respectively.

Nevertheless, housing supply remains in a state of constant undersupply as population and demand continue to outpace supply with a deficit as high as over 17 million in the affordable segment of the market.

Speaking on the situation, Prof. Austin Otegbulu, council member of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), said the housing sector is highly influenced by property market dynamics, which oscillate in response to economic or business cycles.

He said the nation's political

system is unpredictable; hence there is always the notion that the general election could trigger violence and an unfavourable investment climate.

He observed that many people will want to sell their property and relocate, adding that politicians vying for electoral positions and those sponsoring candidates may need to raise the required fund by selling houses with the hope of buying new ones if they win the elections.

"The cumulative effect of this is that it changes the market by creating an imbalance due to oversupply. The effect of supply and demand imbalance coupled with a decline in economic activities leads to decline in property prices."

"They prefer to keep their money in the bank. Some school of thought is of the opinion that the property market will bubble under this scenario. I believe that such views run against logic as most foreign and local investors will avoid investing under conditions of uncertainty and political instability. We must realise that we are part of the global property market," he said.

Gbenga Ismail, former chairman, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Nigeria Chapter, said: "I have not seen any one of them yet unveil plans for housing but we hope when the campaigns start in full, we will see that. I want to see how they will tackle the affordability issues and easy access to property and mortgage finance and development. It is important for them to identify how they would make people have access to housing because it is a big problem that needs necessary action. The same way that we say power is a problem, housing is also a problem."

Similarly, a former chairman of NIESV's Faculty of Estate Agency and Marketing, Mr. Sam Eboigbe, said the electioneering period has obviously affected the real estate sector in some notable way as campaigns attract a huge flow of funds.

This dimension of injection of funds in local and foreign currencies, Eboigbe said: "Real estate sector contributes a huge flow of funds to campaigns since most of the participants and their sponsors are investors in the real estate sector. For ease of liquidity, prices respond to the market and adjust downwards as the volume of listings in terms of the gamut of the supply chain are far in excess of demand."

"It is an economic principle that prices will realistically adjust themselves in relation to demand over time. Also, lack of confidence as no one could predict the direction of the economy. So much anxiety as people expect a major shift in governance and policies. At the moment, the fluctuating nature of the naira against the dollar is also making the sector lose confidence."

"When there is a lull in business activities and the trend is consistent over time, this will generate a lack of motivation for developers or investors in the market space. There is this issue of capital flight as stakeholders create room for the inevitable. They throw their properties into the market space. Upon consummation of transactions, the proceeds are deployed to purchase

the dollars or reinvested elsewhere until such a time they feel it is safe to acquire properties. It is usually not unlikely to find investors halt activities on site leading to the abandonment of projects."

"Some investors use the electioneering period to acquire properties, and take advantage of the opportunities, especially those offerings and listings below the market value."

"They understand the market dynamics and have analysed the market over time to know the specific and choice locations and type of listings to increase their portfolios. These categories of investors are usually not many,"

"When we exit the inflationary

trend and the naira is strong, then issues of housing and interest rate will similarly and ultimately adjust accordingly. I think no serious political candidate can afford not to have a realistic policy on the recovery of the housing market."

Mr Lookman Oshodi, Project Director, Arctic Infrastructure, said: "Electioneering period impacts housing as governors who are seeking re-election will want to increase the production of new housing units to convince the electorate on their sincerity to do more after re-election. Not many low-income earners will become new homeowners but the impact will be more among the medium-to-high-income earners

since the mortgage system is not yet a mass appeal.

"Real estate investors who want to hold assets on a long-term basis are generally conscious of political risk and often take back seats in this period. Instalment payments approach for assets and lending with real estate collateral are usual at this period."

"Investors want to be sure that the number is backed up by adequate purchasing capacity, which the next government needs to address. Regeneration of brownfields in our large cities must be a priority, as this will create viable markets for investors and a sustainable housing system for the people. 'Win-win' situation for the stakeholders."



Widows: Helen Agbi and Ogeri Agbi

Widows rendered homeless as brother-in-law demolished family house

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE

Two widows, Helen Agbi and Ogeri Agbi with their children have been rendered homeless following the alleged demolition of their family house by their brother-in-laws.

The unfortunate incident occurred on the 18th and 26 July 2022 respectively, in Ezi Agbi, Ukpa Community in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State over ownership of a family building.

A visit by The Trumpet to the scene of the incident at Ezi Agbi, Ukpa Community, it was gathered that part of the family house including the fence and the properties inside were all destroyed.

Speaking with the affected widows, the duo Helen and Ogeri Agbi lamented that she had never seen that kind of thing before and never believed that her brother-in-law could do such a thing to them.

They alleged that the boys that demolished the building and destroyed their properties were hired by Azubuike Agbi, one of their brother-in-laws, who conspired with the other whose name was not ascertained.

They further lamented that they have no place to lay their head, calling on the government to come to their rescue.

"You have seen how the world is, we don't have anybody to come for our rescue nor to speak for us. I have never seen this kind of thing in my life. I never knew that my husband's brother could demolish

our house for no just cause.

"They destroyed the building including the properties inside the house. All our cushion chairs, bed, fan, Television, lamp, kitchen utensils, wrappers and other things were all destroyed.

"I want the government to come to our rescue. You can see how we are struggling to earn a living. We are only surviving by God's Grace", Helen and Ogeri Agbi lamented. "As you can see, our husband died some years ago. It is my brother-in-law that came and destroyed the only house where we are living. They gave us notice to pack out.

"We have been living peacefully in this compound until when they came and told us that they wanted to rebuild their own side of the building and later migrated to our own side and did the same thing.

"This thing happened on the 18th and 26th July, 2022. Our husband, Egwu Agbi owns this building. Our late husband and his brother inherited this building from their mother and were divided for both of them to live.

"The issues we had with them were in the past and have been settled by Ukpa Community who divided the compound into two, one side was given to our husband while his elder brother has the other side. And We have had no issue recently that could warrant this type of wickedness.

One of the widow's children, Mr Agbi Anelechi while reacting to the matter, stated that the building

is a family compound which his father Egwu Elechi and Okwa Agbi inherited from their grandmother and have lived there for years, but unfortunately, their cousin's brother, Azubuike Agbi came and claimed ownership of the compound and served them quit notice to pack out saying that the compound belongs to them.

He further explained that his cousin hired some group of boys on the 18th of July 2022 led by Mr Heart Okwa and demolished the building, but following the alarm raised by an Okada rida they ran away.

Also, on 26th July 2022, those boys came again with all manner of weapons such as machetes, axes, guns among others and succeeded in demolishing part of the building including the fence and the properties inside it.

He, therefore, called on the government and Non-Governmental Organizations to come to their rescue and ensure that the perpetrators are arrested and prosecuted.

When contacted for his reaction to the allegation, Mr Heart Okwa said he won't react to the issue until he knows the people that reported him.

Meanwhile, Mr Azubuike Agbi, one of the brother-in-laws who instructed that the building should be demolished, is based far away in the United States of America (USA).

All effects made to get his contact proved abortive.

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EFCC warns real estate operators, landlords to obey KYC policy

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has warned Real Estate operators, landlords, and property managers in the country to desist from renting out, leasing, or selling properties to individuals that do not comply with the "Know Your Customer" (KYC) policy.

This was disclosed by the Commission in a statement on its official website on Thursday, noting that the Ibadan Zonal Commander of the EFCC, Assistant Commander of the EFCC, ACE Kanu Idagu gave the warning while addressing members of the Kolapo Ishola Government Reservation Area (GRA) Residents Association in a Town Hall meeting at Rolat Event Centre, Akobo, Ibadan, Oyo State.

Idagu said the KYC is a regulatory mandate for both the private and public sectors with the primary aim of mitigating fraud.

According to him, KYC was set up by the government to uphold and maintain the standard of conducting business and sanitize the economy.

"One major regulatory concept that was set up by the government to uphold and maintain the standard of conducting business and sanitizing the economy is the concept of KYC and it simply means Know Your Customer.

"This has become a regulatory mandate, which requirement is not only limited to the private sector but to all sectors of the Nigerian economy with the primary objective of mitigating fraud," he said.

Idagu, who was represented by the Head, Extractive Industry Fraud Section (EIFS), Chief Superintendent of the EFCC, CSE Oluwasegun Oloruntuyi stressed the need for real estate operators to verify, monitor, and report any suspicious activities on their premises to the

Commission.

He said such intelligence information will help curb and combat all fraud schemes, money laundering, and terrorism financing, which are major setbacks for the Nigerian economy.

He further reiterated the stance of the Executive Chairman of the EFCC, Abdulsheed Bawa, regarding the use of premises for fraudulent activities, stressing that the law shall take its course whenever individuals fail to comply with Section 3 of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act, 2006, which states that, "a person who, being the occupier or is concerned in the management of any premises, causes or knowingly permits the premises to be used for any purpose which constitutes an offence under this Act commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of not more than 15 years and not less than 5 years without the option of a fine."

Idagu commended the Association for its deliberate efforts and role played in sensitizing and enlightening the public in the fight against corruption.

According to him, the EFCC is aware "of the role played by the real estate operators and property managers as major stakeholders in the fight against crimes and corruption. Hence, it is crucial to further collaborate in creating more awareness and enlightenment campaigns on the positive roles expected from every Nigerian."

In his response, the Chairman of the Association, Barr Olalekan Thanni thanked the EFCC for gracing the event, while emphasizing the commitment of his members to ensure that the government has adequate information on every citizen who resides in Nigeria.

"The synergy between the Association and the EFCC will help reduce crime rate and make the Commission a pacesetter," Thanni said.

EFCC probes S/Court Registrar over alleged N10bn loot, racketeering

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is probing an allegation of racketeering against Supreme Court Chief Registrar, Ahmed Gambo Saleh.

It was alleged that Saleh has received over N10 billion in bribes from court contractors and other persons with criminal cases with the judiciary.

A whistleblower petitioned EFCC to look into the activities of the Chief Registrar, accused of feeding fat on the court's funds while leaving vital projects to suffer neglect.

It was alleged that Saleh had connived with Surajo Muhammad, son of the immediate past Chief Justice of Nigeria, Muhammad Tanko, to embezzle public funds.

It was further gathered that Muhammad (Jnr) despite lacking in qualifications and competence to handle judicial matters, was in charge and managed affairs of the apex court and wielded his father's position as a tool to carry out backroom deals.

"Today (June 1), Surajo could be said to

be a de facto head of the SCN as his father seems to have relinquished the administration of the court to him, even when he is not a staff," the petition sighted by The Gazette noted.

Citing instances of their brazen underhand dealings, the petition said the duo sold off the residence of a Supreme Court justice without the knowledge of Tanko, who was CJN at the time.

"It will interest you to know that a residence of a justice of the Supreme Court located in the villa, Abuja was sold by Gambo and Surajo recently. The underhand dealings between Gambo, Surajo, and the agency so pissed the CJN that he ordered the reversal of the transaction," added the petition with no. EFCC/PET/HQR/1817/2022 and dated June 1.

Meanwhile, the building was said to have been demolished before the situation was remedied, a situation that rendered the justice who should have been assigned the residents homeless.

The petition further noted that Saleh connived with Muhammad to allegedly

withheld the funds meant for purchasing exotic vehicles usually assigned to newly sworn-in justices.

"Under Gambo and Surajo's shenanigans, they, JSC were given only a Land Cruiser, albeit refurbished. A Hilux was added after one year, and to date, the Mercedes Benz is still being awaited by the justices," the petition added.

It was revealed that eight justices sworn in since November 2020 are yet to be properly accommodated and receive the Benz even though the projects were captured in the capital budget for the 2020 fiscal year.

In 2017, Saleh was charged having been accused of diverting N2.2 billion, a matter later withdrawn by the Attorney General of the Federation over a purported plea bargain.

Before the withdrawal of the case by AGF, Saleh was charged with diverting Supreme Court's N2.2 billion to his personal bank account at the United Bank for Africa PLC, account number: 2027642863.

Saleh, despite fraud charges and allegations, was appointed as the Secretary of the National

Judicial Council (NJC), a body responsible for the appointment, promotion, and discipline of judicial officers.

A spokesman for the NJC declined comments on the matter.

Although Saleh then confessed the money belonged to him as it was a collection of cash gifted to him by friends, further investigations revealed that the money was "bribes collected from various court contractors who ended up executing shoddy jobs or outright abandonment," the petition stressed.

He was also charged with obtaining N21 million gratification from MBA Computes Ltd, N16 million from Dean Musa Nigeria Ltd, N10 million from Willysdave Limited, and N2.4 million gratifications from Welcon Nigeria Ltd, all contractors of the Supreme Court.

The petition also claimed that the Chief Registrar, a public servant, was worth over N10 billion.

Also, the spokesman for the EFCC did not immediately provide updates about the investigation.

ICPC won't disclose information on investigative activities – ICPC Chairman

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN has said that the Commission was not at liberty to disclose information related to the identity of a petitioner and suspects, or the status of any investigative activities until investigation was completed.

This was made known by the ICPC Chairman on Thursday during an advocacy visit to the Commission's headquarters by the Service Compact with All Nigerians (SERVICOM) Office led by its National Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Nnenna Akajimeli.

Owasanoye revealed that when cases are received, they are investigated to ascertain which ones are to be handled by the Commission, saying not all reported cases fall under the purview of ICPC.

However, he said, despite the Commission's efforts to be responsive to requests for information, ICPC was constrained by law not to disclose to anyone any piece of information regarding any case that is still under investigation.

"Section 64 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000 clearly forbids the Commission to reveal any information, the identity of informers and all other circumstances relating to a matter except to a trial Judge

or the defence lawyer in any civil, criminal or other proceedings," he said.

Speaking at the meeting, the SERVICOM National Coordinator, Mrs Nnenna Akajimeli praised the Commission for the creation of the SERVICOM unit and said she was happy at the progress the unit has made so far.

The Coordinator stated the advocacy visit was to improve the Commission's public service delivery by building the capacity of the management through training and to demonstrate how services can be improved in practice. According to her, law enforcement agencies in Nigeria can offer quality service to the public despite the delicate nature of their mandate and advocated a proactive

disclosure of what customers should expect when coming to the Commission.

"The quality of governance is determined by the quality of services delivered to citizens and the extent to which these services meet their expectations, and therefore SERVICOM's mandate focuses on improving the quality of service delivery to the public by working with MDAs to ensure effective service delivery," she said.

She urged the Commission to continue its engagement and support to the SERVICOM team in the Commission as that would help to achieve more effective service delivery.

The ICPC Chairman was named as a SERVICOM Ambassador during the visit.



Prof Bolaji Owasanoye

Portray Nigeria, EFCC in good light, Bawa tasks film industry stakeholders

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdulsheed Bawa, has tasked stakeholders in the film and movie industry to portray Nigeria and the EFCC in good light.

Bawa gave the charge on Thursday when the Executive Director, National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Alhaji Adedayo Thomas led other stakeholders in the industry on a Courtesy visit to the Commission's

headquarters in Abuja.

The EFCC boss who appreciated the commitment, passion, originality, and creativity of operators and stakeholders in the industry, enjoined them to work with the Commission in areas beneficial to the country.

Bawa said, "the relationship can be established, the relationship is welcome, and we have a full-fledged Department of Public Affairs headed by a director. We can develop, we can work together and we can give you stories.

"We can also give you our own modus

operandi which you can use to portray us in a good light because Nigeria is the only country that we have. You can make or mar the reputation of the country by the way you are depicting it, not only the EFCC but also Nigerians as a whole." While highlighting the impact of the industry on Nigerians, Bawa stated that "Nollywood has succeeded in employing millions of Nigerians, contributing its quota in terms of revenue generation in this country, has succeeded in taking Nigeria beyond the shores of this country.

Why I will never compromise on production value - Kunle Afolayan



Kunle Afolayan is a leading filmmaker who has produced timeless movies and positioned the movie industry globally; Afolayan doubles as the CEO of Kunle Afolayan Production (KAP), cinema, film and television academy, Afefeyeye restaurant and bar amongst others. In this interview with OMONIYI ALLI, he spoke about why he is a different filmmaker from others.

Q: What's your understanding of the Nigerian film industry?

A: My understanding and experience of the Nigerian film industry didn't start 10 or 20 years ago. It started about 40 years ago because my father was a filmmaker and I was opportune to watch and witness how films were made in those days, coupled with the fact that we all grew up on Indian films and Chinese films. When television started, we had very few channels and started broadcasting at about four pm and everyone was always looking forward to watching Indian and Chinese films. But when it came to motion pictures, we used to have a lot of cinemas around. And Nigerians would go all out to watch indigenous films at the cinemas.

Q: Why does your film seem different from other filmmakers?

A: I decided to adopt what was obtainable then and now to create a kind of balance.

Q: How would you describe what makes your films different?

A: To start with, I tell stories that people can relate to. I tell stories that an average movie lover regardless of where they are from would understand. Primarily, I always consider Nigerians and Africans as my first audience. Secondly, production value is what I will never compromise because that's what gets your films to the big screens and not just beyond the shores of Nigeria but the Nigerians and Africans in the diaspora. If the production value is there and the quality is good, then it would be open to exploration of different parts of the world.

Q: When and how did your career in acting and directing begin?

A: I started as an actor in 1998 when I featured in Tunde Kelani's film titled Saworo Ide. After that, I did a few films here and there but because I was working in a bank at that time, I couldn't really get to feature

in a lot of films. In 2004, I resigned my appointment at the bank, I went to New York Film Academy where I did a diploma, came back to Nigeria and set up this company in 2005. I did my first feature film in 2006 titled Irapada meaning redemption. The film enjoyed a bit of exposure here and there. It premiered at the Pan African film festival in Los Angeles, United States of America. It screened at women of colour in Atlanta, US and went to a few other places.

Q: You said you make movies others can be able to relate to, but can you say that

about other movies emanating from Nigeria?

A: Well, some yes, some no. But there are quite a number of stories that are primarily targeted at Nigerians specifically in different genres. Some of them are comedies, and these are comedies that only Nigerians would find funny. Even in my own films, there are some scenes in which people here laugh when they see it but outside the shores of Nigeria, they have different perceptions about those same scenes. So, it is important to know your core audiences.

Q: How in your opinion has the movie

industry contributed to the promotion of tourism in Lagos for instance?

A: Generally, I believe, movie production contributes to the development of tourism and revenue generation in any society. This is because when a movie is done, it engages a lot of hands; there is a lot of financial and cultural exchange. Specifically, Lagos is peculiar in that aspect. The Nigerian film industry pretty much started here. If you ask me, I'd say just as Los Angeles contributes immensely to the GDP of the United States as a whole, Lagos serves that purpose for Nigeria.

Q: Nigerian films recycle the same characters that are often known for just particular kinds of roles. Why the stereotype?

A: It's the same in Hollywood. Bruce Willis is always playing the bad guy, Denzel Washington is always playing the cool guy, and these guys have been there for more than two decades doing the same thing. But maybe in their own case, they do one or two films in a year, while in Nigeria, those actors do maybe 50 films (giggling) in one year. A talent is a talent. We can't change that. If the talent still has the relevance to still be in the industry, they would be there. There are so many aspiring actors with less training but who believe that they have all the talents in the world. But for me, in doing my findings, I realized that most of them lack discipline and discipline is key in the profession. I think it's the same trend everywhere. Even in India's film industry.

Q: What do you watch out for in scripts?

A: It must have cultural and entertainment value as well as a universal theme.

Q: How long did it take you to conceptualize the Kunle Afolayan Production hub?

A: I really can't put time into it, but we have been on these premises and we put up another building beside it, which we started using in 2019. It took us another year to complete the others and here we are.



Nu trybe's novel signee debuts with 5-track "Son of the moon" EP

TARIQ (born TARIQ Oluokun) is set to announce himself in the Nigerian music scene with his diverse five-track EP- Son of The Moon.

The talk around grooming talents before announcing them is not a new one and Chocolate City Music is towing that path. This has informed the decision to launch NuTrybe Records- Chocolate City Music's training academy for young talents.

Having undergone training in the last year, NuTrybe's novel signee, TARIQ, will, however, announce his entry into the Nigerian music scene with this meticulously named EP Son Of The Moon (S.O.T.M). Picture the Nigerian version of Drake, The Weekend, or even our very own Wande Coal, then you have TARIQ!

In this project, he sings about all things from love, unrequited feelings, and even self-confidence with two tracks in focus- BAD INTENTIONS and SIGNAL. Both tracks depict the artist's desire to find love; pure, faultless, and reciprocity.

Speaking on this single TARIQ said, "I've been working hard for this and I'm very excited to finally introduce the world to my sound".



Yaw Launch Sparadise, another StarTimes Original Comedy Series

Sarcastic, amusing and commotions are the best terms to define Sparadise, a new comedy series that mimics the intrigues that happen in a spa.

The sitcom, produced by Steve 'Yaw' Onu and another original production by StarTimes, premiered on Thursday in Lagos.

The new TV series, Sparadise captures the intrigues and happenings that play out in a spa, from the gossip to all the madness, banter and quarrels that ensue, comically told using notable comedians.

Currently recording positive reviews; Sparadise features talented acts that include Buchi, Kunle Remi, Senator, Tony Akposheri, Yaw, Ngozi Nwosu, Ernest Donald, Lolo1, Tomama, Ada Muorah, Bofie Itombra, Dianne Chukwu, Davidsyn Eboigbe, Ese Idia, Eseosa Benard, Godwin Ovy, Imaobong Cletus, Omotunde Adebawale, David Odiaka Onyeka Favour, Onukwube Chukwube, and Roby Ekpo amongst others.

Speaking at the premiere, the producer of Sparadise, Yaw said, "For the choice of cast, some of the actors were specifically written for the role Kunle Remi, Ngozi Nwosu, the albino guy, Expatriate, Buchi, Senator, Lolo. Some of the characters were written for them.

"It's comedy and whether you like it or not, you can never have enough laughter; and with the situation of things in the



L-R: Yinka Adebayo, Executive Director, Media Reach; Yaw, Producer of Sparadise; Alex Jian, CEO, StarTimes; Kenny Ogungbe and Lai Labode, CEO of Cash Token at the unveiling of Sparadise, another original series by StarTimes

country, we need more of it. So Sparadise is an educational, interesting, interactive, and real-life situation that you just bring into bear.

"Don't forget that 90 per cent of the sitcoms that you see on TV are our day-to-day reality. It is what is happening to everybody. So, this everyday reality is delivered differently using comics," Yaw said.

Also speaking, Alex Jian, CEO, StarTimes Nigeria said that the entertainment provider

is keeping to its words of growing original content locally with a view to giving Nollywood fans something juicier to enjoy at a pocket-friendly price.

Lai Labode, CEO of Cash Token remarked that his business was proud to support the Sparadise project. "It is always important to support projects that will impact the people. This necessitates while Cash Token, a social enterprise, is supporting StarTimes on this project."

Joeboy, Black Sherif joins YouTube Music Global Foundry Class of 2022

YouTube Music has announced the Foundry Class of 2022, made up of 30 independent artists representing 15 countries from across the globe. This year, the class which is the biggest to date, features artists at all stages of their careers from different genres- including two African acts, Black Sherif, from Ghana and Joeboy, from Nigeria

The Foundry program which is aimed at assisting the artists to build sustainable careers on their own terms was created in 2015 and has so far supported 250 independent artists.

Foundry artists are recognized for their storytelling, innovative approach to music and are viewed as the next generation entertainers.

YouTube Artist Partnerships Lead, Naomi Zeichner shared, "It's no small task to be an artist in 2022, working to find stability, fulfilment, and fans who get it. Foundry celebrates the courage of independent artists and the communities that surround them. Our global team is lucky to be their champion and reduce barriers on their journey, every step of the way."

The 2022 Foundry Class reinforces YouTube's commitment to supporting Sub-Saharan artists as next generation global music stars; playing a part in developing individual talent in the region.

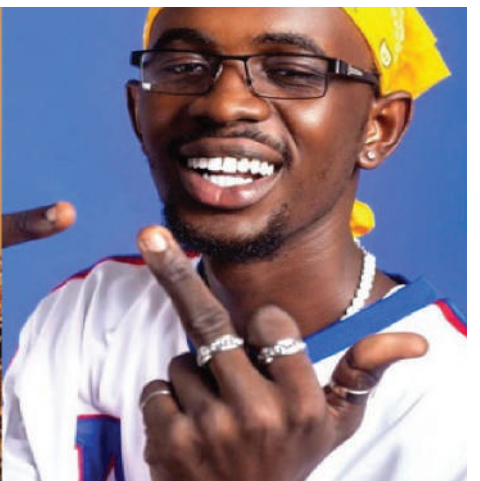
Joeboy said, "Being an independent artist simply requires me to be at the centre of all of my dealings as a creative. Aside from creating the music, I have to carry out due diligence to make sure I am making the right decisions every

now and then."

Black Sherif said, "Success as an independent artist is connecting with one more person on any level through my music. Once that is constantly achieved, in my opinion, everything else will follow. Being a Foundry artist for me means a strong global platform with support to visually take my expression to the next level and reach more people in the process."



Joeboy and black sherif



Nine-year old Omogbolabo launches comic book, based on his mum's inspiring life

Nine-year old Omogbolabo Odunbaku has launched his first comic book, OMOH, an adaptation of his mum's book which tells inspiring stories of her life.

The 8-page coloured and pictures filled comic book was launched at his ninth birthday celebration at the MUSON Centre in Lagos last weekend.

According to Omogbolabo, "the book is a comic adaptation of my mum's 334 pages book; it has fewer pages, more pictures and less writing, unlike the original book. It tells the story of my mum's life which we were able to summarise in a few pages in the comic."

Narrating his sojourn into writing the

comic, he said, "I brought my mum's book to school for two days after her 40th birthday and then I kept getting my friends to read it, they said it was too bulky and the pages were too long. So I went to my mum and asked her if we can make the same content for children and then she said, what are you talking about? I went again and would walk out of her room.

"Every morning for one week, I would draw pictures trying to match it with the book and after she saw them, she decided she would let me do the comic book."

On his interest in comics, Omogbolabo said the first comic book he read was 'Captain underpants', "I saw how horrible

their drawings were and then I decided to give it a try to see if I could do better. At first, I started drawing stick men, then I moved to drawing people with poses and actual things.

"I read 'Captain underpants' a lot because it was hilarious and I really wanted to see the comics. Then a new version came out, called 'Doggman', it's a full comic book, so far I have read all of its books.

His mum, Omoayena Odunbaku who holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning said that proceeds from the launch will be channeled to driving causes for empowering the girl child through her foundation, Her Ability Hub.

According to her, "I wrote a book on my life's journey when I turned 40, it told the story of growing up in a neighbourhood in Somolu, despite the fact that I didn't attend public school most of my friends in the neighbourhood did and some of them didn't turn out well." This led her to write her book, OMOH, to inspire other young girls in the same neighbourhood to be the best of themselves in their chosen field, either a career path or honing skills."

She added that the comic book will also serve as a way of giving back to her community and ensure that more young people including the boy child are inspired to be the best versions of themselves.



Poor outing, Super Falcons slump in FIFA world ranking

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

The Super Falcons of Nigeria have recorded their poorest ranking on 46th place in the ranking released by the world football governing body (FIFA) on Friday, August 5, 2022.

The ninth-time champion of the African continental tourney, fell seven places below their previous following the poor outing in the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.

In the WAFCON 22, Nigeria lost their opening group C game against the Banyana Banyana of South Africa, the eventual winners of the tournament.

Despite the loss, the 2018 winners of the event qualified to play Cameroon in the quarter-final after they defeated Burundi and Botswana to join South Africa as the only two countries to emerge from group C.

They eventually defeated



the Lionesses of Cameroon but were stopped by host Morocco on their quest for the tenth WAFCON triumph to compete for third place.

However, and most unfortunate, the Shepolopolo of Zambia shocked the Super Falcons to exacerbate the pains of the Nigerian people with a 1-0 victory to secure the third place position.

FIFA, which draws its data from continental events

to rank national teams, saw South Africa move four places to 54th position while third place Zambia is ranked 80 after moving 23 places as 'the most improved side' in the 12th WAFCON event.

The world governing body disclosed that Nigeria registered the biggest decline in terms of points having lost 69.33 points to wallow in the new world ranking.

Meanwhile, the United

States of America, champions of the women's Concacaf championship retained the top spot in the world ranking followed by the runners-up in the Euro women 2022 event, Germany.

Semi-finalist in the Euro women 2022, Sweden, fell by one place to third spot trailing Germany with the Euro women champions England moving four places to emerge fourth.

Athletics: It's time to discover new talents- Premium Trust Bank

Chief Executive Officer, Premium Trust Bank, Mr Emmanuel Emefienim said it is the right time to start the discovery of new talents in the world of athletics following the exploits Nigeria pulled in the recently concluded World Athletics Championships held in Oregon, United States.

In Oregon 2022, Tobi Amusan broke the world record in 100m while Ese Brume ended as a silver medalist.

Emefienim, in awe of what Nigerian athletes achieved in the championship, said that sports are an indispensable tool in fostering unity in a highly diverse nation like Nigeria.

The CEO who said this on Monday after Premium Trust Bank was announced as the official banking partner of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) by Nilayo Sports Management Limited, the marketing consultant of AFN, added that the partnership will create a platform where talented youths can be easily scouted.

"It's a corporate social responsibility (CSR), as the partnership that will help create a platform for the youths to express themselves and enable the AFN to do more for the athletes, especially in the discovery of new talents and supporting them in their training programmes," Emefienim

told the media.

"We have seen sports as a very powerful tool that can foster unity in our diversity as a nation. Whatever can be done to support it, will encourage other private players to key into it and tow the path of Premium Trust Bank.

"The time is right for us to discover new talents looking at what Tobi Amusan and others did recently. She broke the world record in the women's 100m hurdles at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon, United States, and set a new one. Ese Brume did also excel in the women's long jump, winning a silver.

"We need to unearth some of these talents and the way to do it, is to support the AFN, and the youths and encourage them to discover themselves and make the best of the opportunity available to them," he explained.

Emefienim clarified that Premium Trust Bank distinctively decided to explore a new concept different from football to create an avenue for youths interested in athletics.

He added, "A whole lot of people are in football and we want to be different from others as we have more youths keying into the different aspects of athletics, and we think it makes more sense to focus is on athletics and not just football."

NPFL clubs set sight on AITEO Cup quarter-finals

A clutch of Nigeria Premier Football League teams including Akwa United, Sunshine Stars and Nasarawa United are the acknowledged top dogs as the Round of 16 matches of this year's AITEO Cup competition take place on Saturday and Sunday in different centres of the Federation.

Niger Tornadoes, who squeezed through to this stage with a 6-5 penalty shoot-out defeat of two-time CAF Champions League winners Enyimba FC have a date with Green Beret FC at the FIFA Goal Project inside the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Akwa United have an interesting fixture against Kogi United, who also experienced the lottery of penalty shoot-out before edging out ambitious Kanta United following a 2-2 draw in regulation time. The boys from Uyo eased their way to this stage with a 3-0 spanking of CAF Cup aspirants Remo Stars. Both teams are engaged in the only match of the men's competition coming up on Sunday, and at the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.

Sunshine Stars, big winners (5-1) over Rovers in the Round of 32, have a date with Katsina United at the Area 3 venue in the Federal Capital Territory, while Kano Pillars tackle DMD FC at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium in

Bauchi.

Heartland FC, who ejected multi-titlists Enugu Rangers after a penalty shoot-out in Benin City, will be up against Dakkada of Uyo at the Stephen Keshi Stadium in Asaba. Lobi Stars will square up against Akure City at the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus on Saturday.

Nasarawa United, stretched taut by Sokoto United in a penalty shoot-out that eventually ended 11-10, will be up against inspired Bendel Insurance at the Enyimba International Stadium in Aba, while El-Kanemi Warriors and Wikki Tourists will do battle in Jos.

In the women's event, Cup holders Bayelsa Queens will trade tackles with Abia Angels in Akure on Sunday, with Nasarawa Amazons and Confluence Queens in a potentially explosive encounter at the FIFA Goal Project in Abuja also on Sunday.

Heartland Queens, 2-1 winners over Dannaz Ladies in the earlier round, will be up against Delta Queens at the Otunba Dipo Dina Stadium in Ijebu-Ode.

Last year's runners-up FC Robo Queens, who dislodged Edo Queens 2-0 in the Round of 16, are rewarded with another big tie, this time against Royal Queens, who edged Osun Babes. Both teams take the pitch at the Abakaliki from

4pm on Sunday.

AITEO CUP COMPETITION 2022 ROUND OF 16 FIXTURES (MEN)

Green Beret Vs Niger Tornadoes - 06/08/22 - FIFA Goal Project - 4pm
Lobi Stars Vs Akure City Vs Niger Tornadoes - 06/08/22 - Enugu - 4pm
Heartland FC Vs Dakkada FC - 06/08/22 - Asaba - 4pm
Sunshine Stars Vs Katsina United - 06/08/22 - Area 3 Abuja - 4pm
Akwa United Vs Kogi United - 07/08/22 - Enugu - 4pm
DMD FC Vs Kano Pillars - 06/08/22 - Bauchi - 4pm
El-Kanemi Warriors Vs Wikki Tourists - 06/08/22 - Jos - 4pm
Bendel Insurance Vs Nasarawa United - 06/08/22 - Aba - 4pm

QUARTER-FINAL FIXTURES (WOMEN)

Bayelsa Queens Vs Abia Angels - 07/08/22 - Akure - 4pm
Nasarawa Amazons Vs Confluence Queens - 07/08/22 - Abuja - 4pm
Delta Queens Vs Heartland Queens - 07/08/22 - Ijebu-Ode - 4pm
Royal Queens Vs FC Robo Queens - 07/08/22 - Abakaliki - 4pm

ROUND OF 32 RESULTS (MEN)

Bayelsa United 0 Green Beret 0 (4-5 penalties)
Enyimba International 0 Niger Tornadoes 0 (5-6

penalties)
Doma United 0 Lobi Stars 3

Akure City Academy 2 Bendel Insurance Feeders 1
Rangers Int'l 1 Heartland FC 1 (7-8 penalties)
Sunshine Stars 5 Rovers FC 1

Cynosure FC 1 Katsina United 3
Remo Stars 0 Akwa United 3

Kogi United 2 Kanta United 2 (5-4 penalties)
DMD FC 0 Housing Corporation 0 (4-2 penalties)

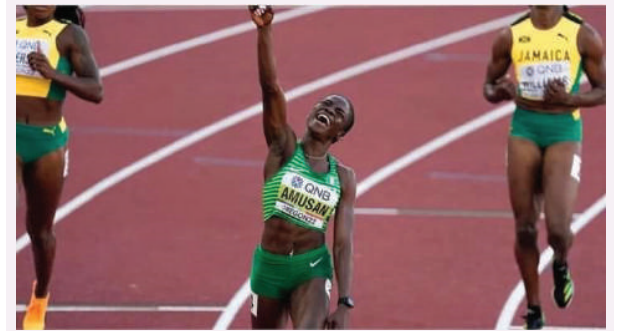
Zamfara United 0 Kano Pillars 5
Fulfill FC 0 El-Kanemi Warriors 1

Kwara United 1 Wikki Tourists 1 (3-4 penalties)
Bendel Insurance 1 Ottasolo FC 1 (4-3 penalties)

Sokoto United 1 Nasarawa United 1 (10-11 penalties)

ROUND OF 16 RESULTS (WOMEN)

Bayelsa Queens 3 Niger Amazons 0 (W/O)
Abruka Queens 1 Abia Angels 3
Naija Ratels 0 Nasarawa Amazons 1
Immaculate Queens 0 Confluence Queens 8
Honey Badgers 0 Delta Queens 2
Heartland Queens 2 Dannaz Ladies 1
Osun Babes 2 Royal Queens 3
Edo Queens 0 FC Robo Queens 2



Team Nigeria haul medals in Birmingham, set world records

Team Nigeria captain in the ongoing 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, Innocent Nnamdi, Obichukwu Ikechukwu, Folashade Oluwafemiayo and Bose Omolayo have clinched medals for Nigeria in the para-powerlifting event.

Nnamdi in the men's para-powerlifting event, successfully lifted 190kg but his total points of 132.5 could not secure the top spot as Malaysian Bonnie Gustin outclassed him with 154.6 points to clinch the gold medal.

Also on the podium was Mark Swan of Team England who garnered a total of 154.6 points to clinch the silver medal of the event.

In a related event, Obichukwu Ikechukwu won a silver medal in the men's heavyweight category of the para-powerlifting event. Meanwhile, in the women's category, Folashade Oluwafemiayo

and Bose Omolayo won gold and silver medals respectively to add to the medal haul of Team Nigeria.

Consecutively, both athletes with their lifts, broke the Commonwealth Games records until Oluwafemiayo went ahead to upset a world record with her final lift.

Also in the spotlight in Birmingham is Nwachuku Chiemia who clinched a gold medal in the women's para discus.

Chiemia did not only swell the ranks of Nigeria in the Commonwealth Games with a gold medal but also set a new world record of 36.56 having broken her old world record of 33.35 set five months ago.

Nigeria on the issues of Onyinyechi Mark and Latifat Tijani, who were disqualified in the finals of the women's event, has filed an appeal to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Aiteo Cup: Profligacy at goal caused our downfall, says Maikaba

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

Head coach of Rangers International FC, Abdul Maikaba has attributed their inability to progress to the round of 16 in the ongoing Aiteo/Federation Cup competition to the players' failure to convert golden opportunities that could have earned them a win at a regular time.

Maikaba said their challengers, Heartland of Owerri, were highly defensive at the back-line during the cracker at the Samuel Osaigbovo Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin City, Edo State.

In a post-match reaction, the football gaffer lamented that the final score of the game did not reflect what his team worked for or expected to happen.

Although he conceded to the defeat which ended in penalty shootouts where they lost 8-7 to Heartland of Owerri, Maikaba vowed to come back stronger the following season.

He said, "It was a very good game but I believe that our greatest undoing was not converting our numerous opportunities created during

the regular period as well as not holding onto our lead."

"We lost through penalties, which is one of those things in the game of football. This was not the result we worked for or wanted in the game but we take it in good faith and hope to come back stronger next season," Maikaba added.

According to Norbert Okolie, Media Officer of the club, the six-time national cup champions exited the competition after losing to Oriental rivals, Heartland FC after a pulsating penalty kick that saw the Owerri side picking the round of 16 tickets via an 8-7 win even when the Enugu side took a 29-minute lead through Ossy Martins who bundled home a Chidiebere Nwobodo' goal-bound effort off an inch-perfect pass from Ejike Uzoenyi.

Okolie noted that Ossy Martins could have killed off any fightback chances from the 'Naze Millionaires' but failed to convert on 47 minutes when he was free on goal after he was set up by Chidiebere Nwobodo while Godwin Paul was alert to push out a Samuel Pam' well struck free kick on 57 minutes before substitute, Nonso Nzediegwu reacted the fastest to stab home on 65 minutes a Murphy Ndukwu's



cross.

He said efforts by both sides to get the winning goal during regulation time failed to yield any dividend. In the marathon shoot-out, goalkeeper Paul Godwin became the hero for the Owerri side as he stopped Christian Madu's twice-taken kick even though, video checks showed he moved off his line before both kicks were taken, to send Heartland into the round of 16 where they are scheduled to trade tackles with Dakkada FC of Uyo in Asaba.

Meanwhile, Ejike Uzoenyi conceded that they were wasteful in front of the goal which caused the team's loss eventually.

He added that the team, who had all the avenues to triumph in the game, has taken responsibility for the loss.

He said, "We lost and we can't take it back. We played an excellent game but blew our chances, especially in the early part of the second half.

"This was a game we had in our hands and we take responsibility for this loss," he added.

Enugu Rangers finished last season in 5th position on the Nigeria Professional Football League table having amassed 56 points, 3 points above Nasarawa United in 6th and 2 points below Kwara United in 4th position.

FIFA U20 W' Cup: Falconets jet to Costa Rica

■ Danjuma unveils final list of 21

Twenty-one Falconets of Nigeria departed the country on Thursday to kickstart the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup campaign with an opening group C match against France on August 12 in Costa Rica.

Coach Chris Danjuma picked team captain Oluwatosin Demehin and 20 others - an overwhelming majority of whom were involved in the lengthy qualifying series - to wear Nigeria's colours at the 19-day championship.

The Falconets had to scale the hurdles presented by the Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Senegal, winning six of seven matches (they only drew with Cameroon in Douala) to be eligible to fly Africa's flag once more at the finals in Central America.

Aside from France, Nigeria play Canada and Korea Republic in Group C of the 16-nation tournament starting on 10th August, while 2018 runners-up Spain will tango with hosts Costa Rica, Australia and Brazil in Group A. Africa's other flagbearers Ghana are up against Cup holders Japan, the Netherlands and three-time champions United States of America in Group D.

Germany, who have also won the competition three times, including 2010 and 2014 when they beat Nigeria in the final, will play Colombia, New Zealand and Mexico in Group B.

All group phase and quarter-final matches will be played at the Alejandro Morera Soto, which is a hybrid of natural and

synthetic grass, called stitched grass. The semi-final, final and third place matches will take place at the Estadio Nacional.

Nigeria's first match of the competition will be against France, which hosted the 2018 edition. At the 2014 championship in Canada, Nigeria topped a group involving Korea Republic, beating the Koreans 2-1 in a group phase match. France finished in third place in the same competition as Nigeria finished as runners-up.

FALCONETS' FINAL TEAM FOR FIFA U20 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Goalkeepers: Nelly Ekeh, Monle Oyono, Peace Obidinma

Defenders: Oluwatosin Demehin, Omowunmi Oshobukola, Rofiat Imuran, Jumoke Alani, Chidinma Ogbuchi, Oluchi Ohaegbulem

Midfielders: Bashirat Amoo, Esther Onyenezide, Adoo Yina, Motunrayo Amoo, Chinyere Kalu, Deborah Abiodun

Forwards: Blessing Okpe, Joy Jerry, Mercy Idoko, Flourish Sabastine, Chioma Olise, Chiamaka Okwuchukwu

FIFA U20 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP COSTA RICA 2022

GROUP A: Costa Rica, Australia, Spain, Brazil

GROUP B: Germany, Colombia, New Zealand, Mexico

GROUP C: France, Nigeria, Canada, Korea Republic

GROUP D: Japan, The Netherlands, Ghana, USA

Abandoned Nigerian Olympian receives cash gift from Super Eagles Ahmed Musa

1983 Commonwealth gold medalist Bassey Etim who had been abandoned by Nigeria to degenerate to a level of sand filling potholes on Nigerian roads, received a N500,000 cash gift from Super Eagles captain Ahmed Musa in Lagos recently.

The athlete's predicament started when he was struck by injury while representing Nigeria in the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, United States.

Etim popularly known as 'Iron Bar' said he was practically abandoned by the country and left to his fate which resulted in him spending all his life savings



to treat himself in the USA.

According to the artiste, Oc Cares, the Cross Rivers State-born athlete was seen at the Ado/Badore road in Lagos doing due diligence to sand filling the failed sections, instigating him to reach out for help on social

media which eventually caught Musa's attention.

In a bid to contact the athlete, Musa who is the most capped Super Eagle, wrote on his Instagram account, "How can I get him pls."

The 56-year-old Etim claimed he volunteered to do the job as a way of giving back to the country despite being criticised by people over the ill-treatment meted on him by Nigeria.

"I sustained an injury and when I came back, Nigeria refused to take care of my injury, so I had to use my life savings to go back to America in September 1985 to take care of the injury,"

Etim lamented.

"But I still come out to volunteer myself to give back to my country,

"People are saying, why should I do that? They didn't care for you," he added.

However, on Thursday, August 4, 2022, Musa benevolently reached out to Etim.

"I just finished speaking with him now. I sent him N500,000," the 29-year-old, who plays in the Turkey Super Lig for Karagumruk, said.

This development has been confirmed by sports journalist Babajide Orevba who stated that Musa has sent the money to Etim.



Seth Sincere joins Kaunas Kalgiris on a two-year deal

A Lyga side Kaunas Žalgiris have signed Nigerian Seth Sincere until 2024 to bolster their defensive setup following the injuries that have affected two of its defensive players, Ben Anis and Jason Noslin.

The A Lyga club said the player has been training with the squad.

In a statement by the club, the 24-year-old started his football career at the Supreme Court and Rhapsody academies in Nigeria before he left for Turkey in 2017 to join Yeni Malatyaspor

club in Malatya.

He featured in the Turkish side U21 before he was promoted to the senior team to play in the Turkish topflight league.

To confirm the development, Sincere appreciated God for the opportunity to join the Lithuanian side adding that several of the club's players facilitated his settling down much easier.

He said he learnt a lot while in Turkey, playing at the highest level to boost his confidence

with the ball.

"First of all, I would like to thank God for this opportunity. When I arrived in Lithuania, I found many good football players who welcomed me kindly and made everything easier," the defender told the club.

"During the year I spent in Turkey, I really learned a lot, I played at a high level, and my confidence in my abilities increased a lot. I can't wait to make my debut in Lithuania," he added.

Kaunas Žalgiris explained that the 'defender who played 14 matches in the Turkish top division in 2019-2020, spent the season on loan at the second Turkish football league club "Bolusspor" and played 19 matches there'.

Sincere, during the contract negotiations, was overwhelmed with difficulties which emanated from visa issuance and details of his previous contract with the Turkish club.

He said, "I had problems

with the visa and the details of the former contract, which took too long. I'm glad it's in the past and I'm ready to commit to this club.

"I want to help the club in every possible way, so I will do everything the coaches ask of me," Sincere, who chose to wear jersey number 18, added.

The footballer has also represented Nigeria in international matches, especially in the 2016 Olympic Games where he won a bronze medal.



Gbenga Ogunbote departs Remo Stars

Club appoints Daniel Ogunmodede as successor

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

Head coach of Remo Stars Gbenga Ogunbote has left Nigeria Professional Football League side following the expiration of his contract, the Trumpet learnt.

Ogunbote who coached the Rangers International, guided Remo Stars to qualify for the CAF Confederation Cup with a third-place finish in the recently concluded NPFL season.

In a statement by the club on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, the CEO thanked the football gaffer for his contributions to bringing the club back to winning ways with a historic finish last season.

"We hereby announce the departure of our Head Coach,

Gbenga Ogunbote, following the expiration of his contract," Lookmon Ogungbefun said on behalf of CEO Kunle Somane.

"Our most sincere thanks go to Coach Gbenga who was unrelenting in his efforts to get the club back to competing at the top level as well as sealing a historic continental finish, for this, we wish him nothing but future success," he added.

Sky Blues Stars returned to the Nigeria topflight division at the close of the 2020-2021 NNL season after being relegated in the 2017-2018 NPFL season.

Consequently, Daniel Ogunmodede has been appointed in his stead and was unveiled on Friday, though the new coach has already taken charge and led the team to a three-nil defeat in the Aiteo Cup round of 32 to Akwa United.



NNL actions resume on Saturday – Organisers

The Nigeria National League (NNL), the second-tier division of the federation's football leagues, will commence actions on Saturday, August 6, 2022, to conclude the remaining fixtures of the season.

These actions are scheduled in a four-week time frame for clubs in group B2 while other groups have a two weeks time frame.

In a 'circular 212', dated August 3, 2022, and signed by the Chief Operating Officer, Emmanuel Adesanya, the NNL clubs by the notice are expected to kickstart preparations.

While the NNL organisers want fairness and a hitch-free event, they admonish the State Football Associations to ensure they uphold the integrity of the league.

The circular read: "We convey to you the warm regards of the Chairman, Management and Staff of the Nigeria National League.

"We write to humbly inform you that Nigeria National League matches for the remaining 4 weeks in Group B2 and 2 weeks in other groups have been scheduled to commence on Saturday 6th August, 2022 at the various designated centers.

"All Nigeria National League Clubs are by this circular requested to commence preparations to honour their league fixtures accordingly.

"The hosts State Football Associations concerned are also requested to ensure that the integrity of NNL League matches are not compromised.

"We regret the inconveniences our delay in resuming our league matches may have caused all clubs and stakeholders alike.

"While thanking you for your understanding, please accept our warmest sporting regards," the circular concluded.

Meanwhile, El Kanemi in group A1 presently top the table with 31 points, a point above Sokoto FC and City FC Abuja in second and third positions with 30 points.

In group A2, Doma United head the log with 36 points, 8 points above Jigawa Golden Stars, DMD FC and Malumfashi on 28 points to sit at the second, third and fourth places.

Also, Bendel Insurance have been in top form to dominate group B1 with 46 points edging out Gateway United from the top spot with a 10-point lead while in group B2, Bayelsa United though have the same 36 points as Crown FC, top the log with Warri Wolves trailing on 34 points.

Kasper Schmeichel joins Ramsey, signs for OGC Nice

Leicester City goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel has joined French Ligue 1 OGC Nice on a free transfer after Aaron Ramsey's move, to bring an end to his eleven years reign in the King Power Stadium.

The 35-year-old Danish who joined Leicester in 2011 from Leeds United to make 478 appearances in all competitions, played a vital role when the club lifted their maiden Premier League title in 2016.

In a statement by Leicester City Chairman, Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, to confirm the departure of Schmeichel, he described him as a captain who distinctively manned up his responsibilities.

Srivaddhanaprabha said the goalkeeper commanded leadership both on the field of play and off it

which was exceptional in all aspects of his life.

He said, "Throughout his time with us and particularly as a captain and vice-captain, Kasper has always been a player willing to stand up and take responsibility, leading the team with distinction.

"His influence and his leadership on and off the pitch speak volumes about him as a professional, as a football player and as a human being.

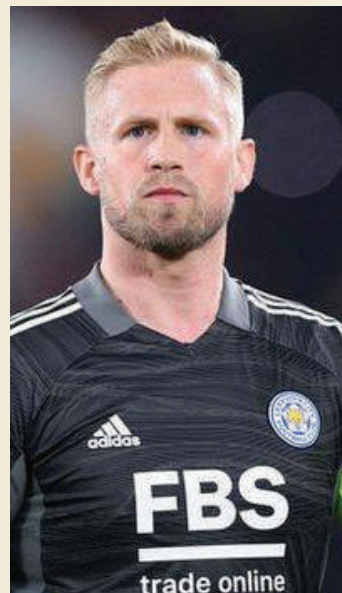
"I know Leicester City supporters share the respect we all have for a player of Kasper's standing after all his accomplishments as a footballer and captain and will join me in wishing him the very best for the next stage of his career in France with OGC Nice.

"It's clear to everyone who has

watched him perform that Kasper has given everything to Leicester City every time he has played and the experiences shared between him, the Club and our supporters over the last 11 years mean he will always remain a part of this family," Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha added.

Schmeichel started his career in the Manchester City youth side before he was loaned to Darlington in 2006. He underwent a loan spell in the Scottish league with Falkirk and also played for Cardiff, Bury, and Coventry before he joined Notts County permanently.

The Denmark international who has been capped 84 times for the national team, won the FA Cup, Community Shield and Championship titles during his time in England.



Arsenal Folarin Balogun moves to French Ligue 1

Nigerian Folarin Balogun has been sent by Arsenal on a season-long loan to Ligue 1 side Stade de Reims.

The forward, who grew through the ranks of the Arsenal youth system, made two Premier League appearances for the senior side in the first phase of last season.

In the second phase in January, Balogun joined Middlesbrough where he made 18 Championship appearances, netting 3 goals.

Like Reiss Nelson, who went for a season-long loan to Feyenoord and returned to become part of coach Mikel Arteta's squad for the season, Balogun could become an integral part of the Gunners' squad in the 2023-2024 campaign.

According to a statement by Arsenal on Balogun, who is eligible to play for the Nigerian senior men's national team, "The 21-year-old forward joined our academy in 2012 aged 10 and showcased

an impressive goalscoring record throughout youth football.

"The 2020/21 season saw Flo [Balogun] make his first-team debut, as well as signing a long-term contract with the club.

"The American-born striker made an immediate impact, following his breakthrough when he scored twice in the Europa League from just five substitute appearances.

"Flo [Balogun] spent the second half of last season on loan at

Championship side Middlesbrough, where he made 21 appearances in all competitions, scoring three goals and assisting three times.

"Everyone at Arsenal wishes Flo [Balogun] all the best this coming season with Stade de Reims.

"The loan deal is subject to the completion of regulatory processes," the statement concluded.

Consequent to completing this deal, Balogun said his commitment remains intact.