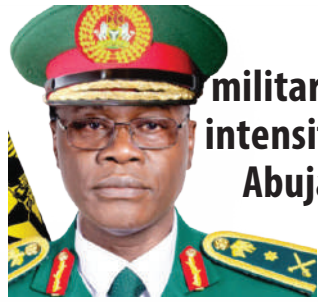




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# The Trumpet

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**Weekend**

## Millions of eligible voters thwarted, miss registration

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# Millions of eligible voters thwarted, miss registration

BY TUNDE JOSHUA (ABUJA),  
GABRIEL OMONHINMIN,  
AHERHOKE OKIOMA,  
(Yenagoa), OROWO VICTORIA  
OJIEH and others

Tomorrow, Sunday July 31, the ongoing Continuous Voters Registration ends, according to the national election management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

It has been on for about a year now and as at the end of Quarter 4, Week 15 of the exercise at 7.00am on Monday, 25th July, 2022 fresh registration had hit 10,487,972.

The Commission in the weekly update issued disclosed that 11,011,119 registrants have completed their registration. INEC said 3,391,940 of the registrants did online registration, while 7,619,179 did physical registration.

Gender breakdown of those who completed their registrations showed that 5,453,071 were male and 5,558,048 were female, and 80,101 are People Living With Disabilities (PWDs).

Age distribution revealed that 7,828,570 were youth; 2,192,897-middle age, 871,690-elderly, while 117,962 of the registrants were old age.

With this addition, the voting population expected to participate in the 2023 general election, barring any unforeseen circumstances, is in the threshold of 96 million.

But Nigerians across parties, ethnic, civil society organisations, religious bodies and individuals have bemoaned the short fall in the number of eligible voters ahead of 2023. They are unanimous in calling on INEC to extend beyond the Sunday deadline to give more people opportunity of exercising their civic right of participating in the electoral process.

The Commission was dragged to court by a group, Socio - Economic Rights and Accountability Projects (SERAP) over the need to extend beyond deadline.

SERAP and 185 concerned Nigerians filed the lawsuit against INEC asking the court to "declare unconstitutional, illegal, and incompatible with international standards the failure of the electoral body to extend the deadline for voter registration to allow eligible Nigerians to exercise their rights."

In the suit, SERAP had asked the court for "an order restraining INEC, its agents, privies, assigns, or any other person(s) claiming through it" from discontinuing the continuous voters' registration exercise pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice."

SERAP submitted that "extending the voter registration exercise would also bolster voter confidence in the electoral process."

"One of the people's most sacred rights is the right to vote. The commission has a constitutional and statutory responsibility to ensure the effective exercise of the right of

all eligible voters to participate in their own government.

"The extension of voter registration would ensure that Nigerian voters are treated equally and fairly. The future of Nigeria's democracy depends on it."

A coalition of Civil Society Organisations in the country, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room), called on INEC to extend the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) because of the believe that "citizens have now intensified their efforts in registering.

The coalition faulted certain processes in the entire exercise.

Convener of the Situation Room, Ene Obi said "there were lots of complaints while the pre-registrations were open on the online voters' portal, that confirmed scheduling was not observed by officers at many INEC offices leading to people being treated as walk-in registrants and asked to queue to supply the same details already provided online.

"While we note some registrants wait for last minute to meet deadlines for registration, it is also worthy to note that there have been several complaints of inadequate manpower and equipment in INEC offices, thus making it difficult to have a seamless registration process. This has led to delays and restiveness of citizens waiting to register in long queues.

"Situation Room is further concerned that INEC is yet to cover many of the rural communities in this process thereby excluding citizens who may be far away from the INEC LGA offices.

While calling for extension, the Coalition of Nigerian Voters, CNV claimed millions of Nigerians are still unable to register.

It blamed this on the sparse registration centres across the country.

The Convener, CNV, Asuzu Echezona, said the deadline is in contest to promise by the INEC chairman that every Nigerian willing to vote in the 2023 general elections would be given the opportunity to register and to collect their Permanent Voters Card.

Prof. Mahmood Yakubu had a week to the early June 30 deadline assured Nigerian of indefinite extension of the exercise.

He told the surging Nigerian youths at the Youths Vote Count Concert at the Old Parade Ground, Abuja that "the exercise will continue until we are satisfied that eligible voters have been given the opportunity to register"

The awareness campaign was organised by INEC, in partnership with the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN), and YIAGA Africa. It was aimed at mobilising youths across the state for the ongoing nationwide CVR exercise.

Now that the Commission stuck to its gun that the exercise ends on Monday, CNV Echezona said "with the current rate of registration, it is public knowledge that there is no magic that would make INEC accommodate every voter who



Yakubu

wants to register for the 2023 general elections before the current deadline of 31st July 2022.

"This would result in the disenfranchisement of millions of Nigerians willing and eager to perform their civic responsibilities in the 2023 polls. This would be a defeatist of INEC objectives.

"We are also concerned about the insufferable difficulties faced by Nigerian voters trying to register especially those in many parts of Northern Nigeria, South West, South-South and South East. There are cases of registration centres located in private homes. There are instances of voters being extorted different amounts of money to be registered.

"We are also worried about the suspension of registration as a result of violence in the South East particularly in Enugu State.

"We believe that if INEC could allow voter registration to go on in parts of Nigeria where terrorist operations and banditry have become entrenched, it is suspicious and an exercise in bad faith to disenfranchise numerous communities in the South East on the guise of isolated security breaches. This suggests a hidden agenda wrapped in mischief.

The CNV convener called on INEC to extend the Continuous Voters Registration till at least the end of August 2022.

Recall that the House of Representatives had earlier asked INEC to extend the exercise to the end of August 2022 to shore up the identified difficulties faced by voters.

The extension, it was argued will help in building public trust toward peaceful electoral outcomes in the 2023 general election.

The move by the House of Representatives came amid calls on INEC to extend the exercise by many groups

Chairman, House Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Hon. Benjamin Kalu, who represents Bende Federal Constituency of Abia State asked INEC to do so to enable more Nigerians participate in the election.

He backed his demand with the provisions of Section 9(6) of the Electoral Act which says: "The registration of voters, updating and revision of the Register of Voters under this section shall stop not later than 90 days before any election covered by this Act."

Kalu said: "The House also notes that the decision to suspend the voters' registration is in line with the provisions of the Electoral Act, 2022, which requires INEC to suspend voters' registration at least 60 days before an election."

The Labour Party (LP) kicked against the deadline, arguing that 30 million Nigerians are about to be disenfranchised should INEC close registration tomorrow.

But some parties appear indifferent and prefer the status quo, relying on their own registered members to deliver the ballots at the 2023 polls.

One of the pro-LP groups, Coalition for Peter Obi (CPO), even threatened protest if the deadline is not extended.

in an open letter to INEC signed by its Media Director, Chief Tochukwu Ezeoke, the umbrella for all Peter Obi support groups, said it would embark on a civil protest if INEC fails to not only extend the deadline for Permanent voters card registration and register new centres but, make an undertaking that all Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) must be ready at least 60 days before the date of the election.

Part of the letter reads; "An Open Letter from the Coalition for Peter Obi (CPO) to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), concerning INDIRECT disenfranchisement of about 30m would-be Voters in the 2023 General Election"

"The Coalition for Peter Obi (CPO) is an umbrella organisation made up of various Peter Obi Support Groups with membership drawn from all walks of life, age groups, gender and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and beyond. Our members are spread across the world and have chosen to synergize efforts and resources towards the single objective of entrenching good governance in Nigeria through a Peter Obi Presidency and continue with our mandates thereafter".

"The Commission is aware that it was established in accordance with section 153(f) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) the Core functions of the Commission as stipulated in Part I of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution are as listed below with particular emphasis to Subsection 5 where our concerns are captured".

5. Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote as well as prepare, maintain and revise the Register of Voters for the purpose of any election under this Constitution.

"Every eligible citizen has the right to register and vote in democratic elections. However, the right to vote cannot be effectively exercised without a place to register, and Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) ready for collection before the date of the election"

Citizens' right to take part in the election process must not be marred by huddles designed to disenfranchise them.

The group went further to note that, "the percentage of eligible citizens that had registered and taken part in the previous election had hovered

around 35%.

"We believe this number is very poor by every standard measurable and have made a concerted effort to ensure a sharp increase in the numbers through massive nationwide awareness and mobilisation campaigns as evidenced in the surge by new electorates recently.

"Our members have complained bitterly and consistently of their inability to go through the continuous registration process as either there are insufficient staff members and/or computers devices at designated registration centres or insufficient registration centres due to the sudden surge and desire for the younger demographic to register and take part in the 2023 Election. We understand that some of our members had to take days off from their respective daily endeavours to register but sadly and disappointedly most did not succeed".

Threatening protest, the CPO said it has the mandate of members worldwide to embark on a civil/ peaceful protest if the Commission fails to do the following: "extend the deadline for registration until the end of September 2022, Increase Registration Centres, Staffs and indeed be flexible to plug into locations provided by citizens in close proximity to their respective places of daily endeavours and an undertaking that all Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) must be ready at least 60 days before the date of the election."

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) insisted that it is possible for INEC to extend the exercise without affecting its scheduled activities for the 2023 election.

The Deputy National Youth Leader of the party, Hon. Tim Osadolor said " this is just a matter of willingness on the part of INEC. The Commission acceded to the request to extend time for presidential primaries because of the ruling party, the APC because it became very clear that the party was unable to meet up with the deadline then.

He said "if it is possible for an umpire in electoral contest to extend the deadline for an interested party that failed to abide by its regulation, then it should not be difficult for INEC to listen to yearnings of Nigerians for at least a month extension."

The PDP advised that INEC should make the exercise easier by deploying more hands in voters registration centre and ensuring prompt printing of PVCs to those already registered. "INEC should decentralize registration centres to polling units to create avenue for accessibility for people who spend useful hours and days queuing in centralized locations," said Osadolor.

Presidential Candidate of the African Democratic Congress, ADC, Dumebi Kachikwu had also raised the question on possible deliberate motive by INEC to disenfranchise millions of Nigerians.

While urging INEC to extend the exercise, Kachikwu

said the success of the 2023 general elections depends a lot on public perception of the Commission as unbiased and fair to all.

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) presidential flag bearer, Prince Adewole Adebayo also expressed the party's wish that INEC could allow more willing people to register by extending duration of the exercise

Prince Adebayo said "there is no doubt that enough Nigerians have not been registered. We are than 200 million in population but not a half of the population have been registered. According to INEC, we have 84 million voters in 2019 and they said they have registered about 11 million in the ongoing exercise bringing the total registered voters to about 96 million.

"This still fall short of expectation. At least we should have about 150 million eligible voters What will happen to the rest if INEC should end registration on July 31 as announced. They need to extend the exercise."

With barely two days to the end of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) deadline for registration of Permanent Voters Card (PVC), there is tension in the South West over difficulties to collect registered voter's PVCs of qualified voters.

Besides the inability of INEC machines to register eligible Voters in record time, which has not only resulted in the large numbers of people who daily gather at the registration centres across the south west region, the difficulty has also resulted in palpable anxiety in most of these centres The Trumpet gathered.

Our correspondent who visited some centres authoritatively report, that except drastic measures are taken, there might be trouble as frustrated eligible voters, who feels they are being deliberately schemed out of the process, might take the law into their hands.

The Trumpet authoritatively reports that a large crowd gathered at INEC Distribution centres in some parts of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states.

A senior INEC official in one of their offices in the South West state, who spoke to our correspondent on the condition of anonymity said, while he was not qualified to comment on issues like this, to the public. He, however, gave an insight into the problem at hand.

He said "If you must know, part of the problem is that so many people are doing multiple registrations, what these people don't know, is that, once it is detected, their names will be knocked off the INEC list of eligible voters in the forthcoming elections.

"Although this exercise will be ending on Sunday, 31st July 2022, the Nigerians that are today rushing to be registered, failed to take advantage of the exercise when it began over a year ago. Nigerians are known for this eleventh-hour rush in matters like this. Besides, Nigerians who were initially not interested in voting in next year's election suddenly

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# 44,572 PVCs uncollected in Rivers, security agencies examine PVCs in drainage

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**, Port Harcourt

Even as registration for the Permanent Voters Card, (PVCs) for the 2023 general election is scheduled to end on Saturday, 30 July, 2022, a whopping number of 44, 572 permanent voters' cards are still laying at the INEC offices in Rivers State.

Mrs. May Agbamuche-Mbu, a National Commissioner for Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) who disclosed this at the INEC office in Port Harcourt said out of about 54,945 new Permanent Voters Cards, PVCs, received by Rivers state, only 10,373 had been collected, leaving an outstanding 44,572 for transfers and replacements.

Agbamuche-Mbu who is National Commissioner for INEC in charge of Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers while appealing to people of Rivers to go and collect their PVCs, regretted that collection of PVCs in Rivers had been low with seven months to go for the 2023 general elections.

She stated that Rivers received 95 INEC Voter Enrollment Devices called IVED and deployed to 24

registration centres in the local government areas and also to the head office.

Mbu said the Commission registration officers and other staff at the LGAs had been working assiduously to make sure they registered voters in the state.

According to Mbu, from the records, 278,417 new voters were registered as well as 127,670 voters transfer and 43,080 Permanent Voters Card replacements as at July 24

The Commission said the Commission had a record of about 302,297 cards from the old PVC which only 33,575 were collected.

"The Commission is working hard in its preparation for the 2023 general elections and strongly desires that no citizen is disenfranchised and that every vote will count," she stated.

She said that the Commission was now in the last week of the exercise which would be concluded by July 31.

Mbu commended the figures that emanated from Rivers state during the registration.

"I therefore urge the people of Rivers state to collect their permanent voters cards in good time and not to wait until



the last minute of 2023 general election," she said.

Meanwhile, security agencies in Rivers have commenced investigation into how thousands of Permanent Voters Cards, PVCs loaded in sacks got inside a drainage system in Rumuodara axis of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of the state.

Residents of Apa-Ogwu Estate in Rumuodara community made the discovery of about 10,000 Permanent Voters Cards, (PVCs) abandoned in a drainage in the area.

The abandoned PVCs were discovered while the residents

were clearing the debris from the drainage.

A resident of the Estate who pleaded anonymity said when they closely examined the contents of the bags, some of the names on the cards indicate people likely to be from registration areas such as Iribe and Rumuokoro, all under the Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. According to him, the PVCs were stuffed in sacks and abandoned under culvert inside the drainage.

The source asserted that immediately information about the discovery of mysterious PVCs leaked in a viral video, some persons who claimed to

be staff of Chairman of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area came to pick them up.

He claimed that the local government officials emptied the PVCs into baskets before taking them away

However, top officials of Obio-Akpor Council who pleaded anonymity claimed that they did not know about the PVCs found in drainage.

They also said nobody from the council was ordered to evacuate cards from the drainage scene.

However, the INEC confirmed that it has reported the incident as captured in the viral video pushed out

by those who discovered the PVCs to security agencies.

In a press statement signed by Mr. Richter Alabrabra, its Administrative Secretary in Rivers, INEC said the incident as captured in the viral video has been reported to the Nigeria Police and other security agencies for investigation and further action.

He assured that the outcome of the investigation will also be made public once concluded.

INEC assures that the Commission will continue to work with the security agencies and well meaning Nigerians to preserve the integrity of the Electoral process.

## CVR deadline: Queues persist in Imo INEC registration centres

By **ATHAN AGBAKWURU**, Owerri

Ahead of the deadline for the end of Continuous Voters Registration, CVR, exercise nationwide by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, long queues still persist in many Local Government registration centres but reduced drastically at commission's office in Owerri, the Imo State Capital.

Despite efforts at decentralizing the registration by taking it to selected electoral wards, churches etc, many prospective voters wishing to register for the Permanent Voter's Card, PVC, have not been captured and may be denied the right to vote come 2023.

Ikenna Ogu, 18yrs who claimed to have been trying to register to no avail because of long queues caused by alleged late arrival of INEC officials and periodic epileptic internet

network at the Central School Umuohiagu, in Ngor Okpala LGA of the state.

Ms Nkiru Anyanwu, in her reaction blamed the persistent queues on INEC's inability to provide adequate machines and other logistics to hasten the process.

An official of INEC who spoke on condition of anonymity at the Ngor Okpala council headquarters, Umuneke Ngor, told our correspondent that many people have been captured since the last extension but maintained that a lot of eligible voters will miss the chance of registration because of technical and logistics reasons.

Reiterating that there is not going to be another extension of the CVR, the source decried the last-minute rush syndrome adopted by people as well as the inability to supply accurate personal information by some of those who are transferring or lost their PVCs.

## Applicants call for extension in Ondo

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Following the July 31, 2022 deadline given by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, for the conclusion of the Continuous Voters Registration, Applicants in Ondo State have called for an extension.

The applicants in an interview with The Trumpet at the INEC headquarter in Alagbaka Akure, the state capital and other various registration centres, alleged INEC officials of nepotism.

Mr Micheal Israel disclosed that he had visited many registration centres in Akure in the struggle to get registered but all proved abortive.

"It is now over three months since I had been moving from one centre to another and if they did not complain of no network, bad server, they will say come back tomorrow."

Another applicant, Mrs Emmanuel Anthony who emphasized the extension of the deadline stated whenever she visits INEC centres for registration all she got was the list is full and they are not taking anybody again.

Also, Mrs Nnakwe Faith Ebube, a fashion designer who blamed voters for the deadline rush called on INEC to consider the working class people who only have a chance on weekends.

## Ebonyi Residents call for extension of voters' card registration

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**, Abakaliki

Residents of Abakaliki, the Ebonyi state capital, have called on the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to extend the voters card exercise to avoid disenfranchising thousands.

Some of people who spoke to The Trumpet on Friday, said they have been in the queues since two day now,

but to no avail.

Madam Veronica Nwoba from Abakaliki Local government area, accused the Electoral umpire for not providing the necessary things for the exercise.

Also, in Ebonyi Local government, Mr John Item a resident of the area, said for the past three days now, he has been coming to be registered without meeting INEC officials on sight for hours.

## Millions of eligible voters thwarted, miss registration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

had a change of mind to vote because of the bad government of the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. The electorates are this time around determined to vote the APC government at the centre out of office.

"Another possible reason for the rush can be attributed to Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's open confessions, that he will continue with President Buhari's mal-administration."

Our source stressed that the current exercise is getting too late, and as such, there is no way INEC will risk extending this particular exercise.

He added, that the point most Nigerians seem not to realise, is that it cost a lot of money to carry out this voter registration exercise.

Trumpet INEC source confirmed that they have been getting a lot of complaints from people in Lagos and Ogun State who although, have long been registered and were given temporary PVC but were yet to get the permanent card. He added that people in some local government area Councils in these states are deliberately denying non-natives from collecting their PVC because they suspect will not vote for the APC presidential flag bearer in the forthcoming elections. Unfortunately, they are instead hoarding these cards in their respective Local Government Councils, while stressing that this problem is more pronounced in areas like Mushin, Lagos Island and Ajegunle in Lagos state, while Ifo Local Government Area Council in Ogun state, is where non-indigenes PVCs are being hoarded by some unscrupulous local government officials.

Ebonyi Residents call

for extension of voters' card registration

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**Voter registration observation in Lagos LGA**

People seeking to register and obtain their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), ahead of the 2023 General Election holding in the country a visit to Eti-Osa local government in Lagos State shows there was mammoth crowd at the local government with the number of names written down to be over 700.

The gate of the local government was locked and the crowd waiting for the names written down to be called to enable them to do their registration

Some of the people said they came as early as 5am to write down their names, others said they have been coming for two days and yet to conclude the registration process.

It was also observed that

they are some agent at the local government secretly charging some amount of money to help people facilitate their registration fast.

Bayelsa state government though did not declare public holidays for the on going voters registration by the Independent Electoral Commission ( INEC ) but there are still unprecedented long ques across the state.

Our correspondent who visited one of the registration centres at the Swali Ultra Modern Market reports that many traders and persons thronged there struggling to get their permanent Voters Cards that would qualify them to partake in the next general elections.

According Mr Benson Eyaredei, though Friday is a very day for traders to sell as most people want to purchase what they needed for their week ends, but for the fact many people and organizations , both on radio have embarked on sensitization program on the need to get their PVCs in order to vote for credible candidates, he decided to sacrifice his time despite the long que to wait patiently to get registered.

" I consider today as the only day , I can come to obtain my pvc , because Mondays are very busy days being the actual market day for traders with many buyers coming from the riverine areas"

Also at the Yenagoa local government area INEC secretariat the premises has many people that are biting the gun to meet the dead line of the July 31st deadline extended by the INEC .

A registrant, who simply identified herself as Joy Amatoli, said she



# Christ Embassy holds world's largest ever healing crusade

As another edition of the Healing Streams Live Healing Services with Pastor Chris Oyakhilome takes off, billions of prospective participants at the world largest event have been urged to raise their spirituality in order to fully discover and experience the life changing infinite power of God.

Media Manager of the Healing School of Christ Embassy, Mr. Olajide Babasola, who gave the advice over the Healing Streams Live Healing Services holding Friday

29th – 31st July, 2023. He enjoined partakers to register for participation in the programme @ www.healingstreams.tv/3days.

According to him, this month's bumper edition like the previous one, would offer a rare opportunity for participants to experience torrents of God's healing miracles through Pastor Chris from various diseases.

A statement issued by Babasola read in part: "The last edition of the Healing Streams Live Healing Services with Pastor Chris Oyakhilome held on the

18th-20th of March 2022 with billions of people participating from every nation of the world.

"It was a flood of miracles that exceeded all expectations with phenomenal global impact and remarkable healing miracles from all kinds of illnesses including, deafness, cancer, visual impairment, arthritis, migraine and several others that continue to pour in.

"The joy of the participants knew no bounds as they continue to testify and give glory to God several weeks following the programme.

To be a part of the next edition holding this weekend from 29th – 31st July, 2022, kindly visit: www.healingstreams.tv/3days

"God's will is for all men to live in health and to constantly enjoy the blessings of Christ. For many, however, this divine revelation is not yet their reality. They are beaten down daily by sicknesses and diseases, living the opposite of the life God ordained for them. This is why the man of God, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome is reaching billions across

the world with the healing power of God through the Healing Streams Live Healing Services".

Continuing he said Catherine from the United States of America in her testimony says, "My 3-year-old son had challenges with speaking and communicating. This gave me a lot of concern. I prayerfully prepared for the Live Healing Services in March 2022. Glory to God... We received a miracle during the programme and

my son started talking on the very first day of the programme."

"The past editions of this global healing crusade resulted in mighty demonstrations of God's power. The sick were healed, hope was restored to many, and all kinds of mind-blowing transformations occurred. People from all walks of life participated in the services. It was a turning point in their lives; turning mourning to dancing and despair to delight.

Also testifying Brian from Ireland stated: "I suffered from pulmonary fibrosis for two years, but I received healing as I was watching the programme. I no longer feel fatigue or other symptoms. Thank you, Pastor Chris."

Quoting Pastor Chris Oyakhilome Dsc, DD the statement added that: "divine healing is one of the beginning stages of a greater life. Healing is wonderful, but there's a greater life than healing. God doesn't want you to live in the realm of getting healed from one sickness or the other every now and then. He wants you to come to a place of victory where you understand divine health, which is greater than divine healing".

He further noted that with countless lives transformed all over the globe, the "Healing Streams Live Healing Services with Pastor Chris is truly a place of solution; where people experience God's love, wisdom and the supernatural manifestations of the healing power of God to a hurting and dying world".



Pastor Chris Oyakhilome

## NIMASA, NLNG to set up committee on efficient operations

### •NLNG MD commends Deep Blue Project as maritime agency commits to global best practice

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Management of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) have agreed to set up a working committee that will be meeting regularly to ensure greater collaboration between both organisations for improved operations in the overall interest of the country.

The agreement was reached during a courtesy visit by the Management of NLNG, led by the Managing Director, Dr Philip Mshelbila, to NIMASA's Head Office in Apapa, Lagos.

During the visit, Director-General of NIMASA, Dr Bashir Jamoh, who noted that a better working relationship between NIMASA and the NLNG would greatly enhance operations in the maritime sector, assured the management of NLNG that NIMASA would extend its working relationship with NLNG's Ship Management Limited (NSML) to the parent body, while also urging the company to consider the Nigerian Flag as the first option for its vessels.

He said: "This is a new beginning and our focus should be what will be best for Nigeria and not only for the NLNG or NIMASA."

Jamoh, who commended the NLNG for providing platforms for sea time to train Nigerian seafarers, noted that the agency remained committed to attaining best global practices so that certificates issued in Nigeria will be recognised globally.

"We are working to

ensure that the Certificates of Competency (CoCs) issued by NIMASA are of international standard. This will make it easy for the NLNG and other international organizations to accept them."

Jamoh said the agency needs the NLNG to boost the Nation's tonnage, adding: "NIMASA needs the NLNG, we desire to have vessels of the NLNG fly the Nigerian Flag, just imagine that NLNG vessels are on the Nigerian Registry, our tonnage will increase exponentially, the Nigerian Flag will earn much more respect globally and we will get better recognition," he said.

Speaking, Managing Director of NLNG, Philip Mshelbila, noted that the management of the NLNG was committed to deliberate indigenisation of the human component of its operation and that the management was ready to partner with NIMASA to enhance the safety and security of lives and assets in the Nigerian maritime domain.

He noted that they are on the same page with NIMASA in terms of capacity development and the quest to ensure Nigeria attains internationally acceptable standards in her operations in the maritime sector.

"We at NLNG have realised that for us to fulfil one of our key elements of our vision, which is helping to build a better Nigeria, it is important for us to work with all our stakeholders including NIMASA. We are aware that NIMASA and our subsidiary, NMSL are working for the progress of the country and we desire the same spirit of partnership and collaboration to be extended to the NLNG."

## Innoson sues Imo Government over N2.5B debt

By **ATHAN AGBAKWURU**, Owerri

Foremost Nigeria's indigenous vehicle manufacturing firm, Innoson Vehicles Manufacturing Company Ltd, IVM, has dragged the Imo State Government to the High Court of Anambra State, Nnewi Division, over a debt of over N2.5billion. IVM sued Senator Hope Uzodinma's led administration over failure to pay or service the debt of N2,547,666,435.00 (Two Billion, Five Hundred and Forty-Seven Million, Six Hundred and Sixty-Six Thousand, Four Hundred and Thirty-Five Naira).

The *Trumpet* reliably gleaned that the debt was incurred for the purchase price of the various IVM vehicles and spare parts manufactured, sold and delivered to the State Government which the government has failed to pay despite repeated demands and appeals.

In the suit filed by Prof. Joseph N Mbadugha, SAN, of McCarthy Mbadugha & Co, the counsel to the applicants disclosed that the litigation is coming against the repeated attempts made by the

Chairman of the firm, Chief Innocent Chukwuma, to make the Governor pay the company on the vehicles sold and delivered to the State Government.

According to a statement issued to newsmen, Mr Cornell Osigwe, Head Corporate Communications and Affair, IVM, the company and Imo State government discussed and agreed that Innoson Motors would sell various brands of its vehicles to the state government in 2021.

He said "For the avoidance of doubt, sometimes in April 2021, His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Imo State, Senator Hope Uzodinma invited the Chairman/CEO of Innoson Vehicles, Chief Dr Innocent Chukwuma to the Imo State Government House, Owerri where they discussed and agreed that Innoson Vehicles would sell and supply various specifications of its brand of vehicles to the State Government which includes, inter alia;"

He listed the purchased vehicles to include: 70 units of Innoson 5-Seater double cabin pick-up (IVM Carrier) 4WD, 10 units of Innoson 5-Seater double

cabin military pick up (IVM G12), 10 units of Innoson 5 seater single cabin military pick-up (IVM G12).

Others were 100 units of a complete siren with public addressing system, revolving light, and street police light, two (2) Units of IVM Ambulance Vehicles, 20 Units of IVM G12 MS11 and 20 sets of B. Canopy.

He added, "The above vehicles which were valued at over N2.5billion (\$6.3million) were supplied in good faith to the Imo State Government based on an understanding with the Governor which arose after a special request that Innoson Vehicles grant the State the favour of paying for the vehicles after deliveries to them and which request was granted and honoured.

"The special and privilege request granted to the Governor turned into a nightmare for Innoson Vehicles and Its Chairman after Chief Chukwuma had at various times through several visits, phone calls, messages, and submission of letters requesting payment appealed to the Governor and his conscience to make

total payments or set up a payment plan that will offset the debt.

"The inability of the State Government to pay the aforesaid purchase price of the vehicles supplied has resulted in Innoson Vehicles having difficulties in fulfilling its loan repayment obligations to Keystone Bank Limited and Bank of Industry.

"These banks granted their credit facilities at the rate of 10% interest and other fees therein. More so, it has led to the loss of profit arising therefrom and the accruing interest.

"It is also interesting to note that as of July 27th, 2022, the over N2.5B worth of vehicles supplied to Imo State Government in April 2021 under the leadership of Hope Uzodinma with a dollar value of \$6.3M is now worth \$3.8M. Even if the money is paid today, the value of the money has depreciated by over 40%."

Osigwe hinted that the company approached the court to slam a lawsuit of over ₦2.5billion against the Imo State Government with an interest rate of 10% on the entirety of the sum claimed at the High Court.



# WACHEF tasked media on hepatitis stigmatization

By **SURU CHARLES**, Jalingo

**A**ware of the stigma and discrimination impact on people living with hepatitis, media organizations have been urged to see the need to disseminate accurate information and awareness in a bid to sensitise people against stigmatization and discrimination of persons with the disease.

The Programme Manager of Women and Children Health Empowerment Foundation (WACHEF), Wisdom Christopher, who made the call yesterday in Jalingo, Taraba state, also beckoned on the media to help create the necessary awareness of male involvement in Anti Natal Care (ANC) to help prevent mother

to child transmission of the disease.

She made the call at a sensitization campaign organized by the WACHEF in collaboration with the Islamic Medical Association of Nigeria (IMAN) while commemorating World Hepatitis Day 2022.

Stressing the determination of the organization to tread extra legitimate miles to bring to an end stigmatization and discrimination of hepatitis patients, for their dreams to be actualised, the media, as suggested by her, also need to actively get involved.

The Programme Officer who also doubles as the Acting Executive Director said hepatitis prevalence is on the increase hence the need for all hands to be on deck to eliminate the disease.

Citing the report from the world hepatitis alliance which confirmed that almost 300 million people globally are living with chronic hepatitis B, most of the causes, according to her, emanated as a result of mother to child transmission.

Vehemently beckoning at the male partners to encourage their pregnant

wives to take advantage of accessing the various ANC facilities spread across the state and the country at large, doing that, she believed would go a long to eradicate the prevalence of the disease in the state and the country as a whole.

The organization, which our correspondent noticed to have gone as far as

creating awareness on hepatitis virus, testing, vaccination and male involvement in ANC among others, said they will not go to bed pending when the virus is totally eliminated from the state.

The exercise which took place at the Sabonger primary school in Jalingo metropolis, which ac-

ording to her was free of charge, was observed to have led to a massive turnout of persons who availed themselves for testing and vaccination.

Some of those tested who bared their minds to our state correspondent said the exercise has no doubt made it possible for them to know their hepatitis status.

## Buhari didn't know about terrorist abduction threat, I informed him – *El-Rufai*

•Says he's worried about the security situation

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

The Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai has said he was the one that told President Muhammadu Buhari of the terrorist's threat to abduct him.

Last weekend, terrorists who abducted Abuja-Kaduna train passengers on March 28, threatened to abduct Buhari and El-Rufai in a video that went viral on Social Media.

Speaking on a Radio Programme on Wednesday night, El-Rufai also said the terrorists also warned him and his family members to be careful. He noted that the situation of security in the country also worries him.

The Governor explained further that for the past five years he has been advocating for the bombing of terrorist camps wherever they are, saying it's the only solution to the problem.

"I also heard about a video where they threatened to abduct Buhari and myself. I have been warned to be careful including my family too. How can we be in a country with soldiers, police and Federal Government but some terrorists will be threatening to abduct the president?"

"If in the past those in

government think this is a joke and see it as only happening in Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna and Niger, it's now at home and we must rise up to deal with these people. This is why I met with the president on Sunday and told him about these problems.

"I also told him about the video because up to that day he was not even aware. I told him and the following day Zamfara State Governor, Bello Matawalle, also confirmed to him that he saw the video too so as to take action.

"The president assured me that he met with the Service Chiefs 3-4 days before our meeting and that he gave them a clear directive to have a comprehensive military operation to deal with those people.

"We hope, God willing the soldiers and police that were given the directives will hasten up to finish the job. We don't have to wait until they (terrorists) strike before we respond.

"They (soldiers) must go after them wherever they are to deal with them. The truth is we are worried about the security situation but we hope the federal government will do the right thing," he said.



Gov. Abdullahi Sule

## Nasarawa govt orders closure of primary, secondary schools over insecurity

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

Following growing security challenges and threats, the Nasarawa State government has ordered the immediate closure of primary and secondary schools in the state over

Commissioner for Education in the State, Fatu Sabo, announced the development on Wednesday after a meeting of the State Executive Council.

Sabo said that the order was given by the State Governor, Abdullahi Sule.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the Commissioner, however, said those currently undertaking the National Examinations Council (NECO) and Senior School Certificate Examination

(SSCE) would be allowed to remain in school, while measures would be taken to ensure their safety.

The statement said, "Following recurring incidences of security breaches and threats in parts of the country including some neighbouring States, His Excellency, Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule, the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, has directed the immediate closure of both public and private primary and secondary schools operating in the state as a precautionary measure.

"Accordingly, all Principals and Head Teachers of Secondary and Primary schools are directed to release their students/pupils to their

parents and guardians.

"It is noteworthy however that students currently undertaking the NECO/SSCE examinations are to remain as Government has put measures in place to ensure their safety during the examinations."

The order comes on the heels of recent attacks by gunmen in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), as well as threats of further attacks.

Nasarawa is a border State with the FCT with multitude of residents in the State carrying out their daily businesses and other endeavours in the country's capital city.

There is a tendency for any attack in the FCT to either flow into Nasarawa or have advanced effects

on the fortunes of the State and its dwellers.

Among recent attacks in the FCT was the invasion of the Kuje Medium Correctional Centre in the Kuje Council Area on July 5, by terrorists, which led to the escape of over 600 inmates including 64 Boko Haram suspects.

Also, troops of the Presidential Guard were attacked in the Bwari Council Area of the FCT on July 24, with three casualties recorded while several others injured.

An attack in some communities in Kwali also forced the Federal Ministry of Education to order the closure of the Federal Government College, Kwali, also in the FCT.



# Presidential Primaries: Nwajiuba wants court to disqualify Tinubu, Atiku

● Cites votes buying, faulty composition of delegates

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

Two months after the conclusion of presidential primaries by political parties in the country, candidates have started facing pre-2023 election litigations.

Candidates of both the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar are faced with imminent disqualification as they were dragged to court by the immediate past Minister of State for Education, Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba.

In conjunction with a group, Incorporated Trustees of Rights for All International, Nwajiuba, also a presidential aspirant on the platform of APC approached a Federal High Court in Abuja with an originating summons seeking an order declaring him as the authentic Presidential candidate of the APC by cancelling votes garnered by the Presidential candidates of the APC, Bola Tinubu.

The plaintiffs also prayed for the disqualification of the Peoples Democratic Party candidate, Atiku Abubakar.

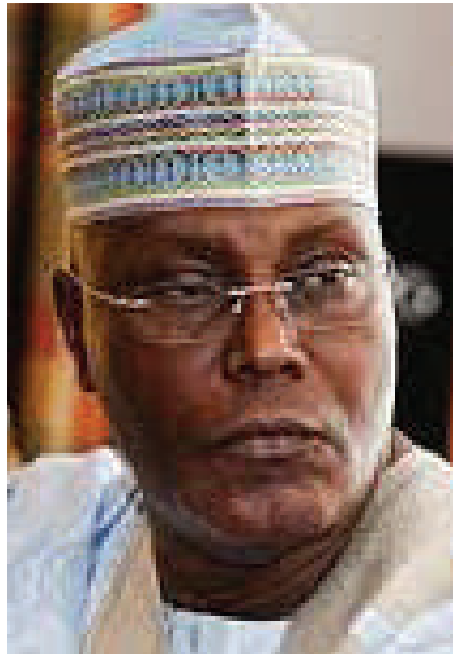
Joined as defendants in the case with suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/942/22 are: the APC, the PDP, Tinubu, Atiku, the Attorney-General of the Federation and the Independent National Electoral Commission.

While accusing Tinubu of bribing delegates with dollars, he also attached as evidence a video recording showing the immediate past Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, lamenting that delegates to the APC primary sold their votes.

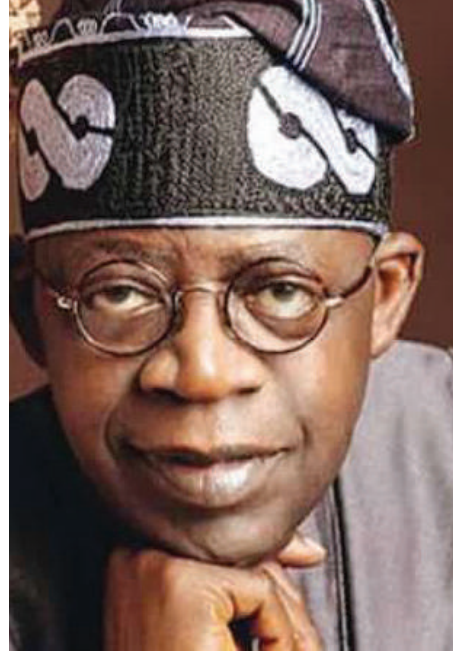
Amaechi had last week at the 60th birthday celebration of Apostle Eugene Ogu, General Overseer of Abundant Life Evangel Mission, said "those who voted at the APC primaries, who are they? They are ordinary Nigerians. The small money they got solved their immediate problem, now they are saying they made a mistake; you are now hearing different things,"

In a supporting affidavit deposed to by one Abadom Chidinma, on behalf of the ex-minister and the RAI, it was stated that the evidence presented to the court was genuine including Amaechi's claim and that of Chief Dele Momodu of the PDP that votes were sold at the primaries.

Nwajiuba and his co-plaintiffs presented 25 issues for determination by the court prominent among which is whether the composition of the delegates contravened Article 11(A) 12(1)



Atiku Abubakar



Bola Tinubu



Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba.

and 13(1) of the constitution of the APC.

He also demanded that the court should determine if the composition of the delegates at the PDP primary contravened Section 33(1) and (5) (c) of the constitution of the party.

The plaintiffs prayed the court to determine whether having regard to the clear unambiguous and express provisions and tenor of Sections 6(6) (A) (B) and (C) read alongside Section 15(5) of the 1999 Constitution, the court has the inherent judicial powers to nullify, cancel and declare as illegal the Presidential primaries of the APC and the PDP.

Nwajiuba specifically prayed the court to declare that all the votes cast in favour of Tinubu and Atiku at the special national convention of the APC and PDP are "illegal, null and void and of no effect whatsoever" on the grounds of corruption and selling of delegate votes and voter inducement.

Lastly, the ex-minister prayed the court to decide if having regard to the express provisions of paragraphs 1 and 8 of the 5th schedule of the 1999 Constitution, the corrupt conduct of the "third defendant (Tinubu) and the 4th defendant (Atiku) in buying votes and corruptly inducing delegates with dollars and naira in various sums to secure their votes at the special national convention disqualifies them from further seeking, contesting and holding the office of the President."

As part of the 26 reliefs sought, Nwajiuba categorically want an order of the court that

the composition of delegates at the APC and the PDP was not properly constituted.

The plaintiffs are seeking a "declaration that the conduct of the 3rd (Tinubu) and 4th (Atiku) defendants who by way of corrupt inducements of delegates with US dollars which being a foreign currency and non-legal tender in Nigeria under the CBN Act... used the dollars for the inducement of votes in favour of the 3rd (Tinubu) and 4th (Atiku) defendants have rendered the votes they scored at the special convention of the 1st defendant (APC) and the 2nd defendant (PDP) illegal, void and invalid and of no effect whatsoever and thus inhibiting (Tinubu and Atiku) from benefiting from the proceeds of their gross illegalities."

The plaintiffs also asked the court to declare that Tinubu could not be recognised as the Presidential candidate of the APC because the money he used in purchasing the APC form could not be traced to any business.

He asked the court to make a declaration that Tinubu lacked the minimum qualification to run for the office of the President which is a secondary school certificate, a document which he had failed to submit but tendered his university certificate instead.

Finally, they are seeking an order, "returning the 2nd plaintiff (Nwajiuba) as the duly elected/nominated Presidential candidate of the 1st defendant (APC) being that by the operation of Section 90(3), the 2nd plaintiff,

Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba is the only contestant out of the 10 contestants whose source of N100m is verified and complied with in the Electoral Act as contained in the printout of the names of the bank statement."

Responding, the Director General of Asiwaju Tinubu Presidential Campaign Organisation, Adebayo Shittu, was said to have challenged the plaintiffs to prove their allegation of vote-buying.

Shittu stressed, "Can Nwajiuba prove this allegation? As I once told you, these are frustrated people. Was he even at the unveiling of Kashim Shettima, his party's vice presidential candidate? No, he just like a few others, didn't turn up. Did he even write to the APC leadership about this?"

"Anyway, let him go to court and prove his case beyond a reasonable doubt. The truth is that we can't stop anybody from going to court if he has a genuine case and can tender the evidence. I mean, what he is alleging in this case, is criminality and he has to prove it. That is my position."

When contacted for comment, the APC Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka asked one of our correspondents to call back the following day.

He simply said, "It is not a good time I can't talk, let's talk tomorrow(Friday), please."

National Publicity Secretary of PDP, Hon. Debo Ogunagba did not respond to enquiries on the matter.

## Don't allow politicians manipulate you, SDP presidential candidate tells CAN leaders

By **TUNDE OPALANA**, ABUJA

Leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) have been admonished to exercise caution and not to fall into the traps of actors in the political class across the nation.

He advised them to shun manipulation and any action that will set the Christian community against any other religion or give the impression that the 2023 general election is a tug of war.

Presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Prince Adewole Adebayo said this on Thursday in Abuja during the 2022 Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), General Assembly and Valedictory Service for its outgoing President Rev, Dr Samson Ayokunle.

This is coming against the backdrop that some leaders of the CAN have become too involved in the controversies surrounding the

nomination of candidates and their running mates in a partisan manner which has been sending the wrong signals.

Instead of predicting who becomes the next President of Nigeria, Adebayo charged Nigerians, especially the clerics, to pray for peaceful polls.

The presidential hopeful said "the first role the church should play is not to create a situation that seems to pitch the Christians against anybody but to unite the country and to give a message that is ecumenical, not only among the Christians but among all the communities in Nigeria.

"And I reminded CAN that the Priests, the Bishops, the Primate and their eminences are people who are called as the instrument of God. This is the moment where politicians use anybody.

"They should not be used by anybody, except by the spirit of God. And that in this

politics, they should not become instruments of men, they should remain an instrument of God. And nobody will use them for politics.

"And that they should pray for the country and get us together. If the church is united in righteousness, and it is not against anybody and it is searching for God's answer, for God's guidance, to ensure the moment of rescue has come for this country, God should give us the righteous one to lead this country, the church would have played a major role in bringing the country together.

"What I mean is that, first, it is good that the Christian community did their transition successfully without rancour, without a problem. And it has become an example of what Nigeria can be.

"There are five blocs in CAN, but if you come today, you see all of them are happy together. And you also see that almost the smallest of them all, the youngest of them

all is now the leader of CAN.

"And it is a biblical thing that when God does his things, it is not about noise, it is not about who is making the most noise. Everything about God is ordained.

"And I was reminding the Christian community that in this time of tribulation, one, we should not lose hope. We should know that it is a test of faith. And all the troubles that the Christian church and the rest of Nigerians are going through are meant to test our faith and to answer with prayers.

"Secondly, that a Christian church is not only for Christians, and the unity of the body of Christ is not to create a Christian community versus the rest of Nigeria but to create a unity for the country.

"And that the church is an inspiration for the whole of Nigeria. And that the mercy of God upon Nigeria includes the presence of Christians in Nigeria.



## 2023 elections doubtful - UK Govt

The United Kingdom has warned that the 2023 general election in Nigeria may not hold if the current spate of violence and insecurity continues unchecked.

The Director, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office in the United Kingdom, Chris Beecroft raised the concern on Thursday during the launch of the Nigeria Governors' Forum Peace and Inclusive Security Initiative (PISI) in Abuja.

He listed as worrisome and challenging, active insurgency in the North East; farmers-herders conflicts which are extending across the country, resource conflicts in the Niger Delta, the tension in the South-East and banditry in the North West.

He charged various stakeholders in the country to find definite solutions to the major security challenges.

Beecroft advocated the strengthening of the Nigerian military and the police to provide solutions to security challenges while suggesting renewed efforts in reconciliation, mediation, arbitration,

and access to justice as well.

The UK official said: "We are at a critical juncture in Nigeria's journey, and now is an important moment for new thinking and action to build a more peaceful future for all Nigerians.

"The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office values our relationship with the Nigeria Governors Forum, NGF, and has supported the NGF through our programs, including SPARC, PERL and most recently the Technical Assistance provided in framing the Peace and Inclusive Security initiative, PISI.

"Nigeria faces significant peace and security challenges. There is an active insurgency in the North East; farmer-herder conflicts are extending across the country; resource conflicts in the Delta; tension in the South-East; and banditry in the North West. The rise in conflict risks destabilizing Nigeria's democracy in the run-up to the 2023 elections.

"Conflict destroys lives, destroys liveli-

hoods, destroys hope and ambition for the future. Conflict represents an existential threat to Nigeria's unity and its development.

"The police and army are in urgent need of reform-but the solution to Nigeria's instability does not lie in simply strengthening the police and army-but rather in building an effective social contract, building federal, state, local and community level infrastructure to manage conflict; and in giving young people jobs and opportunities so they have a stake in a prosperous and peaceful Nigeria.

"Injustice and impunity, weak Justice institutions, the proliferation of small arms and weapons, the weaponization of social media, are all drivers of conflict and instability. But with the right commitment, dedication, and support, there are solutions.

"The UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, FCDO, recognizes the important role NGF plays in setting the peace and security agenda, building

state-level and community level structures and institutions to reduce violence and respond to conflict and insecurity across Nigeria.

"The FCDO is keen to continue its collaboration with and support for the government of Nigeria in its efforts to deal with the mounting insecurity. The UK is pleased to have been able to support this initiative and is committed to continuing working with the Nigeria Governors Forum, NGF, in advancing its peace and security agenda.

"The UK is engaged in supporting Nigeria to reduce violent conflict in a number of areas; we promote a regional response in the North East and Lake Chad Basin through our contribution to the Regional Stabilisation Facility, RSF, and delivery of programs on peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, human development, good governance, and accountability.

"All our programming, whether focused on health, education, economic growth, or governance, works to reduce the risk of violent conflict and support peace-building infrastructure.

## Femi Kuti supports Tee-Mac on Tinubu's age

● Says APC candidate too old to rule Nigeria

Afrobeat musician, Femi Anikulapo Kuti, has corroborated claims by another musician, Tee-Mac Omatshola on the age of the presidential candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress, Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Femi, who is the son of the late legendary musician, Fela Kuti described Tinubu as an old man who is too old to rule Nigeria.

Kuti, who during an interview with Arise News did not disclose who among the presidential candidates he is supporting ahead of 2023, said the country does not need an old man like Bola Ahmed Tinubu who he said is too old to lead Nigeria.

He said he is not ready to waste his time arguing with anyone that Bola Ahmed Tinubu is not too old to rule Nigeria, or that their candidates are the best.

Tee-Mac Omatshola had during the week said Tinubu's real age is 86 years. He said this with the authority of an insider as he claimed to be Tinubu's in-law.

The popular flautist and former President of the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria (PMAN), Tee Mac Omatshola Iseli also before the APC national convention urged Nigerians

not to vote for Tinubu, as the party's presidential candidate in the 2023 elections, saying he was not qualified to be voted as President.

In reaction to a Facebook post by one Yemi Olakitan, Tee Mac said Tinubu was 86 years old, not healthy enough and has many unanswered questions about his age, background and how he made his money!

He said: "Anybody can choose any candidate, but an intelligent person will ask himself the question: do I choose rightly! Is the man qualified? Is he honest? Does he tell us the truth about his age, background and how he made his money? Is this man healthy enough at 86 to take up the task of a totally run-down country?

"You see Tinubu is my in-law. His wife Remi is my cousin. Her Itsekiri mother and my Itsekiri mother are sisters. I have known Tinubu since the mid-1980s personally and even arranged for him to stay in my stepfather's house (Sir Mobolaji Bank-Anthony) in London when he went into exile. I stopped supporting him and stopped family visits etc when he sold Buhari to the nation in 2015. My advice to the nation is that this man is absolutely not qualified to become our next president."



Atiku Abubakar



Nyesom Wike

## Atiku used PDP chieftains to spread falsehood against me - Wike

Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike has finally broken his silence over developments in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) after the presidential primary election in which Alhaji Atiku Abubakar emerged the party's flag bearer.

He accused the former vice president of telling lies against him and also using some PDP chieftains to spread falsehood against his person but vowed to respond to both the party's flagbearer and the party chieftains whom he described as Atiku's 'attack dogs' one by one and line by line in due time.

Wike reacted on Friday at the Port Harcourt International Airport in the Rivers State capital shortly after he returned from a foreign trip.

"I have decided to be quiet because PDP is a party I love so much," I have moved on to conclude my social contract with the people of Rivers. However, it is time to let Nigerians know the truth."

However, he said posterity would not forgive him should he fail to set the record straight and clear the air on issues within the party as earlier

promised to do.

He reacted by faulting the speech by Atiku during the unveiling of Delta State Governor, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa as his running mate.

On the reconciliation committee set up by the PDP leadership, Governor Wike disclosed that former Vice President Atiku had yet to send any delegation to him, however, said a former President of the Senate, Bukola Saraki, met with him in Spain, although in his personal capacity.

He wondered why the former vice president came to his house to beg for support but suddenly do not know the way to his house any longer.

He went on to challenge anyone to identify that he or she was sent by the PDP candidate to speak to him about the issue in the PDP and the aftermath of the party's presidential primary.

Contrary to speculation that he may consider the option of dumping the PDP, Governor Wike insisted that he would remain in the PDP and help rebuild the party.



Bola Tinubu



Femi Kuti



## Aseyin's death: unimaginable shock to oduduwa race - Ooni

The Ooni of Ife, His Royal Majesty Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II, has sent a condolence message to the government, people of Oyo State, and the indigenes of Iseyin town and Oke-Ogun in particular over the death of the Aseyin of Iseyin, Oba AbdulGaniy Adekunle Salawudeen, who joined his ancestors on Sunday, July 24, 2022.

In a press statement signed by his Director of Media & Public Affairs, Otunba Moses Olafare, on Monday, July 25, 2022, Ooni Ogunwusi described the Oyo State frontline king's passage as an unimaginable shock and a surprise. He said Oba Salawudeen's death is a colossal loss to the Oduduwa race.

Ooni Ogunwusi, Ojaja II stressed that he is yet to overcome the news of the death of Aseyin of Iseyin Kingdom.

The Ooni described the late Iseyin's traditional ruler as an unforgettable close ally, who had strong beliefs in the unity of the Oodua people at home and abroad.

He added that the late Aseyin of Iseyin Kingdom was selfless in his contributions to my peace and unification agenda. The Ooni then recalled how the Aseyin made his entourage to several local and international peace and unity trips.

He stressed, "Kabiyesi Aseyin will be greatly missed as one of my close allies, who accompanied me on many local and international trips. Along with him and many other Yoruba Obas, we met with many Yoruba subjects in the UK, Ghana, USA & Brazil.

"The late Aseyin was indeed a

peace-loving and easy-going Yoruba frontline progressive monarch, who devoted his reign to the progress of Iseyin Kingdom, Oke-Ogun and Oyo State at large. He was also a patriotic descendant of Oduduwa and a very dependable ally who worked closely with me. His strong

commitment and dedication to Yoruba's ethos and beliefs helped in no small measure to the peace and tranquillity we enjoy today in the entire Oduduwa race."

While praying for the departed king and the family he left behind, Ooni Ogunwusi, who is the Natural Head

of the Oduduwa race worldwide enjoined the people and the kingmakers of the ancient town of Iseyin not to leave any stone unturned to give the late great king a befitting burial rites in total compliance with the customs and traditions inherited from their ancestors.



Oba AbdulGaniy Adekunle Salawudeen

## Ogun State approves appointment of Matemilola as new Olowu of Owu

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

The Ogun State Government has announced the appointment of Prince Saka Matemilola as the new Olowu of Owu, in Abeokuta North Local Government Area of the state.

Ten other stools across the State were also approved by the state government to be filled immediately.

The State government equally approved some persons to fill the hitherto vacant Chieftaincy titles in the state.

Chief Press Secretary to the Ogun Governor, Kunle Somorin says in a statement that the approval for the new Olowu of Owu's appointment alongside the filling of ten other stools across the State was given by the Ogun State Executive Council meeting which took place on Monday, July 25th 2022.

"Other vacant stools filled with this approval are that of Prince Oluwaseyi Mulero as the Aboro of Obese in Yewah North Local Government Area while Prince Rufai Adeyalu was approved as the Lemo of Ode Remo in Shagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State", the statement noted.

Prince Ademola Eletu is the Onitele of Itele in Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government Area, Prince Ogunsola Muyideen Oluseyi Soile is the new Ayanperuwa of Sotubo in Shagamu Local Government Area and Prince Lukman Salami as the Ebi of Idena in Ikenne Local Government Area of the state.

The statement explained that at the same Exco meeting, approval was also given for the Chieftaincy declaration of Onikooko of Koko Ebiye in Ado-Odo/Ota LGA and the Olu of Ajura in Obafemi Owode LGA of Ogun State.



Prince Saka Matemilola





## Ooni renews call for Yoruba's unity as Erelu Dosumu becomes Yeye Oodua

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

In a rare gathering of Yoruba traditional rulers in Ile-Ife on Friday, 22nd of July, the Ooni of Ife, HRM Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II, who was joined by 25 traditional rulers across Yoruba land officially installed Princess Abiola Dosumu as the 'Queen Mother, Yeye Oodua' of Yoruba land.

The event was an opportunity for the Yoruba people's cultural display and exhibition of pomp and pageantry to be on display.

The Ooni in a brief remark at the occasion renewed his unending call for love and unity of all descendants of Oduduwa, noting that such gesture will further enhance the prosperity of the Yoruba people.

Ooni Ogunwusi, who is the Co-Chairman of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria, made the call at the Ile Nla auditorium of his Palace in Ile-Ife while installing Erelu Kutu IV of Lagos, Erelu Princess Abiola Dosumu, as the Yeye Oodua and Queen Mother of the House of Oduduwa.

The Ooni urged Oduduwa descendants to be united even as they respect one another's stance on politics, religion and others to build peace and attract development across the land.

Justifying the choice of Erelu Dosumu,

the Ooni said, "It was the unanimous decision of the Ife Traditional Council and major stakeholders of the Oodua race that Princess Dosumu be made to succeed the highly revered late Chief Mrs Hannah Idowu Dideolu Awolowo as the Yeye Oodua."

The Ooni stressed further, "Erelu Dosumu's choice was made very easy because of her character, personality and her wealth of experience as an international business woman, a royal ambassador and a great icon of the African culture, which perfectly qualify her to step into the big shoes earlier wore by late Chief Mrs HID Awolowo as the immediate past Yeye Oodua.

"In almost half-a-Century of her public life, Erelu Dosumu has proven herself to be an outstanding woman of stamina, integrity and far-reaching influence. In 1980, late Kabiyesi Adeyinka Oyekan, the Oba of Lagos, installed her as the Erelu Kutu IV of Lagos. With this appointment, she became the right hand person of the late Oba of Lagos. Since then, she has executed her charge with maturity, sagacity, courage and commitment. Indeed, since then, the beautiful and ageless Queen mother has become an enviable cultural Face of Lagos; with her traditional allure and ageless charm."

In her speech at the occasion, the newly crowned Yeye Oodua expressed

profound appreciation to the Ooni, Ife indigenes and to the entire Oduduwa Race worldwide for the honour done her and her family with the highly exalted Chieftaincy title. She promised to work assiduously for the preservation of the Yoruba culture and strengthen the unity of members of the Oduduwa race globally.

She said, "I am honoured to be recognised by the Arole Oodua and being singled out among the great and deserving women of our time. This is a huge responsibility and I strongly believe that during my time, I will work assiduously to preserve our culture and strengthen the unity of Yoruba land. I am grateful for the prayers and the huge turnout of friends and family members, who came from far and near for this important occasion of my installation as the new Yeye Oodua."

The Orangun of Oke-Ila, Oba Adedokun Abolarin, who spoke to Trumpet Palace Watch immediately after the event in Ile-Ife, said, "I am very impressed that there was a large turnout of young men and women who today graced this occasion. The installation of Erelu Dosumu is an attestation to the fact that quality leadership and character are what anyone requires to get to any position in life.

The Oba stressed that from what the

youths observed today at this event, it is clear to them that their time has come as the present set of leaders and Obas will not be alive forever.

For example, 50 years ago, I never dreamt of becoming the Orangun of Oke-Ila, I was nobody then. So is the case with many Obas here today. We will all at some point in our journey through life, pass on, the youths of today will eventually take over our various positions", he concluded.

The installation ceremony was attended by prominent personalities across the country, especially notable Yoruba traditional rulers, which include the Orangun of Ile-Ila, Oba Wahab Oyedotun, Oore of Otun Ekiti, Oba Adekunle Adeagbo, Alayemore of Ido-Osun, Oba Adedapo Aderemi, Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Oba Rufus Adejugbe, Olofin of Isheri Awori, Oba Adekunle Bangbade, Olota of Ota-Awori, Oba(Prof) Adeyemi Obalanlege, Ajero of Ijero-Ekiti, Oba Adewole Adebayo, Orangun of Oke-Ila, Oba Adedokun Abolarin, Alara of Ilara-Epe, Olufolarin Ogunsanwo, Olowa of Igbara-Oke, Obaro of Kabba, Oba Solomon Awoniyi, Zaki of Arigidi-Akoko, Oba Yisa Olanipekun, Aladeshonyin of Odo Noforija Oba Babatunde Ogunlaja, Olugbon of Ile-Igbon, Oba Olusola Alao, Ogoga of Ikere-Ekiti, Oba Adejinmi Alagbado, and many others too numerous to mention.



## Shakeup in military, terrorists intensify push into Abuja with fresh onslaught

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

### ■ Terrorists attack military at Abuja-Kaduna highway, kill one

The Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Faruk Yahaya has approved the posting and appointment of some senior officers of the Nigerian Army across its formations and units.

The appointments and redeployment were made on Thursday 28, Director Army Public Relations, Brig Gen Onyema Nwachukwu, said in a press statement released to journalists on Friday.

Gen Nwachukwu said some Principal Staff Officers of the Army Headquarters, General Officers Commanding, Corps Commanders, Commandants of training institutions, Brigade Commanders, and Commanding Officers, amongst others were included in the redeployment exercise.

He said the posting was done as part of Gen Yahaya's effort to reposition the Nigerian Army for operational efficiency and proficiency.

"Some of the senior officers appointed as General Officers Commanding (GOCs) are Major General UT Musa from Headquarters 81 Division to Headquarters 82 Division and appointed GOC, Major General TA Lagbaja from Headquarters 82 Division to Headquarters 1 Division and appointed GOC, Major General OC Ajunwa from Nigeria Defence Section Brasilia to HQ 81 Division and appointed GOC, while Major General AS Chinade was redeployed from Depot Nigerian Army to Headquarters 2 Division and appointed GOC," Nwachukwu said in the statement.

According to him, "The newly appointed Army Headquarters Principal Staff Officers include, Maj Gen OW Ali, from Headquarters Command Army Records to Army Headquarters Department of Army Administration and appointed Chief of Administration (Army) Maj Gen S Muhammed,

from Defence Headquarters to Department of Army Standards and Evaluation and appointed Chief of Army Standards and Evaluation (Army), Major General JA Ataguba from Army Headquarters Department of Army Standards and Evaluation to Defence Headquarters and appointed, Director Peace Keeping Operations, Major General AA Adesope from Headquarters Nigerian Army Finance Corps to Defence Headquarters and appointed Chief of Defence Accounts and Budget, Major General US Mohammed from Army Headquarters Department of Administration to Nigerian Army Resource Centre and appointment Senior Research Fellow."

Other senior officers affected in the redeployment are Major General PB Fakrogha, from Defence Headquarters Garrison to Defence Space Agency and appointed Director Policy Plans and Research; Major General MO Enendu, from Nigerian Army College of Logistics to Defence Headquarters and appointed Director Psychological Warfare; Major General AE Attu from Defence Headquarters Department of Defence Training and Operations to Defence Headquarters Garrison and appointed Commander; Major General BE Onyeuko from Defence Headquarters Directorate of Defence Media Operations to Defence Headquarters Department of Logistics and appointed Director Procurement.

Nwachukwu listed the newly appointed Corps Commanders as "Major General AM Alabi, from Nigerian Army Ordnance School to Headquarters Nigerian Army Ordnance Corps and appointed Corps Commander Ordnance; Major General A Mohammed, from Nigerian Army Farms and Ranches Limited and to Headquarters Nigerian Army Electrical Mechanical



**Lt Gen. Yahaya**

Engineers and appointed Corps Commander Electrical Mechanical Engineers; Major General E Akerejola from Nigerian Army School of Supply and Transport to Headquarters Nigerian Army Corps of Transport and appointed Commander Corps of Supply and Transport; and Major General AA Fayemiwo from Nigerian Army Welfare Holdings Limited by Guarantee to Headquarters Finance Corps and appointed Chief of Accounts and Budget (Army)."

He said other Senior Officers appointed include Commandants of Nigerian Army Training Institutions and Brigade Commanders.

"Senior officers newly appointed as Commandants of Nigerian Army Training Institutions are Major General PI Eze, from Defence Headquarters Department of Procurement to Nigerian Army Ordnance School and appointed Commandant; Major General AA Adeyinka from Army Headquarters Department of Army Logistics to Nigerian Army College of Logistics and appointed Commandants; Major General PP Malla from Army Headquarters Department of Army Administration to Depot Nigerian Army and appointed Commandant as well as Brigadier General

UT Otaru from Defence Headquarters to Nigerian Army School of Supply and Transport and appointed Acting Commandant.

"The newly appointed Brigade Commanders are, Brigadier General DH Ndahi, from Nigerian Army Resource Centre to Headquarters 4 Brigade and appointed Commander; Brig Gen FS Etim from Amphibious Training School to Headquarters 6 Brigade and appointed Commander; Brigadier General EA Orakwe from Headquarters 6 Division to Headquarters 19 Brigade and appointed Commander; Brigadier General JO Are from Army Headquarters Department of Army Standards and Evaluation to Headquarters 3 Brigade and appointed Commander, amongst others," he added.

While announcing the appointment, Gen Yahaya directed all the newly appointed senior officers to redouble their effort and commitment to duty in tackling the security challenges bedeviling the nation.

Meanwhile, reports said terrorists on Thursday night attacked a military checkpoint in Zuma Rock between Zuba, Abuja and Madalla, Niger State along the Abuja-Kaduna highway.

The terrorists were said to have launched the attack on the Army while trying to gain access into the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), which resulted in a heavy gunfire exchange with the military.

It is not yet clear if there were any casualties, however, eyewitnesses said one soldier was killed before the military were able to repel the attack which lasted for about 30 minutes.

The sources said the incident led to a gridlock on the highway.

"They took control of the area for about 30 minutes and kept on shooting before heading towards Kaduna axis of the expressway after being repelled by the soldiers.

"About 20 minutes after the terrorists left, soldiers from Zuma Barracks rushed to the scene and took full control. A patrol team of policemen also arrived at the place. One soldier was killed during the attack," the source said.

It was gathered that the terrorists were said to have gained entry to the area through the back of the rock to attack the military operatives on duty.

The police and military authorities were not immediately available to respond to the incident.

The attack has increased tension and anxiety within the FCT, which ought to be the most protected city in the country. Our correspondent gathered that many residents are currently contemplating on relocating from the FCT temporarily pending the return of normalcy.

This latest attack on a military installation comes days after bandits attacked a unit of the Presidential Brigade Guards, killing at least three soldiers in Bwari Council Area of the FCT.

There have been high alerts from all security agencies to their commands, formations and units that terrorists and bandits have infiltrated the FCT and other parts of the country.

IGP vows to clampdown cyber criminals, tasks officers to be ahead of offenders

■ Lauds appointment of DCP as Vice Chairman, Africa Heads of Cybercrime

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

The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, has restated the determination of the Nigeria Police Force to clampdown on all cyber criminals in the country.

IGP Baba warned youths to desist from engaging in criminality but rather to channel their creativity to productive, noble and legal enterprise in the interest of the country.

He said the NPF will continue to sustain the fight against cybercrimes and other related offences in Nigeria and across the globe.

The IGP charged the Police Cybercrime Investigation Unit to continually boost its capacity and be ahead of perpetrators of cybercrimes within its jurisdiction.

The Police boss gave the warning while applauding the appointment of DCP Uche Ifeanyi Henry, who is the Head of Cybercrime Investigation Unit, INTERPOL NCB Abuja, as the Vice Chairman of Africa Heads of Cybercrime Units, Force's spokesperson, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi said in a statement on Thursday.

According to Adejobi, "The IGP noted that the Nigeria Police Cybercrime Investigation Unit has recorded remarkable successes in dismantling the operations of organized transnational crime syndicates and apprehending perpetrators of cybercrimes."

While mentioning some of the successes recorded, the IGP added, "Notable amongst these include the arrest of 2 threat actors who through an elaborate Business Email Compromise (BEC) scheme diverted the sum of 2.3million Euro belonging to a German Company to their Nigerian account. The money was for the purchase of face masks and COVID-19 testing kits.

"Similarly, the Police apprehended the perpetrators of a BEC scheme which diverted COVID-19 testing kits belonging to a British company and recovered all the goods. Additionally, the Unit was instrumental in the rescue of a 69-year-old American woman who was lured to Nigeria and fled over half a million dollars by threat actors in a romance scam.

"The Police has equally arrested suspects who specialize in generating and distributing child pornography online through the agency of the Cybercrime Unit."

Adejobi said that DCP Uche, the new Vice Chairman of Africa Heads of Cybercrime Units, holds a Master's Degree in Security and Strategic Studies from the Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Cybersecurity at the University of Glasgow.

"He is a certified Ethical Hacker and a Computer Hacking Forensic Investigator, having attended several local and international courses on cyber security. He is equally a member of INTERPOL Cybercrime Advisory Body, Association of Cybercrime Specialists, amongst other professional associations," he added.

## Four injured as NDLEA officers, NURTW drivers clash in Osun

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

No fewer than four persons were reportedly injured during a clash between operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and some members of National Union of Road and Transport Workers (NURTW) in Osogbo, Osun State.

It was gathered that officials of the NDLEA were trying to arrest and seize suspected

hard drugs conveyed by a vehicle when the incident occurred.

The NDLEA operatives reportedly engaged the NURTW members, Orok branch, in a gun duel in a bid to clamp down on the vehicle with suspected cannabis.

NDLEA's Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, confirmed the incident, saying officials of the anti-narcotics agency were attacked while doing their legitimate duty.

"From a preliminary report I got, our men had intelligence that a vehicle was bringing in substances suspected to be hard drugs to Osogbo today (Thursday).

"They followed the vehicle to a particular garage to see who the consignment would be delivered to.

"So at that point, they tracked the vehicle to the garage and confirmed the consignment and arrested the driver of the vehicle, then they raised the alarm and the

miscreants in the garage came out with bottles, cutlasses and guns to engage our men and our command called for reinforcement which was provided.

"I think four of the miscreants were injured and they have been taken to the hospital," Babafemi stated.

When contacted, the Chairman of the unit, Oyewale Kazeem said though he was not at the park at the time but it was reported to him that NDLEA suspected

a bus driver that he was transporting substances suspected to be Indian Hemp to the park.

"When they got to the park, in an attempt to arrest the said driver, they were shooting sporadically around the park which led to four persons being injured.

"The situation angered the boys in the park and they tried to resist the NDLEA officers to limit the number of people that will sustain gunshot wounds," Kazeem stated.



# Buhari's 'eager to go' declaration

While receiving some APC governors, legislators, and political leaders in his Daura residence in Katsina State during the last Sallah, President Muhammadu Buhari declared that he is "eager to go". In unmistakable terms, he stated that the last seven years of his administration have been "tough".

This leaves much to be desired for a man who made three attempts in the past to ascend the highest seat in the land to openly declare that he is tired of the office before the end of his tenure. Having desperately sought to occupy the seat of the president with much determination and having succeeded in occupying that seat for only seven years amid eviscerating conditions in the country, one would think that Mr. President would show love for his office and ameliorate the terrible social fortunes of the country before leaving office. President Buhari should ask his conscience whether he has delivered on his promises on corruption, power supply, infrastructure and security before hurrying from office.

Mr President's "eager to go" declaration shows a man who, from the beginning was not prepared for the office which he has occupied for seven years. The first signs of his unpreparedness immediately after he was elected became obvious after it took him many months to constitute his cabinet. That delay by Mr President earned him the sobriquet Baba-Go-Slow. And he did not do much to change that perception. From then on, his administration has been marked by all manner of tensions, especially in the economy and security. During the first four years of his administration, Mr President, and his party the APC made excuses that it would take a long time to clean the mess left by former President Goodluck Jonathan under the PDP. Indeed, Nigerians bought into

that lame narrative and gave Buhari and his APC government all the support they needed. At the end of the first four years in power, it was clear that his administration lacked focus and direction. Yet, Nigerians argued that perhaps, he would need another four years to steer the country to new heights. Rightly or wrongly, Buhari won the next election in 2019, thus kick-starting another four years of his administration.

From 2019 till now, the country has regressed on many fronts. But it can be argued that he has made appreciable progress in the infrastructure sector. Whatever achievements he recorded in that sector have been overshadowed by the almost collapse of the Nigerian economy. Also, the country has been

in the strangulating grip of insecurity with many people insisting that the president has not been sincere in dealing with the menace. Corruption within the period of Buhari's tenure in office has acquired monstrous shadows with corrupt politicians becoming heroes immediately after they cross carpet to his APC party. Under the watch of the president, monies belonging to the public have been stolen without any consequences. The judiciary has also been compromised with Judges in numerous reckless acts of misconduct.

In all of these, it is expected that Mr. President will be challenged to correct so many wrongs that have shaped his time in power as a democratically elected government. For him to declare that he is 'eager to go' shows a man who does not have any willingness to affect change of any kind in his country. Indeed, if Mr. President is sincere with his "eager to go" declaration, then he can immediately tender his resignation letter and hand over to the Vice-President to complete his tenure. There is nowhere it is written in the Constitution that an elected president must complete his tenure even when it is obvious that he is no longer interested in the job. If Mr. President resigns, Nigerians will rejoice and gladly accept his resignation. But because his "eager to go" declaration is not sincere he would rather cling to power until the last day. The President's "eager to go" declaration shows a man who is tired of his job but wants to remain in office for ceremonial purposes. The regular practice across the world is that when a President or a political leader is tired of his job, he resigns immediately.

To be sure, Nigerians are also eager to see the President go. The inertia in government is debilitating to the body politic. If a president is 'eager to go' and the people are also eager to see him go, he should just go! Mr President, do the right thing: JUST GO!



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## Modelling christ's ethics

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (John 12: 21). Sadly, there are many in the church today who do not wish to see Jesus. The symbols of the church are now being progressively "replaced" by the portraits of pastors, and sometimes with their spouses. It is no longer the Cross, Ship, Fish, Dove or Fire. Who are we seeking to see when we are His Sanctuary? One of my best Christian authors, John Maxwell's book is titled, Talent is not Enough. The author's intention is to let us know that above all, character and behaviour are required for success to be recorded. Many talented musicians, sports persons, professionals and pastors, professors and politicians

have met their downfall on the account of their behaviour.

How is your behaviour modelled? A model serves as a paradigm, an example, a look-alike, a case study, etc. When they say show me your friends and I will tell you who you are; they are simply drawing attention to the fact that friends stand as models for each other's behaviour. We are models to our children and subordinates at our workplace. In our various professions, we look up to those who are successful to be adopted as our professional models. We may even engage them as our mentors!

Christians are called to MODEL CHRIST in behaviour. They are asked to ask themselves each time they want to act, "How would Christ behave in this circumstance?" Even though the behaviour is psychological in disposition, the way we conduct ourselves as social/rational beings is also a moral/ethical construct. That is, our behaviour can be good or bad (evil); morally acceptable or out-rightly immoral. There is one behaviour that is never evil, bad, wrong or immoral. This is Christ-like behaviour; one that is modelled after Christ Jesus. Consequently, we are being called to promote Christian ethics.

Christian morality cannot be carried out outside the Divine. It is a grace and blessing

from God; so we need to connect to Jesus Christ as believers in faith before we can "use" Him as a "behavioural model". It is a consequence of God's promise of old: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all idols I will cleanse you" (Ezekiel 36:25). And in Galatians 5:17, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

There are steps we can take to achieve Christlikeness. We can only model Christ on our behaviours if we take the right steps in our Christian journey. They are (i) Newness of Life: "We are buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (Romans 6:4-6). This is how Paul puts it.

So being tied to Jesus frees us from sin and gives us a new life, to make us born again (John. 3:16).

(ii) Altruistic Love. We are expected to be selfless and loving in our behaviour. The core of "Ethics of Jesus Christ" is called the Golden Rule by theologians and moral philosophers. As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them (Luke 6:31). Jesus Christ did not just decree this rule. He gave a threefold explanation of what He meant by the golden rule. (1) Love because of a different principle from that of sinners (2) Do good on a different basis from that of sinners, and (3) Lend with a different motive from that of sinners. (Luke 6:27-30). Jesus Christ also expressed a quartet - of four laws of love - of Laws thus: (i) Love your enemies, (ii) Do good to those who hate you, (iii) Bless those who curse you; and (iv)



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

Pray for those who abuse you (Luke 6:27-28).

All this is supported by another four laws of retaliation (Luke 6:29-30). (i) To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, (ii) From one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either, (iii) Give to everyone who begs you, and (iv) From one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. Furthermore, He gives us four more laws of mercy (Luke 6:35-36) thus: (i) Love your enemies, and do good, (ii) Lend and expect nothing in return, (iii) Be kind to the ungrateful and the evil, and (iv) Be merciful like God, your Father. Finally are the four laws of Justice (Luke 6:37-38) thus: (i) Judge not, (ii) Condemn not, (iii) Forgive, and (iv) Give It follows that to model Christ in our behaviour we should love, not be retaliators, be merciful and promote justice. According to "Dake's Annotated Reference Bible," "These sum up the righteousness of the law, the prophet and the gospel." Christians require the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, otherwise, no one can live a Christ-like life. We have to be sanctioned and washed for this to be possible. Apostle Paul enjoins that: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the flesh" (Galatians

5:16). In the concluding verses, Paul says "And those who belong to

Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passion and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit (v. 24-25).

Many things happening today in our country are contrary to the Christian call.

In all spheres of life in Nigeria, we see idolatry for fame, power and wealth; ill-gotten wealth derived from crass and heartless corruption is a new normal. Christians - so-called - and even pastors are not exempted. Can you and I imagine the massive looting that is ongoing in Nigeria today in face of unemployment, lack of infrastructure, decay in the health and education sectors, etc.? Those involved in such acts know clearly that the ethics of Jesus Christ has departed from them; as they lack the FRUIT of the Holy Spirit.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:9,

22). If we have those who are endowed with the Holy Spirit, those who can truly be described to have modelled Christ in their behaviour then this nation will be a better place. We must fall into the class of those who say, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus.

There is a great gain if we model Christ in our behaviour. "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Roman 6:22). Herein lies true redemption!

Apostle Paul says, "Live as children of light, for the fruit of light consist in all goodness, righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:9). Nobody follows Christ Jesus and regrets or be disgraced on that account both before the law and fellow human beings. May God give us the grace to be like Jesus Christ.

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

## Danger of fasting, praying without holiness

It is good to pray without ceasing and it is also good to add fasting to prayers to make it more effective especially against higher demons in charge of particular cases. However, to fast and pray without living a holy life can open more doors for stronger demons to possess a person.

This is the reason this message is very important, spiritual warfare has rules and regulations to have victory.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ made it very clear in Matthew 12:43-45 that when a demon/unclean spirit is cast out from a person, the demon will eventually come back to see if there is room to enter back into the person and if there is a possibility to re-enter into the former victim, the demon will not come back alone but will invite stronger demons to join him to hold their victim into stronger captivity. This knowledge therefore should guide us as Christians to understand what holiness in Christ Jesus entails because holiness or allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell in your temple always is compulsory to have permanent victory over satanic attacks and possession.

Without holiness, the demon that was cast away from the person will join hands with other demons to make the current state of the person will be worse than what it was before. Some of these reinforced attacks against victims may have led to the untimely death of some people without knowing what transpired spiritually.

Some people may pray against poverty or different sorts of satanic attacks but if they refuse to live a holy life as well as watch and pray, worse poverty will invade them after some time in addition to other spiritual punishments. The person may have immediate relief after such prayers and perhaps have some breakthroughs but without consistency



Dr. Agbodo

in holiness, the situation can deteriorate and lead to a worse calamity.

To this effect, we need to understand the aftermath of fasting and praying which some of us refer to as deliverance prayers before we engage in it.

It is therefore important to understand what it means to live a holy life in Christ Jesus and the strategy to keep re-evading demons away after fasting and praying to purge oneself from demons and other strange elements in life.

First, the person that wants to live a holy life must understand that it is only Jesus Christ that has defeated the devil and all fallen angels totally and it is only in His name that any evil power can be cast out from a person. To this effect, any person seeking freedom from demons, spiritual husbands, spiritual wives and other satanic principalities and

habits must first and foremost accept Jesus Christ as the new King Lord) of their lives so that demonic kings and queens that were occupying their lives through evil covenants, curses and other mediums can be displaced and cast away.

Now, we must also understand that demons are in categories. Some demons are higher and stronger than others and our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ made it clear that stronger demons can only be cast away through fasting and prayers. The smaller demons can leave with effective, focused and concentrated prayers but the stronger demons may resist such prayers and the only option available is to add fasting to the prayers to make it more effective.

Therefore, to live a holy life according to God's standard, the person must repent from any known sin as stated in the Bible and commit himself or herself to obeying the commandments of God always and if for any reason he or she falls short by committing any sin, he must repent immediately.

Yes, sin demotes whether you repent or not but at least it is better to remain in the lane of righteousness by repenting of such a sin even though the sin committed may have taken you backwards in your journey to perfection. It is better to repent than continue to live in sin and finally destroy oneself.

To be more specific, let us look at the sins that easily beset humanity today so that we know when we are sinning. One of the most common sins committed today is fornication/sexual impurities.

Fornication is when you have sexual intercourse with a person that you don't have marital vows with. Fornication is so dangerous because when you have sexual intercourse either in marriage or outside marriage, your soul will join with the soul of that person and the spiritual history of both individuals are

intertwined and the demons disturbing both of them will share both souls and will begin their torment. Therefore, if one of the sexual partners had five demons and the other five demons, both of them will now have ten demons each and the process of casting out ten demons instead of five of course will be more Herculean. So, fornication is an open door to the pollution of the soul and separation from the Holy Spirit and when you are separated from the Holy Spirit and engage in prayers and fasting against stubborn demons, you may just be inviting great torture from more demons.

Adultery is also a major sin and committing adultery is a passport for the person to remain possessed by demons and also a passport to untimely death because the Word of God has stated that the punishment for adultery is death.

Sexual lust, which means not committing the physical act of fornication and adultery but accommodating and enjoying such thoughts can also be an open door for more demons to invade a human being.

Harbouring hate against anyone in your thoughts, telling lies, un-forgiveness, masturbation, drunkenness, using vibrators to excite oneself, stealing and embezzlement of public funds for personal satisfaction are all sins and if you want to be free from any spiritual problem, you should reject such sins and embrace holiness and righteousness in Christ Jesus before you fast and pray so that your fasting and prayers do not land you into more trouble. Let us stop here for now. God bless us in Jesus Name.

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# CAN politicisation: Can new leadership rescue body?

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**, Culture and Religion Editor

On Monday, July 25, 2022, the Most Rev. Daniel Okoh, who is the General Superintendent of Christ Holy Church, also known as the Nation Builders (Odozi-Obodo) emerged as the new President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN).

Most Rev. Okoh's election as the new CAN President was announced by Mr. Joseph Daramola, the association's General Secretary, on Tuesday, July 26, 2022.

The Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), was formed in 1976, exactly 46 years ago by a five bloc of Christian bodies. They are Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), The Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), the Organization of African Instituted Churches (GAIC), the (TEKAN and ECWA Fellowship).

A new era of the Christian body is expected to begin with the handing over ceremony to Most Rev. Okoh and his new executive members on Friday, July 29, 2022. Can Rev. Okoh and his executive give CAN a new lease of life, and a proper direction as a Christian body? These and many more questions are begging for answers.

Also of paramount concern to Christians of faiths and denominations is how to rescue CAN from active partisan politics, which the body has unfortunately enmeshed itself in. Can the Rev. Okoh's administration be able to redirect the affairs of CAN, to reflect its core values? Only time will tell. But how did the Christian body abandon its core values and delved into partisan politics full time that it is now finding it very difficult to separate it from?

In an attempt to answer these questions, Trumpet Religion Desk looked at how CAN derailed and became partisan.

CAN as a body, became actively involved in partisan politics during the leadership of Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor as chairman of the association. As expected, after the Catholic Bishop's subtle warning that the body be redirected to face its core values and the reluctance by the Pastor Oritsejafor-led administration to heed its warning, the then President of Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, (CBCN), in a letter dated September 24, 2012, personally signed by Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama addressed to Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, one of the associations most influential blocs, informed CAN that it was pulling out of the organization.

Given reasons as at the time of this action, according to the CBCN "CAN most recent attitudes, utterances and actions of the body's national leadership, which the Catholic Bishops said, negated the concept of the foundation of the association and the desire of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

This letter went on to say, "the CBCN has suspended its participation in CAN meetings until such a time the leadership of CAN reverses back to the original vision, mission and objectives of CAN."

Expatriating further on its grouse with the then Oritsejafor-led leadership of the

association, the Catholic Bishops lamented that CAN had been politicized and was no longer being used to promote peace and unity in the country.

The CBCN continued, "CAN is being dragged into partisan politics thereby compromising the ability to play its true role as conscience of the nation and the voice of the voiceless."

Pastor Oritsejafor, the then CAN President was repeatedly accused by Nigerians of being divisive in the way he ran the association, often making comments in support of the People's Democratic Party-led Federal Government and President Goodluck Jonathan. Many Nigerian Christians believe till now that Pastor Oritsejafor pushed CAN into ignominy with his utterances and actions making Nigerians to regard the association as an arm of the PDP.

Pastor Oritsejafor became even more unpopular among his colleagues and around the country in late 2012 when he got a new Jet as a gift from unknown donors. Till date, he is yet to disclose the names of those who gave him the Jet, which was once seized in South Africa and loaded with millions of dollars. In the same breath, CAN has not been able to account for the 7 billion Naira, the ex-President Jonathan administration allegedly gave to CAN to run its affairs up till 2015 elections, which PDP lost to the ruling party, APC.

It is important to note, that the number



Most Rev. Daniel Okoh

eight item in the Catholic Bishop's letter to CAN then, is the fact they pointedly made, that "CAN is not a Mega Church but an association of different Churches." Stressing that, "therefore, any claim by the President of CAN to the leader of all Christians in Nigeria must take this into account." In other words, CAN is not in a position to speak for all Christians in

Nigeria especially having so soiled itself with partisan politics and having become a tool of divisiveness and destabilization and persecution of Christians satanic propaganda from hell and bringing the body of Christ into ridicule, disrepute and disgrace with the level of greed the CAN leadership exhibited then.

Superior Evangelist Kayode Ajala, the spokesperson for Celestial Church of Christ, (CCC) Worldwide, said, "If the new leadership of CAN led by Most Rev. Daniel Okoh and his executive want to be taken seriously, it must immediately excuse itself from any form of partisan political activities and concentrate on the vision of CAN when the body was formed 46 years ago. The vision of CAN is to be among other things, a watch-dog of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation. As expected, this body is to propagate the Gospel, to promote understanding among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria."

Pastor John Kuforiji of CK-REGLOM said the Most Rev. Okoh leadership of CAN should immediately revert to the aims of CAN as an association with a lot of values in biblical studies. The association should immediately create a platform that will provide the Nigerian Society with mutual support, academic and research collaboration, intellectual growth, career development, research dissemination, and global exposure for its members.

## APC Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket, a slap on Christianity, says Cleric

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

The Bishop of the Anglican Communion, Diocese of Oleh, His Lordship Rt. Revd. John Usiwoma Aruakpor has condemned the prospect of the Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket of the All Progressives Congress (APC) that produced Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu and ex-Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, as a slap on Christianity in Nigeria.

He made this known when he delivered his Bishop Charge during the 2nd Session of the 8th Synod of the Oleh Diocese of the Anglican Communion that was held at the St. Paul Anglican Church, Ozoro, Isoko North



Rt. Revd. John Usiwoma Aruakpor

Local Government Area of Delta State.

Bishop Aruakpor stated that "In a sane nation where there is no mutual suspicion, religious affiliation/tribe ought not to be an issue in who should rule a country. But in a country such as Nigeria where a particular people/religion claim to be superior and to be the only people granted the right to rule, it becomes an insensitive thing and a slap on Christianity for the APC Presidential flagbearer to go ahead despite all the criticisms to pick a fellow Muslim as running mate.

He opined that the action gives credence to the rumours making the rounds that there is a grand plan of Fulanisation of the country, noting that "as a Diocese, we commend those Christians that have taken the bull by the horn in throwing in the towel by resigning their membership of the APC in protest."

He added that all well-meaning Christians should be courageous enough and do the needful, saying that church leaders should sensitize their members of the danger that this trend portends.

In the area of security in the country, Bishop Aruakpor stated that "the last seven years have witnessed sordid and squalid increase in the area of insecurity. We have equally learnt new vocabularies such as Bandits, Unknown Gunmen, Fulani Herdsmen, Kidnappers, Yahoo plus and a lot more.

"Our take on this is that either the Federal Government has been overwhelmed by the situation they have always claimed to be in control of, or they are deliberately looking the other way from the issue which makes them culpable of what is happening."

He lamented that "A situation where innocent citizens are languishing in the den of these criminals for years with the government making us to believe that they are working with no tangible result

and bandits could gather intelligence and storm a prison to free their fellow criminals without resistance is very worrisome."

The Bishop also noted that Nigeria happens to be one of the most celebrated corrupt countries in the world, "noting that when APC came on board with their campaign slogan and promised to bring change and fight corruption, most people were carried away and APC succeeded in winning their sympathy which brought them to power. Unfortunately, what is on ground today is a far cry from what they promised."

"The unfolding scenarios in the political sector have forced the church to suddenly realize her civic role in the country, urging Christians in the country to wake up from their sleep and do the needful, by registering as voters, collecting their permanent voter's cards and ensure they vote right in the forthcoming general elections. He urged the populace to fight against all the associated electoral evils. While calling on the Federal Government and the relevant bodies to provide a level playing ground for all players, and also ensure that vote buying is stamped out of the system.

He appealed to the Delta State Government led by Dr Ifeanyi Okowa to look into the plight of retirees/pensioners, stating that, the issue of gratuity and pension has been a recurring decimal all over the country, particularly in Delta State.

According to him, it has left many who have faithfully laboured for their fatherland to suffer untold hardship and many deaths, saying that, this present administration will write their name in gold if they take the bull by the horn to clear outstanding debts accruing to retirees and pensioners.





## CBN's new monetary policy rate, MPC's goof and manufacturers' dilemma

Only recently, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) met to review its first quarter (Q1) 2022 previous decisions and increased its Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 14 per cent from 13 per cent in May 2022. But the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the Nigerian Association of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) and the Organised Private Sector (OPS) faulted the MPC's decision, insisting that the new rate will stifle economic growth and deepen the sufferings of Nigerians, **JOHNMARK UKOKO** writes.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) meets every quarter to take critical monetary decisions on the country's economy and in its meeting in May 2022 it retained the MPR at 13 per cent.

However, during its second quarter (Q2) meeting, it increased the MPR from 13 per cent to 14 per cent, for which Nigerians were quick to berate the MPC for its decision, saying it got it wrong this time, considering the struggling economy and the sufferings Nigerians have been subjected to under the current administration.

Groups that berated the MPC include the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), which said the MPR goofed in its decision, noting that the committee could not have increased the MPR to check rising inflation, as it claimed.

MAN argued that the CBN could not achieve its rationale for increasing the MPR, which it said, stemmed from the need to curb rising inflation, which recently peaked at 18.6 per cent, to ensure relative stability and sustained economic growth in the face of uncertainties in the global economy.

In a statement issued by the Director-General of MAN, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, the association said the MPC's decision would lead to increase in interest rates on loanable funds, which would no doubt compound the intensity of the crowding out effect on private businesses, as firms will have lesser access to funds in the credit market.

The manufacturers maintained that the new MPR rate would also intensify demand crunch emanating from the heavily eroded disposable income of Nigerians, constrained access of households and individuals to cheap funds.

It further stated that the new rate would also lead to the rising cost of manufacturing inputs, which will translate to higher prices of goods, low sales and enormous volume of inventory of unsold products, adding that the new MPR rate would exacerbate the intensity of idle capital assets, worsen the already declining profit margin of private businesses and heighten the mortality rate of small businesses.

They stressed that the new MPR will further reduce capacity utilisations, upscale the rate of

unemployment, incidences of crimes and insecurity as the capacity of banks to support production and economic growth is heavily constrained.

The real sector opined the MPR rate will reduce the pace of full recovery of the real sector and make manufacturing performance remain lacklustre, adding that it will lead to leaner contribution to the country's Gross Domestic product (GDP).

"Clearly, the increase in MPR has widened the journey farther away from the preferred single digits interest rate regime. It is not manufacturing friendly considering the myriad of binding constraints already limiting the performance of the real sector.

"MAN is therefore concerned about the ripple effects of this decision and its implications for the manufacturing sector that is visibly struggling to survive the numerous strangulating fiscal and monetary policy measures and reforms," the statement stressed.

The manufacturers cautioned the government and the apex bank to do all within their power to improve credit facilities to the real sector in particular and the business sector in general.

"Consequently, manufacturers are hopeful that the stringent conditions for accessing available development funding windows with the CBN will be relaxed to improve the flow of long-term loans to the manufacturing sector at single digit interest rates.

"The expectation is that MPC will ensure that future adjustment of MPR takes into consideration the trend of core inflation rather than basing decisions on headline and food inflation. This will no doubt shield the sector from the backlashes from the 14 MPR, ramp up production and guarantee sustained growth in the overall best interest of the economy," the statement added.

The backlashes trailing the 14 per cent MPR also come from the President of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commercial, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Ide John C. Udeagbala, said the association also has issue with the new rate, urging the CBN to address all the issues the business community has raised.

Udeagbala said although the MPC members may have valid reasons for increasing the rate, it behoved the apex bank to address all the issues raised against the decision, adding: "While we



Segun Ajayi-Kadir

welcome the MPC's decision to raise the monetary rate from 13 per cent to 14 per cent, this is an inflation management measure and does not address the root cause of the inflation, which is rising food prices, brought about by the devaluation of the naira and rising energy costs, which has affected production and transportation."

He also urged the CBN to resolve the issues being highlighted by the various sectors and groups, stressing that the NACCIMA would continue to look forward to the continued implementation of CBN's intervention in agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, energy, export and other sectors to ensure improvement in food and energy supply chains.

As the private sector awaits the progress of the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI), immediate intervention is required in the oil and gas sector on which the entire country depended for most of its production and transportation needs.

"Automotive Gas Oil (AGO), also known as diesel and Jet A1 have become prohibitively expensive forcing a lot of enterprises to shut down or scale down their operations. This puts to question the readiness of Nigeria to compete in the global economy especially under the trade agreements like the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

"If urgent steps are not taken, the resulting non-competitive na-

ture of Nigeria as a consumption economy and dumping ground for all manner of foreign goods and services," he stressed.

Also, an economist, Dr Muda Yusuf and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre for Private Practice Enterprises (CPPE) said the new MPR rate would impact negatively on the real sector

He said the new rate would crowd out the private sector from the credit facility, adding that the MPC failed to consider the plight of the manufacturing sector before fixing the rate.

Respondents berated the MPC members for not considering the various concerns the manufacturers have raised in the past few months and urged the MPC to always consider the views of the country's manufacturers wherever they want to adjust the MPR rate to avoid worsening the already bad situation of the real sector.

They are at a loss as to why the Federal Government and the CBN do not seem to pay much attention to the various concerns being raised by the players in the manufacturing sector, maintaining that the MPC and the CBN do not seem to feel the pains of local manufacturers were grappling with on a daily basis.

With the barrage of complaints, the MAN has rolled out in recent times, it will be wise for the MPC to think through issues thoroughly before arriving at the rates in future.

Although the CBN governor, Godwin Emefiele, has defended

members of the MPC for the new rate, it is left to be seen who is right between members of the MPC and MAN.

An economist, Jude Amadi, said with the new MPR rate, lending rates will rise significantly, insisting that this is based on data from CBN's money market indicators, which shows a relationship between interest rate hikes whenever monetary policy rates are increased.

"Data from the report shows Nigeria's prime lending rate, which is the average lending rate in the country printed at about 12 percent lower than the MPR of 14 per cent. The prime lending rate is the lending rate offered to large corporations and blue-chip companies with near triple 'A' rating," he said.

According to Amadi, while the prime lending rate is currently 12 per cent, the maximum lending rate is 27.6 percent more than double the existing prime rate. This data has existed for years, as banks price in the risk of lending to small businesses and individuals.

He stressed that things could get worse if the trends we have seen in recent years were repeated this time around and disclosed that the last time the MPC rate was increased to 14 per cent, the prime lending rate also rose to about 30 per cent.

He explained that this happened in 2017 when the country also faced a similar forex crisis with exchange rate disparity between the black market and the official market rate widening frequently amid forex scarcity.

"Commercial banks in Nigeria implemented interest rate hikes for loans raising rates by as much as 200 basis points when the CBN increased the MPR from 11.5 per cent to 13 per cent. Essentially, interest rate hike is in response to the recent increase in CBN's monetary policy rate," he stated.

As of the time of Friday, July 29, 2022, the naira was already exchanging at the parallel market for over N700 to \$1, and while the CBN still retained its Import and Exporter (I&E) window at N452.70, manufacturers confirmed that they hardly get up to 20 per cent of their forex needs after queuing for months in the banks.

The weeks ahead will show the impact of the new MPR rate on the country's manufacturing sector and how the manufacturers will cope with the situation.



## Bullion Go Neat boss wins media awards for entrepreneurship

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Bullion Go-Neat Global, a beverage and alcoholic drinks manufacturing firm, Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyibo, has won various awards from different media groups during his recent birthday celebration.

Oguntoyibo, who is a budding entrepreneur, politician, philanthropist and promoter of young talents and musicians, won five different awards on the occasion.

Among the awards he received at the occasion are the Commerce and Industry Correspondents Association of Nigeria (CICAN) entrepreneur 2022 award for his strides in manufacturing during a period when some local manufacturers were closing down their plants.

Presenting the award, President of CICAN, Charles Okonji, commended Oguntoyibo for his entrepreneurship spirit and strides in the manufacturing sector and by extension, the nation's economy.

Okonji disclosed that he and other members of the association, had on several occasions, visited the headquarters of Bullion Go-Neat Global and expressed delight that the firm kept expanding at a period most manufacturing firms were either scaling down their operations or closing down totally due to the challenges they face on daily basis.

"I and many of my members have on many occasions visited the Bullion Go-Neat Global factory at Ibafo, Obafemi Owode Council

of Ogun State. We kept seeing massive expansion and more machines being imported to increase production.

"We have seen the ongoing projects at various stages and we have no option but to salute Olufemi Ajadi Oguntoyibo for his efforts. We are also delighted that he is also a journalist. Therefore, we are proud of him and delighted that he is also in the process of unveiling his Frequency Modulated (FM) radio station soon.

"Based on what we have seen and heard of Oguntoyibo's plan in manufacturing, economy, talents support and employment of over 100 direct jobs and hundreds of indirect jobs, as well as his support for various media groups, we are convinced that he is fit and proper for recognition as our Entrepreneur Man of the Year for 2022," he stated.

Okonji added that the association decided to honour the manufacturer, politician and philanthropist for creating economic value and for his friendly disposition towards journalists covering the real sector.

Besides the CICAN, Managing Director of Dream Next Enterprises, Bisi Otunla, Chief Executive of Nollyfans, Steve Akpos, as well as delegates of the Online Correspondents Association of Nigeria (OJAN) and the Brands Journalists Association of Nigeria (BJAN), commended the businessman for supporting entrepreneurship, the media and impactful partisanship.

## International Breweries commends distributors

In a bid to enhance the fortunes of its key distributors, the International Breweries (IBPLC) has pledged commitment to ensuring the sustained growth and development of their businesses as major stakeholders.

At a recent conference in honour of its distributors, the IBPLC, a member of ABLN Beverage, the world's largest brewery, with over 400 beer brands, appreciated its stakeholders who have supported the company over the years.

At the event in Lagos, the company commended its distributors who made impact on its growth across the country, either as new distributors or loyal partners, who backed the company since its inception over 50 years ago.

Distributors were recognised on the night and received awards for their Sterling achievements in the year.

They were also treated to world class musical performances by top Nigerian artists.

Speaking at the occasion, Managing Director of International Breweries Plc, Hugo Rocha, commended the distributors for the long-standing relationship and the value they have added to the business over the years.

His words: "We are delighted to commend our esteemed distributors for their commitment to our diverse brands over the past 12 months. In spite of the challenges in the operating environment, the company did well and achieved many milestones that call for celebrating our partnership that was not only built for today, but also for the future.

"And as an ambitious organisation keen on meeting the needs of consumers across the country,

neither the International Breweries Plc organisation nor its trade and distribution partners would rest on their oars. We are looking forward to 2022, which will be more impactful than 2021."

Some of the award winners are MacDen Communications, which emerged winners in the prestigious President Award category.

Acknowledging the role of the distributors as strategic made partners in the organisation, Rocha also restated the company's commitment to producing high quality standards to ensure consumers enjoy wholesome and safe products of the finest quality products, which comply with all legal requirements as stipulated by the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

"We recognise and acknowledge your efforts in reducing unemployment in the country through job creation and getting our products into the hands of the consumers who reside in the most remote areas of the country.

"Our products are household names because of your support and dedication and more than ever before, we are committed to improving our internal processes to help you achieve more. In the last 50 years, IBPLC has achieved giant strides as a producer of some of the finest quality beverages internationally and in the local market," he stated.

He urged the distributors to redouble their efforts in growing their business in the years ahead, adding that the company was proud of their support and commitment in ensuring that the company grew from strength to strength.

# Capital market expert advises investors

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

An economist and professor of Capital Markets at the Nasarawa State University (NSU), Lafia, Uche Uwaleke, has advised investors on stocks to invest in the capital market as from September 2022 and sell their investments in January 2023 to reduce the impact of electioneering activities on such investment.

Uwaleke gave the advice at a capacity building programme organised by the Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN) in Lagos, saying the stock market had always responded to negative pressures following election years in the economy.

At the forum with the theme: Impact of Electioneering On Fixed Income And Equity Market In Nigeria, he said while the All-Share Index (ASI) depreciated in January during election years except for 2015, "January 2015 ushered in the present administration and it witnessed high tension and uncertainty.

"This was compounded by the fall in oil price at the international market and the prediction of Nigeria's imminent break-up in 2015 by the United States National Intelligence Council. The bearish run experienced in the stock market in the second half of 2014 largely on account of the tension, lingered into January 2015."

## Higher revenue crucial to budget balance, surplus, says DMO

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

The Debt Management Office (DMO) has charged the Federal Government to increase its revenue generation to enable it to balance its annual budgets with a view to reducing borrowings.

Director-General of DMO, Ms Patience Oniha, stated this in an interview in Abuja, insisting that improved revenue generation would help reduce borrowing.

It would be recalled that the Nigerian media was recently awash with controversy about the country's increasingly rising debt stock and huge revenue that went into debt servicing.

The controversy was generated by the disclosure by the Minister



Ms Patience Oniha



Uche Uwaleke

He maintained that the second half of any pre-election year is not for risk-averse investors and advised investors to take longer-term perspectives during the electioneering period, saying that the second half of the pre-election year was a good time to identify and take position in under-valued stocks, especially in dividend aristocrats.

"To identify miss-pricing of stocks, the application of Tobin Q or "Kaldirs V" and ratios are advised. Ultimately, the best strategy to shield the headwinds is to stay with securities that have solid fundamentals as well as ensure a well-diversified portfolio of investments, particularly during

electioneering periods, he added.

Uwaleke, however, said that there was still hope for Nigeria's Equity Market, based on trends analysis, which always experiences drawbacks in every pre-election year, particularly during the second quarter of the year, adding that no investor wanted negative returns on investment (RoIs) and that high inflation was not in the best interest of the equities market.

He maintained that political impact breeds low interest in the capital market, as a sell down in shares was unavoidable despite vast local investors in the domestic market.

"Stock returns have been on a downward trend for all penultimate election years since 2006. Poor performance of the stock market in 2014 despite relatively strong Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate, including strong-crude prices and single digit inflation, may not be unconnected with heightened political tension that characterised electioneering in the second half of 2014.

"Low GDP growth rate of 1.92 per cent double digit inflation rate of 12.09 per cent in 2018 resulted in stagflation, which may have contributed to the negative returns in 2018. Bond yields tend to be higher in the second half of pre-election years. This may be done to increase demand for money occasioned by general elections," he stated.

removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Sprite (PMS) would also help to reduce the country's huge debt burden.

Oniha urged the Federal Government to take urgent steps in optimising crude oil production to reap the benefits of rising crude oil prices in the international market.

"There is a vital need to ramp up crude oil production and tackle oil theft and pipeline vandalism to meet oil revenue targets, especially in light of rising crude oil prices.

"Other structural issues such as security, inflation, infrastructures deficit and foreign exchange shortage adversely affecting the business environment need to be resolved. This will create an avenue for efficient tax collection and wider tax base" she said.

Oniha advised the Nigerian media and stakeholders to also pay attention to the challenges of revenue generation.

"It is advisable for the media and the public analysts to begin to focus attention on Nigeria's revenue generation. Increasing revenue generation is the way to go and that is how countries will develop and use borrowing funds to augment revenue shortfalls now and again.

"Nigeria has been running budget deficits for decades and it is about time to shift to a balanced budget and even surplus budget," she stated.

of Finance and Economic Planning, Mrs Zainab Ahmed, who disclosed that between January and April 2022, the country generated revenue of N1.63 trillion, but expended N1.94 trillion in debt servicing.

Oniha explained that the figures were contained in the Draft Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for 2023 to 2025 presented by the minister.

The MTEF put actual revenue and debt service from January to April at N1.63 trillion and N1.94 trillion, while the debt service of N406 billion on ways and advances.

The figures show that debt service was higher than revenue. This is by no means a desirable position but then we need to shift focus to revenue.

"How much revenue is Nigeria generating? Statistics show that relative to other countries, Nigeria's revenue is very low. A strong and comparable revenue base will not only reduce the need for relatively large amounts of new borrowing as Nigeria has witnessed but will also reduce the debt service to revenue ratio," she stressed.

She stressed the need to grow revenues significantly in order to reduce debt burden, saying that the agency had continuously maintained its position on the need to raise revenue, adding that





# How to deliver housing for low, medium income groups – AHCN President

By **BLESSING OZIWO**

Paying rent for a decent home is a major challenge for low income earners. In a bid to facilitate housing delivery, especially for the low and medium-income earners, Dr Victor Onukwugha, the President of the Association of Housing Corporation of Nigeria (AHCN), has solicited the creation of a new 'Housing Development Fund' to grant social loans to housing corporations to engage in property development that will be allocated to National Housing Fund (NHF)'s contributors.

He made the admonition during a two-day National Workshop on Facilitating Affordable Housing for Medium and Low-Income Earners in Abuja, Onukwugha said there was an urgent need to sanitise the primary mortgage market with enabling laws.

He blamed inadequate financial support in terms of seed funding and the high cost of funds for challenges confronting the nation's housing corporations.

Onukwugha called for the

provision of government guarantee with credit insurance for lenders to mitigate and share risk.

He said there should be provision of a credible national credit database to assist financial institutions in information sharing, assessment and rating in property financing and mortgage origination.

He also appealed to the government via the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to regulate interest rates to a single-digit for housing financing; while making a case for the provision of quick resolution of foreclosures parameters to attract investors to the sector.

To facilitate low and medium income housing, the AHCN boss said the controlling body of cooperative societies in each of the states should work in partnership with the state housing corporations to develop affordable dwelling units for viable societies in all states of the federation.

"The state controlling body of cooperative should serve as the guarantor for the housing corporation to get an exit point.

Provide tax incentive/rebate for manufacturers of local building materials to encourage adequate production of such materials at affordable prices to flood the market," Onukwugha said.

He called for the commitment of the government to the provision of infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity as a subsidy package to reduce cost of housing units.

He also urged the government to inject at least N500billion intervention funds at single digit interest into the housing sector.

The AHCN boss called for digitalisation of land registries and reduction of cost of registering property

He is of the opinion that there should be provisions for the diversion of certain percentage of excess funds in the coffers of Pension funds and insurance companies into housing provision, saying there should be activation of vibrant secondary market and alternative funding sources.

On what is required for the transformation for effective housing delivery, Onukwugha



Victor Onukwugha

stated that usurpation of the statutory responsibilities of state housing agencies by the state ministries should not be allowed "as it will create room for politicking with projects."

He urged the Ministry of Housing to strictly reduce its activities to policy formulation and monitor her statutory parastatals to ensure policy compliance and accomplishment

"There is no doubt that provision of low and medium income housing has suffered great neglect in recent time which was further compounded by the effect of COVID-19 that paralysed global economy, it is however pertinent to recognise that housing sector still possesses the most viable platform to rescue the nation from economic woes and recession if approached pragmatically.

"The involvement of state housing corporations is definitely inevitable if we hope to facilitate low and medium income housing for Nigerians through social housing platforms as enumerated in the National Housing Policy."

"Moreover, if the Economic Sustainable Plan hopes to achieve its lofty objectives of creating jobs for the people and contribute to GDP and economic development, Housing Corporation remains the key to unlock this potential of economic recovery through ESP," he said.

## Ogoni Communities pledge to protect environment

By **GENESIS ERIRIOMA**

An organization involved in the fight against environmental pollution, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), brought together community members from K-Dere, Kpor, Goi and Mogho communities for a learning and sharing session on the usefulness of community monitoring, organising and advocacy to environmental protection.

HOMEF works with communities to help them seek environmental justice with the power of knowledge. During the event units of FishNet Alliance – a continental network of fishers against harmful activities – were

inaugurated. It is common knowledge that communities in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria are vulnerable because of the impact from the exploration and exploitation of oil companies. Communities, where oil and gas activities are carried out have continued to bear the costs of the negative impact of these activities and the oil and gas companies have continued to replicate these actions in various communities in the region.

While addressing the community people, the Director of HOMEF, Nnimmo Bassey stressed the need to protect the environment stating that although oil has not been drilled in Ogoniland since 1993, oil still passes through the territory, and it remains one of the most polluted areas in the Niger Delta. He further elucidated the need for solidarity and the need to rebuild their livelihoods.

"The Niger Delta region has been bastardised, yet these companies are attempting to divest and sell off their assets to indigenous companies without cleaning and remediating the environment and compensating the people for decades of rapacious exploitation. This learning session aims to empower community members to be ready to hold environmental

destroyers accountable for the damages done," he said.

K-Dere community with about 54 oil wells had a major oil spill which occurred on April 12, 2009, when the fire from the Bomu Manifold burned and spread to the neighbouring Goi and Mogho communities, causing damages that destroyed people's livelihoods. Between 2007 and 2014, it was reported that 352,000 barrels of crude oil were spilled from the Bomu Manifold, a Shell facility.

Some members of the community took time to share their experiences on what they suffered from the destroyed environment and loss of livelihoods. Julia Gaage, a 62-year-old female farmer from K-Dere, lamented the damages on the land from pollution.

"We are forced to plant yams using fertilizer because of the damage done to our land by oil pollution. We know that fertilizer is not so good for our soil, but it is the only way we can make things grow in our circumstances. Before now we did not use fertilizer but today if you do not add these things, you will not have a good yield and there will be nothing to live or feed on," she said.

One Chief Godwin from Goi told stories of how favourable the environment was to them in the

past. "I saw my parents harvesting tubers of yam that required the help of three people to pull out of the ground. But now, you can't even find grasses anymore. Oil has taken away our livelihoods. We cannot fish or farm successfully anymore. You cannot find crabs or small fishes anymore. The air in Goi community is even hostile to the people. No hospital, road, or even clean water. We are scared for our lives." He said.

Stephen Oduware, a Project Lead on Networking and Alliances, charged community members to learn to task our political leaders who approach them for votes to begin to take issues of environmental pollution seriously.

"We should learn to hold them accountable when things are not going the right way and demand that they should come up with policies that will elevate the sufferings of the people," Oduware said. He further charged the people to regularly monitor the environment and note the changes that occur.

The participants that took part in the exercise from the various communities thanked HOMEF for enhancing their capacity to identify and report on environmental, social-economic challenges that affect their daily lives and overall wellbeing.



Nnimmo Bassey



# Affordable housing provision: Adverse effect of rising cost of land and construction materials

By **GENESIS ERIRIOMA**

An African Housing Development Financier, Shelter Afrique has raised an alarm over the adverse effect of the high cost of land and the rising cost of building materials on efforts to speed up the development of affordable housing across the globe, especially in Africa.

This was disclosed during the World Urban Forum (WUF) which is a global event on sustainable urbanisation convened every two years by the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat). It was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine rapid urbanisation and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies. The first WUF was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002 and has been held around the world ever since.

This year's event was convened under the theme: "Transforming our cities for a better urban future".

Speaking on "Delivering Affordable Housing Across Continents" at a special session of the 11th World Urban Forum, The Ag. Managing Director and Chief Finance Officer, Shelter Afrique, Mr Kingsley Muwowo, disclosed

that there was an urgent need by governments to address the issues of rising costs of land and construction materials, which were hindering efforts to fast-track the provision of affordable housing around the world.

He said, "From market studies, the cost of land should constitute between 10% and 15% of the total cost of a housing unit for it to be affordable, but this isn't the case in many countries."

"In Kenya, for instance, the cost of land makes up between 40% and 60% of the total cost of a housing unit, like the case with Nairobi which is the most expensive in the entire continent of Africa. How do you deliver affordable housing when you've got the most expensive land? So, if we don't address the issues around land, we will not be able to effectively tackle the issue of affordable housing."

Speaking further, he also decried the rising construction cost – which he blamed on old building codes, punitive tax regimes, and high cost of financing such projects in various countries.

He noted that the Russian-Ukraine war had also resulted in the sharp increase in prices of critical construction materials as Russia is considered the

fourth-largest steel exporter globally, serving over 150 countries and territories.

"In the built environment, the conflict has exacerbated and exposed the dangers of overreliance on importing building materials. Prices of building materials have increased and continue to do so, a burden that the homeowners will ultimately share," Mr Muwowo said.

The price of steel in Kenya, for instance, has significantly shot up over the past few

months.

The prices of steel bars and nails have risen by between 80 per cent to 90 per cent and 13 per cent to 43 per cent, respectively, in the past few months in the country.

In another vein, the conflict has resulted in shortage of coal, which is a crucial source of energy in cement production through clinker manufacturing resulting in price hikes.

The Vice President of European Investment Bank, Prof

Teresa Czerwińska, speaking at the event, said the rising cost of housing in many cities across the world was a major concern for the bank.

"We have managed to make education and healthcare relatively cheap and accessible by putting in place proper policy interventions. Housing is a fundamental human right and we can apply a similar framework in ensuring housing remains affordable and available," Prof Czerwińska stated.



Kingsley Muwowo

## Experts seek review of chemical engineering curriculum in varsities

By **BLESSING OZIWO**

Experts have called for the review of the curriculum of Chemical Engineering in Nigeria Universities, in order to provide practical solutions to emerging issues.

They said the curriculum of most chemical engineering schools is inadequate and inappropriate to overcome challenges of infrastructure, ecological and social-economic realities in today's world.

According to them, the review must cater for environmental sustainability, promote students' industrial training, increase practitioners' contact with society, development and have a strong element of versatility.

The experts spoke at the first Mini-Conference and Workshop on Chemical Engineering Education and Research, entitled: 'Chemical Engineering Innovations and Practical Solutions' organised by the Nigerian Society of

Chemical Engineers, (NSChE), held virtually.

Many scholars who were present at the conference shared their experience on chemical engineering, Nigeria and the changing society, nanotechnology: prospects and applications in chemical engineering, investment and technology transfer opportunities from Germany/European Union in agri-business circular economy and renewable energy sectors.

Leading the call, the lead paper presenter, Dr John Erinne, an engineer, explained that efforts must be made for an improved chemical engineering curriculum in the nation's universities, which will enable the production of chemical engineers, who are well equipped to meet the needs of the future.

Speaking on, 'Chemical engineering and the changing society, Erinne said adoption of such new curriculum and

other measures would help train and prepare young engineers for challenges.

Some of the changes he canvassed include, adequate resourcing in terms of facility and infrastructure and faculty, control class sizes of not more than 50 students, admission requirements and reformed Students Industrial Work Experiences (SIWES) programme.

Erinne, who is the managing consultant, CHEX and Associates, also harped on sustainability, safety and environmental protection, economics management, entrepreneurship, other soft skills, process, plant and product designs to be included in the new curriculum.

The Education & Research Sectoral Group Coordinator, NSChE, Dr Ibrahim Muritala, said the forum became important to open discussion, knowledge sharing, collaboration and

advancement of chemical engineering education and research to enhance the provision of practical solutions to emerging issues such as future of learning and education, taking research from the lab to the market, improvement of skill gaps, solving global and national crises through chemical engineering approaches.

Speaking on 'Nanotechnology: Prospects and Applications in Chemical Engineering', the Head, Chemical Engineering Department, University of Pretoria, South Africa, Prof. Micheal Daramola said, within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there are responsible resource for production and consumption, which are in a way preserves ecological footprint to meet the needs of the growing population, while minimising the pressure on the planet would be a great challenge

for chemical engineers.

He said application of nanotechnology in chemical engineering would innovate the field, as a channel to providing solutions to the present societal problems.

However, he disclosed that understanding and applying nanotechnology requires learning the concepts; applying the learned concepts; teaching the learned concepts in engineering education and creating knowledge and developing human capacity in nanotechnology through research and innovation.

Earlier, the NSChE National President, Saidu Mohammed, represented by the National Deputy President, Anthony Ogbuigwe, said that technology keeps changing the world as a driver for development and innovation adding that technology is key to survival of any nation. He noted the importance of training young chemical engineers along that line.



## How ex-AGF Idris compromised TSA, GIFMIS, others for personal gains

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has released fresh facts indicating how former suspended Accountant-General of the Federation, Ahmed Idris, compromised vital government systems such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA), Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), and Integrated Payroll and Personnel information system (IPPIS) among others to cart away billions of naira belonging to the government.

Idris and his co-defendants, Godfrey Olusegun Akindele and Mohammed Kudu Usman are standing trial in a N109 billion fraud case instituted against them by EFCC before Justice A. O. Adeyemi Ajayi of the Federal Capital Territory High Court (FCT), Maitama, Abuja.

At the resumed trial of the case on Thursday, July 28, 2022, Chief Investigative Officer of the case and Prosecution Witness One (PW1), Chief Superintendent of the EFCC, CSE Hayatu Sulaiman Ahmed, while being led in evidence by the prosecuting counsel, Rotimi Jacobs SAN, told the court that the investigations by the EFCC showed that Idris while in office, compromised key units under his care like the TSA, GIFMIS, and IPPIS that led to a loss of funds by the government.

Idris allegedly used the funds in constructing properties like the Gezawa Exchange Limited, Gezawa Integrated Farms, and Kano City Mall, EFCC spokespersons, Wilson Uwujaren, disclosed in a statement on Friday in Abuja.

According to him, the PW1 said "We had



Ahmed Idris

cause to invite several individuals who had transactions with the Gezawa Commodity and Exchange Limited and found one Baita Ibrahim Kura of B I Kura Ibrahim, a Bureau de Change, BDC, operator based in Kano. We invited him and cautioned him and he voluntarily wrote a statement, claiming he made several payments like N208 million into Gezawa Commodity Market with Jaiz bank."

The witness further told the court that Ibrahim also admitted to have paid the sum

of N866 million to one Architect Mustapha Mukhtar of Marsc Construction Limited for the construction of Gezawa Commodity Market and Exchange limited.

"My Lord, investigation showed that Ibrahim received United States dollars from the first defendant. We also found out that agitation from the nine oil-producing states, regarding derivation from the excess crude account, was tabled before the Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) and the committee came up with a figure of about \$2.2 billion as what was due to the nine oil producing states, and this amount was to be deducted over a 60 months period on a quarterly basis", he said.

The witness further told the court that 11.5% of the figure amounting to N44.7 billion was put aside as payments to some public officials to facilitate payments to the oil-producing states.

"After the determination of this committee, my lord, some companies, Akindele and Co, a company owned by the second defendant, Godfrey Olusegun Akindele was presented under the guise of consultancy.

"My Lord, until recently, the second defendant, Akindele was a staff in the office of the AGF, and Technical Assistant to the first defendant. Investigation revealed that N84.39 billion was paid into Akindele's bank accounts. Another transaction occurred on February 12, 2021, with N21 billion paid into his account," he added.

The witness further revealed that aside from the payment of money that was made on February 12, 2021, other payments were made on May 6, 2021, and between July 28,

2021, and November 5, 2021, amounting to N94.39 billion.

Ahmed further told the court that funds were shared with some groups, including the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), represented by one of its Commissioners, Peace Akomas, former Deputy Governor of Abia State, who allegedly collected N18.8 billion. He said the money was withdrawn by Akindele and converted to US dollars and handed over to Akomas.

"The second group is the AGF group and it got a total sum of N18.01 billion.

"The third group, the Commissioners of Finance in the nine oil producing states, received N21.4 billion. The money was withdrawn by Akindele, converted to US dollars, and handed over to Akomas on behalf of the group.

"The fourth group is called the Yari group. This group received N17.15 billion. The entirety of the sum was transferred to the account of Fimex Professional Services on the instruction of the representative of this group, Abdulaziz Yari, former Zamfara state governor.

"The remaining N8.9 billion naira was retained by the second defendant. Furthermore, N4.29 billion was converted to US dollars by Akindele as appreciation for the consultancy contract, and the balance of N4.6 billion was given to Akindele," he explained.

Ahmed confirmed to the court that all his disclosures were confirmed by the defendants in writing, in their statements admitting to have collected all the monies.

Also, properties purchased with the funds by the first and third defendants were traced to various locations in Abuja, Kano, and Minna, Niger state.

## Primary school teacher, others forfeit N120m, cars to

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A N120 million traced to a primary school teacher, Mrs Roseline Egbuha, and her accomplices, was forfeited to the Federal Government through the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) following a final forfeiture order by a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja.

Mrs Egbuha and her cohorts were also ordered to forfeit vehicles, Toyota Lexus and Venza Sport Utility, to the government, which form part of N540 million proceeds of crime traced to them.

It was gathered that Mrs Egbuha, who is a teacher with Ozala Primary School, Abagana, Anambra State with a salary of N76,000 as of 2020 when she was arrested by ICPC, had N540 million stashed in her Guaranty Trust Bank account.

Further investigations by ICPC revealed her alleged complicity in money laundering thereby prompting the Commission to place a Post-No-Debit (PND) on the account, ICPC spokesperson, Mrs Azuka Ogugua said in a statement on Thursday.

Mrs Ogugua, however, said the PND was lifted by Egbuha and her accomplices with

a court order from a Federal High Court, Abuja, and the money promptly split and moved into multiple bank accounts owned by Bureau de Change operators and private individuals.

The Commission, therefore, charged Egbuha and others to court for involvement in fraudulent activities and warehousing proceeds of crime.

The Commission gave the names of the accomplices as James Ereboutye, Emon Okune, Chisom Iwueke, Alonge Ojo, Maureen Chidimma, Owoyemi Mayowa, Ejeaka Ifeoma, and two private companies.

Counsel to ICPC, Adesina Raheem, had in an ex-parte motion filed in 2021 before Justice D. U. Okorowo, alleged that the funds were proceeds of unlawful activities stashed away in six new generation banks by Egbuha and her associates.

Raheem therefore, prayed the court to order the final forfeiture of the money and cars to the Federal Government.

Justice Okorowo, after taking arguments from counsel to ICPC and the respondents, ruled that monies found in seven individual bank accounts and that of two private companies as well as cars in their possession should be

## Knowledge needed to handle cases of sexual harassment – Prof Owasanoye

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Professor Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN) has stressed the importance of educating the staff of the Commission on the best methods to investigate and prosecute issues that border on sexual harassment. Prof Owasanoye made this known at a two-day capacity-building workshop for ICPC staff organised in collaboration with Ford Foundation. The event was held at the Commission's headquarters in Abuja.

The Chairman, who was represented by Honourable Dr Grace Chinda, stated that the collaboration between the Commission and Ford Foundation on sexual harassment is dedicated to making positive change in the workspace and society at large.

The ICPC boss highlighted Sections 8 and 19 of the ICPC Act 2000, which allows the Commission to investigate and prosecute persons who use their office to confer unfair advantage on themselves or others; and maintained that sexual favours fall firmly within that category.

According to Prof Owasanoye, some of the efforts of the Commission to counter this vice include the creation of a dedicated unit that regularly receives appropriate training that is equipped with tools necessary to win the war against sexual harassment and other related offences.

He also referred to previous virtual sessions as well as engagements with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as some of the imperative steps taken to train and re-educate staff on sexual harassment investigation and prosecution.

"Staff and operatives being abreast of all its manifestations and variances will be more

armed with knowledge on investigating and prosecuting sexual harassment and other related matters", he said.

He suggested that sexual harassment, which is closely related to domestic violence, requires painstaking attention as one cannot be completely detached from the other.

## NSCDC, EFCC to collaborate in tackling emerging threats

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has moved to collaborate with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in tackling emerging security threats across the country

The National Coordinator of the Female Squad of NSCDC, Chief Superintendent of Corps, CSP Imomkhe Oluwakemi, made the call in Abuja on Thursday, July 28, 2022, while on a working visit to the EFCC's Headquarters.

According to Oluwakemi, the Female Squad is a special squad in the NSCDC, formed

through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Interior and the Commandant General of NSCDC to protect lives and properties, especially in schools across the 36 states of the country.

"We are carrying out sensitization programmes in schools to be security conscious, encouraging them to install surveillance devices and reaching out in cases of emergencies via our hotlines. Also, part of the reasons for our visit is to encourage the Commission to reach out to us if there is a need for extra hands, especially in areas of fire backing and other security needs," she said.

While responding, Secretary to the Commission, Dr George Ekpungu, who spoke for the EFCC's Chairman, Abdulrasheed Bawa, thanked the NSCDC's team and emphasized the need for stakeholders to collaborate in tackling emerging security challenges in the country.

He said, "I have been told that if you need NSCDC personnel, you go for the female squad and you have demonstrated that it is not about size, gender but about determination and courage to do the job.

"We already have a robust relationship with the NSCDC. We will do everything to support and collaborate with you."



# I'm not a stereotyped actor -Adedimeji Lateef



Nollywood actor, Adedimeji Adetona Lateef has evolved over time from featuring in home videos and now to the big screen where he said he is currently enjoying and living his dreams as a thespian. Adedimeji who joined Nigeria's film industry 15 years ago has featured in over 100 significant films including Ayinla amongst many others. In this chat with OMONIYI ALLI, spoke about his career, his personality amongst other various issues.

**Q: Is it good to say Ayinla was your best movie?**

A: I think Ayinla is. If you look at it, I've featured in a lot of amazing movies but Ayinla was on another level entirely, in a way apart from others.

**Q: How has playing the role of the legendary Ayinla Omowura impacted your real life as an individual?**

A: The movie Ayinla placed me on another level entirely. The story itself teaches me a whole lot. It shows that when you are famous in life, be rest assured that things that don't make sense will come to you. So, you must be prepared on how to attend to issues and learn how to react to every situation that comes your way. If Ayinla had taken caution at a time somebody upset him, he might probably still be alive because when you are somebody every dog can choose to bark at you. So, it teaches me that I need to be calm in every situation. It's not everything that people say to you that you must react to, just overlook it and move on with your life.

**Q: Do you think you've been stereotyped since you're always given the same type of role?**

A: Not at all, I'm not a stereotyped actor. At first, it was me playing only romantic roles and crying (laughs). At a point in time, I realized that it could get me nailed to a particular role. So, I was like, 'people have never seen me in a comedy role' until I started the role of an Igbo man in a movie and people were surprised

**Q: For you, how did the journey begin?**

A: It started so many years ago, in my JSS 2. Basically, I was trained by a Non-Governmental Organisation, 'Community Life Project (CLP)' in Isolo, Lagos. In those days, there was limited accessibility to television for grassroots people so there was a need to sensitize people, especially the youth about HIV/AIDs, STDs and other diseases. So, CLP goes to secondary schools to pick the best students and train them to be peer educators through eighteen topics so that they can impart the knowledge to their fellow youths at the stage of puberty.

I was lucky to be part of the trainees who passed information to people via dance, music and acting. So, that was how my acting career started and I was with them for seven years. After that, instead of me studying Theatre Art at the university, I felt it would be a total waste of another four years so I decided to opt for the Mass Communication department to study Public Relation and Broadcast at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State. I came out of school and I became a presenter on TV for like five years with Nigezie. So, when my acting became demanding I had to drop my broadcast world for acting.

**Q: If not acting, what would have become?**

A: I always wanted to be a lawyer but I do a lot of silly things and people laugh. So it was when I joined the NGO I found out that acting is my line.

**Q: Like every other filmmaker, have you also rejected scripts?**

A: Yes, recently I turned down a lot of scripts because I felt like they do not convey

a good or genuine message. Then what is the essence of doing it? I've realized we don't act in movies for the sake of it.

We need to be deliberate and intentional about the message we want to get across to people. Everybody wants to be an actor or a star, but the profession is beyond you

just going to be there. You have to merge the talent with the right things so that you can have it well nurtured and well-tuned.

**Q: Do you think a better storyline is better than fantastic acting or directing?**

A: You can have a good storyline but you don't have a good person to bring that vision to life. So I think all three go hand in hand.

**Q: There is a belief that female actors are more successful than male actors; do you agree with that?**

A: I don't believe in that because it depends on how you plan to live your life. Some people can buy a car today and choose to show it to the world while some may buy four cars and not even post one of them on social media. But a lot of people feel when you post stuff; it gives you a hype that maybe brands will come for you. You know, people with different orientations. I might post nothing, it doesn't mean brands will not come for you, you may post something, but it doesn't mean brands will come for you. So, I believe everybody is successful in one way or the other, so, it depends on how you portray it to people. I've been here for quite sometime before my fame finally came. I've done movies for ten days for N1, 000, I played lead roles of 98 scenes for N4, 000 and many others but today I can be paid millions for a consistent film.

**Q: What's your opinion of the Nigerian movie industry?**

A: Good impression. In every industry, there will be right and wrong. What is important is where do you want to stand? You wanna go with the wrong or stand with the right? You can go with the wrong one and have a lot of crowd following you but what does that teach you? And you can be right and have limited people with you because negativity trends more than positivity, especially on social media. Many people pick negativity because they want to be noticed by fans, you can be noticed at some point but what happens afterwards? So, always stay on the positive path no matter how long you'll get to where you are going.





## "African Queen is a Blessing and a Curse" - 2Face Idibia

The legendary hitmaker, 2Face Idibia, now known as 2Baba, has expressed that his first single hit, African Queen, is a source of blessing and a curse in the fifth episode of Showmax's Journey of the Beats.

The legend, who has had a lot of hit songs and successful albums under his iconic artistry, explained that he regarded his 2004 hit single, African Queen, as a blessing for single handedly bringing him to the limelight and winning him national and international awards. The song also earned him the title King of R & B in Nigeria and became a template for delivering a quintessential Afrobeats song.

However, for 2Baba, the song's success

feels like a curse because it has served as a yardstick to his other works, and they seemed to pale in comparison. He also explained it seems that the hit song would always overshadow his other works in terms of success.

The episode on Showmax also explored the angles and momentous events that contributed to Afrobeats during the mid-2000s. The Urban Kings, such as the first Nigerian pop boy band, Style Plus and the iconic duo, P-Square, to the Bariga boys such as ID Cabasa, 9ice, Da-grin, and Olamide, who brought the street sound, an infusion of street slang, local dialects, and originality that spoke directly to the audience were also explored.



## Linda Osifo bag special recognition

Sterling actress and philanthropist Linda Osifo over the weekend, received an award as part of the 40 UNDER 40 CEOs in Nigeria — a recognition following her numerous support and efforts to enable e-learning in Nigeria.



Known for her love for less-privileged children and the support she provides to several orphanages in Lagos, the gorgeous Edo state native has always created the time and the energy to give back to society.

Awarded by the YEISUMMIT at a dinner held at the Oriental Hotel, Lagos, Linda was recognized for her incredible philanthropic work through her work on the LAO Foundation — her Love and Oneness foundation is dedicated to putting smiles on the faces of every Nigerian in need and support for the less privileged in the society, especially those in our immediate environment.

Receiving the award, the ever-cheerful actress said "My part and that of the LAO Foundation is to eradicate poverty and illiteracy — a cause that has always been close to my heart. I'm humbled by this award recognition and hope that we can all do our part to make Nigeria, Africa and the world a better place."

## Jim Iyke unveiled as M.Gurush ambassador, spokesman

Nollywood actor & producer, Jim Iyke have been unveiled as the brand ambassador and spokesman of M.Gurush, a foremost South Sudan owned money transfer platform headquartered in Dubai.

An insider revealed that the deal is earmarked to be around 200K dollars yearly

Joseph Arinaitwe, Managing Director of M.GURUSH disclosed that a mutual friend brokered a meeting between Jim Iyke and the Chairman of Trinity Energy group; South Sudan's foremost business mogul, Mr Akol E Ayii in Dubai for an entirely different business deal.

Mr Ayii who doubles as Chairman of M.GURUSH was so impressed by Jim Iyke's business pitch and personality that he not only acceded to the pitch to partner with Lofty media which is co-owned by the serial entrepreneur actor but proposed to have him come on board his entity as a spokesman.

The entity will also collaborate with

Jim on his oncoming project; the much anticipated sequel to his blockbuster movie 'Bad Comments' that was acquired by Amazon a couple of months ago.



## DRC fetes Afrima in Kinshasa, discusses plans to preserve rumba heritage

In line with its mandate to develop the African creative ecosystem, the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA), met with the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as well as stakeholders from its creative industry, recently, in the capital city of Kinshasa, to discuss possible ways to protect the globally-renowned heritage of Congolese Rumba.

Recall that the Congolese Rumba was, in December 2021, added to the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) list of world intangible heritages, sparking conversation about the need to protect the iconic genre, which has long been revered as the soundtrack of Congolese history.

AFRIMA delegates from its international secretariat, based in Lagos, Nigeria, including the Executive Producer and President, Mr Mike Dada, Associate Producers, Olisa Adibua, and Victoria Nkong; AFRIMA Regional Director, Central Africa, Mr Ernest Ewane Egnor; AFRIMA Juror representing Diaspora Northern America, as well as AFRIMA International Executive Committee Member, Matlou Tsotetsi, met with the Honourable Minister of Integration, DRC, Didier Mazenga, as well as the Honourable Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Catherine Kathungu Furaha, in the DRC Capital of Kinshasa, as well as the Honourable Commissioner in charge of Education, Health and Culture, in the Economic Community of Central African



States (ECCAS), Yvette Ngandu Kapinga, to discuss a partnership which would see Rumba spotlighted to Africans and the rest of the world as a sound of the future.

Furaha, who received the AFRIMA team with enthusiasm, lauded the initiative, adding that it will be beneficial to allow the Congolese Rumba to play a role in the unification of Africans, as well as develop the entertainment industry in the Central African region.

AFRIMA's Executive President and Producer, Mike Dada, appreciated the DRC hosts, noting that the partnership

was strategic and vital as a prelude to the Biennale of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, which is scheduled to hold in Kinshasa at the end of the year.

"AFRIMA, which is celebrating its eighth edition, in November, this year, has always been a beacon of hope for the African creative industry. As the rest of the world celebrates our popular music, it is important that we honour and safeguard our pioneering and iconic genres, which have shaped our global image for several decades. The Congolese Rumba is such a powerful genre that is at the risk of

being forgotten by the current generation of music lovers in Africa, and it is our responsibility as a Pan-African body to showcase it and transfer this heritage to our younger music lovers," Dada said.

The delegates also discussed innovative solutions to some challenges bedeviling the African music industry, citing that the African Creative Academy, which is a continental youth empowerment initiative, would play a key role in helping Africans to develop their old and minority genres for global acclaim.

The AFRIMA delegates were also treated to a special closed-door performance from Congolese superstars and previous AFRIMA winner, Fally Ipupa, who serenaded the whole team with their enigmatic Rumba melodies and dance moves. The team also met with the media and other AFRIMA winners, such as Majoos and Inoos B.

The AFRIMA team also urges entertainers, across the continent and their counterparts of African descent who are based in the diaspora to submit their entries for possible nomination at the awards this year.

The submission deadline for the entries, which has been set for August 5, 2022, will not be extended this year, the organisers have previously announced. All entry submissions can be done via the AFRIMA website at [www.afrima.org](http://www.afrima.org), which also contains information about the guidelines, as well as eligibility status for prospective entrants.





## Sports ministry, AFN, on last-minute rescue to provide kits for Team Nigeria in Birmingham

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

The Ministry of Youth and Sports Development and the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) are in a last-minute attempt to save the country from an international embarrassment at the 2022 Commonwealth Games for failing to provide kits for Team Nigeria.

In an emerging report from Birmingham, the handlers of the Nigerian contingents in Birmingham contacted MG Sportswear firm, a British sportswear manufacturer to produce kits for the national team.

A concerned citizen lamented that the handlers of Team Nigeria had ample time to provide the needed kits before the commencement of the 2022 Commonwealth Games but chose unjustifiably to wait till the last hour to dent the international image of the country in athletics.



Gino Ruffinato, manager of MG Sportswear, said the handlers of Team Nigeria contacted the company on Tuesday to quickly produce 200 pieces of sports kits 'including running vests and shorts, staff tracksuits and even 400 Nigerian badges'.

The manager divulged that when he got the demand,

he was startled at first and doubted its authenticity until multiple emails confirmed it was real. He noted that this instigated the launch of a full-scale action with its fourteen staff to meet the Friday deadline.

"As it progressed I started getting emails with orders on, so at that point, I thought,

hang on, I think this is serious," Ruffinato told BBC.

"When they hit us with the deadline saying it needs to be there for Friday and today was Tuesday... there's all the fabric, the print, the designs to get out in two days. It was a bit hair-raising," the MG manager added.

Furthermore, he admitted that the job is arduous but the staff have braced up to accept the challenge.

Elatedly, Ruffinato, whose company got the first job to produce sports kits for a national team, stressed that he would pay rapt attention to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham to watch Team Nigeria wear the MG Sportswear brand.

"I still pinch myself. I'll be looking on the telly and seeing the MG Sportswear brand for a national team," he added.

Recall that a similar incident almost happened in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics when the handlers of Team Nigeria and two sportswear makers disagreed.

## Oyewusi lights Zalgiris Champions League hope

Nigeria forward Mathias Oyewusi has raised the hope of Lithuania's topflight club, Zalgiris Vilnius, to qualify for the 2022-2023 UEFA Champions League.

The forward, in the second leg against Malmo FF, opened the scoresheet in the 34th minute at the Eleda Stadium which later ended 2-0 courtesy of Renan Oliveira's 54-minute finisher.

Oyewusi was on top of his game, displaying brilliance to put Malmo FF on their knees. Describing his superb goal, the pacy striker humiliated goalie Edvinas Gertmonas in a one-on-one encounter to render the defensive system

in disarray as the ball hit the back of the net unhindered.

Preceding the second leg against Malmo FF, Zalgiris in the first round of the Champions League clash with Kosovan side Ballkani, played a one-all-draw in Pristina City Stadium before Oyewusi finished the job after extra time at LFF Stadium.

The Lithuanian topflight proceeded to the second round where they humiliated the Blue Ones in a three-goal aggregate, courtesy of Oyewusi's outstanding performances to complement the Green Whites' surge towards a European tourney.

Consequently, Zalgiris



after defeating the Swedish topflight, qualified for a third round, a two-leg encounter with Norwegian topflight Bodo Glimt scheduled for 3 & 9 of August.

Oyewusi, 23, joined the

Lithuanian club five months ago on a free transfer from FC Postojna and has netted five times in 16 appearances while providing two assists in A Lyga.

## Commonwealth Games: Nigeria soars in first round

Nigeria's men's table tennis team have brushed off Ghana with an easy win to herald a blistering campaign for the gold medal in the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The team seeded second in the event and led by top-seed, Quadri Aruna, saw a double of Omeh Amadi and Omotayo Olajide defeat the Ghanaian pair of Commey Emmanuel and Abrefa Derek 11-7, 11-3, 11-9.

Nigeria, in the first round aside from Ghana, played South Africa and Cyprus in a competition that features top-seed England as well as star-studded India that paraded legendary Sharath

Kamal Achanta, the 2004 Melbourne Champion as well as Sathiyam Gnanasekaran.

Meanwhile, the men's team comprises the quartet of Quadri Aruna, Bode Abiodun, Olajide Omotayo and Amadi Omeh who makes his debut for the national side.

In the men's singles event, top seed Quadri Aruna, walloped Ghana's Asante Emmanuel 11-3 11-3 11-6 while Omotayo Olajide in a three-set win, 11-8 11-7 11-8, saw off Abrefa Derek of Ghana.

Earlier, Omeh Amodi and Omotayo Olajide won their first group game 11-5 11-5 11-5 against South African

duo, Cogill Theo and Nathoo C.O. African number 1 Aruna Quadri in a singles contest against Jones Shoun of South Africa, won 11-6, 11-3, 12-10.

Omotayo Olajide also in the first group games, won the three sets 11-9, 11-6, 11-6

against the South African, Nathoo C.O.

The handlers of Team Nigeria believe that despite the top-seeded teams in the contest, the quality of the country's quartet guarantees a semi-final reach.



## Ishaq Rafiu's our player, Rivers United debunk deal

■ Plans to report issue to FIFA

■ I'm glad we got Rafiu- Maribor

Rivers United have condemned the report making the rounds that Ishaq Rafiu has signed for Slovenia's top-flight NK Maribor on a three-year deal asserting that the player belongs to them.

The winners of the recently concluded Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) stated that the forward still has an existing contract with the club.

According to the management in a statement on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, to debunk the news which was reported on Maribor's official website, the purported move by Rafiu whose contract with the Pride of Rivers is still binding will amount to a breach of contract.

The NPFL champions added that they have resolved to report the issue to the world football governing body as they are only aware that the player absconded from the club.

The club statement read: "The attention of the Management of Rivers United football club of Port Harcourt has been drawn to a fictitious report being circulated in a section of the social media suggesting that our player Ishaq Rafiu Kayode has left the club.

"Such report is completely false and a product of the imagination of mischief makers with the intent of misleading the unsuspecting members of the public.

"Ishaq Rafiu Kayode is still a bonafide player of Rivers United FC as his contract with the team is still valid and as such, any purported transfer without the knowledge and consent of Rivers United FC will only be a breach of contract.

"As a club, we are not aware of any such purported transfer as the player only absconded from the club and this position has been made known to FIFA thus any acquisition of the player without our consent is null and void.

"It is important to also note that Rivers United FC remain the only club that can release the said player to any other club when the proper things are done," the statement concluded.

Earlier, FK Maribor reported that they have signed Rivers United attacker Ishaq Rafiu for a three-year deal after the Nigerian won the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) trophy in the recently concluded 2021-22 season.

The Slovenian PrvaLiga club, on their official website, said that the Nigerian striker would have emerged the top-scorer of last season's NPFL if not for his debut for the Super Eagles against Mexico and Ecuador during the international break.

According to the club sports director, Marko Suler, the 21-year-old forward represents the present and future to bolster the team's attacking option. Additionally, he also comes to add his qualities centred on physical strength, speed and penetration.

"We had to react, to expand the staff we also need a new solution in the wing positions," the sports director said.

"I'm glad we got the deal done, Ishaq is here as a player for the present and the future. He comes with good recommendations, like the Nigerian champion. Last season he scored 14 goals, if he played all the matches until the end, he could also become the top scorer in the championship.

"He is a player with penetration, speed and concreteness and with rarely seen physical strength. It can mean an appropriate choice for the purpose of realizing our competitive goals, but also for a further step forward from Maribor, which the players from Nigeria often prove as a breeding ground for talent," Marko Suler added.

Maribor stressed that they were lucky to secure the highly coveted player who was on the radar of several clubs seeking to snatch him away likewise.

However, the Purples explained that the former Pride of Rivers' forward was very cooperative during the negotiation which affirms that the player will bring the desired result in their attacking option.

He continued: "In the meantime, he has already found himself under the scrutiny of many clubs, so we managed to catch the right moment to lure him to Ljudski vrt. From the beginning of the talks, he had a desire to come, all matters came together in the desired mosaic and we got a player who brings us a new dimension in the offensive part."

Meanwhile, Ishaq said that he chose to sign for Maribor despite having offers from European clubs because it is the best choice to develop him further.

"I am very happy that we agreed and that I signed the contract. After playing in the top tier of the competition in Nigeria and after winning the championship, I had quite a few offers from clubs from Europe, I decided to move to Maribor because I believe that the best Slovenian club is currently the most suitable choice for me as the next step on the development path," he said.

"As a multiple national champion and a long-term participant in European competitions, Maribor makes it possible for a football player to do what he wants. I am looking forward to a new challenge in my career, I want to contribute my share on the field and I can't wait to meet my teammates, the professional staff and join the training sessions.

"I got a lot of information about the club and also heard about the great support of the fans. I believe that together we will bring them many reasons to be satisfied, with new victories and winning trophies," added Ishaq.

A further statement by the club reveals that the deal is still subject to Ishaq's arrival to conclude the paperwork. "The transitions between continents are specific at the moment and will require some time to coordinate all the necessary matters, so Ishaq will join the team later."



# AITEO CUPS: 64 men's, 32 women's clubs ready for showdown

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

**N**igeria Professional Football League (NPFL) champions, Rivers United, will play Dakkada FC in the round of 64 of the 2022 AITEO Federation Cup in Owerri according to the match fixtures drawn.

Rivers United won the league for the first time after edging out fierce rivals and league title contender, Plateau United, to clinch the title with a 10-point difference.

While Dakkada FC narrowly survived relegation to the Nigeria National League (NNL) on 14th place, same points as Lobi Stars on 15 and 1 point above Shooting Stars and Katsina United.

Also, double champions of CAF Champions League Enyimba will travel to Benin to take on Ijebu United on the same day.

The Peoples Elephant and eight times champions of Nigeria's topflight division finished the 2021-22 season in seventh place and will open their AITEO Federation Cup campaign with the second-tier division club.

Ijebu United is seventh placed in Group B of the NNL which was dominated by Bayelsa United, Crown FC and Warrior Wolves.

## ROUND OF 64 (MEN)

Bayelsa United Vs Osevan FC - Aba - (30/07/22) - 4pm

EFCC Vs Green Beret - Minna - 30/07/22 - 2pm

Enyimba International Vs Ijebu United - Benin - 30/07/22 - 2pm

Dreams FC Vs Niger Tornadoes - Enugu - 30/07/22

- 2pm  
Apex Crane Vs Doma United - Old Parade Ground, Abuja - 30/07/22 - 2pm

ABS FC Vs Lobi Stars - Kaduna - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Nnewi United Vs Akure City Academy - Warri - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Insurance Feeders Vs Dannaz FC - Ilorin - 30/07/22 - 2pm

Rangers Int'l Vs ABJ FC - FIFA Goal Project - 31/07/22 - 4pm

JM Liberty Vs Heartland FC - Calabar - 30/07/22 - 4pm

FRSC FC Vs Adoration FC - Ilorin - 30/07/22 - 2pm

Rivers United Vs Dakkada FC - Owerri - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Sunshine Stars Vs Osun United - Ikenne - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Rovers FC Vs Gombe United - Makurdi - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Mailantarki FC Vs Cynosure FC - Makurdi - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Saki United Vs Katsina United - Minna - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Remo Stars Vs Winner - Asaba - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Essien Ayi Vs Akwa United - Aba - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Mighty Jets Vs Kogi United - FIFA Goal Project - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Kanta United Vs Kebbi United - Sokoto - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Plateau United Vs DMD FC - Gombe - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Housing Corporation Vs Jigawa Golden Stars - Minna - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Zamfara United Vs Gamiji Eaglets - Jos - 30/07/22 - 2pm

Kano Pillars Vs Junior Niger Tornadoes - Kaduna - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Fulfill FC Vs Olukismet FC - Makurdi - 30/07/22 - 2pm



El-Kanemi Vs Kun Khalifat - Old Parade Ground, Abuja - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Yobe Desert Stars Vs Kwara United - Ranch Bees Stadium - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Wikki Tourists Vs Junior Pillars - Yobe - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Bendel Insurance Vs Junior Katsina United - FIFA Goal Project, Abuja - 30/07/22 - 2pm

Ottasolo FC Vs Abia Warriors - Warri - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Ekiti United Vs Sokoto United - Minna - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Eaglets FC Vs Nasarawa United - ABS Kaduna - 30/07/22 - 4pm

ROUND OF 32 (WOMEN)

Bayelsa Queens Vs Winner - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Brave Heart Ladies Vs Niger Amazons - Lokoja - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Abruka Queens Vs Paragon Soccer Academy - Benin City - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Abia Angels Vs Ekiti Queens - Asaba - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Naija Ratels Vs Rivers Angels - Enugu - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Imo Angels Vs Nasarawa Amazons - Ilorin - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Immaculate Queens Vs Maureen Madu FC - Benin City - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Salem City Vs Confluence Queens - Ilorin - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Gallant Queens Vs Honey Badgers - Area 3 Abuja - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Castmog FC Vs Delta Queens - Ilorin - 30/07/22 - 4pm

Sunshine Queens Vs Heartland Queens - Warri - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Crystal Stars Vs Dannaz Ladies - Enugu - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Moje Queens Vs Osun Babes - Ekiti - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Joy FC Vs Royal Queens - Owerri - 31/07/22 - 2pm

Ibom Angels Vs Edo Queens - Owerri - 31/07/22 - 4pm

Awka Angels Vs FC Robo Queens - Warri - 1/08/22 - 4pm

## Africa Nations Championship: Nigeria'll dominate Africa, says Mohammed

### ■ NVBF invites 17 to camp

The newly appointed head coach of Nigeria's U21 boys' volleyball national team, Sani Mohammed, is confident that the country will dominate Africa in the forthcoming U21 Africa Boys Nations Championships scheduled from August 12-23 in Tunisia.

Mohammed, judging from his antecedent with the U19 boys' national team where most of the players were promoted to U21, stated that the squad is fit and ready for the task ahead.

"I am familiar with all the players in the U21 because I was their coach in the U19 team," Mohammed said.

"I won the U19 African title twice and attended the FIVB U19 World Championship twice; I am optimistic Nigeria will dominate the U21 in Africa.

"Most of the players are key players in their respective club sides, they are fit and ready to make Nigeria proud at the forthcoming African U21 Boys Nations Championships," he added.

The double-title-winning coach in the Africa U21 Boys Nations Championships appointed alongside Suleiman Ajeigbe as his assistant by the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), will prepare the squad in a camp in Kaduna State before they jet out for the continental tourney.

Meanwhile, in a statement by NVBF Chairman Media and Publicity, Hon Famous Daunemigha, 17 players have been invited to the camp which were mainly drawn from the U19 squad that

won the last U19 Africa Boys Nations Championships in Nigeria.

Daunemigha said, "the three-week training exercise would be strictly for U21 players and that Invited players have been contacted and intense training has begun."

He explained that Michael Abari, AbdulQuadri Jaiyeola, Dhikrullahi Oyedepo, Jerry Kinze, Vincent Mathias and Pascal Ozokoye are some of the products of the National U19 programme that have graduated to the National U21 Team.

Furthermore, Sani Mohammed coaches Nasa Thunders while Suleiman Ajeigbe coaches OFFA VC in the nation's volleyball league.

The 2022 African U21 Boys Nations Championships is scheduled for 12th to 23rd August in Tunisia.

### THE FULL LIST

AbdulQuadri Jaiyeola (OFFA VC), Dhikrullahi Oyedepo (OFFA VC), Emmanuel Oko (CNS Spikers), Paul Ogwulumba (Sunshine Spikers), Timothy Ogwulumba (Sunshine Spikers), Peter Mathias (CNS), Paul Mathias (CNS), Michael Abari (Kano Pillars), Jerry Kinze (Nigeria Customs Service), Lucky Pamler (Kano Pillars), Jerry Alex (Kada Kings), Michael Digil (CNS), Vincent Mathias (COAS Spikers), Pascal Ozokoye (NSCDC), AbdulJelil Abdullah (Nasarawa), John Solomon (Niger Brass), Endurance Afagami (Kada Kings).



## CAF thwarts Nigeria's plans to co-host AFCON 2025

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has thwarted the appeal by the President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Amaju Melvin Pinnick, for Nigeria to co-host the 2025 edition of the TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Guinea was picked to host the next edition after the 2024 AFCON final in Ivory Coast but the restiveness in the west African country since the coup last year gives course for concern.

The concern has made Pinnick through a zoom meeting on Tuesday to inform the continental football governing body of Nigeria's preparedness to co-host the 2025 edition with the Benin Republic.

However, against Pinnick's wish, CAF has distanced itself from such suggestions with one of its top executives affirming that Guinea remains the host nation of the 2025 AFCON event.

"The host for the 2025 tournament remains Guinea and that has not changed," the CAF executive told BBC Sport Africa.

The CAF executive claimed that they have not received any formal notification from the Guinea football association about their inability to host the continental event.

He continued: "We've not discussed anything about a replacement or received any communication from Guinea about the inability to host."

At this very moment, everything is on track for

Guinea to host and there is no reason to suggest otherwise," he added.

Nigeria's push to host the 2025 edition is a result of the security situation in Guinea. Though CAF is unwavering on its stand to withdraw the hosting right from Guinea, Pinnick is confident that Nigeria is ready to host the tourney.

"We are still in the early stage of the whole process," he said.

"As time goes on things will get clearer as to the stadiums Nigeria will present to host the matches," Pinnick added.

Should Nigeria be granted the right to co-host the tourney, it will be the third time after the 1980 edition where they won their maiden AFCON title before co-

hosting with Ghana in 2000 where they lost to Cameroon in the final.

## Volleyball: 'We're aiming a treble in Africa U19 championship'

Head coach of Nigeria volleyball U19 boys' national team, Adenuyi Adekalu, said they aim to win a treble in the Africa U19 Nations Cup Championship scheduled to take place in Morocco from September 1-12, 2022, due to the working system of the country.

Adelaku is confident that the Nigerian players numbering 21, who were invited to camp to prepare adequately for the U19 continental championship, will do well in El Jadida/Casablanca.

According to him, the depth of the Nigeria

volleyball league which comprises three tiers provided a stress-free avenue to invite the best to camp.

"If you look at the list of players invited, you will notice that this is a new crop of players," Adelaku explained.

"Nigeria Volleyball Federation have three leagues and selecting the players for national duty was made easy."

"We are aiming for a treble in the U19 category and by the Grace of God, this will be achievable due to a working system in the country," the head coach added.

Preceding the above, the

Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) in a statement said the federation invited 21 players from its national leagues and two non-league players to the camp in Kaduna State.

Aside from the players invited, NVBF also named Adeniyi Adelaku, head coach of Sunshine Spikers, and Vincent Unogwu, Kada, Emerald head coach as the handler of the U19 team assistant respectively.

NVBF noted OFFA VC Tiamiyu Ismail and Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Spikers' player, Elisha Amedi got their second call up to the National U19 Boys Camp.





## Fearsome S'Falcons now beatable, laments Akide

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

**N**igeria's campaign in the Women's African Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco has continued to raise concern over their drop in dominance in the African continent.

Before the continental tourney, the Super Falcons of Nigeria were defeated 4-2 in 2021 by Banyana Banyana in the maiden edition of the Aisha Buhari Cup in Abuja.

Although South African females had ended up as runners-up to the Super Falcons in the 2018 WAFCON that was hosted by Ghana, Banyana Banyana vowed revenge which they did in the Aisha Buhari Cup and also in the group stages of 2022 WAFCON.

The Super Falcons' opening game in the recently concluded WAFCON was a 2-1 defeat to the Banyana Banyana but qualified to play the Lionesses of Cameroon in the quarter-final.

However, they were stopped a step to the final by Morocco and fell to fourth place after Copper Queens of Zambia got an advantageous 29-minute own-goal conceded by Chiamaka Nnadozie.

Following the Super Falcons' poor outing, Mercy Akide-Udoh said the Nigeria senior female team has lost its fearsome nature in the African continent.

According to her, the

competition is advancing with respective national teams believing they can nip the Super Falcons in the bud.

"Everyone now believes they can beat Nigeria," Akide-Udoh told BBC Sport.

"The competition is growing and other countries are catching up. Everybody now believes they can beat Nigeria," the first African female footballer of the year reiterated.

However, the 46-year-old who won three WAFCON titles with the Super Falcons in 1998, 2000 and 2002, applauded the Confederation of African Football (CAF) for the strides recorded in advancing female football.

Comparing her time with the present, Akide-Udoh agreed that there was a distinction in the WAFCON event which affirms that CAF is doing a marvellous job.

Akide-Udoh commended South Africa and Morocco coaches, Desiree Ellis and Reynald Pedros respectively for the wonderful jobs they are doing for their teams.

She expressed, "When I see those countries that are investing, if you give it four or five years, it is going to be amazing, I am so grateful that I am still alive to see what CAF is doing for women's football.

"The quality from my time to now is getting better. South Africa have come so far and I give kudos to my friend Desiree (Ellis) for what she has done for that team.



Looking at the Morocco team the coach (Reynald Pedros) has done an amazing job," she added.

The retired Super Falcons forward scored a brace in her international debut during a World Cup qualifier against Sierra Leone in Ibadan.

### FULL LIST OF NIGERIA U19 BOYS IN CAMP

- Dumsami Elam (Bayonet Spikers)
- Tiamiyu Ismail (OFFA VC)
- Nuhu Ahmed (Adamawa Spikers)
- Manaman Solomon (Spartan Spikers)
- Adebayo Ojo (Taraba Spikers)
- Samuel Ogbonna (Plateau

Rocks)

- Alo Taiwo (Sunshine Spikers)
- Emmanuel Ojile (Lagos)
- Ebuka Nwafor (Plateau Rocks)
- Andrew Philip (Ogun State)
- Abednego Hassan (Wikki Spikers)
- Elisha Amedi (CNS Spikers)
- Raheem Olayemi (Sunshine Spikers)
- Philip Douglas (OFFA VC)
- Abdul-Azeez Aliu (CNS Spikers)
- Jubril Mora (Kwara United)
- Eliphaz Yusuf (Spartan Spikers)
- Mudashiru Ayodeji (OFFA VC)
- Desmon Domiy (Spartan Spikers)
- Patrick Anthony (OFFA VC)

## Akpata, Igwilo, attend ICC conference in UK

- Receives ICC award
- Council retains ODI format, finalises FTP - ICC boss

President of the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF), Uyi Akpata, on Wednesday, July 27, joined representatives from other nations to attend the annual conference of the International Cricket Council in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Akpata will by this means contribute extensively to issues affecting cricket sport including the One-Day International format (ODI) and Future Tours Programme (FTP) 2023-27.

According to the NCF Public Relations Officer, Musa Bodie, the President was accompanied by the federation's General Manager, Emeka Igwilo, where they officially received the award, ICC Cricket 4Good Social Impact Initiative.

Recall that early last month, the ICC in recognition of NCF programmes directed towards grooming and providing aid to internally displaced persons, awarded Nigeria the ICC Cricket 4Good Social Impact Initiative.

The programme saw coaches deployed to these restive areas to help engage and develop the grassroots, who were victims of the crises, in cricket sport as well as avail them humanitarian relief.

"With a couple of thousand introduced to the game, and a boys and girls team involved in the State's secondary schools' tournament, we have seen cricket largely contributing to addressing the issues of integration and inclusion of disadvantaged children in the country," Akpata said after the recognition in June.

"On behalf of the almost 2,000 students in the Benin IDP Camp and two million children in various camps, we accept this special recognition," he acknowledged.

Meanwhile, ICC have retained the ODI format despite the appeal from different stakeholders that it should be abolished.

At the Birmingham conference on Wednesday, the world governing council said the ODI format will be played in the 2023-2027 cycle.

English cricketer Ben Stokes, who is the captain of the England national team, said his retirement from 50-overs tournaments was because it was unsustainable following the cramped T20 calendar schedule.

Also, South Africa pulled out from the ODI tour of Australia in early July after it clashed with the launch of its domestic league which reportedly, has increased their chances to qualify for the World Cup next year in India.

## Pinnick vows to sustain Teslim Balogun Foundation

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and FIFA Council Member, Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick has promised to help with the sustenance of the Teslim 'Thunder' Balogun Foundation, and be involved in all its activities in the years to come.

The NFF boss made this pledge in his welcome address as chief host at the 50th year remembrance ceremony of the late Teslim 'Thunder' Balogun, held at the Sheraton Hotel, Lagos.

Balogun, who achieved tremendous fame as the first Nigerian football player to ply his trade outside the shores of this country, and also shone brightly for the Senior National Team, died on 26th July 1972.

Pinnick praised the family of the departed hero for their uncommon commitment to marking the anniversary of his exit in the last 50 years.

"Right from my secondary school days at Hussey College, Warri, Delta State, the name Teslim 'Thunder'

Balogun was a household name among young footballers across the country," Pinnick said.

"Anybody among us who had the hottest shot during games was nicknamed Thunder Balogun. We also heard the fable of how Thunder Balogun's shot tore a goalkeeper's stomach while trying to stop his strike during a football game. All in all, we grew up hearing the story of Thunder Balogun as the greatest Nigerian football player.

"I am happy to be a part of this event and to be talking about the life and times of a man seen as the greatest Nigerian football player ever.

"I attended Hussey College, Warri, which is acclaimed to be the biggest school that trained national players for Nigeria. But I was not good enough to make it as a footballer because of the high standard in my school.

"Nevertheless, I told myself that I would strive to become one of the top football administrators in Nigeria. Today, I am not just the

President of the Nigeria Football Federation; I am an Executive Committee Member of CAF and Member of the FIFA Council," the NFF helmsman bragged.

Pinnick dismissed conceptions in some quarters that Nigeria Football is going through a poor patch.

He added, "Nigeria Football is making progress by all standards. All our junior national teams, men and women - the Eaglets, Flying Eagles, Flamingos and Falcons - have qualified for their FIFA World Cup finals. The Senior Women Team, Super Falcons, also just picked the ticket to play in the Women's World Cup finals.

"The Golden Eaglets and Flying Eagles all won WAFU Cup titles recently. These are noticeable feats that amount to some progress. The only one we fell short of was the World Cup qualification. This happens in football. It is impossible to win every match," Pinnick expressed.

Also in attendance at the Teslim 'Thunder' Balogun 50th



year memorial event were First Vice President of the Nigeria Football Federation, Barrister Seyi Akinwunmi; President of the Nigeria Football and Other Sports Supporters Club, Dr Rafiu Oladipo and family members of the late Teslim Balogun and members of the Anniversary Committee