

# Commonwealth Games medal haul for Nigeria

■ Tobi Amusan, Ese Brume break records ■ Star hurdler becomes first African to win three championships in a year

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

■ Athletics boss Tonobok Okowa predicted feats

Nigeria recorded its name in the annals of world

athletics in the recently concluded World Athletics Championships in Oregon, United States where Tobi Amusan broke the 100m

global record to emerge champion.

Ese Brume also won a gold medal for Nigeria in the women's long

jump event after leaping a distance of 6.99m, to set another Commonwealth Games record.

Nigerian athletes' zeal

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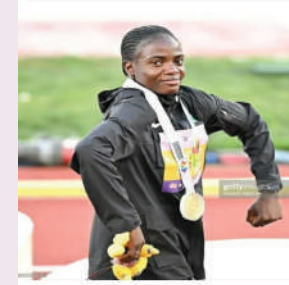
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# Stakeholders oppose Atiku's, Tinubu's campaign teams → 2



Amusan, Ofili, Chukwuma, Nwokocho Win Gold In Women's 4x100m

- TOBI AMUSAN...**
- 🏆 Nigerian champion
  - 🏆 African champion
  - 🏆 Commonwealth champion
  - 🏆 World champion
  - 🏆 World record holder



**Nigeria is currently 6th on the 2022 Commonwealth Games Medal Table and No. 1 in Africa.**

**Gold Medal count...**

- 1 Australia — 60
- 2 England — 50
- 3 Canada — 22
- 4 New Zealand — 17
- 5 India — 15
- 6 Nigeria — 10



Ese Brume

# Stakeholders oppose Atiku's, Tinubu's campaign teams

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

After barely coming out of rancours that greeted their choices of running mates, presidential candidates of All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, are facing fresh challenges over compositions of their campaign teams. September 28 is the official date for commencement of campaign activities.

While the APC last week unveiled the national presidential campaign council with the governor of Plateau State, Simon Lalong as Director General, the PDP is yet to constitute a standing committee to lead Atiku's.

Hardly had Lalong's appointment been made than his kinsmen rejected it, demanding the resignation of the governor from the committee.

Their grouse was against the placie of the North Central zone in the political calculation of the country.

The critical stakeholders, under the aegis of North Central APC Forum, asked Lalong to reject his appointment as APC presidential campaign DG on the ground that the position belittles the region.

The region demanded a better deal in the party.

Saleh Mandung Zazzaga on behalf of the Forum at the weekend in Jos said the North Central deserves the Presidency and not just a mere Campaign DG position. He lamented that the zone has neither produced the country's President or vice president since the return of the democratic dispensation in 1999.

He wondered how Tinubu or the party could trust someone from the zone to head the campaign when nobody from the region is said not to be qualified enough for the presidency or at least vice president position.

His words: "Our concern in the 2023 election is that of the North Central as either the President or Vice

President but we were denied because they considered us either not qualified or competent enough. But as it comes to Director General of the Presidential campaign, we suddenly became the most qualified.

"Ironically, it is the same Governor Simon Bako Lalong whom we have been canvassing support for as either president and then later as presidential running mate/ vice president, but the party discarded our call, that is suddenly being appointed as Director General of the parry's presidential campaign organisation. We spent lot of resources pushing for either the Presidential slot or vice president at different times and it was all over the media since last year.

"We therefore considered Lalong's appointment as insulting, degrading and making the region irrelevant in the political calculation of the country. We won't accept this because this is quite unfair and sort of relegating our people to the background.

"Thus is why we are calling on Governor Lalong to reject this offer and those celebrating his selection from the region should desist henceforth because this is a great slap on our face.

"We have been pushing for the good of the region in national political affairs all along but those who have neither lent voices, time and resources to our course are busy celebrating the relegation of our region in this 2023 election at the national level. This is quite insensitive, unfortunate and regrettable."

Should they pursue this agitation, APC and its candidate might be having a raw deal at the polls with Tinubu's chances reduced because of the strategic votes expectation from the region for the leading parties, APC, PDP and Labour Party.

Although neither Atiku nor the PDP has announced a campaign team, there is strong speculation of preference by the candidate for



Lalong

Sokoto State Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal.

The Trumpet learnt of a secret deal between Atiku and Tambuwal to make the latter Director General of the campaign.

This, it was gathered, was agreed upon after the historical stepping down of the governor for Atiku at the May 28 PDP presidential primarypoll which gave Atiku an edge

over Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike.

However, the arrangement may be suspended following realities on ground consequent upon a hint of reconciliation between Atiku and Wike.

Unconfirmed reports had it that one of the conditions demanded by Wike to settle with Atiku is that Tambuwal should not



Tambuwal

lead the campaign.

It was learnt that the Rivers State governor clearly told the mediator, Prof. Jerry Gana that he will not participate in the campaign should the party anchor it on Tambuwal.

This condition, it was further gathered, will form part of demands to be made by the Wike team when a larger reconciliation committee

meets to iron out issues between the two gladiators ahead of the campaigns.

Concerned stakeholders in the party agreed to sacrifice Tambuwal's ambition to lead the campaign. This is for peace to reign in the party and for the PDP to approach the nationwide campaign ahead of the 2023 polls.

## Gale of defections hits Delta APC, PDP

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO**, Asaba

A gale of defections is currently sweeping across the two major political parties in Delta State.

Already, the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party, PDP and the opposition All Progressive Congress, APC, have had their fair share of defections in the last few months after they conducted their primary elections which has seen dissatisfied members moving to the opposite divides.

However, the past four days have witnessed a massive turn of event, with the APC appearing to be the worst hit.

Amongst major defections that took place within the past four days, was the movement of Hon. Fidelis Adjogbe, younger brother to the former Executive Director of Project (EDP) Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Engr. Samuel Adjogbe, and former Majority Leader of Ughelli North Legislative arm, Hon. Desmond Okpako and over one hundred of their supporters from the APC to the PDP.

There is also the defection of the Secretary to Delta Political Vanguard (DPV) and Senior Special Assistant to Governor Okowa, Chief Wellington Monday Oyiso, who dumped both PDP and DPV for the APC.

Receiving Hon. Adjogbe and his political followers into the PDP fold, chairman of the party in Ughelli North LGA, Pastor Kess Numuoja, and other party executive and elders, assured the decampes of their support and encouragement.

The party chairman said, "PDP is the foundation of modern politics in Nigeria. It is the largest political party in Africa. The symbol of our party is umbrella. I want to tell you that, the umbrella is big enough to accommodate everyone. We don't discriminate or look down on people in our party.

"No doubt, this is your own party. We are very happy to receive you and your teeming followers back to your party PDP. You are like a lost child and we are happy to find you with so many followers like this. With people like you in the

party now, victory is sure in Evwreni ward and also in the local government area.

Responding to the chairman's speech, Hon. Fidelis Adjogbe who was highly elated during the event said, "As many of us are aware, PDP was our original party. We were just like children who thought, their mother was no longer the best cook they used to know until they tasted other people's food. In this case, we have tasted other people's food and discovered our mother's food is still the best.

"Truly, we went out to join another party based on circumstances beyond our control. Unfortunately, we discovered that PDP still remains the best political party in Nigeria. It's the best in my ward, Evwreni ward. We can never regret coming back to the PDP as our own party.

"We want to inform you that for us in Evwreni ward, Governor Okowa's project is our own project and it's dear to our heart. This is just the beginning. More persons are going to join us in PDP in Evwreni ward.

Therefore, we can assure you that victory for all PDP candidates is certain and uncontestable in Evwreni ward in the 2023 general elections," he said.

Also speaking, Hon. Desmond Okpako, in his remarks, said he was happy and pleased to return home to the party that gave him the mandate to serve his people.

On his part, Chief Wellington Monday Oyiso who was also a Frontline aspirant for the Ethiopia West Constituency Seat in the state Assembly via a letter he personally signed and addressed to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, said his reasons for resigning were personal and thanked the governor for having him in his core team.

Oyiso immediately had a close-door meeting with the deputy governorship candidate of the APC in Delta, Friday Ossai Osanebi.

This is just as the Ovie Omo-Agege gubernatorial candidacy of the APC is gathering momentum, following the unveiling of Osanebi, the empowerment master, as his running mate.



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# Commonwealth Games medal haul for Nigeria

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to triumph and dominate the world of athletics did not end in Oregon. Team Nigeria, after being charged by Youth and Sports Development minister Sunday Dare, to be good ambassadors as they fly the country's flag, consistently, in various sports competitions, harvested medals meritoriously.

Remarkably, the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England played host to 93 competitors comprising 41 men and 52 women in seven major sports namely, Athletics, Boxing, Judo, Para powerlifting, Table tennis, Weightlifting and Wrestling, with Team Nigeria hauling a total of 32 medals so far.

Recall that Nigeria, in the last Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia, was ranked ninth in the championship that was competed by 88 athletes after hauling 24 medals that comprised 9 gold, 9 silver and 6 bronze.

However, the superlative 2022 Team Nigeria have improved on their earlier record in Gold Coast to scoop 11 gold, 8 silver and 13 bronze medals to be ranked 6th in the country's 15th appearance at the Commonwealth Games.

Among the crop of athletes that shot Nigeria to the podium in Birmingham, is Nwachukwu Chiemera who won the gold medal in the Women's Para Discus event with a throw of 36.56 to set a new commonwealth record, surpassing her previous feat.

Nasiru Sule in the men's para singles in table tennis clinched the silver medal with a 3-5 win to climb the podium in Birmingham.

In the men's freestyle 57kg event, our, Ebikewenimo Welson finished with a silver medal after he lost to India's Kumar Ravi. In the women's freestyle 50kg wrestling event, Miesinnei Genesis snatched the gold medal after she humbled Canadian Meddison Park.

Cynthia Ogunsemilore, in her surge to snap the gold medal, was defeated by Any Sara Broadhurst of Northern Ireland to settle for the bronze medal. Ogbonna John won the bronze medal in the men's

freestyle 74kg event after he defeated England's Charlie Bowling.

Also in wrestling, Team Nigeria got a silver medal after Hannah Reuben lost to Canada's Justina di Stasio in the final fight. In boxing, Nigeria's duo, Jacinta Umunnakwe and Ifeanyi Onyekwere, won bronze medals in separate categories.

As aforementioned, world champion and record holder Tobi Amusan has broken the Commonwealth Games record to set hers of 12.30s in the 100m event at the Alexander Stadium, Birmingham.

It was her second feat in the Commonwealth Games.

The 25-year-old, who in the build-up to the final round dominated her challengers, floored Jamaican silver medalist Devynne Charlton on 12.58s and England's Cindy Sember on 12.59s to ignite the ecstatic crowd.

Prior to the final contest, specifically on Saturday, the President of the Athletic Federation of Nigeria (AFN), Tonobok Okowa, believed Nigerian athletes will win more gold medals before the conclusion of the games with much emphasis on Tobi Amusan to successfully defend her title and set a new record.

Tonobok referred to the global record holder as a star in the world of athletics, who will become the first Nigerian athlete to successfully defend her title in Birmingham.

Amusan won the title in 2018 in Gold Coast, Australia, and has successfully defended it with the game's record to complement her feat. With this achievement by the athlete, she became the second sprint hurdler after Australian Sally Pearson (2010, 2014) to defend the 100m title in Commonwealth Games. Why hers is spectacular is that she set a new games record in the process.

"Tobi has proved to be a big occasion athlete and exhibited it at the World Championships in Oregon, USA last month where she not only made history as the first Nigerian to be crowned a world champion but also the first Nigerian athlete to set a world record," Okowa



Amusan

said.

"She will be defending the Commonwealth Games title she won four years ago in the Gold Coast, Australia and the entire athletics family in Nigeria is behind our golden girl who has exhibited the can-do spirit of an average Nigerian," the AFN President added.

Amusan had earlier broken the Commonwealth Games record of 12.65s set in 2006 by Jamaica's Brigitte Foster-Hylton also with her 12.40s attained in the semi-final but it was rendered untenable by a 2.4m/s tailwind.

Despite the setback, the undeterred Ijebu Ode-born sprint hurdler finally broke the 16 years record with a 12.30s run.

Spectacularly, Amusan has become the first Nigerian athlete to win gold at the African

Championships, the Commonwealth Games and the World Championships in the same year.

In athletics, Favour Ofili clinched the silver medal in the women's 200m final after Jamaican Elaine Thompson Herah ran 22.02s ahead of her 22.51s. Also in Athletics, the quartet of Tobi Amusan, Favour Ofili, Rosemary Chukwuna and Grace Nwokocha clinched the gold medal in the 4x400m. In the male category, Udodi Onwuzurike, Favour Ashe, Alaba Akintola and Raymond Ekevwo won the bronze medal with 38.81s to trail gold medalist England on 38.35s and silver medalist Trinidad and Tobago.

As also pointed out earlier, African record holder Ese

Brume has broken the Commonwealth Games record in long jump event to win another gold medal for Nigeria in Birmingham.

Brume, who emerged a silver medalist in the World Athletics Championships in Oregon, was unavailable in Gold Coast 2018 edition in Australia to defend the title she won as an U20 athlete in Glasgow, Scotland, eight years ago.

However, the athlete like her compatriot Tobi Amusan who broke the 100m record in the ongoing Commonwealth Games, recorded a 6.99m thrust in her second attempt after her first was disqualified.

Resultantly in her final attempt, she recorded an astronomical jump of 7.00m to win a gold medal

for Nigeria that none of her competitors could match.

Prior to reaching this distance, the Deltan-born long jumper also recorded 6.97m in one of her attempts.

In a statement, Tonobok Okowa, President of Athletic Federation of Nigeria (AFN), on Saturday, also described Brume as the only athlete that has been consistent in winning medals in major athletics events.

Okowa said, "Ese is also one of the athletes that has served Nigeria meritoriously. She is the only Nigerian athlete who has won medals at every and all major athletics championships and game."

The medal won by Ese Brume has increased the number of gold medals of Nigeria to 12.



Former Nigerian athletics stars, Mary Onyali (Sprints) and Orode Mo Oyiki (110m hurdles) at the ongoing Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England at the weekend.

# SERAP, CJID sue Buhari over terrorism reporting

## •Want 'unlawful fines' on Daily Trust, others overturned

A lawsuit has been filed against President Muhammadu Buhari, asking the court to "declare arbitrary and illegal the N5 million imposed on Trust TV, Multichoice Nigeria Limited, NTA-Startimes Limited and TelCom Satellite Limited, over their documentaries on terrorism in the country."

Joined in the suit as defendants are Mr Lai Mohammed, Minister of Information and Culture, and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC).

The suit was instituted by Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID).

The NBC had last week imposed the fines on the media houses, claiming that their documentaries "glorified the activities of bandits and undermines national security in Nigeria", and contravene the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code.

But in the suit FHC/L/CS/1486/2022 filed at the Federal High Court, Lagos, SERAP and CJID are seeking: "an order setting aside the arbitrary and illegal fines of N5 million and any other penal sanction unilaterally imposed by the NBC on these media houses simply for carrying out their constitutional duties."

According to the plaintiffs: "The NBC and Mr Lai Mohammed have not shown that the documentaries by the media houses would impose a specific risk of harm to a legitimate State interest that outweighs the public interest in the information provided by the documentaries."

"The documentaries by these independent media houses pose no risk to any definite interest in national security or public order."

"It is inconsistent and incompatible with the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended] to invoke the grounds of 'glorifying terrorism and banditry' as justifications for suppressing access to information of legitimate public interest that does not harm national security."

"The documentaries by the independent media houses are in the public interest, and punishing the media houses simply for raising public awareness about these issues would have a disproportionate and chilling effect on their work, and on the work of other journalists

and Nigerians.

"The action by the NBC and Mr Lai Mohammed is arbitrary, illegal, and unconstitutional, as it is contrary to section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution, and international human rights treaties including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which Nigeria has ratified."

The suit filed on behalf of the plaintiffs by their lawyers Kolawole Oluwadare and Ms Adelanke Aremo, read in part: "A fine is a criminal sanction and only the court is empowered by the Constitution to impose it. Fine imposed by regulatory agencies like the NBC without recourse to the courts is unfair, illegal, and unconstitutional."

"The grounds of 'glorifying terrorism and banditry' used as the bases for sanctioning the media houses are entirely contrary to constitutional and international standards on freedom of expression and access to information."

"Imposing any fine whatsoever without due process of law is arbitrary, as it contravenes the principles of nemo iudex in causa sua which literally means one cannot be a judge in his own cause and audi alteram partem which means no one should be condemned unheard."

"Article 19 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes the right to freedom of opinion without interference. Article 19(2) establishes Nigeria's obligations to respect 'the right to freedom of expression,' which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, regardless of frontiers."

"Under article 19(3), restrictions on the right to freedom of expression must be 'provided by law', and necessary 'for respect of the rights or reputations of others' or 'for the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health and morals'."

"Although article 19(3) recognizes 'national security' as a legitimate aim, the Human Rights Council, the body charged with monitoring implementation of the Covenant, has stressed 'the need to ensure that the invocation of national security is not used unjustifiably or arbitrarily to restrict the right to freedom of opinion and expression.'"

"The grounds for imposing fines on these independent media houses fail to meet the requirements of legal-

ity, necessity, and proportionality.

"The requirement of necessity also implies an assessment of the proportionality of the grounds, with the aim of ensuring that the excuse of 'glorifying terrorism and banditry' and 'national security' are not used as a pretext to unduly intrude upon the rights to freedom of expression and access to information."

The plaintiffs are also seeking the following reliefs:

1. A DECLARATION that the act of the Defendants imposing a fine of Five Million Naira each on the independent media houses is unlawful, inconsistent with, and amounts to a breach of the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and therefore a violation of the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and media freedom;

2. A DECLARATION that the use of the Broadcasting Code by the NBC to impose sanctions on the independent media houses for an alleged infractions without recourse to the court constitutes an infringement on the provisions of sections 6[1]

& [6][b] and 36[1] of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 and Articles 1 and 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Nigeria is a state party;

3. A DECLARATION that the provisions of the National Broadcasting Commission Act and the Nigeria Broadcasting Code which are arbitrarily being used by the Defendants to sanction, harass, intimidate and restrict the independent media houses are inconsistent and incompatible with sections 36[1], 39 and 22 of the Nigerian Constitution, Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and are null and void to the extent of their inconsistency and incompatibility;

4. A DECLARATION that the Defendants lack the legal power and authority to impose penalty unlawfully and unilaterally, including fines, suspension, withdrawal of license or any form of punishment whatsoever on the independent media houses for promoting access to diverse opinions

and information on issues of public importance;

5. AN ORDER OF COURT setting aside of the fine of Five Million Naira imposed by the Defendants, through the 3rd Defendant, each on Trust TV, Multichoice Nigeria Limited, TelCom Satellite Limited (TSTV) and NTA-Startimes Limited for televising the documentary by the British Broadcasting Corporation "BBC Africa Eye" titled "Bandits Warlords of Zamfara";

6. AN ORDER OF PERPETUAL INJUNCTION restraining the Defendants or any other authority, persons or group of persons from unlawfully shutting down, imposing fine, suspension, withdrawal of license or doing anything whatsoever to harass and intimidate or impose criminal punishment on the independent media houses or any of Nigeria's journalists and media houses for promoting access to diverse information on issues of public importance;

7. AND any other order or other order(s) that the Court deems fit to make in the circumstances

No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit.



L-R: Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; his Deputy, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat; Managing Director, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Engr. (Mrs) Abimbola Akinajo and Director, Rail Transportation, LAMATA, Engr. Oluksunmi Okusaga during the inspection of the ongoing works on the Red Rail project sites, on Sunday, August 07, 2022.

## No zone will be cheated in PDP administration, Okowa pledges

Delta State Governor Ifeanyi Okowa and Vice Presidential Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has said he was on the political grouping's apex ticket because "it's God's will."

He said the party's rescue mission for Nigeria was a divine project, and assured that no geopolitical zone in the country would be cheated in a PDP-run Federal Government.

Okowa gave the assurance while addressing PDP stakeholders in Anambra at the Constituency Office of Senator Uche Ekwunife in Awka.

He said that the presidential election in February, 2023 would be won by the PDP "because of the things that I know and I see and whole lot of things going on".

"Looking at what I am seeing this afternoon, I am worried because both APGA and Labour Party are in trouble.

"I must thank the men and the women here for standing strong for the PDP. The party in Anambra will come out alive and will remain strong."

"I can assure you that actions are being taken to ensure that we do the right thing in Anambra State. Nobody will right off Anambra when you have people like these in the party."

"I know that there is a Presidential candidate from Anambra but I know that Anambra and Ndigbo will play a major role in the next political dispensation as no zone will be left out and no zone will be cheated because we have equal opportunities for all."

"In the last seven years the South East had not gotten its fair share in this country and we cannot afford to continue in that route."

"When we went to Osun State

they never gave us a chance but when the result came we had a very wonderful result."

"By God's grace we will win that election by a landslide because if God had not endorsed it, He would not have allowed me to be on the ticket," he said.

He commended the Anambra party stakeholders for standing strong for the party, saying "I must thank all of you for standing strong because in politics it takes a man who has knowledge and wisdom to know the direction to take their people to."

"A lot of people are being deceived and when we speak about the need to unite Nigeria people think that we are mistaken."

"I have political wisdom that God gave to me because I understood politics very well and it is not possible to have an accidental

President.

"When people talk about Muslim-Muslim ticket am being careful because I don't want to get involved in religious politics."

"But Nigeria is better off standing united as we are and it behoves on all Nigerians to be on board to dig us out of the pit that the APC has put the country."

"It is for us to stay committed stay strong to that structure that God has given us to enable us take back power from the ruling party."

"The insecurity and economic challenges facing Nigeria today requires a united people to resolve it."

"Nigeria must work for all with everybody participating in the working and sharing of the dividends and we must work as a team to rescue and redeem Nigeria."

"My principal and I understand

all the issues and I can assure you that we have all it takes to bring a fair deal for our people and other parts of the country."

In his welcome remarks, Senator Ben Obi lauded Governor Okowa for always identifying with the PDP in Anambra and for always helping them to resolve issues in the party.

He pledged that the party would reciprocate Okowa's kind gesture by supporting the Presidential ambition of Atiku Abubakar and Dr Ifeanyi Okowa.

Ekwunife who is the senator representing Anambra Central Senatorial District said the party is formidable in the state despite losing out from the last governorship election. She assured of the support and goodwill of the people of Anambra to the Atiku-Okowa project.

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# Jonathan, Diri, minister, others eulogise Bayelsa monarch At 97

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan, Governor Douye Diri, Minister of Water Resources, Engr. Suleiman Adamu, captains of industry and literary giants were among dignitaries at the 97th birthday celebration of King Christian Otobotekere, the Amananaowei of Tombia community in Ekpetiama Kingdom in Bayelsa State.

At the event held on Saturday at the DSP Alamiyeseigha Memorial Banquet Hall in Yenagoa, former President Jonathan extolled the virtues of one of Nigeria's longest serving monarchs.

The former Nigerian leader described the royal father, who ascended the throne in 1975, as a man of many parts that deserved to be celebrated.

Represented by the Obanobhan of Olei (Oloibiri Kingdom) in Ogbia Local Government Area of the state, King Amalate Turner, Dr. Jonathan said Otobotekere is an Ijaw icon and role model that the state and the entire Ijaw nation owe a debt of gratitude.

Jonathan lauded the monarch for a fruitful time on the throne, which he said he used to promote social justice and the well-being of his people.

His words: "His Highness is a man of many parts, who has excelled in life and gives us reason to celebrate. He is a gift

to the state and Ijaw nation at large and we owe him a debt of gratitude.

"I appreciate the government and other family members who put this event together. Our father is indeed a good father and a role model to many.

"As a monarch, he has ruled with truth and grace and has continued to promote social justice. I am happy that we gathered to celebrate a living legend, a success story with traits our children should emulate."

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, also expressed delight that the monarch was being celebrated while alive.

He stressed the need for Bayelsans and humanity at large not to wait until death to celebrate the achievements of humans.

While paying tributes to the Tombia monarch, he urged families to review their values so as to raise responsible children like the royal father and in order for the state and society at large to be a better place to live in.

He said: "I am truly elated that we are not celebrating this man at his death. Today, the Otobotekere family decided to celebrate their father while he is alive. Let this be a turning point.

"For us as government, we have been preaching love and unity and this celebration exemplifies that.

"It had not been all rosy for

our father and mentor. At a point, he was kidnapped. If he had died, we will not be here celebrating.

"I call on families to review their value system. Parents must bring back the kind of values we are celebrating today. I am sure that if we reflect we will all go back to the good old days.

"His Highness is a man of many parts. I invite all of us that even in politics, let us not play politics of bitterness.

Governor Diri noted that the gathering, which had people from different divides, exemplified the significance of love and unity that his administration preaches.

He emphasised that without love and peaceful coexistence among people of the state, development will be elusive.

While cautioning against unnecessary actions and utterances that cause disaffection among leaders of the state, the Bayelsa helmsman said he holds all leaders in the state in high esteem and enjoys a good relationship with them, including his predecessor, Senator Seriake Dickson.

He noted with sadness recent social media reports suggesting a rift with the immediate past governor of the state, saying he did not authorise any of such reports.

"I appeal to all those involved in social media attacks. I and my government will continue to respect leaders that have contributed



Former President Goodluck Jonathan

to the development of this state. I have never authorised anybody to do any social media nonsense against our leaders and I will not do it."

In his remarks, the Minister for Water Resources, Engr. Suleiman Adamu, thanked God for keeping the celebrant up to 97 years and for giving him a purposeful life.

He said having worked with his daughter, Dame Didi Walsong-Jack, as Permanent Secretary of his ministry, he had no doubt that the celebrant inculcated the

right values in his children.

He said the monarch has built a name for himself and urged his children to protect the legacy, stressing that it was the best gift they can give to him.

During a review of two of the monarch's new books: "At One With The Spirit" and "Background Report", renowned poet, literary critic and author, Odia Ofeimun, described him as a literary giant who has inspired many and shaped society through his literary works.



Mohammed Ali

## Police foil kidnapping attempt, rescue victim, kill one suspected armed robber

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

Operatives of the Delta State Police Command have foiled a kidnapping operation and rescued an abducted victim in the process.

The operatives, who were attached to the State Anti-Cult Unit (SACU) alongside a patrol team from Sapele Division on 6th August, 2022, were said to have embarked on a special duty when they intercepted three suspected kidnapers in a Toyota Camry.

It was gathered that the suspects, in a bid to escape, refused to stop for a search instead they drove against traffic along Okirigwe road, Sapele but were given a hot chase by the Policemen until they got to a dead end.

The Command's spokesperson, DSP Bright Edefe, who confirmed

the incident in a statement on Sunday, said the suspects jumped from the vehicle and escaped through a crowded place.

"The Policemen professionally did not open fire as the reason while they were running has not been established and did not want to hurt innocent persons in the process.

"When the team got to the abandoned vehicle, they saw a victim (name withheld) tied inside the car who was kidnapped by the suspects. He was rescued unhurt and has since reunited with his family.

"Exhibits recovered includes, one locally made short gun, one cutlass and their operational vehicle which is suspected to have been stolen. Effort to arrest the fleeing suspects is ongoing," Edefe added.

Meanwhile, Anti-Crime Patrol team attached to 'A' Division

Warri on 5th August 2022 killed a suspected armed robber.

The deceased and two other members of his gang had engaged the policemen in a gun battle after they attempted to escape in a tricycle.

"On 05/08/2022, at about 1715hrs, Anti crime patrol attached to 'A' Division Warri were on Stop and search duty at Iyara road when they intercepted a tricycle with three male occupants.

"The suspects surprisingly reversed the tricycle and sped off, the team upon suspicion went after them till they got to chevron Clinic road in Warri. The hoodlums opened fire on the Policemen and the team equally responded.

"In the process, one of the Suspects was maimed while others escaped. The injured suspect was taken to the hospital

where he gave up the ghost while receiving treatment.

"One locally made cut-to-size gun with six live cartridges and two expanded cartridges were recovered. Serious manhunt for the other members of the gang is ongoing," Edefe said.

The Commissioner of Police, Ari Mohammed Ali while appreciating the efforts of Deltans in the fight against crime and criminality, urged residents to be patient especially when they encounter Policemen on the road performing stop and search duty.

He noted that Stop and search is one of the proactive ways in combating crime and nipping it at the bud.

"The CP assures all residents in the State that the Command remains committed in carrying out its core mandate which is the protection of life and property," Edefe added.

# Renewed sense of urgency on tobacco control funding

By PHILIP JAKPOR

Tobacco industry political activity remains a largely overlooked obstacle in the development and implementation of policies to regulate industry activities. From their marketing strategies to their so-called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and their buying of scientific and other expertise to create controversy about established facts, the tobacco industry is never away from duty.

Tonnes of formerly secret internal tobacco industry documents reveal their involvement in legal, political, and socially important issues and confirm that they are not disposed to act morally or responsibly. A tobacco industry former executive once stated: "Our goal is to help shape regulatory environments that enable our businesses to achieve their objectives." He went on to add that the company will "act aggressively with all available resources, against any attempt, from any quarter, to diminish its ability to manufacture products efficiently and market them effectively".

What remains clear as crystal is that tobacco companies and their proxies are unwavering and continue to convey their false narratives through direct and indirect lobbying, through the advancement of voluntary codes and alternative policies and through the creation of alliance with other industrial sectors.

In Nigeria, not much research is needed to unearth these kinds of activities by the industry. In 2020, the Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) and other anti-tobacco groups learnt of a proposed Draft Policy on Conventional Tobacco and Non-Combusted Alternatives to Cigarette Smoking allegedly sent to the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment by the tobacco industry.

As anticipated, the promoters of the document deliberately bypassed the government focal point on tobacco control, the Federal Ministry of Health, with the intent of creating a conflict. The proposal which is consistent with the advocacy for so-called less harmful products by corporations like Philip Morris International (PMI) falls flat on arguments when weighed side by side the



Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie E. Ehanire

proven life-saving propositions in the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC).

Article 5.3 of the WHO-FCTC equally mandates Parties to ensure that tobacco or tobacco products control policies are implemented over and above any contrary interest of the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry because of the inherent and irreconcilable conflict of interest between public health policy goals and the commercial interests of the tobacco industry.

Although the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment did not respond to civil society demands to comment on the draft policy, the industry action itself represented a consistent pattern that the tobacco industry employs at any point tobacco control legislation is about to take root in any country.

It can be said however,

that the disturbing episode was pivotal to the growing momentum for adequate and sustained funding for Nigeria's tobacco control efforts in view of the widely held view of the public health community that if government agencies are starved of funds to enforce tobacco control laws, the tobacco industry will exploit the opportunity to "intervene" to gain good public rating and ultimately stall regulation of any sort.

Such so-called interventions in the form of CSR are carried out by British American Tobacco Nigeria Foundation (BATNF) in partnership with the federal and virtually all the state ministries of agriculture and given undue publicity especially in the virtual space. The engagements are largely driven by the need for the involved government agencies to fill funding void.

Ironically, Section 8 (2) of the National Tobacco Control Act 2015 and Sections 23 and

26 of the National Tobacco Control Regulations 2019 offer ready funding opportunities for tobacco control which the Federal Government is yet to exploit. Explicitly, the Act and its Regulations provide for annual budgetary allocations, gifts, donations, testamentary dispositions, subventions, license fees, and proceeds of sale of forfeited items to go into the Tobacco Control Fund.

In 2021, six years after the National Tobacco Control Act 2015 was signed into law, an account was set up for the Fund. There is however a lingering question as to whether the Federal Ministry of Health and the relevant agencies tasked with ensuring the account is funded are seizing the opportunity that the Tobacco Control legislations are offering to raise funds.

It is worth reiterating that stymieing industry efforts on one front doesn't necessarily stop the industry's advance on another front. In as much

as there is progress in enforcing some sections of the National Tobacco Control Act, the Federal Government must prosecute the tobacco war with tact and demonstrate seriousness in establishing measures to limit interactions between public officials and the tobacco industry.

As calls increase for the full enforcement of the Graphic Health Warnings Policy and e ban on Tobacco Advertising Promotion and Sponsorships (TAPS), so will the need for funding such exercises grow. Therefore, the Federal Government must realise that the battle against tobacco remains a war of numbers. Needless delay means more deaths and more tobacco addicts and as such prevaricating will only keep the industry ahead in the game.

•*Jakpor, Director of Programmes, Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa, writes from Lagos*



## Acting CJN to reposition Judiciary, unveil reform

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Acting Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) and Chairman of the National Judicial Council (NJC), Justice Oluwakayode Ariwoola, is set to launch a major reform that will reposition the Judiciary.

It was gathered that the unveiling of the sweeping reform is reportedly billed for the resumption of the new legal year in September.

It is, however, not clear if the CJN would be announcing the reform package during the traditional ceremony that heralds every new legal year.

A source who spoke to journalists said Justice Ariwoola is currently putting the reform package together, taking into consideration, inputs from other justices, the Bar, prominent senior lawyers, top system operators and other critical stakeholders.

Justices of the Supreme Court have also been broken into committees headed by senior justices to superintend an ongoing internal reform in the apex court.

It was learned that each committee has four members, making a total of three committees for the 12 Justices of the court.

The CJN was said to have recused himself from direct participation in the internal cleansing exercise to give his colleagues unfettered access to all the activities of the court.



Oluwakayode Ariwoola

Senior administrative officers of the court have also been reportedly directed by the CJN to open all financial books of the court to the Justices.

This move has been applauded by insiders and major stakeholders as the right step at re-injecting accountability and probity into the system after the financial controversies that trailed the exit of his predecessor-in-office, Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad.

It was also gathered that the focus of the reform package is mainly to make courts in the country more effective and functional,

as a way of inspiring a revival of populace confidence in the Judiciary.

The Bench currently scores low with the citizenry, but the source assured that the coming reform would take care of most of the issues leading to the poor rating of the Judiciary.

"He is focused on strengthening the courts and he is working on the reform package, to achieve that. He knows what he wants to achieve with the position he occupies. Suggestions have been made to him and he is working on them. By the time the new legal year resumes, the reform should be out" the source said

Meanwhile, the NJC has resumed the monitoring of judges handling alleged corruption cases around the country. The exercise is being undertaken by a special committee known as Corruption and Financial Crime Cases Trial Monitoring Committee, (CONTRIMCO).

The committee was put in place by former Chief Justice Walter Onnoghen in November 2017 as an anticorruption weapon of the Bench against errant judges handling alleged corruption cases. The committee was christened by the media as looters' trial panel.

The Justice Suleiman Galadima-led committee was in limbo for the three years that Justice Tanko was in office.

The new leadership has now reactivated

it. On Thursday, the committee rounded off a tour of five South-West states, excluding Lagos State which it had earlier visited.

This comes as the leadership of the Court of Appeal is launching an all-out war against purveyors of what is deemed as fake news within the system.

Media materials in recent times have targeted the leadership of the President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem.

A senior administrative staff said the attacks have been discovered to seek a termination of her headship of the court.

She had a tough time landing the job, despite being the most senior justice of the intermediate court when the position became vacant in March 2020. Fiery social critic and former military governor of Kaduna State, Colonel Abubakar Dangiwa Umar, in a blistering open letter dated May 31, 2020 to President Buhari, noted the move to bypass Justice Dongban-Mensem for a Northern Muslim.

President Buhari eventually nominated her in substantive capacity, after widespread criticism of the delay. Mensem is a Christian from the North-Central zone and a group within the Judiciary is reportedly seeking a regime change at the court to bring a Muslim in.

She is accused of stalling overseas travel for justices of the court during the COVID pandemic. Before his resignation, Tanko as CJN faced similar accusation, among others.

## NBA asks Okowa to dismantle illegal roadblocks in Delta

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has faulted the erection of illegal roadblocks across major roads by an unrecognised taskforce in Delta State.

NBA asked Governor Ifeanyi Okowa to dismantle the illegal roadblocks.

The Warri, Delta State Branch of the NBA made the call in a communique issued at the end of its general meeting held at the weekend.

Chairman of the branch, Chief Oghenero Okoro and S.G. Edigbonuvie, Esq., who signed the communique, lamented the spate of insecurity along the Effurun-Oghara axis of the Benin-Warri Road, urging the governor to clear herdsmen along the Eku-Abraka Road

and neighbouring bushes due to the security threat they pose to commuters and residents of the area.

"The Warri-Benin Road, a federal high way, particularly the Effurun to Oghara portion of it, has been totally taken over by miscreants and other non-state actors who in the guise of one taskforce or the other have mounted road blocks on every metre of the road.

"Some government agencies like the NSCDC and Delta State revenue task forces, rather than check these miscreants, have also joined them in inflicting pain on commuters on this road.

"Between the Effurun Roundabout in Effurun and Oghara Junction in Ethiope-West local government area, about 32 illegal roadblocks are mounted by these non-state actors.

"This is excluding the ones mounted by the police. These roadblocks do not only make commuting on the Effurun to Oghara portion of the Warri-Benin highway difficult but also causes damage to vehicles," the communique said.

It further added, "There have also been reports of robberies and attacks on citizens at night by criminals taking advantage of the logs and barricades left on the road at these roadblocks.

"That the security state of the Eku-Abraka road and also the Ohoror-Bomadi road is now very alarming. Fulani herdsmen have reportedly taken over the entire stretch of the Eku-Abraka road, daily kidnapping, killing, raping and maiming our people."



Ifeanyi Okowa

## Stratification of legal profession by SANs reckless, Falana warns

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Human rights activist, Femi Falana (SAN) has added his voice to the recent controversies rocking the legal profession.

In the past few weeks, various constituting blocs and prominent lawyers have been taking sides against each other on various issues ranging from the just concluded elections into National offices, the alleged client solicitation scandal involving a Partner at the law firm of the Chairman of the Body of Benchers, Wole Olanipekun SAN, the controversial letter of the NBA President, Olumide Akpata for the resignation of the BoB Chair, and subsequent reactions from Senior Lawyers who have mostly berated the letter.

Falana while reacting to the developments, warned against the entrenchment of class stratification within the Association by Senior Lawyers. According to him, such stratification which he described as "reckless", led to the abolition of the rank of Queen's Counsel in the first republic, and fears recent actions by Senior Advocates may reawaken an agitation by junior lawyers for the abolition of the rank of Senior Advocate.

"Ours is a class society. Hence, some senior

lawyers are bent on sustaining the status quo. It is doubtful if such senior lawyers are aware that the reckless stratification of the legal profession into inner and outer bar led to the abolition of the rank of Queen's Counsel (QC) in the first republic.

"The rank was, however, reintroduced as Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) under the defunct military junta in 1975.

"I won't be surprised if young lawyers are compelled to resume the campaign for the abolition of the rank of SAN!," the learned Silk stated.

He cited examples of similar common law jurisdictions where the rank of Queen's Counsel or Senior Advocate has been abolished as a result of agitation by junior lawyers.

"Like Nigeria, Ghana had abolished the rank of Queen's Counsel. In 1990, the members of the Ghana Bar Association had resolved to institute the rank of Senior Advocate of Ghana (SAG). But it was struck down by the High Court of Ghana in the case of Ward-Brew vs. Ghana Bar Association (NO 1) [1993-94] 2 GLR 439-453.

"In the UK and many other commonwealth law countries, the campaign for the abolition of the QC and similar ranks has not ceased,"

Falana added.

He also canvassed that rather than engage in unhelpful and unhealthy bickering, lawyers, both Senior and Junior, should come together and focus on using the law to effect change in our country.

"It is in the interest of senior and junior lawyers to have one virile and indivisible bar. Instead of engaging in sterile debates we should use the law to address insecurity in the society, mismanagement of the economy, grand corruption, human rights abuse of the masses and unemployment of young lawyers.

"For instance, the Attorney-General of the Federation has refused to prosecute 400 sponsors of the satanic boko haram sect and 61,000 terror suspects detained in the north east zone.

"The Police Establishment Act, 2020 prescribe that a legal practitioner shall be assigned to every police station in Nigeria. Since there are not less than 5,000 police stations that means job opportunities for at least 5,000 young lawyers," he said.

Recall that few days ago a former Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Prof Chidi Odinkalu had tackled a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Jibrin Okutepa over an article wherein the latter supposedly castigated

the actions of junior lawyers.

According to Odinkalu, "Junior lawyers are legitimately concerned about the fate of a profession in which the only rules that seem applicable to their seniors is impunity, while all the rules of professional conduct apply only to lawyer No-Names.

"If seniors are going to insist on creating an exception for themselves from rules supposed to apply to us all lawyers and then monopolise avenues for holding them accountable, Okutepa should not complain if the young lawyers resort to the only platform that seniors cannot control."

The subtle contest for supremacy between Senior and Junior Lawyers in the NBA reached its peak in the prelude to the 2020 national elections of the Association, which brought the Olumide Akpata-led administration on board.

Following the out of the election, a letter was written by a Life Bencher, Adegboyega Awolowo SAN to a former President of the Association, Chief T.J.O. Okpoko SAN titled "NBA: HER FUTURE", alluded to a grand conspiracy by junior lawyers to compromise the influence of Senior Advocates in the Association by electing a Non-Senior Advocate as President of the Association for the first time since her return in 1998.

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5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
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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	
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8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91	
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
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## Children of Nigerian politicians and foreign universities

It is unpatriotic, disgraceful, shameful, and criminal, that at a time when the nation's public universities have been on a lockdown for some six-odd months, members of the political class have taken their penchant for sending their wards to foreign universities at the expense of the state to a ridiculously absurd level. Not satisfied with frittering away our national patrimony on their children, they embark on a gaudy and offensive display of convocation photographs all over social media. When will this madness come to an end?

Muhammad Sani Badaru, son of the Jigawa State governor Badaru Abubakar is the latest in a long and growing list of Nigerian politicians' children who have graduated from foreign universities. He joins the ranks of the children of Nyesom Wike, Ahmad El-Rufa'i, Bukola Saraki, Yemi Osinbajo, the President of the Federation himself, Muhammadu Buhari, and many others. While these privileged children smile proudly and confidently into the camera during graduation ceremonies, surrounded by the equally happy faces of their loved ones, the children of the ordinary Nigerian remain languishing at home, sad and dejected, despair written all over their poor faces as they reflect on a future that holds only the promise of uncertainty for them.

The sad truth is that these privileged children are not in any way better than their counterparts here who have to work even harder to earn their grades amidst crushing economic hardship and incessant avoidable and preventable strikes. It is estimated that Nigerians spend over a trillion naira in school fees abroad. Consider the impact a trillion naira could have if invested in the Nigerian tertiary education system.

The federal government claims it has no money to revitalize universities yet individual members of the ruling elite spend a trillion naira between them to educate their children abroad. ASUU has unsuccessfully shouted

itself hoarse to get the government to do right by its universities. But why would the governing elite repair a system in which they are not invested? Why should they create a system that gives equal opportunity to all? Ours is a despotic system of governance and as Mecha Constantine says "In despotism, the systems are there to protect the privileged and oppress the underprivileged".

While the ordinary Nigerian continues to suffer, our rulers loot public coffers to educate their children abroad. With impunity and inhuman cruelty, some of them even have the audacity to place their children on fully funded state or federal scholarships so that they do not have to pay the school fees themselves. And these are scholarships meant

for children from indigent homes or children with exceptional academic records. Many a brilliant Nigerian student has ended up on the streets because his opportunity was given over to a privileged child.

None of this is irreversible. If we are really serious about education in this country we should put a ban on political appointees educating their children abroad. ASUU has called for a bill banning public officials from sending their wards to foreign universities. If every governor, senator or president knows his children's future lies in Nigerian universities surely they would take the Nigerian education sector more seriously. The same people will do everything to raise Nigerian universities to international standards. As things stand Nigerian tertiary institutions are doing so badly that they no longer attract either foreign teachers or foreign students.

The money that the political elite spend on their children's school fees is sourced right here in Nigeria but it is converted into dollars and pounds and shipped off to foreign schools. Is it any wonder our Naira keeps falling against the dollar? If our political office holders are really serious about our education system, let them invest their money in it by educating their children here at home.

The Trumpet says to political office holders, "Put your money where your mouth is instead of pleading with ASUU to go back to the classroom". A university professor at the zenith of his career earns less than a thousand dollars a month. In other words, in a year, a Nigerian professor earns less than the minimum amount required to pay tuition for a year studying in the UK. What a shame this is for Nigeria! It is no surprise since our elite's privileges are more important to them than any principles. We leave our political elite with the words of Dwight D. Eisenhower when he says, "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both".



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## Muslim-Muslim Ticket Narrative: The Republic in Peril

The Muslim-Muslim ticket which the APC under the otherwise shrewd and perspicacious Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu has adopted promotes and reinforces a dangerous narrative which the seven years of the Buhari administration have negatively entrenched in the minds of Nigerians. For, before Buhari, it was largely in somewhat hushed tones that the mythical Fulani ownership of geographical Nigeria was discussed. Not supported by any instruments of pre- or postcolonial relations, that dangerous supposition was essentially in the minds of a few and believed by fewer persons. For most southerners it was a joke, an infantile joke to claim that the rich waters and oil of the Niger Delta belong to some fellows who live one thousand miles away. It is like the Israelis claiming that the oil fields in the Arab states belong to them because God had promised them the land flowing with milk and honey!

With the style and composition of the Buhari government, the irredentist President made his plans clear to all – government was by a section of the country, for a section of the country and for a particular religion! To boot, Fulani from some countries in Africa have started assembling in the country to make Nigeria their home. The hostile scoundrels who kidnap, maim or kill are not indigenous to Nigeria, I dare say. The baffling thing is that southern leaders could not effectively challenge the gradual dismantling of a national consensus that had governed interethnic relations since 1960. Most of them in mainstream

politics simply latch on to the received wisdom that to gain power in the centre you must suck it up to the holders of power from the north. So, they sacrifice their people on the altar of greed for power!

In 2003, before the grand alliance of unlikely forces that finally gave Buhari access to federal power, Bola Tinubu was reported by Wikileaks to have said that "Muhammadu Buhari is an agent of destabilization, ethnic bigot, and religious fanatic who if given the chance would ensure the disintegration of the country. His ethnocentrism would jeopardize Nigeria's national unity". It is true that the Tinubu camp has vigorously argued that their principal never said any such stuff. But Farooq Kperogi in Notes from Atlanta (December 4, 2021) has laid the authenticity of the statement to rest by asserting that "I took up Tunde Rahman's challenge and showed that Tinubu indeed said what he was quoted to have said – and worse", citing diplomatic cables wrenched from Wikileaks trove.

In skewed appointments both to cabinet and non-cabinet positions, Buhari made no bones about telling Nigerians that he meant to govern Nigeria as a colony of Fulani hegemony. Nowhere is this hegemony so evident than in the security architecture of the country. Also, the marauding herdsmen in the country never fail to remind abductees that Nigeria is their patrimony and that accounts for the soft approach of the incumbent government in dealing with the menace posed by terrorists and bandits. Nigerians have cried aloud about the skewed

appointments in favour of one section of the country. Nothing has entered the ears of the Commander-in-Chief! Suddenly, the successor administration if the APC wins is a Muslim-Muslim band. Not good for the sight. Not healthy for perception. Not healthy for inter-religious harmony.

Nations build institutions which sustain and protect the core values of the country. In a country as multiethnic and multireligious as ours, no individual or administration should violate those core values. It is possible to argue that the fundamental principles for national unity have not been defined and nationally accepted. For example, power rotation, the place of religion and ethnicity must be worked into the Constitution. Nothing must be taken for granted. No section or religion must claim or preach superiority. It has the capacity to implode the country, either now or in the future.

It is against this background that the APC Muslim-Muslim ticket must be resisted by pressure groups, ethnic and religious associations. The issue must be on the ballot box on election day. A northern Christian who was Legal Adviser to APC resigned his position because of his objection to the Muslim-Muslim ticket. Ironically, Senator Tinubu and the APC had expressed reservations about the same-religion ticket in 2015. It was for this reason Professor Yemi Osinbajo was drafted in with his impeccable Christian credentials as a pastor in RCCG. What changed in 2022 or 2023?

The ethnic tension in the country that has reached a crescendo is alarming. Whether by design or default,

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the Tinubu and Shettima ticket is an attempt to further increase the tension and permanently destroy the fragile attempts at inter-religious harmony. It promotes the inane idea that one ethnic group or religion is superior to others in the federation. It is foolish to believe this nonsense, even if the ethnic group is numerically stronger. The point must be made that this rejection would not have mattered if the operating conditions in the country were settled or acceptable. For as we know, a Muslim could be as bad as a Christian in governance and vice versa. In other words, promotion of a religious faith does not bestow administrative or governing competence on anybody. The list of those who have misgoverned the country includes Muslims and Christians, with religion playing no moderating role in attitudes to the commonwealth. The ruling APC which has mismanaged Nigeria into a freefall is slapping Nigeria further in the face by tying

to force an anomaly on the nation. The APC has attempted to make things look good by appointing spokesmen who are Christians. This is after suggesting that a Christian from the north as a running mate to a Muslim from the south is not good enough to attract votes from the north. What a slap to northern Christians. This accounts for the bold and resolute reaction of the Dogaras and Babachirs, something we must take seriously.

All Nigerians must queue up to vote for their candidates in 2023. Hopefully, votes will count this time around. If they do, the Nigerian people will speak on who they want to govern the country. Sadly, the PDP ticket is also guilty of negating one of the assumptions that had governed the country – power rotation. We are therefore in a fix with the two old political parties. What will the end be?  
•Professor Eghagha is a member of The Trumpet's Editorial Board

By  
**Eric TENIOLA**



Cont'd from last week Wednesday

The Senate presided by Chief Ken Ugwu Nnamani(73) rejected the bill. The rejection of the bill was conveyed to President Obasanjo through a telephone call by the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette( 1939-2019) from Ikot Edor in Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. President Obasanjo was attending a UNESCO event in Paris, France.

Chief Ekaette's secretary then, Chief Mrs Abiodun Akinola from Fiditi in Oyo state, had to go through Mrs Remi Oyo, President Obasanjo's spokesperson in other to get President Obasanjo on phone. President Obasanjo flew that night back to Abuja. Having realized that he had to go following the defeat of the third term bid, he settled down to pick his successor.

He reached his conclusion on Alhaji Umaru Yar'adua(16 August 1951 – 5 May 2010) long before the PDP convention held at Eagle Square on December 17, 2006. Alhaji Yar'adua who was the Governor of Katsina state at that time was not too close to PDP Northern governors. The aspirants at that time General were General (rtd.) Aliyu Gusau(79) from Zamfara state, who was then the National Security Adviser, Governor Ahmed Muhammed Makarfi (65) who was then Governor of Kaduna state

and then Dr. Peter Otunaya Odili (73) from Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Governor of Rivers State Governor Odili had the backing of South-South Peoples Assembly jointly led by Chief Edwin Clarke (95) and Dr Joseph Wayas(21 May 1941- November 30, 2021) . The Secretary of the Assembly was Chief Raymond Dokpesi. The leaders of the Assembly toured almost all the various parts of the country.

During this period the friendship between President Obasanjo and his Vice, Atiku Abubakar GCON, had broken down completely. It was beyond repairs. With the selection of Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua as the PDP Presidential candidate, President Obasanjo's imperial Presidency ended and thus began the lame duck era of his presidency.

Dr. Odili in his book titled "CONSCIENCE AND HISTORY: MY STORY" narrated what happened at the Peoples Democratic Party's convention. Odili said in the book: "On 12th December, a spurious and anonymous petition was posted on the internet from a questionable 'source' alleging CORRUPT practices against the Rivers State Government under me. These allegations were contrived into a petition by the EFCC under Nuhu Ribadu's hand, to the President (Obasanjo) the same day.

"On the 13th of December 2006, Mr. President directed EFCC to

## The era of lame duck is here (2)

investigate. On the 14th day of December, 2006, EFCC submitted a so-called 'interim' report to the then president who promptly minuted for my response on the same 14th December, 2006, but forwarded to me on 15/12/06, a day to the convention vide ref. PRES/44. I assembled what was left of my cabinet team, a few having been arrested and kept at the EFCC office in Lagos within these few days of urgent dramatic action.

"We submitted our response on the 15th day of December, 2006 by which time it had become clear what the whole exercise was about— 'get Odili out of the race for the presidency at all cost'."

He said: "Till date the innocent uninformed still make reference to that judicially nullified and voided report. This became lucidly clear with the instant release of my staff who were being detained in Lagos by the EFCC as soon as I voluntarily and wisely withdrew from the contest. There was jubilation at the EFCC office immediately news of my withdrawal broke and all my staff were asked to go home immediately. This was on the 15th of December.

"Then came the 'D' Day- 16th December, 2006-the date of the convention. I was invited for morning prayers with the president at the presidential villa and after the prayers I had a brief chat with the then president in his private study at the residence. He acknowledged my letter of withdrawal from the race and informed me of his intention to get Umaru Yar'Adua-the now expected winner of the upcoming primaries at the convention- to make me his running mate."

The former governor spoke of the late President Yar'Adua's readiness to work with him.

According to him: "I was persuaded to go and accompany Umaru to the convention venue. I had been informed earlier in the day that the

news of my pairing with Umaru was in the air and that 'some people' were already ganging up to oppose the proposed pairing.

"It was, however, noteworthy that when I got to the Katsina State Lodge to join Umaru to proceed to the Eagle Square I met him downstairs in the company of some party leaders-Chief James Ibori, Chief Lucky Igbinedion, Dr Bukola Saraki, Alhaji Aliko Dnagote, Malam Nuhu Ribadu and Nasir el-Rufai.

"Their conversation stopped when I walked in but I read nothing sinister to the gathering or reaction to my entry. Umaru quickly took me upstairs and thanked me for coming and assured me of his happiness at the prospect of our working together.

"He called his wife Turai into the room and introduced us. We later proceeded to the Eagle Square together and were joined by other colleagues in waking round the square."

He continued: "In the course of the night, I was invited to the VIP Guest Room at Eagle Square and was privileged to sight the typed copy of Umaru's prepared acceptance speech. It was clearly stated that he had nominated Dr. Peter Odili as his running mate for the presidential race.

"This was at about midnight or so. In the course of the next few hours, information started reaching me that there was a strong pressure to drop me from the ticket.

"At about 3.30am or so, I was again invited to the VIP Guest room at Eagle Square and informed that there was a strong challenge to my being the running mate based on 'some fresh information' just received from Nuhu Ribadu, that would need to be sorted out later in the day.

"By the close of convention at dawn only 2 State Delegate Stands were still full-Katsina and Rivers- all others were empty or had one or two people left. The result was an-

nounced—Umaru was the winner and he promptly read a handwritten acceptance speech that excluded my name. He announced that further consultations were being made on the matter of his running mate."

He said, however, that "By 4pm on Sunday 17th December, 2006 Dr. Jonathan was announced as the running mate to Umaru Yar'Adua. By Monday 18th December I congratulated Umaru and Jonathan and urged all my supporters nationwide and Rivers people to support the ticket. Odili was out of the race and the ticket."

To me if President Obasanjo had allowed a free and fair election, I guess that Alhaji Yar'adua would not have emerged as the PDP Candidate and the course of history would have changed today.

With the selection of Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua, the Obasanjo imperial Presidency ended.

Four days later he summoned his Chief of Staff, Major General Abdullahi Mohammed(83) and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ekaette and told them in clear terms that he would spend more time campaigning for Yar'adua and that the two of them would be in charge of the day to day running of the government. These two gentlemen were one of the finest, loyal public servants anyone could wish for. Chief Ekaette summoned his own staff too that they will have to spend more time working in the office. He told his inner working staff made up of Dr. Goke Adegoroye, Dr J.N. Obiegbo, Yinka Olanipekun, Tony Ekwere, John Tom, Jonathan Soja, Mamman Audu, Saleh Ahidjo, Danjuma Gambo, Tiamiyu Kasali, Chief Mrs Abiodun Akinola, myself, Prince Kola Adeyemi from Ikirun, Mr. Tunde Kamilu Kasali, of the hard days that lies ahead.

To be continued next edition

# Disagreements dog alleged discrepancies in Adeleke's name

● *His case different from Bayelsa's Eremienyo, says lawyer*

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

A public commentator has warned that alleged discrepancies in names submitted by the Osun State Governor-Elect, Senator Ademola Adeleke might cost him his hard earned victory at the governorship election on Saturday, July 16, 2022.

Akin Adeyi also known as Akoni Oodua Kapoo said latching onto the differences in names on academic certificates and other documents deposited to by Adeleke by the defeated candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Governor Gboyega Oyetola and his party, could be worrisome in the pending legal battle.

Recall that the differences in Adeleke's names as observed and pointed out in the petition / appeal is one of the premises his challengers is standing to upturn the election of the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Adeyi pointed out that the name on West African School Certificate (WASC) statement of result of the Governor - Elect in 1981 is Ademola Adeleke while the same secondary school testimonial indicated he was Ademola Adeleke N.

"He was said to have presented himself as Ademola Nurudeen Adeleke in the affidavit he deposited to while filing forms of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) while contesting in 2019 for same position in which he lost to Oyetola.

"Adeleke's permanent voters card (PVC) has the name Adeleke Ademola Jackson but in the PDP Nomination Form 003 S/00811 dated 15th December, 2021, he claimed to be Adeleke Ademola Jackson Nurudeen while his PDP Membership Card No. 8782063 Adeleke Ademola N.

"In the Osun State Government Tax Payment receipt for years 2020 and 2021, he bears Adeleke Jackson Ademola.

He went further to say that an affidavit by



Senator Ademola Adeleke

Ayodele Akande Adeleke on 14th June, 2016, stated that Ademola Jackson Adeleke, Ademola Nurudeen Adeleke and Ademola Ifeanyi Adeleke is one person.

Making reference to the petition before the Osun State governorship tribunal, he said the name Ademola Jackson Adeleke is on the certificate issued on 16th July, 2021 by the Pen Foster High School, Nigeria's equivalent of secondary school certificate which was prerequisite for his admission into Atlanta Metropolitan State College where he studied and obtained Bsc in Criminal Justice.

While the certificate for a B.Sc degree issued by the Atlanta Metropolitan State College on the 9th day of August, 2021 bears Ademola Jackson Nurudeen Adeleke.

Upon return to Nigeria after his studies, he got an exception certificate from participating in the one year compulsory National Youth

Service Corps (NYSC) service scheme dated 21st October, 2021 on which was written Adeleke Ademola Jackson but in a letter he wrote to the NYSC seeking correction of institutions name, the name Ademola J.N. Adeleke prominently

Putting the circumstance of Adeleke's multiple registration into historical perspective, he said " a Nigerian Senate president was removed before for a lesser reason over whether his name was Evan or Evan(s)

"The most recent was in the case PDP & ORS. VS DEGI- EREMIENYO & ORS.(2020).

"Two years ago a governor-elect and his deputy were removed by the court at some hours before their swearing in ceremony as the governor and deputy for reason of discrepancies in the deputy governor-elect names.

"OSUN PDP is hereby advised to think and think deep then take a decisive bold

step in this case"

Reacting, Malam Olawale Rasheed dismissed the worries as he said there is nothing to fear as those raising the allegations are just holding unto straw

Olawale in a chat with The Trumpet said "having multiple names is not an offence as long as all the names belong to the person. All the names belong to the Governor-elect and those names are as such because he has names from mother side which is Igbo, father side which Islamic and musical appellation which is Jackson.

"The problem arises if some of the names do not belong to the person holding the documents. What the law demands in such situation to avoid conflict and crisis is for the owner of the names to perform Deed Poll and Affidavits at the Supreme Court. Senator Adeleke did all these before the election and declare that he should henceforth be known as Senator Ademola Jackson Nurudeen Adeleke.

"The four names are what he filled in his INEC forms and we have certified true copies of the Deed of Poll and the affidavits. So there is nothing in the so called multiples names allegations except holding unto straw."

A legal practitioner, Abanika Muktar, Esq said the Governor - Elect is sufficiently okay to have used those names in the eyes of the law.

He said "the case of Senator Nurudeen Adeleke is totally different from the case of PDP & ORS v. DEJI I- Eremienyo & Ors In that unlike the Bayelsa State case, there are consistencies in the names adopted by the senator at various levels.

"For instance, if you look at all the names adopted you would notice that the name "Ademola Adeleke" appeared in all his documents .

"It is the position of the law of equity that equity imputes an intent to fulfil an obligation. What this means is that the near performance of an obligation is sufficient in law."

## "I won't surrender LP mandate to anyone, Plateau guber candidate vows

● *Promises not to disappoint Obi, members*

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

Ambassador Yohanna Margif has vowed not to relinquish the mandate given to him by members of the Labour Party (LP) as its standard bearer of the party in the 2023 governorship election in Plateau State.

He said he was firmly in the race and will pursue his ambition to a logical conclusion of winning the gubernatorial election.

He therefore called on LP members to defend the mandate given to him by disregarding anyone else parading himself as the new candidate of the party.

Amb. Margif said plans to subvert his mandate by secretary substituting his name with another person has been revealed but vowed to resist such move by jealously guiding the governorship ticket of the Labour Party.

He addressed the press on Saturday in Jos. In a statement later, he claimed he has been threatened to withdraw from the contest.

"Margif, therefore said "my attention has been drawn to a purported and illegal primary election by some disgruntled political elements who disguised themselves as members of Labour Party in Plateau State, I wish to state clearly that I am the only and authentic governorship candidate of Labour Party in Plateau.

"You recall that a primary election of the Labour Party was conducted on the 9 June 2022 at Retnan Hotel and Event Centre, Bukuru

where I emerged the candidate of the party and certificate of return was subsequently presented to me by the National Chairman of the Party to affirm my candidature as the standard bearer of the party for 2023 election.

"Since then, I have taken deliberate steps in collaboration with other members of the party in Plateau and at the National Secretariat to put the party in better perspective to win the 2023 election. I must say without contradiction that my effort since I joined the Labour Party has endeared several people from different political parties to the Labour Party.

### '2023 election will be candidate-centered, not religious/tribe'

As condemnations continue to trail the same-faith ticket of the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential and vice presidential candidates, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Senator Kashim Shettima, critics of the party's choice have been cautioned to eschew religious or tribal sentiments.

Mr. Meribe Livinus, Publicity Secretary of AGF/PROJECT BEYOND 2023, one of the Tinubu support group in Abia State said majority of Nigerians are sensitive enough not to fall into trappings of ethno-religious bigots who have been knocking Tinubu and the APC over Shettima's choice as vice presidential candidate.

Livinus in a statement over the weekend

"I wish to state clearly that I have not in any way contemplated withdrawing from the 2023 governorship election in Plateau State and I will not withdraw from the race. I am in the contest to win the election and give Plateau people good governance that will enthroned development."

He added that he is not ready to trade the governorship ticket of the his custody because it is not for sale and that he is in the race to win.

"I am not in the contest to withdraw, and the ticket of Labour Party in Plateau State is not

for sale, therefore those who are clamouring for the ticket and misleading gullible Plateau people and Nigerians that I have withdrawn from the race should desist forthwith."

The candidate said by succumbing to such delve move to have him surrender the ticket, he will be disappointing his numerous supporters who expressed confidence in electing him at the primary.

Also, he said he will be disappointing state and national leadership of the Labour Party, particularly, it's presidential candidate, Mr. Peter Obi.

said the 2023 election will be personality based and he expressed optimism that both Tinubu and Shettima possess leadership qualities to govern the country.

He said Nigeria, as a country is enormously blessed with eggheads and intellectuals in abundance, among whom are the APC standard bearers.

He said "it is a height of imbecilic reasoning by a country at the brick of total collapse yet playing the tribal card and religious sentiments. It remains worthy of note to realize that the 2023 general election will make or mar Nigeria.

"The forthcoming elections will "Make" Nigeria in the sense that the fortunes of the

country will turn around from its current situation of rudderlessness to become a highly productive nation which will command huge earnings through exports and also be adequately respected in the comity of nations. Current security challenges and various categories of crime and its perpetrators will be routed and normalcy returned to our communities.

"The elections may also "Mar" the country in the sense that \$1 may readily be exchanged for over #5000 with insecurity poised to be the order of the day to the extent that one may not be able to travel from one state to the other except God forbids an untold hardship may envelope the entire nation.

## Why blaming Christians, heaping insults on CAN won't take APC anywhere, by Babachir Lawal

Federal Universities (in the North) Vice Chancellors 28. Muslims 23, Christians 5.

State Universities, Vice Chancellors

22. Muslims 17, Christians 5.

Federal Polytechnics, Rectors 21. Muslims 18, Christians 3.

State Polytechnics, Rectors 20. Muslims 16, Christians 4.

Federal Colleges of Education, Provosts 23. Muslims 22 Christian 1.

State Colleges of Education, Provosts 31. Muslims 24, Christians 7.

"Of course, it goes without saying that employment to all other positions from the Registrar down to the cleaner in these institutions will be replicated in a similar manner.

"This scenario is what we find in all agencies of governments in the north. Therefore, we view this Muslim-Muslim ticket as an extension of this practice of exclusion to the uppermost level of government.

"Christians all over the country see this Muslim-Muslim ticket as a deliberate and premeditated attempt to introduce and firmly entrench religion into the politics of this country. This, of course, will lead to further disharmony in the hitherto fragile coexistence of the Nigerian society, disrupt peace and hamper both social and economic development of the country.

"Christians and indeed most enlightened Nigerians are at a loss as to why people that intend to govern a country with our kind of diversity would chose this path to power. This is very divisive and must be rejected by all patriotic Nigerians.

"Implied in this ticket is the insinuation that northern Muslims are not willing to vote



Engr Babachir Lawal

for a ticket that has a Christian on it and on which they are not represented. It is our belief that northern Muslims would have seen the Justice in a Muslim-Christian ticket and would have given it their overwhelming support had the party been inclined to do so.

"A corollary to this mindset is that Christians should also not vote for a ticket in which they are not accommodated. Unfortunately, this is the message we get loud and clear from this Muslim-Muslim ticket. This is truly a wake up call for all Nigerian Christians. We didn't start this religious politics, APC and its candidates did; so all of us should take note and act as appropriate.

"So our dear APC colleagues, spare us these sanctimonious lectures on "competence" and the cliché "religion of the candidates do not matter. The truth is that the 2023 presidential election will be all about religion, and sadly, you started it; religion does matter in this context, so be ready for the consequences.

"It is important to reiterate that we Nigerian Christians, want to live in peace and harmony with all practitioners of other religions. We want to enjoy social and economic developments like other parts of the world, but without peace, justice and religious harmony, this is not possible.

"On our part, we neither seek to oppress

nor dominate any one or any religion. But we will also resist any one trying to discriminate against us and our religion. We were not the ones that started this fight. The APC started it and must be ready to carry the cross it has created. Blaming Christians and heaping insults on CAN will take them nowhere.

"For, how do they expect Christians to keep silent when a northern state governor publicly states that they pressured Tinubu to get a northern Muslim VP because they did not believe him to be a good Muslim? Is the VP going to be the National Deputy Imam? How do they expect us to keep silent when another northern state governor goes to Osun State and urges them to vote for someone just because he is a Muslim? Was he there for election campaign or "dawah"? What can be a better example of religion in politics than demonstrated by these governors?

"Clearly, there is an agenda to politically, religiously, and economically suppress and oppress the Northern Christian. But we are up to the task. We will protect ourselves. The PVC and our prayers will be our weapons of choice and we will massively deploy them in 2023.

"But while we are ready to battle this politics of exclusion and oppression, we are open to discussions with any one who wants to engage with us in good faith.

"As I always do, want to end with this quotation from Romans 8:31: "What then shall we say in response to these things. If God is for us who can be against us?". May God bless and reward all our collective efforts at seeking to live in peace with one another in Nigeria, our blessed country."

● Engr Babachir Lawal, Ex-SGF

## Mustapha Sule Lamido unveils plan for Jigawa

### ● To reintroduce almajiri education system

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Jigawa State, Mustapha Sule Lamido revealed how a virile and effective education sector can be used as a foothold to transform a larger society.

Mustapha, son of a former governor of the state and chieftain of the PDP, Alhaji Sule Lamido said education will be one of the pivotal sectors to drive his administration in Jigawa State, if elected governor in 2023.

In the blueprint for education transformation which was made available to journalists in Abuja at the weekend, the governorship hopeful plans a massive revision of the moribund almajiri nomadic education system introduced by the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan in the northern parts of the country.

As a man fully equipped and well-prepared for the job, he said he has the strong will, dedication and partnerships to implement his vision for the state to the very best of his ability.

According to Mustapha, achieving his vision for education will require the input of all stakeholders, public and private, stressing that a think tank has been set up which has been having wide consultations with groups and professional bodies of students, parents, teachers, lecturers and administrators.

These groups, he said " will help provide inputs that will shape our vision and they will also help us in its implementation if we succeed in the elections. Therefore, carrying them along from the beginning will go a long way towards integrating our efforts for effective service delivery.

In specific terms, the candidate said "if we

are given the chance, God-willing the Almajiri system will be remodeled to make it better, efficient and more conducive. First, we will take inventory of all Almajiri schools and Tsangayas and have a census of the students and alarannas. We will then form a technical committee that will include the alarannas, ministry of education staff and some experts.

"This committee will come up with a sound and sustainable policy for the Tsangaya system. Already, we have some existing ideas and structures developed by ex-president Goodluck Jonathan which states like Sokoto have built upon. "Internationally, I have personally studied the Malaysian remodeled Almajiri system which has been working excellently; we also have some remodeled systems in some parts of West Africa. I will feed the policy formulation committee with some of these findings, so that our aim of having a reformed, rebranded, working and sustainable Almajiri system can be achieved."

On tertiary education, he said as at today, there are 14 tertiary institutions in the state, two federal owned universities, one state owned and one private owned, three polytechnics, one college of education, one Information technology institute, four health institutions and one college of legal and Islamic studies.

He promised that all those owned by state government will receive adequate funding as far as the economic situation permits and will be encouraged to seek linkages and explore initiatives that will attract grants and external funding while esearch partnerships will be established between Jigawa State government and all universities within the state.

"Insha Allah Scholarships will be paid to students of special and professional programmes

like medicine, engineering, law and other key programmes. Students of other non-professional programmes will receive scholarships based on academic performance.

"First class graduates will be considered for automatic employment and master's degree scholarships within and outside Nigeria.Ph.D students of Jigawa origin whose researches may directly or indirectly provide solutions to some of the state's socio-economic challenges will receive government funding and patronage.

"Different national and international reports place the general literacy level in Jigawa State at between 25-30% (Adult literacy is 38.3%) making it the fourth worst state above Taraba, Katsina and Borno. As controversial as this ranking may be, we must aspire to be in the top 10 of most literate states by whatever criteria used for future rankings, or at least reach the national average literacy rate of 50.6% in the next five years or less.

"In terms of education accessibility, Jigawa is ranked 32nd out of 36 states and FCT while we are 30th in terms of school attendance. About 60% of all Jigawans have no any form of educational qualification at all. These are scaring figures we need to change rapidly.

"There have been previous efforts to change the negative picture of education in the state. Between 2007-2015, 56 Habbanne centers for Fulani women education were built in addition to 172 Nomadic schools. Over the same period, 1,350 adult and mass literacy centers were built. Two special schools, Jigawa State Academy for the gifted and talented, Bamaina and Jigawa State School for the blind Dutse were also established.

"Our current assessment confirms that the Habbanne centers have been abandoned, the

Dutse school of the blind is also abandoned. However, we are glad that the mass education centers have been increased to 1,917 and the Nomadic schools to 418. However, they are facing serious manpower challenges which we hope to address if given the opportunity Insha Allah."

Mustapha Sule Lamido said current economic realities may not allow for the diligent implementation of complete free education no matter how much he want to do it, "but we have plans to provide free girl child education up to secondary school across the whole of Jigawa. Girls that are orphans will have their sponsorships extended up to tertiary institutions. Disabled people and their children will also be considered for free or subsidized education.

"Teachers' welfare will be a top-most priority for our administration, we will improve the condition of service for education personnel. We will study and review the teachers' salaries with the hope of increasing it to the highest amount possible and permissible by the economic situation.

"God willing, we will create allowances to motivate them and create a reward system to appreciate the best and most dedicated teachers in the state. We will train and retrain them to further their education while making the necessary learning tools and equipment available for their utilization Insha Allah.

"We shall create an avenue for periodic teacher-government engagement where operational successes and challenges of education will be discussed. We will use information in such engagements to take swift action where necessary and make adequate plans where applicable."

# Why is Nigeria able to produce animal vaccines but not for humans?

By ONAOLUWA ABIMBOLA

At the 5th Young Medical Laboratory Scientists Annual Forum in Abuja, FCT, Dr. Godswill Okara; Registrar, West African PostGraduate College of Medical Laboratory Sciences reaffirmed that Nigeria could produce human vaccines for Nigerians' use. He recalled from history that Yellow Fever Vaccines were made at the Nigerian Vaccines Laboratory in Yaba in the 70s. He opined that this became a moribund programme because some government officials were more interested in importing vaccines from overseas rather than encouraging the use of homegrown vaccines.

Furthermore, there are 18 animal vaccines produced in Nigeria by Medical Laboratory Scientists which are in use across the nation. These vaccines have passed global certification standards and safety checks for animals. According to Dr Okara, these vaccines are completely homegrown.

The question today is why are Nigerian Scientists no longer able to produce homemade vaccines for human use. Why are we able to produce animal vaccines, but are no longer able to produce human vaccines?

From the history recap by Dr Okara, it is not because of a paucity of technical expertise or professional competence. Rather, a sorry lack of political will led to decaying and moribund infrastructure. Over the years, there has been noticeable neglect of the Medical Laboratory Sciences sector.

The COVID 19 Pandemic led to a springing up of new molecular diagnostic laboratories in 2020; up to a total of 19 laboratories. However, less than 3 years later, some of these new molecular diagnostic laboratories are barely functional because of dangerous political powerplays that have led to redeploying of the attached Medical Laboratory Scientists to outstation laboratories and acute shortage of needed staff strength. Supplies and logistics challenges aimed at crippling the normal functioning of these laboratories have reportedly contributed to a near total loss of function in these NCDC supported molecular laboratories. Despite the willingness of private partners to support these laboratories, some officials of the Ministry of Health appear to be focused on private gains rather than the public good. In a few years time, it may be that Nigeria will not be able to boast of more than 5 public Molecular Diagnostic laboratories if urgent action is not taken.

Dr Akyala Ishaku, also speaking on the theme referred to the Vaccine Laboratory in Yaba that has been under lock and key since 1991. He also pointed out the sad fact of an absence of vaccine manufacturing capacity in Nigeria which claims to be the giant of Africa, while countries like Tunisia, Ethiopia and South Africa have substantial vaccine manufacturing capacity. He said "most of the COVID-19 vaccines in use are manufactured in South Africa. He called for partnership with multinational companies and international agencies to resuscitate the moribund vaccine production in Nigeria.



Other speakers at the programme called for increased mentorship of young Medical Laboratory Scientists as well as capacity building to increase expertise.

As Nigeria continues in the march towards the attainment of the 2030 SDG goals, vaccine production and utilization remain a priority task for the achievement of the SDG 3 goals. Apart

from the reduction of costs associated with vaccine importation, it would also increase trust and improve compliance and usage of vaccines in the population. The proliferation of conspiracy theories associated with foreign imports will reduce when the country reintroduces vaccine production.

Will Nigeria achieve the SDG 3 goals by 2030? With current data on health

access and coverage in Nigeria, it does not appear doable.

Only time will tell, if by some sort of miracle we are able to achieve the SDG 3 goals.

● Onaoluwa Abimbola is a Health Equity and Gender Equality Advocate.

You can connect with her on <https://linktr.ee/Onaoluwa>

## Nigeria: Way forward

By RICHARD OMA AHONARUOGHO

I have said it for years, develop each Local Government Area and the Country is developed. I suggested a "Dangote" to be Local Government Chairman without pay for 3 years to be succeeded by a "Dantata" for another 3 years without pay and so on and so forth as a deliberate sacrifice to develop each Local Government, State and Country. Voila, the Country will be developed.

The competition will be who will be Local Government Chairman, not Governor, not President.

I have also over the years posited that the tenure of the President and Governors should be a SINGLE term of 6 years with the possibility of a mid-term election called by the Senate of the National Assembly (excluding the House of Representatives as the Senate represents the equality of States) or State House of Assembly if in their opinion, the President or Governor as the case may be has failed to deliver on the Electoral promises for which he/she was voted into office, by a majority of two thirds of the Membership of the Senate or of the State House of Assembly.



If such a President or Governor is re-elected in the mid-term election, then he/she completes the remaining period of 3 years but if another person is elected, then the new office holder starts his/her SINGLE term of 6 years with the possibility of mid-term election. In this way, a President or Governor will strive to deliver good governance and the polity will be better served even if for 3 years, instead of the present situation that encourages a candidate to rig an election and win a 2nd term of 4 years almost automatically, except in one or

two instances, with little or nothing to show for it, again, except in one or two instances.

I see the Political Parties getting more involved in ensuring that Party Manifestos and Programmes are strictly complied with by the President and Governors elected on their Party platforms as to enable their Political Party remain in office/power.

Nigeria can work. We only need sacrificial Leaders.

● Ahonaruocho, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), writes from Lagos.



# The Ukraine War: Nigerian opportunity or Pitfall Part III

By PHILLIP OAK

(See Part 1 and Part 2 in the Trumpet Newspaper of Monday July 18 and July 27 2022 respectively).

Even the more 'modest' non-nuclear fallouts of this war carry significant human disaster risks, some of which are already playing out in crises spots across the world. Russia and Ukraine are global powerhouses in terms of their energy and agriculture product profiles. Ukraine is aptly called "the food basket of the world" and before the war was its biggest grain producer. Its list of cash crops are staples of big box grain stores: wheat, maize, barley etc. It's the world's leading exporter of sunflower seed oil and its fertile steppes are adorned with vineyards that produced grapes for its thriving wine industry. Its mineral wealth is equally impressive. Ukraine has substantial natural gas and coal reserves. Its proven oil reserve is cited at over 1 trillion cubic meters while its shale gas deposits constitute the second largest in the Europe at about 1.2 trillion cubic meters.

If Ukraine's accessible energy reserves are impressive Russia on the other hand is an energy and geological behemoth. With a land area of over 70 million square kilometers, spanning 11 time zones, it is the world's 2nd largest crude oil producer, has the 8th largest oil reserves and its largest proven natural gas reserve.

Historically, massive pipelines carried Russia's petroleum products to Ukraine whose industries depended largely on Russian gas and oil. Ukraine also serve as host to Russia's liquid natural gas (LNG) pipelines that transport this crucial energy product from deep in-country fields in Siberia into Western Europe, constituting a critical source of the European Union's energy needs.

Already the world is reeling from a food and energy supply crisis, the latter worst in developing and low income parts of the world. But no one is exempt. In Europe the effect of this energy deficit on global logistic corridors such as Italy, Spain and Greece is already apparent in the disruption of import-export transactions and rising freight costs, causing supply chains nightmares all over the world.

Germany, which depends almost solely on Russia for its LNG supply, is a manufacturing juggernaut which supplies quality finished products to critical industries all over the world. It has a robust annual trade excess (north of 200 billion dollars in 2018) that reflects this vital global productivity role. It has been a consistent marvel of industrial supremacy but all of that rides on the back of an energy supply source now seriously jeopardized by the Russian-Ukrainian war. Given this substantive importance to industries worldwide which depend on Germany's expert services and goods, the evolving energy deficit would inevitably lead to adverse downstream effects.

The consequences of the Ukrainian war are now topics of heated debates and analyses by political pundits and economic think-tanks around the globe. Already an ongoing famine in Somalia threatens thousands of vulnerable people. And in Sri Lanka economic difficulties from the disruption of critical trade alliances with Russia and Ukraine was the last straw that broke the



Phillip Oak

camels back. Popular protest polulace toppled the government. And with fuel and food costs rising globally, spending habits, even in the more prosperous nations are beginning to turn downwards.

Last month the crisis entered a new and potentially more dangerous phase when Russia, in response to sanctions imposed by the western powers discontinued the sale of its crude oil on the basis of the dollar to "non friendly nations" asking those clients to start making all future transactions in the Ruble. This move saved the Ruble from imminent collapse but it is one that forebodes a significant threat to global economic sanctity and security. In line with this move other major oil market players such as china, Iran, Iraq and even Saudi Arabia are beginning to pursue the option of alternate payment systems in the oil futures market, signaling a critical shift in the way the world does business.

The dollar has been the global standard of exchange since the '70s when it was adopted by OPEC as the currency for the world's crude oil transactions. This shored up the already considerable value of the dollar, propped up America's cultural and economic hegemony, and stimulated capitalism-inspired growth and development in diverse theaters of the world. The impending loss of the petrodollar's titular status therefore forebodes grave ill for the American economy and by extension for global economic wellness.

The World Bank warns that the world is tethering at the edge of a global hunger crisis and is at the risk of a severe, recalcitrant recession.

Yet, as we saw in Part, I this pernicious apocalyptic vision is wholly avoidable. The objective of Russian's invasion of Ukraine was not so much to annex an inch of Ukrainian territory as much as to remove Ukraine's pro-west government of Volodymyr Zelenski, in the interest of Russia's regional security. So far down the road that objective, as wars tend to be, has been more miss than hit. Zelensky is still very firmly in the battle saddle and the only

real outcome has been the considerable loss of of lives and property as well as a fast deteriorating picture of global security. China, the world's workshop, may soon enter into open military confrontation with Taiwan, drawing the US and the West into a wider theatre of conflict. China is currently the world's largest economy and with the war already in its energy and financial phase, further disruptions via a China-Taiwan war can only make things worse, brewing more trouble in workers' paradises everywhere. And all this for the cost of respecting Russia's right to its regional hegemony!

The economic backlash effects are already being harshly felt on the ground in Europe. Supermarkets shelves are increasingly being restricted in terms of their shelf inventory. Germany recently cut down on the usage of airconditioners to conserve its energy resources. A surging wild fire crisis, unrelated to the war, is adding to the toll of deaths and suffering. Like the rest of Europe it is beginning to seek alternative other sources for future grain and energy supply.

Given the realities of economy of scale European countries like Germany had before now depended almost solely on 'next-door' Russia for its energy supply. Now the scales have dropped and it is seeking potentially more distant but more dependable sources for its energy needs.

And this is where countries like Nigeria come in. Nigeria, with her gigantic LNG reserves especially stands to benefit from the current crisis, boosting its GDP, both in the immediate and longer term. In the short term by expediting LNG delivery to European country-clients via specialized ships and in the longer term via transsaharan pipelines. Nigeria's GDP is already 80 percent dependent on her oil exports. Yet this potential windfall is not necessarily good news. Such a projected economic Eldorado may yet well be just that: a mirage. The Nigerian corruption culture has traditionally ensured that GDP bonanzas, such as this is shaping

up to be, translate very poorly into actual change in the country's prosperity indices. Booms often turn into dooms, with such windfalls unleashing a feeding frenzy by its public servants that only serves to set back developmental and anti-corruption strategies by decades.

In the '70s the surplus of crude oil income in the wake of a global oil crisis was met with an unprecedented level of waste and corruption. That was the military government of General Yakubu Gowon. The Udoji award scandal from that era, when salary hikes were prioritized over infrastructural and industrial development have come to symbolize this Nigerian phenomenon of unbridled madness in public fund profligacy. The failed opportunity for infrastructural development from that time still haunts the country to this day.

The General Ibrahim Babaginda-era scandal of a "missing" 12 billion dollar oil windfall is another case in point. And on and on it goes, each new episode delivering to the defenseless Nigerian

masses all of the blows of the global downturns but none of its benefits.

Today Nigeria sits at the top of every negative developmental and corruption index, placing 154 out of 180, squarely in the most corrupt bracket, of the Corruption Index. Ghana by comparison sits at a more decent 74. She has a long history of governmental corruption as a common standard of practice in which vast amounts of public revenue is diverted from developmental projects into private pockets and bank accounts. An estimated 400 billion dollars have been lost to corruption since independence in 1960, according to 2012 estimate. Each succeeding administration has been indicted themselves in the massive syphoning of public funds inspite of highly touted anti-corruption campaigns. Today the country is in deep economic straits with a burgeoning national debt of over 130 billion US dollars and using nearly 100 percent of its GDP to service its debt.

The need therefore for a responsible government has never been more urgent or more dire. We need to finally see that when the gods bless us with yams we dont leave goats in charge of the barn. The coming elections offer the voting populace a chance to vote into public office a team of political apparatchiks willing to morally invest in making a difference in Nigeria. It won't be easy. The tap-roots of corruption sink too deeply and pervade too widely in the polity to be so easily reversed. Yet the need for efficient national resource management means that there is no time to start like now. If the new global geopolitical dispensation is going to be maximally utilized then we need capable managers to oversee the coming lean years, clearly imminent from the trends of the ongoing war in Europe. Competent governance is needed to maximize its benefit while mitigating its adverse fall outs. The 2023 election is fixing to be a major watershed in our developmental growth curve. Now so close to the nadir of our national existence, voting for the candidates who possess the right ethical and technical track records has never been more vital. And the war that never needed to be fought at all might yet for us become an opportunity and not yet another pitfall.

•Oak is a Nigerian-Canadian medical doctor with a passion for socio-developmental issues.



## DreamStream boss tasks Nigerian youths on creativity, enterprise, business ventures

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Following the high rate of employment and the tendency embrace criminal activities, Nigerian youths have been urged to direct their creative energies towards the creation and evolution of viable entrepreneurship concerns and business ventures in the country.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DreamStream Resources Company Limited, Pastor Damilola Oluwatoyinbo, gave the charge at the official unveiling and media tour of the DreamSpace, which houses the company's facilities in Lagos aimed at fostering creativ-

ity and knowledge-driven skills for all, especially the Nigerian youths.

While unveiling the DreamSpace laced with books, T-shirts and other resource materials at the Citadel Centre on Kudirat Abiola Way, Oregun, Ikeja, which offers consultancy services for organisations and individuals, Oluwatoyinbo encouraged Nigerian youths to invest in themselves, as knowledge remains irreplaceable, adding: "Because we are passing through desperate times in the country, there is a lot of confusion in the country and when there is confusion, that is the best time



Damilola Oluwatoyinbo

## Why FG intervened as food prices continue to rise

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mahmood Abubakar, has said increase in the prices of food items in the country is caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity and the Russia-Ukraine, among several other factors.

The minister, who spoke recently at the State House, Abuja, however, promised that the Federal Government was making efforts to address the rising prices of like beans, rice, garri, bread and other food items, which have increased in the past few years by between 200 and 400 per cent.

Abubakar also said the continued increase in the prices of food items was not peculiar to Nigeria, but has remained a major challenge confronting other countries of the world.

The minister lamented that the hike in the prices of food stuff and other essential items was worsened by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, adding: "When COVID-19 came, it affected a lot of things including food production. Its effect is what we are still facing and this will continue for some time before things will finally stabilize."

Abubakar, who noted that he believes that the price of rice has dropped a little bit, but we are still working on it, said the whole world is currently just getting out of the pandemic, sadly the Russia-Ukraine war broke out. The world is now battling the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

"Things will stabilise, because the Ministry of Agriculture is working hard to address the problem and we are not relenting to ensure that the prices will reduce faster," he said.

Speaking on how insecurity has affected good prices across the country, he said attacks by herders and terrorists have denied some farmers the opportunity to go to their farms, especially in the North West and North Central regions of the country.

Abubakar said despite the

security situation, food production has not stopped to any significant level

On how to halt the slide, he said: "This is one of the reasons, why the ministry has put up an arrangement for security agents known as agro-rangers, who are providing some level of security, so that the farmers will be able to access their farmers."

"Truly, if they cannot freely access their farms across the country, a drop in production should be expected, but right now, we are doing everything possible to ensure that production is maintained through the provision of security. Our plan to end hunger is still on track as we are determined to end hunger in the country," he said.

Also, Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Ministry of Agriculture, Samson Umoh, who spoke on fish importation in Nigeria, said there were two reasons why Nigeria still allows fish importation.

"The first reason why fish is still being imported into Nigeria is that local production cannot meet demand, while the second is that some species of fish are not locally sourced."

"Presently, the total fish demand for the country is about 3.6 million metric tons, based on the population of Nigeria, while the total production is about 1.2 million metric tons. The gap must be filled up and therefore, we are engaging the youths, women and all to improve fish production."

"Apart from Federal Government's intervention, some species are not farmed or found in the Nigerian waters, like the mackerel and the stock fish, among others. Therefore, we have to import because they are not available in the country," he explained.

Umoh said President Muhammadu Buhari's commitment to agriculture has seen the sector contributing a lot to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the wake of the fall of crude oil price in the international market, insisting that in spite of the harsh operating environment, manufacturers still have confidence in the nation's economy.

is a reflection of creativity, but it is just media that has gone social."

In its resolve to nurture more creative minds and solution-oriented services, DreamSpace, which houses a 35-seater creative lounge, 15-seater boardroom and 20-seater capacity studio, was birthed as a centre for coaching, consulting, content creation, collaboration and networking, as well as creating solutions for organisational challenges, particularly in leadership, creative marketing and executive coaching.

He said to further help organisations and young Nigerians to discover themselves and attain creative excellence, DreamSpace designed training programmes for company employees and other individuals and houses a studio for recording and producing music and movies.

"There are several Nigerians who are desperate and out of school. With the ongoing strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), students have been at home for

five months. With a space like this, we can serve corporate communities, as they pay us handsome money, and we can pass knowledge to students," says the solution expert.

Oluwatoyinbo, who is also a Pastor of Kingdom Influencers in Nations, Generations and Systems (KINGS), recalled his little beginnings in 2016 when he returned to Nigeria from his sojourn abroad.

He narrated: "What most young people want is quick wealth. They want to look like what they are not. When I began to become profitable, I invested in myself. I invested in products, training, coaches and mentors."

He stressed the importance of investing in knowledge, creativity and self-development skills to make them relevant at this time and beyond through the various facets of the DreamStream, including the Kingraiser Studios, Global Greatness, GeniusX, the Creative Community, White Paper Wisdom and Shaping the Future, among others.

to be creative."

Describing creativity as a tool for transformation, he said: "Creativity means in the midst of the chaos, we can harness the latent and natural resources around us to make a difference. And to stand out this time around, social media

## Ecobank Group grows profit by 24% in first half of 2022

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Ecobank Group has reported 24 per cent increase in Profit Before Tax (PBT) for the first half of 2022 to US\$261 million from \$210 million posted in the first half of 2021.

Its unaudited half year results released in the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) Limited indicated that the group's net revenue rose to \$910 million from \$825 million in 2021, an increase of 10 per cent, despite the challenging operating environment occasioned by high inflation and falling value of African currencies.

Net profit amounted to \$130 million higher than \$106 million achieved in 2021, while earnings per share stood at EPS \$0.53 cents from \$0.43 cents.

Gross loans and advances to customers increased to \$10.053 billion in H1, 2022 from \$9.454 billion in 2021, while deposits from customers rose to \$19.745 billion as against \$19.143 billion in 2021.

Ecobank group balance sheet also revealed cost of funds to be 2.3 per cent as at June 30, 2022 from 2.1 per cent in 2021, non-performing loans (NPL) ratio at 6.2 per cent lower than 7.4 per cent H1, 2021, while NPL coverage ratio at 113.5 per cent from 86.7 per cent.

Commenting on the performance, Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) of the bank, Ade Ayeyemi, said: "Our results for the first six months of 2022 reflect the benefits of our diversified business and geographies. It also shows our resilience and execution capabilities in the service of clients and customers in a challenging environment while generating adequate returns for

our shareholders."

Ayeyemi continued: "Our investments in technology and digital capabilities are scalable and have reduced our cost-to-serve. Coupled with revenue growth, we achieved a record cost-to-income ratio of 56 per cent. We increased impairment charges to reflect heightened credit risks."

"More importantly, we have proactively built-up central impairment reserves of \$206 million, which we can deploy if needed in a stressed credit environment. At the same time, our balance sheet remains liquid and adequately capitalised, providing us adequate capacity to serve our customers better."

During the first half of the year, Ecobank Group, across its pan-African footprint, won nearly

20 Awards from highly respected industry media and corporations. These reflect the beneficial impact on our services to our customers and communities, anchored in our vision to contribute to Africa's economic development and financial integration. Indeed, a few days ago, Euromoney named Ecobank as Africa's Best Bank, Best Digital Bank and Best Bank for SMEs at its 2022 awards ceremony.

"These are a testament to our passion for serving clients and customers and our continued investments in technology, processes and people. I am extremely proud of Ecobank employees and I thank them for their diligence and commitment. As always, we are working towards realising our vision and remaining the bank that Africa and friends of Africa trust," he said.



Ade Ayeyemi

# NPA, SON collaborate to check influx of substandard imports

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

In a bid to promote the Import and Export Trade in quality products, while also ensuring that Nigeria is not shortchanged by the purveyors of substandard imports.

The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) has entered into a strategic partnership with the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) to tackle the influx of sub-standard products into the country.

The strategic arrangement according to the two key federal agencies becomes crucial for the overall good of the nation's economy and the safety of its people especially in tackling the importation of sub-standard products by promoting the circulation and sale of high quality products.

Chief Executives of the two agencies expressed confidence that the collaboration would lead to more gains in terms

of employment opportunities, increased revenue to the Federal Government as well as substantial growth in the nation's economy.

Director General of SON, Farouk Salim and Managing Director of NPA, Muhammed Bello-Koko and managements of both organisations at a strategic meeting in Lagos agreed on the need for more effective collaboration and synergy to drive result-oriented and seamless operations at the nation's ports.

They also agreed to collaborate on the promotion of speedy processing of goods for exports in furtherance of the Federal Government's economic diversification policy, especially for non-oil products.

Bello-Koko stated technical expertise would be brought to bear through its participation in the joint cargo inspection and examination for greater efficiency and subsequent detention of suspected substandard products,

adding: "We will work with SON to ensure that it discharges its duty effectively. I am sure that SON will also work with other sister agencies without issues," Koko said.

The NPA boss, who enjoined SON to play more active role in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) to facilitate Nigeria's export drive for quality and competitive products in the nation's borders, disclosed that both agencies would carefully scrutinise the personnel and equipment for judicial use followed President Muhammadu Buhari's recent approval for Export Processing Terminals.

Earlier, Salim lamented that the challenge posed by the influx of substandard products to the concerted efforts of relevant agencies and stakeholders towards growing the nation's economy has been partly responsible for increased unemployment rate and poor wealth creation in the

country, stressing that all hands should be on deck to reverse the trend.

He expressed SON's readiness to avail its Management Systems Standards Certification (MSSC) and training services to NPA personnel to continually improve its efficiency in service delivery.

While accepting SON's offer for training and certification, the NPA boss requested SON input into the NPA Academy Curriculum and commended the SON for initiating reposition of the organisation to deliver on its core mandate.



Muhammed Bello-Koko

## Manufacturers express confidence in Nigeria's economy

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Despite the harsh operating environment since the beginning of 2022, some local manufacturers have expressed confidence in the country's economy.

Director General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Olusegun Ajayi-Kadir, stated this in MAN's quarterly research and advocacy index, which measures changes in the pulse of operators in the country made available to The Trumpet in Lagos.

In the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) index, the association stressed that the Manufacturers CEO Confidence Index (MCCI) also measures the pulse and trends in the manufacturing sector on a quarterly basis.

In a statement issued in Lagos, the association said: "The MCCI is a response to movements in the macro-economy and government policies, using primary data from direct survey on over 400 Chief Executive Officers of MAN member companies across the country.

"It is computed using data generated on standard diffusion factors of current business condition, for the next three months, current employment condition, rate of employment, employment condition for the next three months."

"In the last six quarters beginning from the second quarter of 2021, manufacturers have sustained improve confidence in the economy as index scores remained above the 50 baseline. In the second quarter of 2022, the index of MCCI marginally increased to 54.6 point up from 53.9 points recorded in the first quarter of the year."

It further explained that despite the many challenges including poor access to foreign exchange (forex) for importation

of raw materials not available locally, rising global inflation, government's aggressive drive for revenue, frequent collapse of the national grid, increase in price diesel, scarcity of wheat and other manufacturing inputs due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and wide spread insecurity that combined to limit productive activities in the economy during the quarter, the manufacturers were still confident in the national economy.

MAN said the above mentioned challenges were some of the improvements in the second quarter of 2022, which implied that manufacturers' confidence in the economy slightly improved above what obtained in the preceding quarter.

It added that the development showed that manufacturers responded to the economic challenges that prevailed in the second quarter with appropriate survival strategies and adjustments including remodeling of production operations after the marginal slowdown experienced in the first quarter.

It also showed that the Russia-Ukraine war has affected the entire world, which it said, reflected the interdependence of counties as a global village, adding: "The effect of the Russia-Ukraine war clearly underscored the popular maxim that the world has become a global village.

"The occurrence of an incidence in a part of the world, notwithstanding how specific we may think, can actually become a global issue. Therefore, apart from the need for proper management of global peace, the series of global occurrences and the lessons learnt demand that national government should begin to take drastic measures to manage the phenomena proactively going forward."

## CBN urges local manufacturers to embrace development banks

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Local manufacturing firms have been urged to approach the Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN), Bank of Industry (BOI) and other development banks rather than the Money Deposit Banks (MDBs) for their financial needs.

Deputy Director of Financial System Stability Directorate at the apex bank, Eboagwu Ezulu, stated this at the first National Stakeholders Conference organised by the Association of Corporate Affairs Managers of Banks (ACAMB) in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) in Lagos recently.

At the event, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) complained of the inability of its members to access credit facilities to run their various manufacturing forms.

Ezulu advised manufacturers and members of MAN to approach the development banks for their loans needs, stating that they were created in collaboration with the apex bank for business and infrastructure development purposes.

He said: "I am aware that the Development Bank of Nigeria was established in collaboration with the CBN to provide funding, as well as the Bank of Industry to support the manufacturing sector.

"Have the manufacturing firms approached those entities to use the funds available rather than asking



Emeifele

the commercial banks? Banks are supposed to approach the CBN on behalf of their customers to resolve these problems. And as such commercial banks do short time lending and have the primary responsibility to protect their depositors."

Responding on behalf of the manufacturers, President of MAN, Mansur Ahmed, said the development of the manufacturing sector and the banking sector were expedient for the sustainability of the economy, adding that hence the need for both sectors to work together to reduce poverty, attract investment and boost economic growth.

He said: "The traditional industry-bank lending relationship is no longer supporting the growth of industry. Activities in the manufacturing have massively declined resulting to rising number of moribund businesses and

capital flight across the country.

"Based on this information, it is, therefore, important that the commercial banks and the industry should come together to chart new ways of supporting each other to the benefit of all."

He recommended that the commercial bank should develop corporate patriotism to strengthen the willingness to lend at the interest rates that support the industry and the banking sector for the sake of the economy.

In his presentation, President of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), Dr. Ken Opara, noted that the Organised Private Sector (OPS) remained the real drivers of real sector growth and economic advancement through industrialisation, job creation, provision of goods and services and poverty alleviation.

"This a well functioning financial system and rigorous private sector are important drivers of national growth in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation, economic stability and poverty reduction.

"However, I must admit that there are still a lot of untapped opportunities between the two critical sectors, some of which are attributable to a lack of proper handshake between the bodies. Given the interdependence of the sectors, it has become imperative for both sectors to work together for the benefit of the country's economic development," he stated.

# EFCC reveals people, entities behind free fall of naira

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) has declared that it knows the people and organisations behind the continued free fall of the naira against world's major currencies, especially the dollar, pounds and Euro.

Chairman of the commission,

Abdulrasheed Bawa, disclosed this during a meeting with Bureau De Change (BDCs) operators in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja at the weekend.

He indicted some members of the BDCs for their illegal activities, adding that the commission was against brazen foreign exchange speculations,

especially at the parallel market.

Bawa, who disclosed that the activities of foreign exchange speculators was harmful to the nation's monetary policy by causing a run on the value of the naira, revealed that the commission has information on specific people and groups, who were stockpiling foreign currencies, particularly dollars.

He said significant effort against the speculators was underway, adding that the EFCC was watching some people and entities in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Benin City, Abuja, Calabar and other cities across the country.

Responding, the operators expressed confidence that the EFCC's action might eventually cause the naira to regain

its pre-speculation value.

Also, the agency pointed out that similar meetings with other BDCs dealers, regulators, players in the financial industry and other stakeholders would soon be held, adding that meeting and other activities of the commission were aimed at finding lasting solution to the foreign exchange challenges in the country.

## How Tinubu will tackle security challenges, by Keyamo

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Minister of State, Labour and Employment, Olorogun Festus Keyamo SAN, who doubles as the spokesperson of the APC 2023 Presidential Campaign Council, has said the Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu, when elected in 2023 would employ additional tools and tactics in dealing with emerging security threats of banditry and kidnapping among others.

Keyamo stated this Saturday night in a statement shared on his Twitter handle, stressing that Tinubu as president would compliment the efforts of the current administration

to eradicate all threats.

The APC Presidential Campaign spokesperson said the statement was necessary to put purveyors of fake news and rumours out of business as the general elections approach.

He praised the President Muhammadu Buhari administration for its infrastructural development, rail advancement and agriculture revolutions, saying that the president has done exceedingly well.

According to him, there is a significant improvement in herders and farmers' clashes and terrorism bedeviling some parts of the current.

"There're areas where PMB's Govt has done exceedingly well: infrastructure, rail, agriculture, etc. Our @officialABAT (Bola Ahmed

Tinubu) will continue with those revolutionary strides but also seek to improve on them

"There're areas of security challenges that have improved significantly, e.g farmers-herders' clashes, North-East insurgency, etc; Tinubu will review these situations & employ additional strategies to maintain the momentum & consolidate the gains achieved in these areas

"As for new areas of security challenges, e.g banditry and kidnappings in the N/West, Tinubu is prepared to employ additional tools and tactics to compliment the present work in progress in order to totally eradicate them if Nigerians graciously give him their mandate," Keyamo stated.



President Muhammadu Buhari

## NSCDC, UN body move to end violence against women in politics

By PAUL MICHAEL

Ahead of the 2023 general elections, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has pledged to protect the rights of women and assist in ending violence against women in politics.

Commandant General of the Corps, Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi, made the pledge when he paid a courtesy visit to the United Nations Women Country Representative, Ms Beatrice Eyong at the UN House in Abuja.

He emphasised that the role women play in the development of the society cannot be undermined as they are diligent, resourceful and goal oriented in whatever duties assigned to them.

According to him, to promote the rights of women, he established the Gender unit and launched the Gender Policy Document to mainstream women into policies and programmes of the Corps at all levels.

"About this time last year, we launched the gender policy document to ensure we have a guideline for the operation of the gender unit in all our commands across the Federation.

"The event also ushered in my

decoration as a 'He for She' by the Honorable Minister of Women Affairs, Mrs Dame Pauline Tallen, in recognition of our effort to promote women inclusiveness in our service since the beginning of my administration," the NSCDC CG said.

While assuring Ms Eyong of women's safety in the country, Audi said "President Muhammadu Buhari is very committed to the security of lives and property of Nigerians and foreigners alike.

"He has also charged all security agencies in the country to work together to end the security chal-

lenges in the country as soon as possible and Nigerians will see changes very soon."

He appealed for support of the UN Women in the area of training for Gender Desk Officers of the Corps across the nation as well as technical support to aid the prevention of school gender-based violence among others.

The Country Representative of the UN Women in Nigeria, Ms Beatrice Eyong, in her response, thanked the Dr Audi for his involvement in the fight for Women's rights.

Ms Eyong affirmed that the

Corps is keeping up to speed with its mandates while assuring that the UN women is ever ready to partner with the Corps especially in areas of common interests and concerns.

She added that there is need for the partnership between the Corps and UN Women to go deeper and stronger in order to help achieve their economic empowerment programme for rural women and the nation at large.

According to her, the UN Women will soon launch a Digitally Assisted Climate-Smart Agriculture for rural women, noting that security is a major factor to be prioritised to achieve the programme.

"We shall expand our partnership with the NSCDC to leverage on the expertise of your Agro Rangers unit to provide security for rural women who are farmers as well as our officials when the programme commences," she added.

Ms Eyong sought the support of the NSCDC in the prevention of trafficking of women and girls, stating that about 18.5 million children are out of school and over 10 million of them are girls.

Commenting on the forthcoming general elections in 2023, Ms

Eyong emphasised that women are vulnerable species that has been constantly denied of their rights to actively participate in politics.

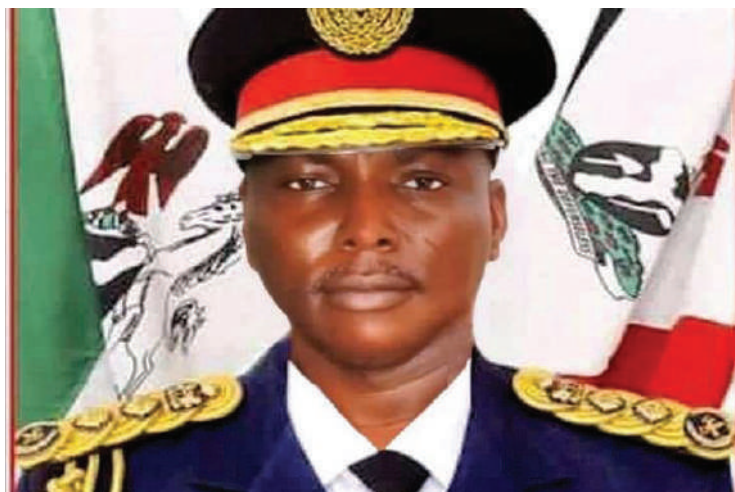
She requested for maximum support from the Corps in bringing an end to violence against women in politics.

The CG however promised to put necessary machineries in motion through the gender unit at the National Headquarters, headed by CSC Oluwakemi Ajet Alao to assist in ending violence against women in politics especially as the election year draw closer.

In his response, Dr Audi assured the UN Women that necessary security machineries are in motion to end violence against women while noting that the Corps is ready to provide security whenever the need arises.

"You can count on us. Call on Civil Defence anytime for your programs, our job is to ensure security of lives and protection of Critical National Assets and Infrastructure.

"We have justified our existence over the years and we shall continue to work hard until we achieve total security in the country," the CG stated.



Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi

## Hoodlums kill expatriates, policemen in Kogi, attack station in Imo, kill four officers

By PAUL MICHAEL

Two expatriates and two police inspectors have been confirmed killed in an attack launched against their convoy by gunmen in Kogi.

The two drivers of the expatriates of West Africa Ceramics Company Ajaokuta, Kogi, were also killed.

Police Public Relations Officer of Kogi Police Command, SP William Ovyeye-Aya, confirmed the incident on Saturday in a statement in Lokoja, saying that the attack took place along Lokoja-Ajaokuta road around 8:00 pm on Friday.

According to Ovyeye-Aya, the expatriates were being escorted by the police to the Ceramic company that evening, when the gunmen attacked them.

He said that the Area Commander and a detachment of Military in the area had to reinforced to the scene of incident before the attackers fled.

He further explained that the Kogi Commissioner of Police in the State, CP Edward Egbuka, had visited the scene for an on-the-spot assessment.

"The CP is assuring the public that the Command is committed to working in synergy with other security agencies as well as patriotic stakeholders to make the State a safe and secure place for all and sundry.

"He has further asked the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) to commence investigations into the unfortunate incident so as to unravel the remote

and immediate cause of the attack with a view to bringing the perpetrators to book," Ovyeye-Aya added.

In a similar development, no fewer than four police officers have been confirmed died during attack on Agwa Police Division in Oguta Local Government of Imo State by gunmen.

Commissioner of Police in the State, CP Mohammed Barde confirmed this in a press statement issued by the command's spokesperson CSP Michael Abattam on Saturday.

He said the incident occurred on Friday evening.

According to Abattam, the gunmen suspected to be members of the proscribed Eastern Security Network (ESN), attacked the station with

explosive devices and also freed some detainees in the station.

Although the CP said officers at the station and other tactical units from state command repelled the attack, he confirmed that four of his men paid the supreme price.

"On 05/8/2022 at about 2300 hours, hoodlums suspected to be members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its militia affiliate, Eastern Security Network (ESN) attacked Agwa Police Station in their numbers.

"The hoodlums who came in two vehicles and a tipper, shooting sporadically, used a tipper vehicle in forcing the gate open to gain entrance into the station, throwing Improvised Explosives Devices (IEDS) and petrol bombs .

"The police operatives of the division joined by the command's tactical teams gave the hoodlums a stiff resistance, engaging them in a gun duel.

"The hoodlums, who were fatally hit with a lot of casualty on their side, retreated, escaping in their vehicles," he said.

The CP said fire from the explosives affected a private vehicle parked in the premises of the station while some motorcycles were also affected.

He, however, stated that the main building was not affected.

"In the attack, two suspects in custody escaped, four police officers gallantly paid the supreme price, while one rifle is yet to be recovered," the CP said.



# Aiteo Cup: Nasarawa Utd enter quarter-final round

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

■ My target is to win continental ticket-Okereke

**N**asarawa United have proceeded to the quarter-final of the Aiteo Federation Cup after they edged Bendel Insurance of Benin to a 2-1 win at the Enyimba Stadium, Aba.

Both teams, who have turned likely foes in the Aiteo Cup, had earlier had an encounter at last season's quarter-final where the Solid Miners defeated the Benin Arsenal 3-1.

On Saturday, Nasarawa United opened the goal chart in 18-minutes of action after King Osanga capitalised on the defensive slip-up by Bendel Insurance to release Sunday Okereke, who seamlessly tapped the ball into the net.

The defensive lapse was caused by the forward thrust of the Benin Arsenal right-back Dede muoghara to support the attack that reversibly led to a counter-attack.

In a quick response, Bendel Insurance who recently won promotion to the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) despite having games in hand, tallied the scoreline from gameplay initiated by defender Benjamin Tanimu and was perfected by Adodo Stephens to beat Solid Miners goalie Ameh Godwin.

However, in the second half, Nasarawa United were awarded a penalty



for a rough challenge by Odinaka Edeh which according to Bendel Insurance was undeserving.

The Solid Miners attacker Sunday Okereke took the chance brilliantly to hand the Middlebelters a lead.

Reacting to the lead, Bendel Insurance boss Monday Odigie made some tactical changes which resulted in fierce attacks against the Solid Miners who were practically caged in their cocoon but efforts to get a goal could only hit the woodwork for the Benin Arsenals.

In a post-match interview, Okereke felt good to have scored a brace at the Enyimba Stadium, adding that his target is to become the highest goalscorer of the tourney and eventually win the title to qualify for the CAF Confederation Cup.

"I feel very good to score on this ground again after scoring in the league," he

said.

"This is because the ground favours me and my team a lot and it looks like I have already mastered this surface.

"My target in this competition is to become the highest goalscorer with the support of my teammates and win the title and get a continental ticket, which is why we always give our best," Okereke added.

Before the match, Bendel Insurance had complained of the tight fixture which saw them play two matches, the Aiteo Cup round of 16 and the Nigeria National League match against J. Atete in Abakiliki without a day interval.

According to the Benin Arsenals, the match against J. Atete FC was taken to neutral ground in Abakiliki following a disciplinary action meted on the host team for allegedly attacking the referee in their match

against Ekiti United.

**AITEO CUP COMPETITION 2022 ROUND OF 16 RESULTS (MEN)**

Green Beret 0 Niger Tornadoes 1

Lobi Stars 1 Akure City 0 Heartland FC 1 Dakkada FC 1 (5-4 penalties)

Sunshine Stars 1 Katsina United 1 (3-5 penalties)

DMD FC 0 Kano Pillars 2 El-Kanemi Warriors 0 Wikki Tourists 0 (4-5 penalties)

Sunday: Akwa United Vs Kogi United - Enugu - 4pm

**QUARTER FINAL FIXTURES (MEN)**

Niger Tornadoes Vs Lobi Stars

Wikki Tourists Vs Nasarawa United

Katsina United Vs Heartland FC

Kano Pillars Vs Akwa United/Kogi United

Date: Wednesday, 10th August

# Rangers Int'l players, others, go for recess

■ We're desirous to achieve set target- Ugwuwarua

Rangers International Football Club have given its players, technical crew and backroom staff three weeks break due to elapse on the 27th of August.

After the 2021-2022 season of the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) ended, Enugu Rangers kickstarted their quest for a seventh AITEO Cup title right from the round of 64 where they thumped Auwalu Baba Jada 4-1 until they unluckily fell out in the round of 32 to Heartland on penalties.

Consequent to the inactivity of the league or competitive actions, the management of Flying Antelopes approved a break with an emphasis on resumption by August 28 for the 2022/2023 NPFL season's preparations.

In an official statement by the club through its media and communication officer, Norbert Okolie, it noted that the administrative secretary, Barrister Ferdinand Emeka Ugwuwarua lamented over the Flying Antelopes' failure to accomplish set targets but commended the players for the job done so far.

Rangers International Football Club ended the recently concluded NPFL season in 5th position and Ugwuwarua, who is optimistic that the club will achieve set targets in the 2022-2023 season, admonished the

players to conduct themselves properly during the period of recess.

"We all understand that we could not achieve our set target for last season and we are desirous of achieving it in the coming season, hence, I urge you to be professional in conduct during this break period so as to come back refreshed for the task ahead," Ugwuwarua said.

Head coach Abdul Maikaba on behalf of the technical crew and players appreciated the management of the club for their unwavering support for the team, who despite not meeting their goal last season, has solemnly assisted when needed.

"Even when our collective efforts did not result in achieving our set targets, I must thank you all for the cooperation shown and believe that we shall get it done in the coming season," Maikaba said.

"I implore you all to display maturity as you take time off the game for the approved period and return stronger for us to strategize going into the new season," he cautioned.

Last season, the Flying Antelopes scored a total of 41 goals and conceded 30 to garner a total of 56 points that saw them trail Kwara United, Remo Stars, Plateau United and eventual champions Rivers United.

# 'Why Oleksandr Usyk is good, effective'

Former heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua's sparring partner Thomas Carty has revealed why heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk is very effective in boxing.

Usyk and Joshua have been slated for a heavyweight rematch on August 20 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and the latter had added Carty, who adores the Ukrainian prowess and seeks to be like him, to his sparring crew.

In an interview recently, Carty noted that Usyk's ability to swiftly move his feet coupled with his outstanding fundamental boxing skills make him a good boxer.

"What makes him effective and good is how mobile he is. His feet are really, really good. His fundamentals are, I would say up there, with some of the best fundamental boxing skills ever, in my opinion," Carty told the British media.

The Irish boxer who dreams of a heavyweight title in Dublin added that to complement his abilities, Usyk happens to be left-

handed, an attribute not common in the top cadre of boxing heavyweights.

Carty continued: "Then you have the element of being left-handed and things not being the way they usually are. If there are a hundred guys in the boxing gym, less than five per cent are going to be lefties.

"It's something that's not seen a lot, I think, at the elite level of heavyweights.

"Obviously, you can pick out examples but few and far between," he reiterated.

He recalled watching the Ukrainian in one of his fights and went afterwards to replicate him the following week during a spar.

"I remember watching him against [Tony] Bellew and he was throwing jab-left hooks, the next week in sparring I'm throwing jab-left hooks and there's guys going to sleep in the ring. It works. It's proven," he added.

Anthony is eager to reclaim his three heavyweight titles from Usyk after he was outpointed in September.

# PSG ready to snap Madrid's target, Fabian Ruiz

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) look set to leapfrog Madrid to sign Fabian Ruiz from Napoli at a price worth £21m.

Reportedly, Madrid's prime target for the new season has a year left in his contract prompting Partinopei to receptively welcome a bid for the midfielder than to lose on a free transfer next season.

According to transfer market expert Fabrizio Romano, Led Parisians are close to wrapping up a deal for the 26-year-old who has netted 18 goals in 125 Serie A appearances for Napoli.

If PSG eventually seal the deal for Ruiz, Carlo Ancelotti's plans for Real Madrid this season would have been gravely affected

without the presence of one of his vital targets.

Ancelotti, during his time in Napoli when Ruiz joined the club from Real Betis in 2018, has been his fan even at Madrid and believes the Spaniard can add depth to Los Blancos' midfield.

However, PSG has gone ahead and, according to Romano, everything responds to a strategy by Luis Campos, the sports management guru who has been a star advisor to the Parisian club since Leonardo's departure.

The Portuguese has been talking for weeks with the footballer's agents and everything indicates that his arrival at the Parc des Princes is very close to materializing.



# How Fulham stunned Liverpool in EPL opener

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

## Klopp blames pitch dryness for surreal result

Newly promoted Premier League side Fulham stunned the season's Community Shield winners Liverpool at the Craven Cottage to a 2-2 draw.

Unpredicted to happen, following the stint of the Reds and their actions in the summer transfer window where newbies were added to bolster the squad for the new season, Fulham got the first goal from Aleksandar Mitrović in 32 minutes.

Ignited by the notion of trailing by a goal, 19 minutes into the second half Liverpool responded squarely on Uruguayan Darwin Nunez's trickery to cancel the 27-year-old Serbian opener for the Cottagers.

Unfortunately, the Reds could not capitalise on Nunez's first Premier League goal for the club as the blazing Mitrović footwalk got the worse of Virgil van Dijk, who



miss-timed his tackle to cause a penalty, which the Fulham striker slotted on the right-hand side to beat Alisson Becker at goal.

However, the Reds had to maximise their potential to render the game to parity and possibly steal a late victory from Craven Cottage but the Cottagers were determined to frustrate their efforts.

Fortunately, Liverpool finally got its opportunity in the 80th minute after a series of trials as star

forward and last season's joint top scorer Mohamed Salah equalised to steal a point home.

Meanwhile, Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp has blamed the pitch dryness as the cause for the surreal result at Craven Cottage.

He said, "We got a point from a really bad game from my side so now it's a question of 'How can that happen?'"

"The attitude was not right in the beginning and then we wanted to fight

back but it wasn't easy anymore.

"The pitch was dry, stuff like this, we played really in their cards most of the time," Klopp claimed.

Liverpool's next fixture is against Crystal Palace on Monday, August 15 at Anfield while Fulham travel to Molineux Stadium to take on Wolves on Saturday, 13 August.

Remarkably, Mitrović is the first player to score a brace in the 2022-2023 Premier League season.

## Rivers United, Asante Kotoko clash to showcase African culture in Turkey

Rivers United is set to clash with Asante Kotoko of Ghana in an exhibition match facilitated by the City Gate Travel and Tours with the objective to sell the African culture, showcase African talents beyond brotherliness that exists between both countries.

The Pride of Rivers who are the champions of the Nigeria Professional Football League and winners of the Ghana Premier League Asante Kotoko will lock horns in the contest tagged Super Cup on Wednesday, 25 August, 2022 in Turkey.

In a report by the club to announce the development, the agreement among the three parties, Rivers United, Asante Kotoko and organisers City Gate Travel and Tours was brokered and documents have been signed to that effect on August 5, 2022, in Port Harcourt.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer of City Gate Travel and Tours, Mr Mizbawu Issah, explained that the primary objective why the company embarked on the Champions clash is to sell African culture to the western world.

He said, "The company wants to enhance the relationship of both teams just beyond brotherhood to other activities, sell the African culture and showcase talents, hence the decision to take the match to Turkey."

Chief Dr Okey Kpalukwu,

General Manager of the Pride of Rivers noted that he was surprised with the development while making references to what the club has achieved in last season.

Dr Kpalukwu further commended the organisers of the exhibition match which he acknowledged will be advantageous to the team's preseason preparations.

"I was not surprised at the invitation considering what the club has been able to achieve as a brand," he said.

"I commend the organizers of the Super Cup, City Gate Travel and Tours for the offer as it will compliment the preseason programs already scheduled by the club's management," Kpalukwu acknowledged.

Recall that Rivers United on the presentation of the NPFL trophy to the River State Governor Nyesom Wike, were promised a pre-season tour to Real Madrid as part of their preparations for the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Champions League and the 2022/2023 Nigeria Professional Football League.

Asante Kotoko are expected to be formidable foes to the Pride of Rivers considering the rivalry between both countries in the battle for football supremacy and David Obeng Nyarko, Asante Kotoko Communications and Brands Manager, stressed that the team is invigorated by the clash.



## Chelsea players avoid 'cursed' number 9 jersey

Koulibaly respectfully wears John Terry's jersey

Like a plague that everyone abhors, Chelsea attackers have refused to wear the number 9 shirt with the assumption that it is cursed.

Fernando Torres, Alvaro Morata, Gonzalo Higuain, Radamel Falcao and Mateja Kezman were all among the players who wore the number 9 shirt but could not perform to their peak as expected by the club.

The latest player to be allotted the infamous number was £97.5m Romelu Lukaku whose lacklustre season only saw the Belgian netting 8 goals in 25 Premier League appearances.

Following his exit on a season-long loan to Inter Milan, having failed to replicate the same feat that endeared him into the hearts of the Nerazzurri in Stamford Bridge last season, none of Chelsea's players has considered taking the number for fear of being overwhelmed by a sombre presage.

However, Thomas Tuchel said no one at the club has demanded to be allotted the number 9 because they claimed it is cursed.

"It's cursed. People tell me it's cursed. It's not the case that we leave it open for reasons or for some players in the pipeline that naturally could come and take it," Tuchel said.

"There was not a big

demand for number 9, and sometimes players want to change numbers but surprisingly no one wants to touch it.

"Everyone who is here longer than me in the club tells me, 'Ah you know, he had the number 9 and he did not score and he also had the number 9 and he did not score."

"Now we have a moment where no one wants to touch the number 9," the Chelsea manager added.

Meanwhile, Kalidou Koulibaly has sought John Terry's permission to wear the number 26 jersey.

Koulibaly said that was the same number he wore while in Napoli and decided to wear it in Stamford Bridge.

He added that he is abreast with what John Terry did for the club and city and knows how important the number is to him.

"I called him [John Terry] at the beginning but he didn't believe it was me thinking it was a joke," Koulibaly said.

"He [John Terry] called the club manager to confirm if it was truly me. When he finally responded I asked him respectfully I wanted his jersey's number and I know how important the number is to him and also for me because I took it directly when I went to Napoli and I wanted to keep it here in Chelsea.

"When he told me yes, I was happy because I know what he did for the



supporters and the city here," he acknowledged.

Relatively, Tammy Abraham was able to record

an average success with the number under Frank Lampard, scoring 15 goals in 34 games.

## Aaron Ramsey: Versatile midfielder with big impact- OGC Nice

Wales international, Aaron Ramsey, has officially joined French Ligue 1 side, OGC Nice, after mutually leaving the Italian side, Juventus, despite having a year left to run in Turin.

Ramsey joined Juventus from Arsenal and won both the Italian League and Italian Cup but injury worries have seen the player fall below the pecking order in Turin, with Massimiliano Allegri ditching the player from his plans on his return from a loan spell in Rangers.

Since the player became a free agent, following the mutual termination of his contract by Bianconeri, several clubs have been on his trail with reports linking him with a move to the MLS.

Rangers would have considered an option for the

player where he won the Scottish Cup and played the Europa League final in Seville to lose the deciding spot-kick but his inconsistency may have allegedly caused the Gers to snub an option to retain him.

Reportedly, the 31-year-old was linked with a move to England, preferably, his former club Cardiff but he opted to move to France.

A statement by OGC Nice described the ex-Arsenal player as a talented attacker who has a lot of experience that will galvanise the young players.

"After the signing of young players, it is this time a man of experience who arrives at the Gym," the club said.

"A talented and charismatic leader: Aaron Ramsey.

"A versatile midfielder

with a big impact, technique and comfortable finishing; Aaron Ramsey worked wonders at Arsenal in the Premier League, with whom he played 371 games (65 goals) between 2008 and 2019, and won three Cups (2014, 2015, 2017).

"The youngest captain of Wales (at just 20 years old), who also passed through Cardiff and Nottingham Forest in the United Kingdom, had been playing for Juventus since 2019.

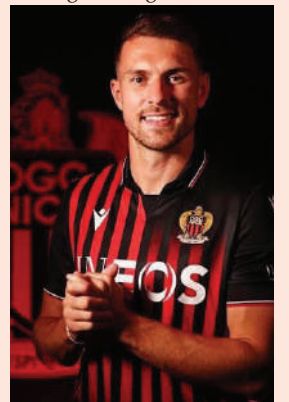
"He played 69 games with the jersey of 'the Old Lady', before being loaned to Glasgow Rangers for the first six months of 2022, playing in a Europa League final and winning a Scottish Cup," OGC Nice concluded.

Reportedly, Ramsey was linked with a move to the

MLS just last week, but he rejected that offer.

Juventus legend Andrea Pirlo tried to bring him to Fatih Karagümrük in Turkey but the move did not sail through.

Galatasaray were also on his trail but the Welshman preferred to explore new challenges in Ligue 1.



## Reticent Dennis on Premier League clubs' hotlist

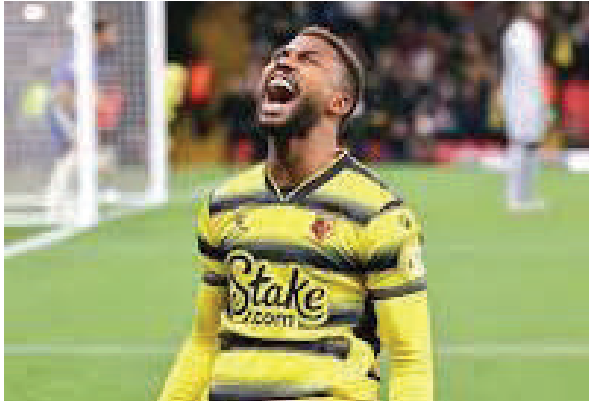
By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Sports Editor, Abuja

**W**atford forward Emmanuel Dennis has been heavily linked with a move away from Vicarage Road with West Ham, Newcastle United and Nottingham Forest on his trail.

The Nigeria international, who has earned 7-caps after he made his debut in 2019 under former Super Eagles coach Gernot Rohr, scored his first national goal in the 10-0 thrashing of Sao Tome and Principe at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers.

Dennis last season, before Watford were relegated to the English Championship, scored an impressive goal through a solo effort against West Ham to attract the interest of David Moyes who is particular about the Nigerian forward.

The 24-year-old was



an integral part of the squad's campaign last season where he featured 33 times to net 10 goals in the English topflight division.

Sadly, despite the player's number of goals for the club, the Hornets were unable to retain the Premier League status as they joined Burnley and Norwich in the Championships.

Superbly, the new status of the club has not deterred the Super Eagle from doing what he does best as he was very instrumental in

Joao Pedro's goal against Sheffield United in the opening match of the season at Vicarage Road.

Reports from England revealed that Hammers fans made their way to the stadium to watch Dennis play against Sheffield United to further relish on their club's prime target.

In a post-match interview, Dennis was asked about his future and how was handling the interest from several clubs.

He said, "I enjoyed the game today, we won the game, so I'm happy.

"I'm still a player of the team so I just do my job and we'll see what happens," Dennis added.

Meanwhile, Newcastle are interested in the forward alongside Chelsea's Timo Werner and Armando Broja.

A report by CSB Sports Golazo journalist, Ben Jacobs revealed that Newcastle United are among the several EPL clubs that are interested in signing the player.

Also Premier League new boys Nottingham Forests are seeking Dennis' signature and Steve Cooper has allegedly doubled his interest in the player after the Championship fixture at Vicarage Road where he was in the spotlight.

Watford have valued Dennis at €20million which probably may be a stumbling block for some of the clubs in furthering their interests but reports had it that West Ham have tabled €18million plus €2million on additions.

## Gov's aide tasks corporate sponsors on social responsibility for championship winners

■ Lauds Diri's move to build standard basketball courts in schools

Organisers of the Annual Milo Basketball Championship for Secondary Schools across Nigeria have been tasked to do more than monetary benefits and laurels for this year's winners of the age-grade school competition with a view to entrenching a lasting legacy in St. Jude's Model Girls Secondary School, Amarata-Yenagoa, who won the female category of the competition for the seventh time consecutively.

Senior Special Assistant on Media to the Governor of Bayelsa State, Comr. Tamarakuro Oweifie, disclosed this on the sidelines with news hounds in Government House Yenagoa when the winning team alongside their technical crew paid a courtesy visit to the Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, to present the trophies they won to the state governor.

Comr Oweifie expressed concerns that winning the coveted adolescent trophy in basketball, for the seventh time in a row, is no mean feat for the adolescent girls and therefore more capital projects needed to be on ground in the school, beyond laurels and cash awards, as this would go a long way in encouraging the school to further groom and expose other budding younger athletes to excel in sports and education.

"One cannot over-emphasize the need for more tangible projects to assist St. Jude's Girls Secondary School, Amarata-Yenagoa, which has brought this glory to Bayelsa State for the seventh time and counting," he said.

"Governor Diri has shown unparalleled commitment to sports in just two years of his first tenure, attracting world-class wins in wrestling through Olympic silver medalist Blessing Oborodudu (who incidentally is also a product of St. Jude's Girls' Model Secondary School, Amarata), rising athletics champion Tamar Godbless, and clinching a record 3rd position on the medals table at the last National

Sports Festivals in Edo State, as well as both female and male football teams winning the 2021 AITEO football league cups.

The Miracle Governor thought it wise, and rightly so, to pronounce the immediate construction of world-class basketball courts in both schools - Jude's Girls Model Secondary School, Amarata and Bishop Dimeari Grammar School, (BDGS) Ovom-Yenagoa - whose boys also won the male category of the annual Basketball Championship in Lagos State earlier in June this year.

"It is in that same direction that I call on the organisers of the annual Milo Secondary Schools Basketball Championship (Nestle Foods Ltd) and other corporate bodies to toe the line of Governor Diri and stamp their brand in gold by constructing lasting capital projects in the St. Jude's Girls' Model Secondary School, Yenagoa - which is an all-female public school in Yenagoa - to give the school a lasting sense of belonging.

"The project should be sited in St. Jude's Girls' Secondary School, Amarata-Yenagoa. It can be a standard sports facility or laboratory or even a multi-indoor sports complex in honour of the female champions and the corporate brand as a befitting legacy for their unparalleled feats!"

Comrade Oweifie, a veteran television producer and media administrator, lauded the efforts of Nestle Foods for its consistency in sponsoring the annual Milo Basketball Championship for secondary schools since the year 2000 with over 10000 participating secondary schools this year alone and challenged other corporate bodies, especially those in the oil and gas sector to emulate this sportsmanly gesture of Nestle Foods Ltd to support grassroots, host communities and school-based sports competition to entrench Nigeria and the Niger Delta in the global arena.

## Juventus alerted as Depay seeks Barca exit

Barcelona attacker Memphis Depay is exploiting all options to leave the Camp Nou after it became clear that he will be denied ample time to feature consistently this season.

The former Olympique Lyon attacker was already aware his playing time would be slashed when the club bolstered its attack with the arrival of Robert Lewandowski, Raphinha and the recovery of Ansu and Dembele's contract renewal.

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez has spoken with the 28-year-old while the Catalans are fashioning out a way to facilitate a deal.

Though Xavi is aware that the player will not get what he requires in the present squad and has also discussed his future, the Calatans boss still featured the attacker in the US preseason tour where he scored vital goals that attracted interest from top European clubs.

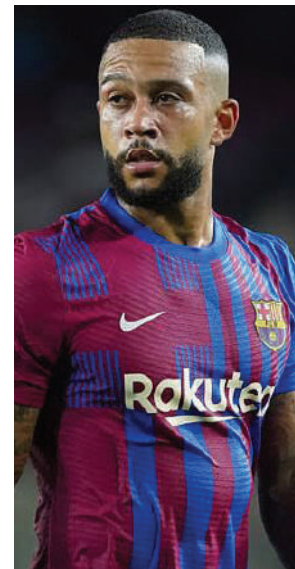
Reports reveal that Juventus are in the race to sign the player who has one year left on his contract with Barcelona looking to sell him at 20 million euros.

Another option being considered by Barcelona is to renew the player's contract by an extra year intending to send him on loan to Juventus

with an option of a 20 million euro buy at the expiration of the loan deal.

Depay, who joined Barcelona on a free transfer from Olympique Lyon having played for Manchester United, is also reportedly on the watchlist of Erik ten Hag's side, Paris Saint-Germain and Olympique Lyon.

Despite the growing interest in the Dutch attacker, Juventus are more likely to snap the attacker to Turin to bolster its attack after Paulo Dybala and Federico Bernardeschi left on free transfers to AS Roma and Toronto respectively.



## Haaland fires Man City to 2-0 victory as Red Devils fall in Old Trafford

Manchester City striker Erling Haaland was in top form at London Stadium against West Ham United in their Premier League opener as the brace from the Norwegian humbled the Hammers 2-0.

Haaland performance against the Hammers lifted the spirits of the Etihad Stadium fans, who were a bit disappointed in the Community Shield cracker against Liverpool where the 22-year-old former Dortmund point-man failed to convert some vital chances that could have earned City a win.

However, feeling re-engineered, shrugging off the inferiority complex following the confidence reposed in him by coach Pep Guardiola, Haaland scored his first Premier League goal from the

penalty spot in the presence of 62,443 spectators.

In the second half, the high spirited striker who slotted in the penalty kick to get his debut goal for City, brilliantly connected Kevin de Bruyne's defence-splitting pass to compound the woes of the Hammers to register his brace in the 65 minutes.

Consequently, having starred incredibly in his Premier League debut for City, the Norwegian became the second debutant in Premier League history to win a penalty and then successfully convert it. He also became the second striker to score a brace on their City debut, matching Sergio Aguero's feat from August 2011.

In a post-match interview by Guardiola, he lauded Haaland's display calling him

a weapon.

He said his team performed in all areas of the pitch, adding that they were more aggressive in their approach.

"Last two years we couldn't do it here," Guardiola said.

"We make an exceptional performance everywhere today. We were much more aggressive. Against Liverpool it was really, really poor, but today we played really well.

"Of course Erling scoring his first two goals is important for him. He has a good threat. Another weapon that we have now, but he isn't going to solve all of our problems.

"We talk about the team, the way we want to play, the way we want to create chances. We found the right moments with the goals today," he added.

Meanwhile, Manchester United lost their Premier



League opener against Brighton & Hove Albion at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The encounter, which saw their former player Danny Welbeck return to Old Trafford, was catastrophic for the Red Devils as he assisted Pascal Gross' first goal in the 30th minute to hand the Seagulls a lead.



## NDLEA nabs 90-year-old bandits' drug supplier, others

By PAUL MICHAEL

### Pastor with 3 drums of crystal methamphetamine held

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Sokoto have arrested a 90-year-old retired soldier, Usman Adamu, who allegedly supply bandits illicit drugs.

NDLEA's Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi disclosed this in a statement on Sunday, noting that Adamu was arrested on Wednesday 3rd August in Mailalle, Sabon Birni LGA.

"At the time of his arrest, the suspect was caught with 5.1kg cannabis sativa," Babafemi stated.

He further stated that a 37-year-old indigene of Ovia LGA, Edo State, who resides in Italy, Solo Osamede, was also arrested at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, for ingesting 41 wraps of heroin.

"He was nabbed and taken into custody for excretion while attempting to board a Turkish Airline flight to Milan, Italy via Istanbul, Turkey on Saturday 30th July. The swallowed wraps of the illicit drug were recovered in four excretions, which the suspect completed on Monday 1st Aug," he added.

In the same vein, a female passenger Jatau Lydia Lami was arrested at the Lagos airport for attempting to export 1,700 tablets of Tramadol 225mg concealed in her luggage to Istanbul, Turkey via a Turkish Airline flight on

Sunday 31st July.

Babafemi said that "Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect, a mother of three, hails from Zango Kataf LGA, Kaduna State and lives in Istanbul, Turkey with her family. She blamed her action on pressure to raise N5million ransom to free her mother from the captivity of bandits who kidnapped her since June."

Meanwhile, a trans-border drug dealer, Pastor Anietie Okon Effiong has been arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, with three drums of crystal methamphetamine, locally called Mkpuru Mmiri, believed to have been imported from India.

According to Babafemi, "The consignment weighing 90 kilograms and loaded into a commercial bus with registration number RSH 691XC at Ojuelegba in Lagos was intercepted during a stop and search operation along Umuahia - Ikot Ekpene highway on Saturday 6th August 2022.

"The dangerous drug packed 30kg in each drum was meant for Pastor Anietie Okon Effiong, who was arrested in a follow up operation at Oron beach in Oron. The recovered Meth drums were meant for onward delivery to the Republic of Cameroon.

"This comes on the heels of four seizures of the same illicit substance weighing 4.074kg going to Australia, Indonesia and Philippines with a 3kg cannabis sativa heading to Dubai, United Arab Emirates at some courier companies in Lagos. The consignments were concealed in body cream, hot burner iron and beads."

Also at the SAHCO export shed of Lagos airport, attempts by some freight agents to export two consignments of cannabis in a consolidated cargo to Dubai, UAE on Thursday 4th Aug were thwarted by NDLEA operatives.

Two suspects, Oladipupo Oladapo Fatai and Animashaun Qudus, were arrested in follow up operations while two others are still at large.

Same day in Zamfara, operatives intercepted a truck from Benin, Edo state enroute Sokoto with 50,000 tablets of Diazepam owned by a drug dealer, Umaru Attahiru.

While in Kogi, 14 sacks containing 1,376 bottles of codeine based syrup weighing 190.4kg were seized along Okene-Abuja highway on Wednesday 3rd Aug.

"The exhibits were found in a delivery bus coming from Onitsha, Anambra and heading to Abuja. Follow up operation in Abuja same day led to the arrest of Jude Ikenna and Ozoemene Cornelius," Babafemi said.



Meanwhile four suspects, Sulaiman Rabi'u, Sanusi Sha'aibu, Ma'aruf Habibu

and Christian Nnachor, were arrested in Zaria, Tafa and Romi in Kaduna State with

106,770 tablets of Tramadol 225mg, Diazepam, Exol-5 and 100 bottles of codeine cough syrup.

In Enugu, 143.5kg cannabis sativa was recovered from locked up stores in new market area of the state capital on Saturday 6th August.

While in Delta, a suspect, Ike Okparachi, 42, was arrested at Abraka Junction, Asaba with 10,550 tablets of Tramadol 225mg, Swinol, Rohypnol, and 3,105 bottles of codeine syrup as well as 69grams of Molly.

While commending the operatives, Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), charged them and others across the country to remain focus and vigilant.

### Nigeria's equity market gains marginally by 0.28%

The Nigerian Equity Market gained marginally on Friday by 0.28 per cent with BUA Cement, Flour Mills and Fidelity Bank being the major gainers, as the All Share Index (ASI) settled at 50,72233 points higher than the previous day.

Market capitalisation of equities on the NGX increased to N27.359 trillion from N27 trillion traded on Thursday, while total volumes traded closed with exchange of 148.810 million units valued at N1.93 billion traded in 4,091 deals.

The market breadth was

positive with 24 gainers as against 10 losers. The NGX 30 index marginally increased by 0.01 per cent to close at 1,828.66 points, as against 1,828.50 points during Thursday's trading, just as market turnover closed with traded volume of 69.82 million units.

Flour Mills and Fidelity Bank were the key gainers, while Unilever and Guinness were the key losers, just as consumer goods and oil and gas indices gained 1.52 per cent and 0.37 per cent respectively.

Also, industrial goods and banking indices gained 0.35

per cent and 0.06 per cent respectively.

Top gainers in Friday's trading session were led by Eternal and Japul, while the total volumes traded on Friday gained 14.2 per cent to 148.8 million valued at N1.9 billion.

Honeywell, Flour Mills, GTCO and FBNA led the volume chat with 22.0 million units, 21.6 million units and 11.3 million units, while GTCO, Zenith Bank and MTN Nigeria led the value chat by N445.6 million, N223.1 million and N172.4 million respectively.

## Stakeholders, Obi groups meet in Delta, urge support for LP

Labour Party (LP) gubernatorial candidate for Delta State in the 2023 general election, Pastor Ken Pella, has promised a robust security network and employment creation if voted into office.

Pella, speaking at a stakeholders meeting of all candidates on the platform of the party in 2023 election and Peter Obi support groups held at Asaba maintained that LP is the right party to embrace.

He urged to the electorate to get registered and obtain their PVCs to enable them vote Mr. Peter Obi as president and all labour party candidates in 2023

elections.

Pella highlighted that labour party came to provide relief to the entire citizens of the country owing to the series of predicaments that has befallen the nation in recent times.

He regretted that Nigeria that was one of the most peaceful nation's in the world has been weighed down by serious security problems.

Pastor Ken Pella advised Nigerians not to be deterred saying all hope is not lost, as Mr. Peter Obi if voted for as president will revive the nation once again.

Also at the event, Bishop Obiajulu Obi a cleric and pastor Elvis Akiah, Delta

state coordinator of Peter Obi support group described the presidential candidate as a man who has a high sense of integrity that should be entrusted with power.

Also, the Labour Party has said that Mr. Peter Obi is to liberate the country from all the predicaments that has befallen it, especially insecurity.

The Labour Party stated this at the weekend at Asaba, the capital during its stakeholders meeting held with party leaders across the 25 local government area of the state in support of the presidential candidate.

Speaking at the event, the state chairman of LP, Chief Tony Ezeagwu, appreciated

all the party faithful that have taken their time despite their tight schedules in ensuring that the political grouping is where it is today.

According to him: "I want to assure you that by the Grace of God we have gotten to where we are going to, there are no doubt about that, if you look at what is happening today you know that it is ordained by God."

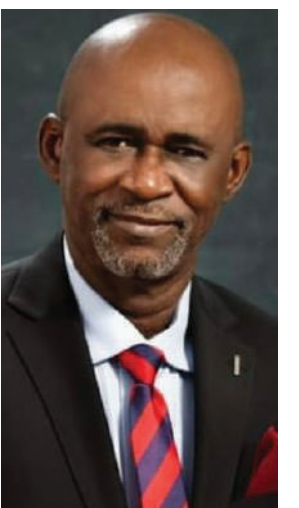
"What we are doing today now is that everybody is contributing his/ her quota, trying to make sure we achieve what we want to achieve."

Also at the event, the Deputy Governorship torchbearer for Labour Party, Mrs. Julie Nwabogo E. Umukoro,

professor of semiotics and performance studies, University of port-Harcourt noted that LP has come to change the narratives of thinking that only a country of people will come together and take the nation for a ride.

She added that leadership is taking consciousness as a connecting thing, saying that connecting consciousness will guide governance.

Pastor Elvis Akiah, Delta State coordinator of Peter Obi support group, described the Labour Party presidential candidate as a man who has a high sense of integrity that should be entrusted with power.



Delta State Labour Party guber candidate, Pastor Ken Pella