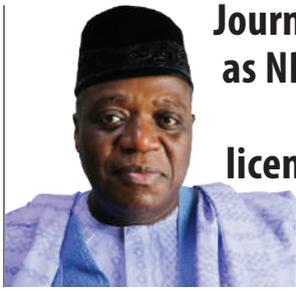




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Why Wike, others may dump PDP

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**
(Politics Editor) and **CHRIS
EZEONOH** (Port Harcourt)

Despite open confession by Governor Nyesom Ezenwo Wike to back the presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, at the polls in 2023, facts emerged that the Rivers State helmsman and his allies may dump the political grouping after all.

A former information minister, Prof Jerry Gana, who raised the possibility in Port-Harcourt, while flagging off construction of the flyover at Mgbuoba Road, said stakeholders loyal to Wike may together with the governor dump the party and support any other presidential candidate to win the 2023 election.

This is despite the reconciliatory process initiated in Port-Harcourt to iron out differences between the two politicians.

Gana, who was very blunt made the comments before the flag-off and hinged the condition for doing so on failure by the party leadership to resolve the lingering crisis in the opposition party and the inability to reconcile Wike with Atiku.

He urged Nigerians to help rescue the nation from the brink of collapse as a result of alleged lack of good governance by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

The party chieftain assured that the crisis rocking PDP notwithstanding, the major opposition party remains the most credible and dependable platform to rescue Nigeria.

He, however, warned that Wike and like minds will not hesitate to team up with a trusted platform in 2023 should the peace talks in PDP fail.

Gana said: "we want to assure you that the problems with the PDP, we shall resolve them and if it does not resolve, this leader, the governor here, together with all of us, we shall tell the people of Nigeria where to go. They are not babies."

The former Information minister had earlier predicted that with age on Wike's side, the governor will "someday become president of Nigeria."

He stressed that Wike was disappointed by some situations leading to and after the PDP convention but with God on his side, he will still lead the country someday.

Commenting Wike for his giant strides in

infrastructural development in the state, he said: "look at what this governor has done. You know what was happening in this state. The governor gave good and focused leadership and now you are in peace. We want to transfer this peace to the rest of Nigeria. It is possible and it must be done, therefore I like to assure the good people of Rivers State and Nigerians that they should give that opportunity to the People's Democratic Party so that we can be at the center and give a government that cares for the people because the security and welfare of the people is the primary purpose of government."

"If you cannot secure the people, you cannot provide peace and stability, then you are not a good government because governance is about people's security, people's welfare, people's future, people's everything that is really important to them."

"Therefore, don't make the mistake of wasting your vote, don't let it go to the other side. You know who I mean. They have failed woefully, embarrassingly failed, therefore don't even go there."

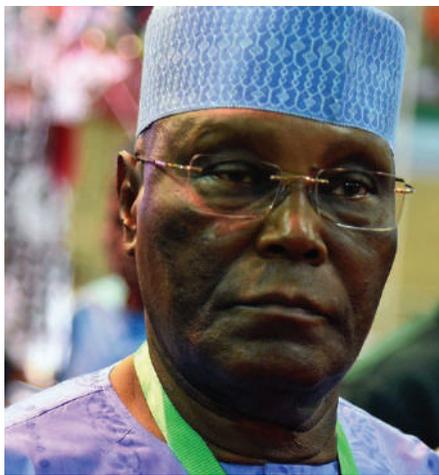
Gana further knocked the APC administration for allegedly ruining the legacies left by the 16 years of PDP governance.

He went further to highlight the many alleged woes of the APC administration.

"I want to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief together with all the leaders at the top that the people of Nigeria deserve much more than this. We cannot continue to lose our security operatives. Nigeria's military forces are more than enough to defeat these bandits, they are more than enough to be able to do it, but they need the kind of qualitative leadership that will give the kind of order that is proper, that will provide the resources that will provide the kind of equipment they need to deliver."

"Let me also appeal that the national economy of Nigeria is about to collapse. Unless something is really done urgently, the national economy is about to crumble. Inflation is at a very high level, food prices rising every day and the common man is suffering. The economy is not doing well at all and therefore we appeal to the managers of this economy."

"Even before we take over, for the few months that are left, there are a number of things that ought to be done so that the national economy does not collapse. We need



Atiku



Wike

to invest in production. Nations grow riches through productivity. You cannot harvest if you don't produce.

"The economy is not producing, because insecurity is not allowing people to go to the farm. Therefore, we appeal that this matter will be taken very seriously in terms of growing the productivity of the nation in the industry and in other vital areas. Nobody should allow the economy of Nigeria to collapse."

And amid moves made to reconcile Atiku and Wike, the governor has allegedly opened another front in his battle against the former vice president's perceived supporters in the state.

In the heat of the cold war between the duo, the governor in a state wide broadcast had threatened to seal off hotels and eateries found to be harbouring 'cultists' and 'criminal elements'.

The move was seen as a ploy to descend on the opposition and anybody who may seem to disagree with the governor.

The Trumpet gathered that some filling stations and hotels in Port Harcourt belonging to persons close to a former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Austin Opara have been allegedly sealed off by police operatives from Government House.

Opara, a former close ally of Wike is said to have fallen out with the governor over his support for Atiku along with other high profile members of PDP in the state like Senator Lee Maeba.

Apparently confirming the fears of observers on his new battlefronts and plot to clamp down on perceived political opponents in the state, Wike on Friday re-echoed his threat to deal with anyone that might be linked with any association with 'criminals' in the state.

The governor who issued the threat at the flagoff of the 12th flyover at the

Mgbuoba, Ozuoba -Ada George Road in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, in Port Harcourt stressed that his administration has invested hugely in achieving the prevailing peace, and nothing would be tolerated in returning the State back to the dark days of insecurity.

Wike said: "Now, let me tell anyone who cares to listen, whether you're in PDP, APC, you're in SDP, you're in Accord or any other party, if I catch you trying to breach the security in this state, you'll go in for it."

"I will not allow anybody to destabilize this State. We have suffered insecurity and God has helped us together with security agencies to maintain peace. For me, whether it is true or not, I must make sure that I take action."

Wike said, sadly most people do not take the warning issued in his last state broadcast seriously. According to him, he had warned that any hotel or event centre where criminals, cultists are allowed to gather to plot the breach of peace would be demolished.

"So, if you know they're using your hotel, or they're using your drinking joint as where they'll be holding meetings, think twice now."

"There is no amount of propaganda, if you like go to social media that they're clamping down on you, that's your business. I will not allow anybody to destabilize this state, because we have suffered insecurity and we have spent money."

"You can't begin to arrange for cultists to meet in your event centres, or in your hotels. Pray that I don't have any hint about that, if I do, I will bring down your hotel, I will bring down the event centre and I will arrest those people found there and I will prosecute them, heaven would not fall."

Wike pointed to how committed his administration has been to providing the best for Rivers people by developing

the State with quality infrastructure.

The governor stressed that this is the first time in Nigeria an administration that has less than 10 months to the end of tenure, is still awarding contract and commissioning projects.

"It has never happened anywhere and it can only happen by the grace of God, with us here. While others are thinking of what they will use to campaign, we don't have to think about that."

The governor said it is not in doubt that Rivers is currently the only state that the PDP is sure will deliver its gubernatorial candidate in the 2023 election.

This is because, Wike said, Rivers people are already at home with the PDP and its commitment to the development of the state.

"That is why we are proud to say this is the only State, for now that PDP can be sure of returning its governorship candidate as governor."

He explained that one of the reasons that the PDP is delighted to have chosen, Mr. Siminalaye Fubara, as its governorship candidate, is because he is aware and knows what is going on in government.

"Because you must be part of the system to understand the system to continue from where we are going to stop. Not people who just have the idea of wanting to be governor because they want to syphon our money. Thank God that we didn't give them the ticket."

Meanwhile, the much-awaited peace talk kicked off in Port-Harcourt Friday afternoon as representatives of both Atiku and Wike camps met behind closed doors.

Details of the meeting were not provided but two of the PDP chieftains at the meeting expressed hope that the process which was initiated at the meeting will achieve the aim of uniting the two leaders and restoring peace to the party

ahead of next month's kick-off of campaign activities.

The Trumpet authoritatively gathered that part of the issues discussed includes the demand for inclusivity by the Atiku camp.

The team loyal to the presidential candidate, it was learnt wanted Wike's team to back-pedal on the demand for the resignation of the national chairman, Dr Iyorchia Ayu.

Atiku argued that the status quo should remain with the party leadership position while promising that if elected president, his government will accommodate all stakeholders while Wike's other demands will adequately be taken care of.

The Atiku team, it was further learnt argued that any attempt to remove Ayu will have ripple effects as the position of the national secretary, Sen. Samuel Anyanwu will be threatened.

It was suggested that Ayu will automatically relinquish the seat if the party's candidate wins the presidency because both positions cannot reside in the northern part of the country.

On the other hand, Wike's team considered it as not well thought out rigidity of Atiku in not coming down to personally pacify Wike but vowed to let go of the demand for Ayu's removal if the national chairman personally visits Wike to mend fences.

Speaking on behalf of the Atiku camp, the governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Fintiri said they are fully aware of the expectations of Nigerians that PDP should regain power in 2023 and are fully prepared to approach the election as a formidable party.

Fintiri said "yes we are aware that Nigerians are anxious and waiting for us to take over in 2023."

"We have met as leaders and members of the same political family and have open discussions, it is a work in progress and we will continue."

Speaking in the same vein, former governor of Ondo State, Dr Olusegun Mimiko simply said "this is a reconciliatory process. There are issues discussed and we will further discuss"

Others at the meeting were; Aliyu Indabawa, former PDP governorship candidate in Ondo State, Mr. Eytayo Jegede, SAN, former governor of Cross River State, Donald Duke, former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adoke.



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Alleged ritualists' den stirs controversy in Edo

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Governor Godwin Obaseki has given Edo Police Command and other relevant authorities seven days ultimatum to unravel the true situation of the alleged discovery of a ritualists' den on Ekenwan Road axis of Benin City, the state capital.

This was disclosed during a press conference organised by the state government and the police command, to provide an update on the development.

Addressing journalists, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Olawore Oluwole, called for calm among residents in the state, assuring that the matter is being thoroughly investigated.

He said, "Based on credible intelligence, we busted a bungalow located at Asoro, Ekenwan Road in Benin City where some dried bodies and items, like generators, gas and oxygen cylinder were found.

"Five suspects have already been arrested in connection with the incident. Those arrested include Chimobi Okosua, Samuel Okoh both from Afikpo in Ebonyi State; Gideon Sunday from Akwa-Ibom State; Victor Obeche from Anambra State and Yusuf Lawal from Katsina State; while one Otu Chukwu who was alleged to be the owner of the bungalow is still at large.

Special Adviser to the Governor on Media Projects, Crusoe Osagie, said: "We want to call for calm as the police are already investigating the

■ Obaseki issues ultimatum for mystery to be unravelled

■ 'It's a mortuary, others claim

incident. We don't want to pre-empt the outcome of the investigation, as all kinds of speculations are out there in the public. We leave that to the police to unravel. Some people have been arrested.

"The state Governor has given the Police Command and other relevant authorities seven days to give details of their findings. No conclusion yet on the issues as the police are still investigating and actively on the matter. We will continue to brief the public on what is going on and what the situation is."

But in a press statement entitled, "Ritualists' den or illegal morgue in Edo?" some groups said: "The leadership and members of Edo Civil Society Organisations led by its Interim TEC Chairman, Leftist Austine Enabulele deem it necessary to respond to the news and gory videos that has dotted the media space worldwide.

"It has been over 24 hours that the news of a ritualists' den was discovered in Benin City allegedly. It has flooded the social media and mainstream media spaces making it viral. The news became worrisome to us as Edo people have no history of ritualism or its likes. More troublesome to us is the fact that, it was the Police Public Relations Officer of Edo state command that led a media report on same which would have suggested that proper investigation would have been carried out to arrive at what was reported in the media.



Obaseki

"Immediately the news got to us, we quickly dispatched a team of investigators to unravel the true situation of the matter and report accordingly for a follow up. Below were the findings of the investigation team.

1. The said building where the mummified corpses were found is not a ritualists' den but a newly built morgue to house evacuated corpses from an old facility because the operator had been given a quit notice there.

2. The operational name of the morgue is St. Gabriel Funeral Home with other offices at No. 24, Ist Federal Road, Benin City. It has branches in Anambra state, Ebonyi state, Murtala Mohammed way and Ist East Circular road where the corpses were moved from.

3. The shrine discovered was said to be a traditional form of worship by the

proprietor as a spiritual protection for himself and the business.

4. The police didn't conduct investigation before addressing the media thereby raising an alarm of a ritualists' shrine.

5. As at the time of putting this report together, the police had not visited other branches of the morgue in different parts of the city.

6. The videos of corpses in circulation revealed that some of the corpses had name tags and medical equipment were visible as well in the building. Further interview with one of the morgue personnel in another of their branch office revealed that there is a register of all the corpses in the facility and that some of the owners have started to call to take away their deposited corpses.

7. Our team of investigators were denied access to the morgue by

members of the vigilance group that have been stationed there.

"Flowing from the above, it is now convenient to state that, the insinuation by the police that it is a ritualists' den is hereby debunked and dismissed as false alarm and an attempt to paint the good people of Edo in bad light. This is not to state that, the morgue might not be an illegal one or does not have the requisite permits to operate a morgue which should be subjected to thorough investigation by the police. A call placed to the proprietor phone was answered by a police officer who stated that he is with them.

"This is a clarion call to members of the fourth estate of the realm who were expected to launch investigation into the issue by engaging the proprietor and the arrested workers to ascertain the true position before broadcasting and publication hook, line and sinker the position of the police. This falls below what is expected of investigative journalism and the doctrine of hearing the other side of a story. How the news hit the airspace would make one to believe it is a case of who plays the piper dictates the tone. The game needs to be stepped up.

"This development had shown that Edo state government lacked own intelligence gathering mechanism to filter stories as it was seen sharing same

misinformation from the police to the de-marketing of the state and her people to the outside world. Edo state government should have been seen mitigating against the spread of such negative story from the state, instead it was a major promoter of it. This is disappointing to say the least.

"We want to reiterate again that Edo state is peaceful, loving and most accommodating in the whole of Nigeria. They are not known for human rituals historically. The state is open for visitation and business opportunities. Citizens can move anytime of the day without fear of the unknown.

"We await the final outcome of police investigation on subject matter and we believe it will be bold enough to put the record straight by stating the true position of the issues. Going forward, the police authority should always carry out investigation before engaging the media. Crimes are not fought with media propaganda."

Another online post said: "There was no ritualists' den anywhere in Uzebu quarters of Benin City.

"The Edo state police command preferred to do media propaganda than do investigation first.

"Edo state government is also sharing same information everywhere. What does it cost government to have its investigation network than spreading falsehood like the police too.

"The owner of the morgue is registered to carry out the business. He was given quit notice in his former place of business at First East Circular (Asuen Hospital) and he bought a new place and tried to quickly build it in Asoro hill where there were other two existing morgues already. The name of the business is St. Gabriel Funeral and partners with an existing hospital. He had stopped taking in more corpses since he was given a quit notice. He decided to move all old remaining corpses to the new site. They have another morgue off federal road in Uselu by St. John hospital.

"The said discovered shrine was what he worships as form of protection. He believes in it for the sustenance of his business. No fresh dead body was seen. They have a register of all the corpses seen in the videos circulating on social media.

"What do you guys gain showcasing Edo state in bad light? Simple investigation, we will not do."

FG renews ex-militant leader Tompolo's contract to curb oil theft

By KELVIN OHOROR

The Federal Government has renewed a multi-million-dollar pipeline surveillance contract to a former militant leader and Commander of the defunct Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Government Ekpemupolo, aka Tompolo.

It was gathered that the government and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Limited signed the deal with Tompolo to end illegal bunkering, illegal refining and other forms of oil theft in the Niger Delta.

A source close to Tompolo, who spoke in

confidence, said the deal was worth over N4billion monthly.

However, the figure and details of the contract could not be immediately confirmed officially as of press time.

The source said the former MEND commander, known for his creek credibility, will monitor and oversee other surveillance contracts, contractors and their activities in the entire Niger Delta.

He said it was a similar role Tompolo played during the former administration of President Goodluck Jonathan when Diezani Alison-Madueke was the Minister of Petroleum.

"The government

merely reviewed and restored his old contract.

"Before the cancellation of his contract, the arrangements he put in place tackled illegal bunkering and increased production quota to over two million barrels per day.

"But the new government cancelled the contract, declared him wanted and he was later exonerated of all wrongdoings.

"They have realised the need to bring him back because currently, the country is losing over 500,000 barrels per day to illegal bunkering", he said.

The source said the new deal was brokered by the Minister of State for

Petroleum, Chief Timipre Sylva and some NNPC top officials including the Group Executive Director, Upstream, Adokiye Tombomelye.

He said NNPC as a new profit-making venture was determined to curb all illegal activities affecting its operations and make it run at a loss every month.

The source said Tompolo held a crucial stakeholder meeting in his Oporoza country home in the Gbaramatu Kingdom, Delta State on Wednesday.

He said a mammoth crowd of stakeholders from the Niger Delta, especially Bayelsa State, turned up for the meeting. He said the number in attendance was over 5000.

He named persons at

Journalists kick as NBC revokes broadcast licences of AIT, 51 others

By PAUL MICHAEL

There was a media backlash at the weekend after the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) revoked the licences of Africa Independent Television (AIT), Silverbird TV, Raypower FM and 49 other broadcasting stations over failure to pay federal licensing charges of N2.6 billion.

Rhythm FM, Classic FM, Splash FM, Beat FM, MITV, and about two-dozen state-run broadcasting stations are also among the outlets affected.

Director-General of NBC, Balarabe Shehu Ilelah, made the announcement at a press briefing at Abuja, saying the 52 broadcasting stations have been shut down.

According to him, the stations had been warned for

several months to pay licensing costs for their operations but failed to comply.

The stations were given 24 hours to settle all outstanding licensing obligations or be closed down. Some of the charges have not been settled since 2015.

The NBC DG said, "Therefore, after due consideration, NBC hereby announces the revocation of the licenses of the under-listed stations and gives them 24 hours to shut down their operations."

"Our offices nationwide are hereby directed to collaborate with security agencies to ensure immediate compliance."

Earlier in May 2022, Ilelah said that NBC published in the national dailies, the list of licensees that are indebted to the Commission, and granted

them two weeks to renew their licenses and pay their debts or consider their licenses revoked, frequencies withdrawn, and withdrawn frequencies reassigned to others who are ready to abide by the necessary requirements.

The DG said three months after the publication, some licensees were yet to pay their outstanding debts, in contravention of the National Broadcasting Commission Act CAP N11, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, particularly Section 10 (a) of the third schedule of the Act.

In view of this development, he said the continued operation of the debtor stations is illegal and constitutes a threat to national security.

Other affected stations include Rhythm FM (Silverbird Communications Ltd), Greetings FM (Greetings Media Ltd), Tao FM (Ovidi Communications Ltd), Zuma FM (Zuma FM Ltd), Crowther FM (Crowther Communications Ltd), WE FM (Kings Broadcasting Ltd), Linkman International Ltd, Bomay Broadcasting Services Ltd, MITV (Murhi International Group Ltd), Classic FM (Pink Nigeria Ltd), Classic FM (Pink Nigeria Ltd), Classic TV (Pink Nigeria Ltd), Beat FM (Megalectrics Ltd), and Cooper Communications Ltd.

Others are Splash FM (West Midlands Ltd), Rock City FM (Boot Communications Ltd), Family FM (Kalaks Investments Nig. Ltd), Space FM (Creazioni Nig. Ltd), Radio Jeremi (Radio Jeremi Ltd), Wave FM (South Atlantic Media Ltd), Kogi State Broadcasting Corporation, Kwara State Broadcasting Corporation, Niger State Broadcasting Corporation, Breeze FM (Bays Water Ltd), Vibes FM (Vibes Communication Ltd) and Family Love FM (Multimesh Broadcasting Co. Ltd).

Also affected are Gombe State Broadcasting Corporation, Lagos State Broadcasting Corporation, Osun State Broadcasting Corporation, Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation, Ondo State Broadcasting Corporation, Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation, Bayelsa State

Broadcasting Corporation, and Cross River State Broadcasting Corporation.

Imo State Broadcasting Corporation, Anambra State Broadcasting Corporation, Borno State Broadcasting Corporation, Yobe State Broadcasting Corporation, Sokoto State Broadcasting Corporation, Zamfara State Broadcasting Corporation, Kebbi State Broadcasting Corporation, Jigawa State Broadcasting Corporation, Kaduna State Broadcasting Corporation, and Katsina State Broadcasting Corporation.

The NBC DG said all broadcast stations which have not renewed their licences for the current duration are advised to do so within the next 30 days to avoid sanctions.

"The Commission also called on all IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) and all other broadcast stations that are streaming online to register with the Commission to avoid disconnection.

"Broadcasters should note that having a DTT or FM license does not warrant a broadcaster to stream online; they are two different licenses," he noted.

Ilelah added that they have been in talks with the media houses for more than a year, but they refused to revert.

But reacting in a statement entitled, "NBC: A hasty decision," Chris Isiguzo, National President, Nigeria Union of Journalists, said: "The decision



Balarabe Shehu Ilelah

today by Industry Regulator, the National Broadcasting Commission - NBC, to revoke the licenses of 52 broadcast stations nationwide over indebtedness to the Commission was ill advised.

"The affected stations, according to NBC are said to owe arrears of licence fees amounting to N2.6 billion since 2015.

"Although the Director General of NBC, Malam Balarabe Shehu Ilelah claimed that this development had no political motives, yet we insist that the action was ill timed and reckless.

"It should be noted that this wholesale revocation of licences at this critical time of insecurity in the Country appears to be a decision taken without careful prior deliberation, consultation or counsel.

"While we regret the inability of these broadcast stations to fulfill their obligations to NBC, in-view of dwindling resources, we caution against such large scale clampdown of broadcast stations in disregard to security issues and the attendant consequence. We cannot afford the unpleasant outcome of such media blackout at this time.

"We call on NBC to exercise more restraint on this issue in consideration of national security and allow for more dialogue and consultation to find a better way of dealing with the situation."

On its part, the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), expressed concern over the shutting down of over 50 broadcast stations by NBC for failing to pay their renewal licence fees.

In a statement by its President, Mustapha Isah and the General Secretary, Iyobosa Uwugiaren, on Friday, the professional body of all the editors in Nigeria said that the action, if not reversed, will lead to the loss of thousands of jobs in a country where jobs are scarce.

"The NGE is worried because media houses, which played and continue to pay a key role in the nurturing and development of democracy, can't just be off air no matter the reasons.

"While the Guild is not

against broadcast stations fulfilling their financial obligations to the NBC, we note that the current harsh operating environment that has crippled every sector in our nation was not taken into account by the NBC before its action.

"Currently, it is difficult for private stations to import broadcast equipment due to the high exchange rate. We are all aware of the high operational cost, including the cost of diesel to power their generating sets", the NGE stated.

The Guild noted that several broadcast stations are just managing to survive in the midst of the high competition in the industry following the licensing of hundreds of more stations by the NBC.

The NGE called for a review of the NBC Act to increase the lifespan of a broadcast licence from five to, at least, 10 years.

The body of editors also advocated a reduction of the licence fees considering the fact that several broadcast stations now operate in the country, saying for instance, the Lagos zone alone now has close to 50 radio stations.

The NGE tasked the NBC to enter into dialogue with the affected stations to restructure the debts owed and work out convenient payment period to ensure their survival.

According to the statement, "A caring government should be concerned about the possibility of job losses than revenue generation. After all, one of the functions of the NBC is working for the survival and the development of the broadcast industry."

"A critical stakeholder in the nation's democratic space cannot be shut out at this critical moment of our democracy, especially when the country is preparing for the 2023 general election."

The NGE, therefore, urged the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria and the Independent Broadcasting Organisation to enter into a dialogue with the NBC with a view to find a lasting solution to this recurring issue of licence renewal fees, which often lead to threats of shutdown.

Farmers knock Wike over alleged neglect

By CHRIS EZEONOH, Port Harcourt

The All Farmers Association of Nigeria, (ALFAN), Rivers State chapter has lamented the neglect of the Agric Sector by the Nyesom Wike led administration in the State.

State chairman of ALFAN, Chief (Amb.) Firmobari Igwe lamented in an interview that despite their importance to the economy of the nation, the welfare of farmers has been relegated to the background in the state and country at large.

He expressed disappointment with the attitude of the state government towards farmers who he said are going through a lot of hard times across the country.

According to the ALFAN chairman, farmers need urgent help from the government to avoid food shortages and even to encourage others to join the agricultural sector.

"What we are saying is that farmers in the state have been totally neglected, their welfare is not being considered. Government is not doing anything about it and it's disturbing. Without farmers or farming activities in the state, there will be no food. We are humbly appealing to the government both at the state and federal level to look into the welfare of farmers.

"The situation in Rivers State in particular should be looked into so that we will not depend on our sister states to import food. We have fertile lands all over the state, we are blessed. We can plant our crops without fertilizer, but surprisingly we are still depending on other states for food supplies, it is very pathetic. We have good and fertile lands in Ogoni, Omuma, Etche, Ikwerre where we can plant and produce food stuffs that can sustain the state".

He said though the government is trying in the aspect of commercialization, it has not impacted grassroots farmers.

"When it has to do with farming or agriculture, the grassroots have to feel the impact. In our sister states where I communicate with my co-chairmen, the state government brings the farmers' chairman closer and they are doing well, but it's not the same here in our state. I don't know whether they are playing politics with it or have any other person

they are dealing with because as for me as the farmer's Chairman in Rivers state, we have not seen anything from the state government.

"Our main challenge has been our welfare, we have been totally neglected and it's telling on us. We just heard that the state government has approved the training of 10,000 youths in agriculture, if it is being done and they are sincere about it, it will take out some youths from the street, it will be a boost to the agricultural sector in the state", he maintained.

On the impact of insecurity on farming, Igwe said; "Agriculture remains the livelihood of every nation, any nation without farmers cannot survive. The insecurity has really affected farming but once the government takes it upon herself to invest, it will go a long way".

He called on farmers in the state to use their PVCs wisely in the next election and vote for one who would cater for the interest of farmers in the state.

"I want to use this medium to call on farmers in the 23 local governments of Rivers state to go get their permanent voters card (PVC) so that we will vote our preferred candidate, those that will know the importance of agriculture, invest in agriculture and take the welfare of farmers seriously", he stated.

He advised youths to take into farming because it remains the most lucrative investment. "My brother, farming is the best business on earth to ever be involved in. Even if you are a Lawyer or practising any profession, it is advisable you practice farming. Farming sustains the nation; it is the best business to invest in. For instance, if you invest in fish farming, it is a 3 months duration farming after which you harvest, same with poultry, cucumber and others. It's only products like cassava and palm tree that will take up to 3 years before harvesting but for any other short term commodity, after 3 months, you start harvesting and make money.

"In other states and countries, farming is the best business to involve in because it fetches you so much money. So my advice to the youths is that they should key into farming, it's the best way for them to shun vices and restiveness, it's the best way for them to engage their minds", he submitted.

Domestic Violence: Drug test for intending couples to begin in FCT

•As Monarch directs Imam, Chiefs on implementation, honours Marwa

By PAUL MICHAEL

Following the rise of cases of domestic violence in the country, the Ona of Abaji and Chairman, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Council of Chiefs, Alhaji Adamu Baba Yunusa has called for the immediate implementation of drug integrity test policy that will ensure intending couples present certificate of fitness before being joined in holy matrimony.

The royal father spoke when the Chairman/Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) paid him an advocacy visit on War Against Drug Abuse (WADA)

Marwa had in his remarks congratulated the first-class monarch on his 25th an-

niversary on the throne and on upholding the tradition and culture of his kingdom.

He commended the royal father for his unflinching support for NDLEA and the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in the country.

According to him, "the traditional institution is a very important stakeholder because the traditional institution exists across every part of our society; all the way to the grassroots.

"It is for this reason, we would like to appeal to His Royal Highness who already has been at the forefront of tackling drug abuse to continue and intensify these efforts to set up a WADA committee in Abaji kingdom that will report directly to him and down to the small communities.

"In the small, small communities, you all know those

selling drugs and those families and youths that need help.

"I would like to also appeal that due to increasing cases of women suffering from domestic violence fuelled by drug abuse by their husbands and vice versa, that we embrace drug tests for intending couples the same way they do HIV/AIDS and genotype tests even though there are no laws making that compulsory.

"This is why we say both husband and wife should also show a drug free certificate before being joined and if any of them tests positive, he or she can be taken for treatment before the wedding is done to avoid unpleasant incidents that we see in recent times."

While responding, the Ona of Abaji said prior to Marwa's assumption of office, drug menace in Nigeria was a huge

problem ravaging the society.

"Many of our young men and women including couples who were supposed to be enjoying their marital lives were badly affected. Your coming on board as the head of NDLEA has brought some succour," he said.

He, therefore, directed all the Chief Imam of Abaji and his Council of Chiefs to begin implementation of drug test certificates for intending couples.

He promised to promote the drug integrity test advocacy of the Agency in addition to other ongoing drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction efforts.

As a mark of honour and to further encourage the NDLEA boss, the monarch conferred on him the chieftaincy title of Santuraki of Abaji Kingdom.

Ortom cautions against illegal mining in Benue

Stories by **SURU CHARLES**

Illegal miners in Benue state have been urged to seek alternative means of livelihood, as the state governor, Samuel Ortom, has directed for the immediate suspension of all forms of illegal mining activities.

The order, as observed by The Trumpet, came yesterday at an emergency security interface with stakeholders drawn from Kwande local government area.

The meeting which brought critical stakeholders from the council to Makurdi, the state capital, was at the in-

stance of the governor whom our reporter learnt was not comfortable with the alleged illegal mining of gold in the area.

Warning that illegal mining poses security and environmental threats to not just Kwande but the entire state, he went ahead to revoke all rights granted to mining racketeers by some communities within Benue State territory.

He also threatened to prosecute anyone caught indulging in or abating illegal mining activities within the state.

Admitting that mining is in the exclusive list which is solely controlled by the Federal

Government, he however stated that the lands where mining would be done were held by the governor in trust for the people of the state.

Ortom emphasized that due process must be followed in carrying out mining and prospective licensed miners will be adequately profiled before they will be allowed to carry out any mining activity in the state.

This, according to him, became necessary in order to check the infiltration of criminal elements into the state.

He also cautioned traditional rulers from the area and the state at large to refrain from unlawfully ceding lands to prospective miners, drumming that only the State government has the right to approve lands for use by anyone for such purpose.

The need from the various communities

spread across the council to get involved in creating awareness in their communities on the impending dangers of allowing unauthorized people access to their

communities for the purpose of mining, he believed has become necessary.

Also speaking, the former governor of the state, who is the

incumbent senator representing Benue North-East Senatorial district, Gabriel Suswam tasked the people of the state on the need to come together as one and indivisible people.

Adhering to the suggestion, he believed it would enable the people to overcome the security challenges that are presently bedeviling the state.

Like the governor, he passionately pleaded with traditional rulers from the state and the council in particular on the need to eschew harbouring undesirable elements in their domains.

Other stakeholders from the council who include the council's boss and the monarch, assured the governor of their readiness to work tirelessly round the clock to frustrate the activities of the undesirable elements and those of illegal miners.



Gov. Samuel Ortom

No civil servant will be retrenched - Zulum

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum of Borno state has again assured civil servants in the state that none of them will be thrown into the labour market in the name of retrenchment.

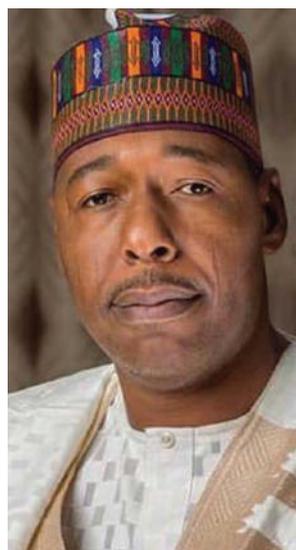
He stated this yesterday in Maiduguri, the state capital when the leaders of the state organized labour which included the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) visited him.

In their visit, the organized labour said they were at the Government House to appreciate and applaud the governor for paying 2020 leave grants.

Led by the state chairman of the NLC, Yusuf Inuwa, the leaders were also observed to have presented other Civil servant demands in the state to the governor.

Some of the demands, as noticed by The Trumpet, include Payment of Minimum Wage for Qualified Teachers, Payment of Promotion benefits and reverification of affected local government staff.

Elated by their visits and presentation of their colleagues' demands, the governor promised not to tread the paths of some of his colleagues who derive



Gov. Babagana Umara Zulum

pleasure in retrenching public servants.

Rather than treading such paths, his administration, as made known by him, will continue to embark on the training and retraining of civil servants spread across the state.

Demonstrating his resolve to always carry the public servants along, he went ahead to approve the payment of minimum wage to 4491 qualified teachers in the state.

Zulu also declared that other teachers not yet qualified will be retrained, stating that "no civil servant will be retrenched".

To other demands presented to the governor by the organized labour, the governor assured them of timely attention.

Former Adamawa Gov set to dump APC

All is now set for the former governor of Adamawa state, Senator Muhammad Jibrilla Bindow, to defect from the All Progressives Congress (APC) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The move, as observed by The Trumpet, is coming barely two days after his meeting with the Presidential candidate of the PDP, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and the incumbent governor of the state, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri

His plans to defect was also noticed when his teeming supporters recently came out en mass to set ablaze thousands of brooms which is the symbol of the APC in the streets of Yola.

Reasons why he has decided to reunite with PDP, as gathered by The Trumpet, was not connected by the alleged mistrust in the APC.

A party source who bared his mind to The Trumpet, said Bindow who governed the state between 2015-2019 on the platform of APC,

has made up his mind to "dump the APC due to high handedness, mistrust in the party" adding that "he has now thrown his weight behind incumbent state governor and Atiku Abubakar.

Bindow it would be recalled recently described the PDP presidential candidate as a father figure in his life.

Also describing the state governor as a "younger brother who has excelled in the area of governance" he was noticed to have showered encomiums on him for completing all the projects he (Bindow) started but was unable to complete them before leaving office.

On the rumours making the rounds on his alleged plans to throw his weight behind Atiku and Fintiri, he admitted that PDP is his home.

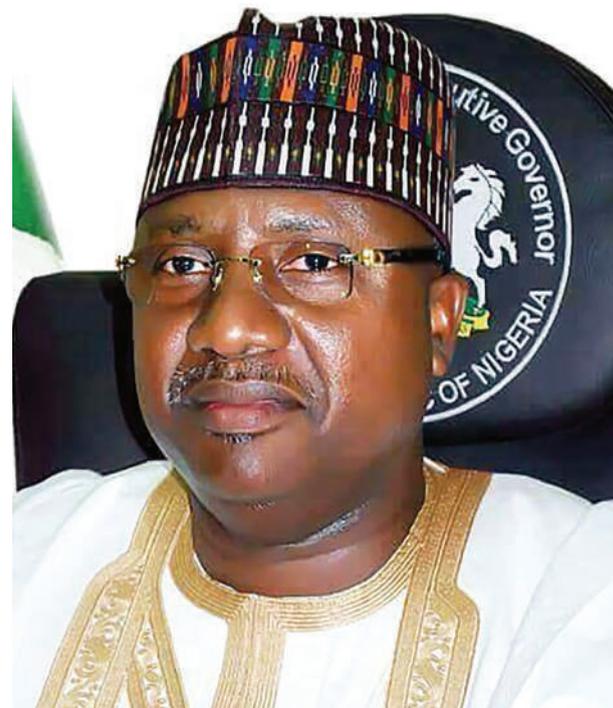
According to him "PDP is home to me, I will do everything within my power to make sure that Adamawa remains a PDP state" adding that Fintiri is the only candidate that can consolidate on the gains and make Adamawa work again.

He said, "I trust and believe in his capacity and capabilities to provide more dividends of democracy to us all in Adamawa State as he has done in the last 3 years".

He went ahead to call on his teeming supporters to align their weights in support of PDP, stating that "I am calling on all my supporters to support and vote PDP from top to bottom"

This move, according to him will "liberate the country from underdevelopment" and as well heralded the much desired dividends of democracy to the door posts of the people.

APC in Adamawa in recent times have suffered setbacks, as several members of the party, have continued to cross over to the PDP and Labour Party.



Sen. Muhammad Jibrilla Bindow

EFCC's ex-chairman, Magu allegedly failed to prosecute high-profile suspects – Presidential Panel

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Ibrahim Magu has been accused of failing to take legal steps against high-profile suspects while acting chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

A presidential panel presided over by Justice Ayo Salami, former president of the Court of Appeal has indicted the ex-chairman, alleging that he purposely killed high-profile cases investigated by the agency while chasing after Internet fraudsters, popularly known as "Yahoo Boys".

In the final report submitted to President Muhammadu Buhari in November 2020, the EFCC under Magu was said to have secured 2,446 convictions from 2015 to 2020, out of which 2,115 had to do with Yahoo boys while only 85 were high-profile cases.

The report alleged that the then investigating officers of the commission, Abdurashed Bawa (now EFCC chairman), Shehu Ala and Sambo Mayana, were said to have submitted executive briefs to Magu seeking permission to take legal steps against high-profile suspects, but the former EFCC boss did not grant the approval until the expiration of court orders.

The panel was set up to probe the EFCC from May 2015 to May 2020 when the retired Assistant Inspector-General of Police was in charge of the agency.

"The commission observed that out of the 2,446 convictions secured by the EFCC from 2015-2020, only 85 were for high-profile and money laundering cases, that is 3.4% of the total convictions. Also, 2115 representing over 86% of the total convictions (2446) during the period were for suspects popularly referred to as 'Yahoo-Yahoo boys' internet fraudsters,



Magu

charged for obtaining under false pretence/cheating and related offences," The panel said.

"The suspended acting chairman, Ibrahim Magu, directed Abdurashed Bawa, the investigating officer, to halt the investigations into a case of abuse of office, misappropriation of public funds and money laundering against Senator Ike Ekweremadu. The investigation which commenced in September 2017 traced monies and properties worth N2.4 billion suspected to be proceeds of crime to Senator Ike Ekweremadu.

"The investigation of Starter Point Integrated Services Limited by EFCC over a failed contract involving the sum of \$200 million to secure onshore pipelines traversing the country was

stalled by the suspended acting chairman of EFCC. That despite the tracing of \$91 million to the bank accounts of Starter Point, and \$40 million traced to a Switzerland-based company, OWANROAD Plc. There was no evidence of contract execution and no money was recovered before the investigation was stalled on the orders of the suspended acting chairman of EFCC.

"The suspended acting chairman, Ibrahim Magu, issued a general directive to ACP Isyaku Sharu and a team of officers investigating cases relating to the arms procurement contract fraud to stand down investigations on all dollar-based contracts.

"In a bid to frustrate the investigations of some politically-exposed persons, the suspended acting chairman split the Economic Governance Unit into two units; Economic Governance 'A' and Economic Governance 'B', and instructed the head of Economic Governance 'B' against investigating high-profile cases which led to the abandonment involving the likes of former governors Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso of Kano state, Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun state, Donald Duke of Cross Rivers state and Ikedia Ohakim of Imo state; as well as the incumbent governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Umar Fintiri. Others are Anyim Pius Anyim, Dr Doyin Okupe, Femi Gbajabiamila, among others," it added.

Under Magu, the EFCC was also said to have investigated Darius Ishaku, governor of Taraba state, and his associates for misappropriating N25 billion, part of which was used to buy a large expanse of farmland in the Mambilla area of the state while some were found in his wife's bank accounts. After

the conclusion of the investigation in 2018, the panel said the EFCC refused to initiate a suit to forfeit the assets and money.

All properties recovered from Bala Mohammed, Bauchi governor; Ibrahim Shettima, former governor of Katsina; Sambo Dasiki, former national security adviser; and Haruna Momoh, an associate of Diezani Alison-Madueke, former petroleum resources minister, by the EFCC were reported to still be in possession of the suspects.

According to the report, Magu failed to give approval for the arraignment of Stella Oduah, senator and former minister of aviation, over the alleged fraudulent diversion of N3.9 billion airport procurement contract fraud after the final investigation report in March 2018.

In addition, the report said Societe D'Equipment Internationale, owned by one Aboubakar Hima, was awarded a contract by the office of the national security adviser to the tune of \$930 million, €9 million and N350 million to supply military equipment to the Nigerian army, air force.

Hima was said to have diverted the money to acquire real estate in Nigeria and the Niger Republic, while some vice-marshals in the air force were also said to have benefitted from the illicit funds.

To further frustrate the investigation of Societe D'Equipment Internationale, in 2016, Magu allegedly dispersed the investigators involved "under the guise of routine transfers" and left no one to continue the investigation.

The panel said Magu also admitted to issuing a letter absolving the company of any wrongdoing, while the suspect fled Nigeria and escaped justice.

A'ibom CJ releases proceeding that sentences Effiong, as groups warn Falana

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA AND ISAAC JOB, UYO

Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, Justice Ekaette Obot, has released a copy of the judgment that committed human rights lawyer, Inibehe Effiong, to prison.

The certified true copy of the court proceedings was released on Wednesday, exactly 21 days after the conviction of Effiong.

Effiong was sentenced to one month in prison by Obot on July 27 for contempt of court after the lawyer reportedly protested against the presence of armed policemen in court as well as the sending out of a Premium Times reporter outside the courtroom.

The human rights lawyer was the defence counsel of Leo Ekpenyong, a lawyer, in a libel suit filed against him by Governor of Akwa Ibom, Udom Emmanuel.

Senior Advocate of Nigeria and Human Rights Lawyer, Femi Falana and others had on Tuesday, August 17, filed a suit against Justice Obot over the alleged violation of Effiong's fundamental human rights.

In the suit, the lawyers claimed that the judge refused to furnish Effiong with a copy of the judgment committing him to prison.

Therefore, they prayed the court for an order directing the Chief Judge to furnish him with a copy of the judgment to enable him to file an appeal.

According to the record of proceedings, the judge had asked Saviour Imukudo, a journalist with the Premium Times, to leave the court for covering the proceed-

ings without permission.

However, Effiong objected, saying the court was an open court and the judge was wrong to have sent the journalist out.

The record showed that Effiong was "shouting, pointing at the court and banging the table" in protest.

"This is an open court. It is wrong for you to send out the journalist. That journalist has every right to make a video recording of these proceedings. I cannot continue until the phone is handed over to the journalist to continue his work," Effiong had reportedly said.

Effiong also complained that the presence of several police officers in the courtroom was intimidating. But the judge accused Effiong of using the journalist to "run down the court." She asked Effiong to continue with the cross-examination, but he allegedly refused.

Therefore, the judge accused Effiong of being "insolent and stalling the court proceedings."

"Is he not that same journalist you have been using, to run this court down," she reportedly said.

"You want to run down my good name, which I have built for over 33 years because you want to be popular," the chief judge said.

Effiong also reportedly refused to "derobe" himself and leave the court as ordered by the judge. "You have gone beyond that; I am citing you for contempt for your unruly conduct and behaviour in this court.

"In that case, you are hereby committed to the Custodial Centre for (one) month until you purge yourself of the contempt," she said.

Meanwhile, groups under the aegis of Afigh Iwaad Ekid and Akwa Ibom Integrity Alliance have backed the state Chief Judge Justice Ekaette Obot for committing Effiong to one-month imprisonment.

The groups also warned Falana to steer clear and withdraw from the appeal case against the judgment of the Chief Judge in an attempt to free the jailed lawyer.

Addressing a press conference in Uyo on Friday, the International President of Afigh Iwaad Ekid, Obong Etiene Bob described the attitude of the jailed lawyer Inibehe Effiong as "legal rascality" not required in a courtroom atmosphere adding that the Chief Judge was right for sending him to prison to serve as a deterrent to other lawyers.

"We admire Barrister Inibehe Effiong as a young brilliant lawyer that has a future. If he can calm down and do his job more 'articulately' and with serious respect for people who have been before him. No very intelligent or outspoken legal practitioner or Activist will succeed without showing respect to leaders. And this respect must be earned.

"When we look at the content of this particular incident, we found out that Inibehe Effiong has made a lot of mistakes. So, we need to call on the public because we have heard that people are going on protests and all what not. "But we seemed not to see that they understood the reason why the decision to imprison him was taken by the Judge.

"Therefore, we want people to understand that whatever we see now, strangers now coming to Akwa Ibom to determine issues in our judiciary system

is not acceptable," the group said.

Apparently referring to Lagos-based Human Right Lawyer, Femi Falana, the International President of Afigh Iwaad Ekid – socio-cultural group in the state, Obong Etiene Bob described Falana as an interloper who just wants to meddle in the state's affairs to gain more popularity.

He observed that the best thing to do was to appeal against the judgement instead of attacking the honourable Chief Judge who had discharged her duty diligently by not allowing the temple of Justice to be desecrated.

"I think Falana has misfired in terms of his prayers at the Federal High court and his threat to report the Chief Judge to the National Judicial Council (NJC). I don't think the CJ has made any mistake. In fact, when I heard of the judgement I felt for Inibehe because of his recalcitrant posture in the court that day," he added.

Meanwhile, the Special Assistant to Governor Udom Emmanuel on Research and Documentation Mr Essien Nduso has exonerated the state Chief Judge Justice Ekaette Obot from allegation of refusal to release the Certified True Copy of the court proceedings where Inibehe Effiong was committed to jail.

In a media briefing with Akwa Ibom Integrity Alliance on Friday, the governor's Aide said the allegations of the Judge's refusal to release the court proceedings were in the imagination of the speculators.

Governor Emmanuel's Aide disclosed that the court proceeding has been released adding that the public is aware of court processes adding that the chief Judge was not the cause of the delay but should blame it on established court procedures.

Ozigbo, former Anambra PDP Guber candidate dumps party, canvasses support for Peter Obi

●Says 2023 watershed moment for Nigeria

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Mr Valentine Ozigbo, the governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2021 Anambra State governorship election has dumped the party on which he contested.

The boardroom management guru who was the CEO of Transcorp Group in Nigeria has now endorsed the candidacy of Mr Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP) ahead of Atiku Abubakar, candidate of his former party and Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Ozigbo said he has joined the Obi-dient Movement of the Labour Party candidate in search of a better Nigeria and therefore called on all Nigerians "to join hands with us as we work to transform the promise and dreams of Nigeria into reality. We must get it right in 2023, we can, and we must."

He said he has notified the PDP of his decision to move ahead with the LP in his political career.

"A few hours ago, I informed His Excellency Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the presidential candidate of my erstwhile party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), of my decision to resign from the PDP and throw my weight behind Peter Obi. I assured him of my abiding love and respect for him as a father, a leader, and a friend, even as I told him I had to follow my conscience and what I feel is best for Nigeria. We cannot afford to replace Buhari with any version of the same," he said.

In a statement titled "2023: A Watershed Moment for Nigeria", Ozigbo said Nigeria has reached a defining moment when all people of good conscience must stand up to be counted and that such time offers no middle ground; but for Nigerians to either be "on the dark side or on the side of the light."

He added that for Nigeria, "2023 is such a moment. Nigerians will be divided into two classes – those who will work to entrench the forces that have destroyed Nigeria or those warriors of the light who will work to bring justice, equity, and peace to our beloved country. And next year, as we go to the polls to elect a new president, there will be no fences to sit on."

He chronicled the near collapse of every aspect of Nigeria's socio-economic life saying

"under the incumbent president, Nigerians have suffered untold hardships. Never in this country's storied history has it been decimated and devastated by a government as it has been under General Muhammadu Buhari's All Progressive Congress (APC).

"Our economy has practically crumbled before our eyes. Disunity and suspicion now define the fabric of our country. Obscene levels of corruption and looting continue to dominate our news headlines. Terrorists, bandits, robbers, kidnappers, ritualists, and cultists now operate openly and without fear of law enforcement. Infrastructure across the country has been left to decay. Our social safety systems have all collapsed.

"All over Nigeria – from Abuja to Akure, from Bauchi to Benin, from Daura to Degema, from Enugu to Epe, from Jos to Jalingo, from Sokoto to Sapele, from Kaduna to Koko, from Nsukka to Numan, from Maiduguri to Makurdi, from Yola to Yenagoa – from North to South, it doesn't matter where you choose, Nigerians are living under the siege of criminals, the siege of poverty, the siege of a collapsing nation. Nigerians have lost the zeal for life, and violation of human lives is the new normal.

"Clearly, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has failed at leadership. They have failed on all their campaign promises. The party has effectively pushed Nigeria to the brink, and the 2023 election is existential, and we must make deliberate and conscious choices."

According to him, when the nation goes to the polls in February next year, they will have two clear options before them.

"Either we sustain the old corrupt brigade, an inept and outmoded class of politicians running on naked ambition and a raw desire for power, or we turn away from our past and embrace the new possibilities of a bright future," he said.

Ozigbo said there is no going back on the burning passion of the youth to take over the country in 2023 through the ballot, adding that the Obi-dient Movement is the face of the looming political revolution.

He said "fuelled by an undying love for the country and a burning passion for changing Nigeria, the youth have risen boldly and intentionally to get their voices heard. They

have rejected the lust for power of politicians that ought to be in retirement. They have consciously chosen who they want to lead them into the next four years.

"In taking a stand, the Nigerian youth have done what their grandfathers have refused to do. They considered fairness, justice, and equity. They embraced the path of unity for Nigeria. They have adopted a bold vision of a country where every kind of Nigerian is carried along irrespective of beliefs, faith, tribe, language, gender, and social status. They are committed to seeing that peace returns to Nigeria and that we experience the true promise of our founding fathers.

"This magical movement, a youth-driven political revolution, is inspired by the candidacy of Peter Obi, a modern-day leader who we can all believe in.

"Our country has never seen this level of passion in the youth. Instead of criticism and unfair attacks, these courageous and gifted youth deserve the support and encouragement of all Nigerians.

"The Obi-dient Movement cannot be ignored, shamed, or waved away. It is the fastest growing and biggest political movement in Nigeria today. The forces that have imprisoned the dreams of the younger generations of this country are terrified because they know the unstoppable power of the youth."

On why Nigerians should give Peter Obi, a chance to steer the ship of the nation come 2023, the former governorship candidate said the groundswell of support that his candidacy is receiving from Anambra, the South East, and the entire country is based mainly on the revolutionary, inclusive, and inspiring leadership he demonstrated as a governor.

"Before he was 40 years, Peter Obi had created an enviable mark in the private sector. A multiple-award-winning banker, entrepreneur, and globally trained business leader, Obi took the helm of Anambra State after a long fight for justice. Eight years later, he had completely transformed the leadership culture in Anambra with his style of down-to-earth grassroots engagement, prudential management of resources, and keen vision for qualitative transformation.

"Peter Obi is the Nigerian politician I have the utmost respect for. Having worked with him closely during my governorship campaign



Valentine Ozigbo

in 2021, I can attest that Obi is a thoughtful, kind, and generous leader who seeks excellence in all he does. After spending many months working with this phenomenal human, I am convinced that he has an abiding love for Nigeria and all Nigerians. He has the right vision for this country, the temperance, and the capacity and experience to take Nigeria out of these troubled waters and lead us to a land of promise," said Ozigbo.

He acknowledged the brilliant choice of Obi's running mate, Dr Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, stressing that this is an unbeatable presidential ticket that deserves the support of all well-meaning Nigerians.

"Pulled by the brilliance of the candidacy of Peter Obi and Yusuf Datti, inspired by the passion of the Nigerian youth, and driven by an undying love for Nigeria, I, Valentine Ozigbo, at this moment, formally joined the Obi-dient Movement.

"From what I know about His Excellency Peter Obi, if we join our hearts and hands and elect him as our next president, I can guarantee that he will be the best president Nigeria has ever had. I genuinely believe that his emergence has a divine inspiration. With his track record as one of the best governors in Nigeria's history, he has the best character, competence, capacity, and compassion in the presidential race today," he said.

Edevbie vs Oborevori: Appeal Court Reserves Judgement

By KELVIN OHOROR

The Court of Appeal sitting in Abuja on Friday, August 19, has reserved a date for judgement in the appeal to overturn the judgement of the Federal High Court which disqualified Rt Hon Sheriff Oborevori in the Gubernatorial primary of the Delta PDP and ordered his substitution with Olorogun David Edevbie as the lawful candidate of the party for the 2023 Governorship election.

The court which last sat on August 8 fixed hearing for August 19 and at the end of the hearing the judges announced that they will communicate a date for the delivery of judgement to all parties.

It will be recalled that following a suit by David Edevbie, the Federal High Court presided over by Justice Taiwo Taiwo declared Sheriff Oborevori unqualified to have participated in the Delta State PDP Governorship primary due to inconsistencies in his name and age and not possessing the minimum qualification.

The particulars of the matter are that arising from the PDP South South Zone Gubernatorial Screening in Port Harcourt, discrepancies were detected in Oborevori's names and age in his certificates

The contradictions include that while he

is known as Sheriff Oborevori, his First School Leaving Certificate dated 1981 for the examination said to have been written in 1977 bears the name of Oborevori Francis; his West Africa Examination Council Certificate obtained in 1999 bears Oborevori O. Francis with the age of the birth date of the writer stated as 1979.

In 2003, he proceeded to swear an affidavit to correct the age in the said certificate from 1979 to 1963 and gave his name as Oborevori Orohedor Francis.

Before then, in 1982, an affidavit deposed on his behalf by one Benson Ogolo said to

be his cousin, gave his name as Oborevori Francis.

His Bachelor's degree certificate bears Oborevori Sheriff Francis; his NYSC Exempt Certificate bears Oborevori Sheriff while his Master's degree certificate bears Oborevori Francis Sheriff Orohedor.

His claims as contained in INEC Form CF 001 with which he entered for general elections in 2018 are also inconsistent with his filings in his Expression of Interest Form for the Gubernatorial Election in 2022.

Whereas he did a Deed to correct the inconsistencies, Justice Taiwo Taiwo faulted

the veracity of the Deed on the grounds that while it was dated July 7, 2011, the FIRS receipt was dated April 19, 2022, while the Gazette was signed personally by him and dated May 5, 2022.

For many Deltans, especially members of the PDP, the inconsistencies make it unsafe to proceed with him into the 2023 elections for fear that opposition parties might take advantage to sue the party and turn over their possible victory as it happened in the case of Degi Eremiayo by which the APC lost its governorship position to the PDP in Bayelsa State.

We'll ride on PDP's crisis to victory – Delta APC

●Says PDP has no guber candidate

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, ASABA

The Delta State chapter of the All Progressive Congress, APC, is perfecting its victory strategies for the Delta State governorship election in 2023.

The state Chairman, Chief Omeri Sobotie, said this during an interactive session with journalists at his Asaba residence where he marked his birth anniversary, that the crisis in the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party, (PDP) was to the

advantage of the APC.

He disclosed that more members of the PDP would soon be jumping ship to APC in the nearest future, describing the Dr Ifeanyi Okowa's led administration in the state as a total disaster that will come to an end next year.

He said, "There is no man who remains in power in perpetuity. The bible records that riches are not forever neither does the crown endure to all generations, that means that PDP in Delta

will come to an end one day, but I want to put you on notice that it's coming to an end next year. The signs are there and even the blind know that we are taking over this state next year.

"The bible says a house divided against itself cannot stand. Can PDP stand against the word of God? Okowa is my colleague, his administration is an unbequeathed disaster. God has a way of bringing a bad thing to an end. Let me put you on notice, more people are joining us after now."

Tinubu not Amaechi's problem in Rivers



Bola Tinubu



Rotimi Amaechi

By EHICHIOYA EZOMON

What's happening in the Rivers State chapter of the All Progressives Congress, and by extension in the Peoples Democratic Party, appears to defy logic. But it isn't!

It's the way politicians muddy up the political arena when their self-interests are threatened or aspirations unfulfilled. Those are the scenarios in the Rivers APC, and PDP.

For example, supporters of former Transportation Minister, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, are issuing "warnings" about his possible defection from the APC to the PDP, even as Amaechi's notable allies leave the APC in droves.

On the PDP side, protégées of Governor Nyesom Wike are dumping his leadership amid internal feuds stoked by Wike in protest of his defeat in the presidential primaries.

The APC and PDP primaries in June and May were high-stake exercises that saw the former and incumbent governors of Rivers coming short in second position.

Amaechi's trusted ally, Eze Chukwue-maka Eze, sounded the defection alarm following well-publicised emissaries of APC's presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, hobnobbing with Wike on separate occasions.

Amaechi is reportedly "unhappy" that Tinubu has snubbed him since the duelling June 6-8, 2022, primaries in which Amaechi came second to Tinubu.

Rather than strive to improve relationship with Amaechi post the primaries, Tinubu has literally rubbed in his defeat by romancing with Wike, Amaechi's political arch-rival.

Trust Wike! Fighting to recover his mojo aftermath of his defeat by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, he made a show of the cross-party "rapprochement" with Tinubu.

While Amaechi tactically cloaked his anger over his defeat by Tinubu, Wike's dramatized his dissatisfaction for being beaten by Atiku, blaming his loss on PDP's leaders.

Interestingly, Wike's display of bitterness, and his avowal to reveal the schemings that robbed him of victory, has made him the "beautiful bride" in the 2023 election cycle.

Thus, Wike's courted by alarmed PDP leaders angling for a truce, and chieftains of other major political parties, including the APC and Labour Party, respectively.

This seems the immediate rationale for the angst in the Amaechi camp, and the threat of his defection to the PDP he'd decamped from in the build-up to the 2015 polls.

It's uncertain if the rush to exit a divided Rivers APC is a prelude to Amaechi also leaving the party. Chief Eze had earlier shot down reports to that effect. But polity watchers won't be surprised if Amaechi joined the exodus of his former allies and supporters to return to the PDP.

Lately, Eze purveys the alleged ill-feelings in the chapter, seemingly initially triggered by Tinubu's backing of Amaechi's political soulmate-turned rival, Sen. Magnus Abe, who Eze derisively labels as "Tinubu's ally."

Let's recall a scene in the heat of the campaigns to grab the APC presidential flag. In an analogy of "actions speak louder than words," Amaechi, unveiling his presidential run at the Port Harcourt International Stadium – one of the legacy projects of his administration in Rivers (2007-2015) – did a "100-metre dash" to the cheers of his supporters.

This was to show his fitness to be president, and a direct dig at Tinubu's ill-health that some Nigerians say makes Tinubu unsuitable for the post of president in 2023.

Besides coming home to a rousing welcome from Abuja after the primaries and a seven-year stint as Minister, Amaechi embarked on a meet-APC-membership in Rivers, during which he alleged a "dollarised" Tinubu ticket.

Amaechi's words: "Those who collected dollars at the APC primaries are now regretting," perhaps for choosing Tinubu as APC's flagbearer, instead of Amaechi who'd only battered Naira for the expectant

APC delegates.

Amaechi's obvious outburst against APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket is akin to the polity-shaking remarks by Tinubu in Ogun State, en route to the June primaries.

Tinubu, crowing "Emi lo kan" ("It's my turn" to be president), listed how he politically made many APC's heavyweights, including President Muhammadu Buhari.

Nationwide condemnation was swift across party lines, but particularly from members of the APC, the Presidency, the National Chairman, former Nasarawa State Governor Abdullahi Adamu, and chieftains of the party.

While Sen. Adamu vowed to "punish" Tinubu for his effrontery, Tinubu's rivals in the primaries were elated that his "unguarded statement" would sink his aspiration.

Prior, Adamu had sprung a "consensus" presidential candidacy of Senate President Ahmad Lawan, in total conflict with the decision of the APC governors and Buhari for an open contest for the aspirants, including Dr Lawan and Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello, who refused to withdraw from the race for only Southern aspirants.

But it's the Abeokuta no-holds-barred outing that saved Tinubu's candidacy, and restored the unprecedented backing of Northern APC governors for the presidency to rotate to Southern Nigeria for the 2023 polls.

At the primaries, Tinubu scored 1,271 votes, to Amaechi's second place finishing of 316 votes that his supporters widely celebrated, even as they downplayed Tinubu's victory and highlighted Atiku's candidacy – suggesting that something's amiss in the Amaechi camp.

And soon after Amaechi's "triumphal homecoming," a highly-visited WhatsApp page managed by Eze, dedicated to propagating the "Principles and Philosophy of CRA" (Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi), began to run negative stories about Tinubu's Muslim-Muslim ticket, the protests by Christians and defections from the APC therefrom.

It's understandable if Eze—who prides

his secretaryship on the defunct New PDP (nPDP) that merged with the APC after its formation in 2013—celebrated the emergence of Atiku as the PDP candidate, but downplaying Tinubu's success at the primaries was beyond imagination.

So, it looks too much for Amaechi to swallow double "uncomfortables" in the Rivers APC that's under his leadership: Tinubu having the ear of Sen. Abe, and Governor Wike in Amaechi's political turf.

To be candid, Tinubu isn't Amaechi's problem in Rivers chapter of the APC. It's self-inflicted as Amaechi tries to install a riverine indigene as governor since 2015.

The laudable moves of fair and equitable representation of all sections of Rivers have been resisted by ambitious politicians from the majority upland section of the state.

From 1999 till date, the upland has produced governors Peter Odili (1999-2007), Celestine Omehia (in 2007), Amaechi (2007-2015) and Wike (2015-2023).

Former Sen. Abe (Rivers South East) is particularly incensed by Amaechi's alleged scheming of the electoral process in his bid to install a governor of riverine origin.

Feeling a sense of entitlement to the ticket he lost in 2015 and 2019, Abe reportedly sabotaged the APC craving by instigating the courts to ban wholesale APC's candidates for governor and national and state assemblies in 2019.

Abe mounted similar efforts for the 2023 polls but was thwarted by the courts, prompting his decamping to the Social Democratic Party that offered him the ticket to run.

So, rather than being hurt by Tinubu's political romance with Abe and Wike, Amaechi should deploy Abe's exit from the APC to re-event the party, and prevent its further depletion, and a third loss of Rivers in a row since 2015.

Unless he's plotted to return to the PDP all along, doing so on the back of a so-called Tinubu's neglect would portray Amaechi as a sore loser not different from Wike that his supporters have laughed off the primaries stage.

Mr Ezomon, Journalist and Media Consultant, writes from Lagos, Nigeria.

Yobe police arrest 6 suspects for trespass, burglary, theft

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

Six suspects have been arrested by the Yobe State Police Command for house trespass, burglary and theft.

It was gathered that cases of theft and house breaking have been on the rise across the state. Residents were said to have made lots of complaints to security agencies.

The suspects include Muhammed Kachalla, Abubakar Musa Kalla, Musa Alhaji Abdullahi, Kassim Ibrahim, Alhaji Gambo Musa and Gambo Sa'idu.

Public Relations Officer of the Command, DSP Dungus Abdulkarim, who disclosed this to news men in a statement on Friday, said all the suspects confessed to the crime and led the Police to the recoveries of properties stolen

from different Houses and locations in the State.

Abdulkarim further disclosed that some of the stolen items were purchased by some unscrupulous members of the society, who were equally arrested.

He said, "In reaction to series of complaints by members of various communities on House Breaking, Theft and other related crimes, the Command commenced a clamp down on such criminal activities.

"On 10th August, 2022 at about 1200hours detectives from 'C' Divisional Police Headquarters have received a distress call from residents of new Bra-Bra Quarters, swung into action and apprehended the following culprits:

"Muhammed Kachalla aged 24, Abubakar Musa Kalla aged 21, Musa Alhaji Abdullahi aged 27, all of new Bra-Bra Quarters, Damaturu,



CP Garba

Alhaji Gambo Musa aged 45 of Anguwan Jaji, Potiskum LGA, Gambo Sa'idu aged 30 of Bolawa 'B' layin Malam Dalili, Potiskum LGA and Kassim Ibrahim aged 30 of

Nayi-Nawa ward, Damaturu. "All suspects confessed to the crime and led the Police to the recoveries of properties stolen from different Houses and locations which were sold

to scrupulous members of the society who were equally apprehended for subsequent prosecution."

Abdulkarim list some of the items recovered to include food items, TV set, and power generators, among others.

He said investigation is ongoing and the command has put in place all assets to ensure perpetrators of such acts are flushed out from the state.

According to him, the command also advised the public to be conscious of buying items from suspicious sources

"To this end, the Commissioner of Police, Haruna G. Garba psc reiterates the Command's commitment towards ensuring security and safety of lives and properties in the state and therefore urged Yobians to support the command by providing useful and credible information at all times," Abdulkarim added.

Troops clear bandit's camp, arrest suspects, recover explosive materials

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

Troops of the Nigerian Armed Forces have cleared a camp belonging to a notorious leader of bandits, Lawal Kwalba, in Rafin Dawa in the Dende general area of Chikun local government, Kaduna State.

The troops also arrested some suspects during the operation and recovered some batteries and 27 bags of fertilizer, suspected to be items for the production of explosives.

Samuel Aruwan, Commissioner of Internal Security and Home Affairs in the State, made the disclosure while giving a security update on Thursday 18th August 2022.

According to Aruwan, the troops of Operation Forest Sanity carried out the operation following actionable intelligence.

He said, "Troops have made further inroads in the ongoing campaign against terrorists and armed bandits across the state.

"The troops cleared the camp of a notorious bandit, Lawal Kwalba, in Rafin Dawa in the Dende general area of Chikun local government.

"According to the operational feedback, the troops of Operation Forest Sanity conducted a patrol to the location following actionable intelligence.

"The troops after clearing the camp recovered some batteries and 27 bags of fertilizer. These materials indicate likely plans to manufacture Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), considering the bandits' close alliance with terrorists."

He further disclosed that one motorcycle and two mobile phones were recovered as the bandits took to their heels before the troops' arrival.

"The troops extended the search a short distance from the camp and made some arrests. Investigations are ongoing on the intercepted suspects," he added.

Aruwan said the Kaduna State Government received the report with satisfaction, and praised the sustained efforts by officers and men carrying out the operations.

Group calls for arrest, prosecution of electricity workers, alleges terrorism

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

A group, Citizens Advocacy for Social and Economic Rights (CASER) has called on the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, to as a matter of urgency arrest members of the National Union of Electricity Employees for what it called "Acts of Terrorism".

CASER, in a statement signed by its Executive Director, Frank Tietie, said it is criminal by the provisions of Section 31 (6) of the Trade Unions Act for workers in the essential services sector to embark on strike actions.

Recall that the electricity workers had on 17th August 2022 embarked on strike in protest against a compulsory

promotion interview for principal managers, unpaid entitlement, among other issues.

CASER said the failure of successive administrations to deal with essential workers embarking on strike for selfish reasons led to the present worsening and highly embarrassing situation where electricity workers had to go on strike.

CASER, which has been calling for proper legal action against trade unions in Nigeria which embarks on illegal strike actions, especially in the essential services sectors of health and education, said the action of the electricity workers amounted to terrorism.

"Irrespective of the propriety or genuineness of the demands of any Nigerian workers union, they are

barred by Nigerian law from embarking on strike actions if they are engaged in the provision of essential services.

"There is a reason why the National Assembly of Nigeria in 2005 outlawed strikes in the essential services sector. It is not unconnected with the fragility of the Nigerian society and other related problems which are fundamental to the well-being of the Nigerian people.

"Thus, in that short period for which power generation and distribution were wholly shut down in Nigeria, the electricity union succeeded in inflicting untold hardships on Nigerians and caused losses in the billions of Naira to Nigerian businesses. This is unacceptable!" CASER stated.

The group added, "What the electricity workers who

went on strike have failed to realise is that their strike action on the 17th of August, 2022 amounted to an act of terrorism against the Nigerian State and that they are therefore liable to be punished with life imprisonment on conviction according to the combined provisions of Section 1 of the Terrorism (Prevention) Act (as Amended)."

It said the electricity workers cannot be excused by the exception in subsection 3 of the above section of the Terrorism Act, "as they embarked on the strike for coercion."

"What the electricity workers have done is not different from acts by a terrorist group such as Boko Haram.

"Therefore, it is only appropriate to institute criminal proceedings against

them to serve as deterrence to other unions in the essential services sector that may contemplate any illegal strikes.

"If electricity workers can embark on strikes, then members of the Nigerian Police and military- Army, Navy and Airforce can also embark on strike actions. Such a situation is unimaginable. That is why the law prohibits such strike actions.

"Therefore, dear Honourable Attorney General, your failure to enforce the legal standards as to illegal strikes as in the tradition of past administrations which, for reasons of lack of political will, failed to act in the public interest, will lead to the further expansion of the reign of impunity which has been the bane of Nigeria's fragile democracy," CASER noted.

Buhari orders security agencies to eliminate insurgents

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

President Muhammadu Buhari has again ordered security agencies to take the fight against terrorists to their hideouts and completely eliminate them.

Buhari gave the order on Thursday in Maiduguri while marking the World Humanitarian Day 2022, Femi Adesina, Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the President said in a statement on Thursday.

According to Adesina, the President said, "The Men and Officers of Operation Lafiya Dole, Security Agencies and the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) are very

much appreciated for their commitment to the fight against insurgency.

"I commend their professionalism and tactical penetration to the hideout of the criminal elements, leading to appreciable improvement of the security situation in this North East Region, without which the resettlement of the IDP's would not be possible.

"I, therefore, implore you not to relent in your efforts, continue to take the fight to their hideouts and ensure they are completely eliminated.

"Also implore you to ensure adequate security for farmers in their farming activities. Agricultural activities are most needed for settlement and

development of the rural areas and this can only be achieved if the farmers are sure of their safety."

The President also directed the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development and its agencies to come up with specific programmes to address urgent threats posed by explosive remnants in the North East region.

He affirmed Government's commitment to reducing the effect of disasters, climate change, insurgency and challenges of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

He directed the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and

its agencies to pay particular attention to emerging issues amid the return and rehabilitation of Nigerians displaced in the 13-year conflict and insurgency in the region.

"The emerging issues include the increasing number of orphans and widows.

"From our experience in the unfortunate Civil War, I know the threat that unexploded ordnances can pose to returnees even after the conflict has ended as we saw in the latest IED incident in Bama just last week.

"I urge the Ministry and its agencies as well as State Governments and the Special Committee I have set up

under the Chairmanship of the Vice President to come up with specific programmes and projects that respond to these emerging challenges of explosive ordnance as well as that of children orphaned by insurgency," Buhari said.

On World Humanitarian Day, commemorated annually on August 19, President Buhari commended all humanitarian aid workers that provide the much-needed assistance to those afflicted by the conflict.

"This typifies the nature of humanitarian work and sacrifice, and it is a great testimony for the theme of this year's World Humanitarian Day which is 'It Takes a Village'.

"On this 2022 World Humanitarian Day and every other day, we stand and shall continue to stand in solidarity with humanitarian aid workers and recognize their tremendous service and sacrifice.

"We celebrate their tireless efforts to save lives, preserve human dignity, and alleviate suffering. Their selfless commitment and actions stand as an example to us all.

"We will also make sure that they have our backing by ensuring that the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Social Development facilitates their work," he pledged.

Hoteliers bemoan spate of insecurity in Imo

By **ATHAN AGBAKWURU**, Owerri

Nigeria Hotel Association, NHA, Imo State Chapter has decried the unabating wave of killing, kidnapping and banditry ravaging the state and called on Governor Hope Uzodimma to salvage the ugly situation.

In a welcome address presented at the inauguration of the Imo chapter of NHA, held at Rockview Hotel, Owerri, the state chairman, Chima Chukwunyerere, noted that the deteriorating security situation in the state has negatively affected the business environment for hotels and the hospitality industry in general.

He lamented that the industry which is the second largest employer of labour only next to the state government and contributes immeasurably to the internal revenue generation of the state is now being threatened.

He warned that if urgent steps are not taken to arrest the menace of banditry, the hitherto booming hospitality industry which

placed Imo as the tourism hub of the nation might be forced into extinction.

Chukwunyerere, who is also the managing director of Domino Paramount Hotel, Owerri noted with dismay that "while some of the hotels are currently on lease and outright sales, others have shut down as a result of insecurity, erratic power supply and high cost of diesel which have made it difficult for the industry to remain afloat in business."

He however commended Governor Hope Uzodimma for his prompt intervention and stoppage of the illegal activities of revenue consultants/touts who he said connived with some erring personnel of the judiciary to garnishee their accounts illegally and equally threatened to shut down all hotels in the state.

He appealed to the Governor to engage captains of the hotel industry in the state in a round table discussion, to enable them brainstorm on ways to remedy

and revive the industry already lying comatose.

Performing the inauguration, the national chairman of NHA, HRH Eze Patrick Anyanwu assured that the National body would do its best to protect the interest of the members of the association and equally stand on their behalf against illegal tax and levies by the state government.

The monarch advised the hotel owners and directors to ensure regular payment of their dues and levies, adding that every hotel in the state should be registered in the National body of the Association to enjoy its benefits.

Also speaking at the occasion, Hon. Uche Ohia, the State Commissioner for Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts,



Gov. Hope Uzodimma

described hotels as the soul of the hospitality industry in the state, pointing out that any threat to the industry would inevitably lead to the collapse of the state economy.

Ohia emphasized that the government would ever remain committed and resolute in its determination to provide a conducive environment for the operation, promotion and sustenance of the hotel industry in the state and had taken steps to create community Tourism which would enable communities in the state to partner with the government.

He applauded the association for appreciating the efforts of Governor Uzodimma to encourage their members to remain in business and gave an assurance that this would be sustained.

USAID donates 10,000 Mama kits to 212 health facilities in Ebonyi

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**, Abakaliki

The USAID funded Integrated Health Program, IHP has donated 10,000 Mama kits to 212 health facilities in Ebonyi state.

The items are to be distributed to the 171 primary health care centers, 27 private hospitals and 14 general hospitals in the state.

Presenting the items to the state government, the Executive secretary Primary Health Care Development Agency Ebonyi State, Dr Chihumnanya Alo, said the items in the Mama pack bags include Sanitary pads, hand gloves, Chlorhexidine gel and soap.

He said the donation is aimed at encouraging hospital based delivery and support for the government to improve maternal and child health indices in the

state.

"This is to encourage hospital delivery as most poor and vulnerable pregnant women find it difficult to buy essential items needed for delivery," he said.

The Executive secretary emphasised the need for the state government to ensure sustainability and make judicious utilization of the items.

Receiving the items on behalf of the state government, the commissioner for Health, Dr Daniel Umezurike, expressed appreciation to USAID funded IHP for the gesture and assured that the items will get to the end users.

"IHP has provided many interventions in service delivery and with these mama kits, more pregnant women will deliver in our health facilities," he said.

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

The Ondo State Police Command has arrested and paraded five kidnapers that adopted the traditional head of Iku quarters in Ikare-Akoko, High Chief Mukaila Bello and three others along the Owo-Ikare highway two weeks ago.

The five suspects are Ilyasu Lawal, 27, Mohammadu Abubakar Sidi, 26, Garuba Bature, 36, Abubakar Dangy, 20 and Mohammed Mosere, 25.

They were paraded at the state police command in Akure with three barrels, five live cartridges, two face masks, and two jack knives as the items retrieved from them.

The Trumpet had earlier reported that the traditional ruler, the Onikun of Iku, Mukaila Bello and others including a former House of Assembly Candidate for Akoko North-East Constituency Yéyè Gbafinro, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress, Hon. Adeniran Adeyemo and a community leader, Bashiru Adekile, were kidnapped on August 4 around Ago Yeye, along Owo/

large road and their driver was shot in the head.

According to the police, the suspects were captured in various locations in Ondo State and Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

The suspects said their leader who is on the run declared that N 2 million ransom was collected instead of N 4 million paid by the victim's family.

According to them, N200,000 each was given to them for the operation by their leader.

However, the relation of one of the victims, Abdul Muritala, who took the ransom to their leader said he delivered N4 million to him as a ransom which he counted before releasing the suspects.

Abdul Muritala said the abductors had initially demanded an N500m ransom, but the victim's families were able to raise N4m with contributions from the entire community.

"They said we should pay N200 million but we begged them and they reduced it to N4 million. The community contributed the ransom money. Our people spent three days

with them without eating any food.

"They released them along Ikare Owo road. I was the person that took the ransom money to the place. I saw the kidnapers.

"They came out with guns. They did not wear masks when they came out to collect the ransom. When we dropped the money they said we should go and that we will see our people soon."

The state Police Commissioner, Oyeyemi Oyediran said Dangy was arrested in Owo town and the four other suspects were arrested at their residence in Ibadan.

Oyeyemi added that the kidnapper that was involved in the killing of a soldier and abduction of a Lebanese in Owo has also been arrested and charged to court.

He said the suspect, Yusuf Hamza, was arrested through forensic investigation and that efforts were on to arrest other suspects.

He said the paraded suspects would soon be charged to Court.

Guinea Insurance beefs up capital for greater performance, profitability

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Guinea Insurance Plc has injected additional capital to boost its underwriting business and return the company to the path of greater performance and higher profitability.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the insurance firm, Ademola Abidogun, stated this at its 64th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos and urged the company's shareholders to see the positive aspects of the upcoming changes.

"With the injection of additional capital, our company is now well positioned to attract and transact larger portions of new businesses.

"It is undeniable that today's consumers are shifting and favouring simplicity more than ever before and as a result, our investment

roadmap in technology and digital transformation is motivated by the need to give customers the freedom to buy reliable insurance products without any geographical restrictions," he said.

He added that the company had made efforts to keep management costs at the minimum, obtain regulatory approval for the underwriting agricultural insurance and reduced operating expenses.

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Ugochukwu Godson, presided over the AGM for ordinary and special business, obtain necessary shareholder approvals and as part of the ordinary business, present the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2021, along with the reports of the directors and auditors to the company's shareholders.

He reaffirmed the board and management's commitment to strategically and effectively position the company as an investor's delight, while propelling it to profitable heights for the financial well-being of its shareholders.

Godson stated that the company was already on the path to better performance and profitability, as additional funds had been injected to strengthen its financial base and increase its capacity for transacting large-scale business deals.

While presenting the operating results for the year under review, he said in spite of the many difficulties and operational challenges encountered in the year, the company weathered the storm and continued on the path of growth. Gross Premium Written was N1.35 billion, representing a 24.8 per cent

increase over the N1.08 billion recorded in 2020.

Gross Premium Income rose from N1.05 billion to N1.34 billion in 2021, representing a 27.4 per cent increase. The Net Claims Expenses in 2021 was N0.48 billion, which is a 69.1 per cent improvement over the N1.55 billion recorded in 2020.

"This was due to efficient claims management. The company did record a loss before tax of N60 million. This is as against N225 million recorded in 2020, representing over 73.3 per cent decrease. Loss after tax also stood at N23 million, representing a significant drop of 89.9 per cent decrease compared with the N228 million recorded in 2020," he stated.

The shareholders approved the re-election of Godson Ugochukwu, Alhaji Hassan Dantata and Simon

Bolaji as directors and to increase Guinea Insurance's issued and allotted share capital to 7,942,800,000 ordinary shares of 50 Kobo each, effective August 16, 2022.

Speaking, Chairman of the Progressive Shareholders Association of Nigeria (PSAN), Boniface Okezie, noted that insurance relies on trust and the timely payment of claims and commended the company for its efforts as well as for showing accountability, responsiveness and commitment to the welfare of policyholders at all times.

Okezie, who recommended deliberate and purposeful actions toward taking the company to greater heights, expressed concern over the numerous mitigating factors impeding the projected upward mobility of the company to profitability.

The lingering crisis in Nigeria's university system

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has extended its February 2022 long strike for another four weeks; effective from 1st of August, 2022. The Union disclosed this after her emergency National Executive Committee meeting at the University of Abuja on Sunday 31st of July, 2022. ASUU declared that the decision to extend the strike was to give the government enough time to resolve outstanding issues with the union.

Last week a meeting between the striking dons and federal government representatives failed to end the impasse with the Minister of Education virtually inciting students against ASUU. This was most unfortunate.

Although the same strike had been extended twice, this last one came to Nigerians as a shock, especially because there had been several indications from diverse official sources that the half-a-year strike would not linger beyond July 2022 due to the progress made in the negotiations. There had been conflicting information from the offices of the Minister of Education, Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), the Minister of Labour and other bodies. Nigerians have lost track of which source to rely on over the lingering strike. To aggravate the confusion was the recent statement by the Minister of Labour who claimed that government did not have the resources to meet the demand of ASUU, and that parents should beg the striking Union to return to the classroom. Now all hopes appear dashed, and Nigerian universities might remain closed for another one month with no clear indications of an end. Which nation does this to its ivory towers?

Since the strike began in February, we have made several public statements over it. We are aware of the state of the negotiations based on information given by both ASUU and agents of the federal government. Specifically, the public is aware that the reports of the Brigg's Committee is awaiting final attention of the Presidency; that in that report, new remunerations have been proposed for ASUU and other university unions, and that

UTAS has been tested and re-tested up to getting 93 percent pass mark. It is also in the general public that ASUU and other striking unions have indicated their desire to return to work as soon as issues recommended by the Brigg's Committee are addressed. We therefore see insincerity in the federal governments' indecisiveness and perambulation over the lingering negotiation.

This, no doubt, is not the way to deal with the future of more than ten million Nigerian youths directly and indirectly affected by this strike. Sadly, the workers are still denied their wages for the sixth month running; apparently left to starve along with their immediate families and dependents. Ironically, the federal government plans to establish more universities while the current ones are in this mess!

We call on the federal government to change its strategy immediately. No responsible government will continue to be this evasive about education. We call for release of the 6 months unpaid salaries of ASUU. While the strike lingers, every lecturer continues to conduct research works that are often used in ranking their universities amongst the rest in the world. They also continue to engage in national and community services as shown in the expert advice and support they provide during elections and other national issues. The suspicion by some that owners of the private universities have hijacked the government and prevented her from implementing her agreements with ASUU may begin to make sense if the attitude of the governments continues this way.

The primary and secondary educational systems have completely collapsed in Nigeria and only private ones give the desired quality of education in a favorable timeframe. The federal government needs to act timeously and decisively in aligning with all stakeholders to prevent the universities to go the same way. The government should discontinue with the plan to establish more universities or better still put it on hold. The universities currently under the states and the Federal Government must first be nurtured to the global standard that ASUU request before going to establish others. There is no logic in a government that is allegedly too financially strained to maintain current universities, now trying to establish more.

The time has come for legislation prohibiting public officials from sending their wards to foreign universities. This would compel government to pay full attention to the needs of our universities.

The current attitude of the federal government to the problems in the Nigerian universities is a joke taken too far. The strike must end immediately. For this reason, we call on the Minister of Education to go back to the negotiation table and carry out the Presidential directive with utmost urgency. His outburst against ASUU is nothing short of executive rascality. This is no time for grandstanding. Mr President and his team: END THE STRIKE NOW!



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Ernest Shonekan as a footnote

By ERIC TENIOLA

I guess that history will be very kind to Chief Ernest Adegunle Oladeinde Shonekan, GCFR, (May 9, 1936-11 January 2022), why? Because his tenure was the shortest, just eighty-two days. While his colleagues, have been brutally treated by history either for action or misaction, I am sure history will treat Chief Shonekan lightly because he did not do much. Infact he was overthrown on November 17, 1993 by General Sani Abacha, GCFR, on the very day he was to move to THE VILLA and take residence. I do not know whether the happiest day of his life was November 17, 1993, but he felt relieved after that day.

After his tenure, his wife, Mrs Margaret Shonekan born in Gusau, capital of Zamfara state on October 8, 1940, rejoined the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) on 1 April 1994 as its senior deputy. She was then hired as the WAEC's Head of National Office on 30 October 1995, defeating five male colleagues who also sought the position. Mrs Shonekan served as the Head of National Office at WAEC from 30 October 1995 until her retirement on 30 September 2000. She described her time as Head of National Office as her most difficult years with the WAEC, due to the examination board's lack of adequate funding and its empty treasury at the time. She retired from the WAEC in 2000.

The couple resumed their regular attendance at the Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos with no funfare but as ordinary worshippers. Chief Shonekan talked less after his overthrow carrying to his grave his opinion on what led to his removal and how he felt after his overthrow.

He neither wrote a book nor grant any interview till he died on top of it all as the Abese of Egbaland, he was buried in far away Lagos.

His voyage to government was in January 1993 when he was made the Chairman of the Transitional Council appointed by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (80), GCFR. His Cabinet members at that time were General Sani Abacha (Defence Secretary), Dr. Garba J.A. Abdulkadir (Secretary for Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development), Alhaji Isa Mohammed (Secretary of State for Agriculture), Alhaji Inuwa Zakari (Secretary for Commerce and Tourism), Alhaji Bello Dogondaji (Secretary of State for Commerce and Tourism), Alhaji Umaru Baba (Secretary of State for Defence), Professor Ben Nwabueze (Secretary of State for Education and Youth Development), Alhaji Zarma Gogoran (Secretary for Establishments and Management Services), Major-General Gado Nasko (rtd) (Administrator of the Federal Capital Territory), Oladele Olashore (Secretary for Finance), Chief Matthew Mbu (Secretary for

Finance), Alhaji Saidu Isa (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Dr. C.Okogie (Secretary for Health and Human Services, Dr.(Mrs.) Laraba Daggash (Secretary of State for Health and Human Services, Alhaji Aminu Saleh (Secretary for Industry and Technology, Uche Chukwumerije (Secretary for Information and Culture), Alhaji Abdulrahman Okene (Secretary for Internal Affairs), Clement Akpamgbo (Secretary for Justice and Attorney-General), Francis John Ellah (Secretary for Labour and Productivity), Alhaji Mustapha Umaru (Chairman of the National Planning Commission), Chief Phillip Asiodu (Secretary for Petroleum and Mineral Resources), Francis Oji (Secretary for Police Affairs), Air Vice-Marshal Nura Imam (Secretary for Power, Mines and Steel), Alhaji Hassan Hadeja (Secretary for Petroleum Resources), Alhaji Oladuni Ayan-dipo (Secretary of State for Power, Mines and Steel, Alhaji Maccido Dalhat (Secretary for States and Local Government Affairs), Mrs Emily Imoukhuede (Secretary of States and Local Local Government Affairs, Chief Oluwole Adeosun (Secretary for Transport and Communications), Yusufu Galadima (Secretary of State for Transport and Communications) and Chief Barnabas Gemade (Secretary for Works and Housing).

When Chief Shonekan became Head of State in August 1993, the following were the members of his cabinet— Defence Secretary: Gen. Sani Abacha, Secretary of State (Defence): Alhaji Umaru Baba, Agriculture/Natural Resources: Prof. Jerry Gana, Commerce/Tourism: Chief Mrs. Kuforiji Olubi, Communications: Chief Dapo Sarumi, Education and Youth Development: Prof. Abraham Imogie, Finance: Alhaji Aminu Saleh, FCT Administrator: Maj. Gen. Gado Nasko, Foreign Affairs: Chief Matthew Mbu. Secretary of State (Foreign): Alhaji Saidu Isa, Health and Human Services: Prince Adelusi Adeluyi, Internal Affairs: Chief Ezekiel Yesufu, Industries: Chief Ignatius Kogbara, Information and Culture: Mr. Uche Chukwumerije, Justice: Mr. Clement Akpamgbo SAN, Petroleum/Mineral Resources: Chief Donald Etiebet, Secretary of State (Petroleum): Alhaji Ibrahim Al, Labour and Productivity: Prince Bola Afonja, Power and Steel: Alhaji Hassan Adamu, Secretary of State (Power and Steel): Alhaji Oladunni Ayandipo, Police Affairs: Alhaji Abdullahi Mahmud Koki Science and Technology: Prof. Bartholomew Nnaji, Transport/Aviation: Alh. Bashir Dalhatu, Water/Rural Development: Alhaji Isa Mohammed, Works/Housing: Mr. Barnabas Gemade, Chairman, National Planning Commission: Mr. Isaac Aluko-Olokun, Establishment/Management Services: Mr. Innocent Nwoga, States and Local Government Affairs: Alhaji Sule Unguwar Alkali, Secretary to Interim National Government: Alhaji Mustapha Umara, National



Chief Ernest Shonekan

Assembly Liaison Officer: Alhaji Abba Dabo (House of Representatives), National Assembly Liaison Officer: Dr. Samuel Ogboghodo (House of Representatives) and National Assembly Liaison Officer: Senator George Hoomkwap (Senate)

The only person appointed into that Cabinet by Chief Shonekan was Ambassador Isaac Agboola Aluko-Olokun from Ilesha, Osun state, who died in March 2011 at the age of sixty-six. He was the Head of Chief Shonekan's think-tank group.

Myself and Dr. Goke Adegoye, retired Federal Permanent of the Federal Capital Territory were extremely close to ambassador Aluko-Olokun in the last ten years of his life. He confided in us. He told us many stories about Chief Shonekan's tenure in government.

For the present day generation, they must read a book titled "SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE" BY Max Siollun, I am sure they will have a better understanding of Chief Shonekan's emergence as Head of State.

Let us start from page 262 to 270, it captured the events that led to the emergence of the Interim National Government, according to Max Siollun "General Babangida's speech of June 26, 1993 asked the SDP and NRC to submit two new presidential candidates by the end of July for a new presidential election. The rules for the new election were carefully crafted to prevent Abiola from contesting again.

Candidates for the new election had to: (i) be at least 50 years old (ii) have been members of their party for at least one year, and (iii) not have an, personal, corporate and business interests that "conflict with the national interest". Criteria (ii) and (iii) were designed to exclude Abiola since he had not been a member of the SDP for a full year and the government owed vast sums of money to his business empire.

While the SDP prepared for its July 4 convention, the Abiola family met and held private discussions with the Babangida family

in Abuja. Abiola's wife Kudirat, eldest son Kola, Babangida's wife Maryam and older children also attended. Kudirat told Babangida and Abiola: "you are friends, whatever your differences, please sort them out": Abiola was convinced that Babangida had the power to rescind the annulment and told him: "I know you. If there a mountain in front of you, you can go through it": However Babangida replied "No. I cannot go through a mountain, but I can go around it,?" Babangida also informed Abiola that his quest for the presidency was endangering the lives of both the Abiola and Babangida families. Babangida warned him that "These people will, kill me. They will kill you"

The meeting failed to persuade Abiola to drop his quest for the presidency. Moreover, news of the meeting was leaked to SDP members, and it made Abiola look bad. While his party was meeting, Abiola was fraternising with the man who voided his electoral victory just a few days earlier.

At its July 4 convention in Benin, the SDP reaffirmed its refusal to engage in a fresh election, and insisted on the full release of the June 12 election results. It argued that it had a valid mandate stemming from its victory at the June 12 election, and that in any case, it did not have time to produce a new candidate before the end of July. The SDP's decision was communicated to Babangida on July 5 when SDP and NRC leaders met him. Knowing it had lost the June 12 election, the NRC favoured fresh elections that would give it a second chance to get into power.

On July 5, Babangida issued the SDP and NRC with a 48 hour ultimatum to find a common position and accept fresh elections, failing which he would dissolve all democratic structures created during the Transition. This raised the spectre of the dissolution of the SDP and NRC, the Senate, House of Representatives and the offices of all the elected officials such as the state governors. By issuing this threat, Babangida jeopardised the jobs of thousands of officials elected during the Transition, and dragged all of them into the crisis. It was no longer just about Abiola, but about the continued office and livelihood of every politician in the system.

Political positions were seen by many politicians as an investment. They were opportunities to acquire wealth, and determine the future direction of wealth. Moreover, continuing in office was the only way that politicians could quickly regain the massive sums they had spent to fund their election campaigns.

Babangida's threat had the desired effect of sowing panic among the politicians. Elected officials of the two parties pressurised their party leaders to reach a, compromise with the FMG

in order to save their jobs. The SDP was thrown into a state of confusion and became polarised into pro-Abiola and anti-Abiola factions. If the SDP continued to insist on Abiola's mandate, it would jeopardise its existence and the well-being of thousands of its members, for the sake of one individual. If it agreed to fresh elections, it would forfeit its convincing electoral victory, and risk losing in a new election.

While the SDP squirmed, the FMG was ready to go ahead with fresh elections, with or without the SDP's cooperation.

In his speech of June 26, Babangida had also lifted the ban on all persons who had previously been disqualified from the presidential race (except those with criminal records). He said this was "with a view to enriching the quality of candidature for the election and at the same time tap the leadership resources of our country to the fullest": It seems astonishing that Babangida felt that individuals whom he earlier disqualified from the Transition for electoral malpractice, rigging and corruption would "enrich" the political process. He was re-admitting into the political process individuals whom he previously described as having "imbibed the worst culture of the Nigerian political class":

The real reason for re-admitting disqualified candidates was to create a cleavage in the political support for Abiola. Babangida played on the greed, opportunism and power hunger of Nigerian politicians. He hoped that powerful disqualified candidates would ditch Abiola in the hope of another shot at the presidency. This was a typically brilliant divide-and-rule tactic by Babangida to isolate Abiola, whose previous mistakes came to bear. Yar'Adua (the political godfather of Abiola's party) was still angry that Babangida had stopped him from becoming president by disqualifying him in 1992. Abiola was an outsider to the SDP so Yar'Adua and powerful party members had no incentive to support or take risks for him. Many SDP members who laid the groundwork and campaigned for six years resented the way that Abiola walked into the party at the last moment and used his wealth and high powered contacts to emerge as the party's presidential candidate, ahead of party members who were there before him. Now Babangida had opened a back door that would give them and Yar'Adua another shot at the presidency. Yar'Adua also had a grievance with Abiola for ignoring his choice of Atiku Abubakar as vice-president. Additionally, the SDP was effectively Yar'Adua's party and was packed with his acolytes. Yar'Adua's new political lifeline placed his interests in direct competition with Abiolas. To support Abiola would mean forfeiting his second chance to run for president.

To be continued

Altruistic Christian Service

“Happy are your men and happy are these your servants who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom” (1 Kings 10:8; 2 Chronicles 9:7). Human actions are often driven by two desires that they may want to rationalize. Many are egoistic. Many self-centred people think that it is only what benefits them, what falls into their perspective that is important and good. They advocate and promote this philosophy. This is what they endorse. Nothing is good if they do not benefit from it. Everything is good so long as they make personal gains from it. The other set of people is the altruists. They think of ‘other-worldliness.’ They look at the bigger picture and fear the danger of being self-centred. They strongly feel that there is no difference between the “I” and the “thou”.

Egoistic people suffer an ‘entitlement mentality.’ Their motto is GIVE ME. Altruistic people are givers. Their motto is TAKE. They are ‘other-worldliness in disposition. Egoism is self-loving. Altruism is other-loving. But “God so loved the world that He gave His son” (John 3:16). The act of ‘service’ is a noble thing to do. To minister is to serve. Those employed by the state are

called ‘servants’ (civil or public). Today, however, this word is abused; as serving now equates to LORDING. Jesus came to serve the world. He served God by serving us. He called us brothers/friends. He earned His Lordship through serving us. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of man. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross” (Philippians 2:5-6).

Whatever it is that makes us believe that we are more special than others; to be self-centred is borne out of what the Preacher calls ‘vanity.’ They are our possessions, our education, our beauty, the office we hold, and the relationships we keep. But let us note that

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:5-6). This is true. A lifestyle of pursuing outward worldly things, and desires of the flesh, is borne out of one’s



desires for the flesh, and not the things of the Spirit, which is Christ. Christ is life and peace. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd because He emptied Himself for His sheep (John 10:14; Hebrew 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4). The divine altruism of Christ is outlined thus: He had compassion for His sheep (Mark 6: 34), and in John 10: 16, He sought (looked for) His sheep to care for, and save them (1 Peter 2:25). Finally, our souls were important to Christ; not His soul (Revelation 7:19).

Dear people of God, we are failing today because of our irrational love for

material things. Until our leadership is built on a ‘sheep-centric’ model, we shall continue to be objects of human ridicule. The Bible calls us “Gentiles” for behaving as such. “For after all these things the Gentile seeks. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things” (Matthew 6:32). The Gentiles are those who do not know a personal, loving, and providential God. God knows our every need and material desire. Nevertheless, God admonishes us that we should “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). God rewards kind-hearted people in many ways. Here, we should recall how Peter restored the life of Dorcas at Joppa. She was rewarded because of her kindness to other women in the fold of Christ. “Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity” (Acts 9:36, 37-43).

Shalom and God bless!

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Understanding holy spirit baptism, evil spirit possession

Understanding this subject is very important because most people feel that when we talk of evil spirits’ possession, we are only referring to witches and wizards who attend particular evil meetings in their covens at night. Also, many think that when we talk of Holy Spirit baptism, we are only talking of Pastors and leaders in Churches who are supposed to be filled with the Holy Spirit and blameless while the followers only attend Church services to tap from their anointing and be blessed.

This subject is so important because it is the state of your spirit and soul that matters most in life. After all, we will all leave the body behind after our journeys on earth. All the material things we possess on earth will not matter in your new abode when we leave the earth.

Also, note that all the material things on earth today will be destroyed and go back to dust one day because a new perfect earth is coming according to the promise of God in the Holy Bible.

Today, many people attend Church services and some are even workers and human-ordained Pastors yet they don’t have the seal of the Holy Spirit in them by their fruits. And, in case we don’t know, it is only the seal or the mark of the Holy Spirit that will admit people into Heaven, not the number of Church services attended.

The importance of this message is that one cannot be a Christian without the Holy Spirit occupying you, and for the Holy Spirit to occupy you, you must repent (let go) of some attitudes (fruits of evil spirits) that are against the attitudes of God.

Also, if you have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit as promised in the book of Acts chapter 1 verse 8 in the Bible, with the evidence of the fruits of the



Dr. Agbodo

Holy Spirit in your life, the possibility is that you are possessed or being regularly influenced by one or more evil spirits.

Committing a sin or disobeying God once in a while may be because the person is weak in the spirit and therefore falls into temptation, and that does not necessarily mean the person is possessed by an evil spirit although the person will still be punished for sinning.

However, if you are living constantly in a particular sin and find it difficult to receive the Holy Spirit and thereafter live a holy life, the possibility is that there is an evil spirit living inside you. There are evil spirits of fornication, sexual lust, lies, selfishness, hatred, un-forgiveness etcetera.

There are however signs to know when you are under the bondage of evil spirit possession. For instance, if you have sex and eat from strangers regularly in the dream, then there is an evil spirit possession caused by evil covenants. When you hate holiness and

find it even difficult and interesting to read the Bible, there is an evil spirit possession in place and you need to repent and flush that evil spirit away to be accepted by God.

Also note that when you receive the Holy Spirit, your dream life will also change to victory always no matter the battles, and you will also have the power to overcome and hate sin.

We should also note that a Christian can be defeated in a spiritual battle if he or she is not alert and prayerful as the spirit leads. However, even when you as a Christian is defeated in any battle, you can still strengthen yourself through prayers and fasting, go back to battle again and recover all you lost.

We can go on and on with many signs of evil spirits’ possession, but let us leave that for another day and look at the signs of the Holy Spirit in a person.

The book of Galatians Chapter 5 verse 22 in the Holy Bible says: “But the fruit of the Holy Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING(PATIENCE), GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS(HUMILITY), TEMPERANCE (TOLERANCE.” So, you can test yourself if the Holy Spirit is living in you or not because when the Holy Spirit is living in you, all these attitudes and fruits enumerated above and more will emanate from you seamlessly. But if you are still struggling to live a righteous life or does not exhibit these attitudes as a way of life, then it is very clear that the Holy Spirit is not domiciled in you yet.

We. Therefore, need to assess our lives daily because without the seal of the Holy Spirit, nobody will be admitted into Heaven and all attempts to even serve God here on earth will be very difficult and will also be a total waste of time because God accepts only true

worship in holiness and righteousness.

Another truth we must understand here is that you can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and can also drive the Spirit away through sin. Therefore, we should weigh our lives always with the presence or not of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our daily activities to establish whether the Holy Spirit is with us or not because if you assume and don’t work on your salvation on earth to hit the target, God will not assume on the last day to judge us.

You cannot receive the Holy Spirit and your life will remain the same in living in sin.

It is therefore very important that we weigh our lives daily and remove all attitudes and evil deposits that need to be removed through prayers and physical change of our ways so that the Holy Spirit can live in us and be our friend.

All said and done, we should note that with God all things are possible hence we don’t need to be afraid or discouraged because in all forms of influences of evil spirits or evil spirit’s possession if we can only humble ourselves, accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord and repent of our sins and never look back, we will be saved and will receive the Holy Spirit that will expel evil spirits from our lives and help us to live the God kind of life on earth. God is very merciful and irrespective of what you may have done if you can only admit your faults and ask for forgiveness, a new life will begin in you and you will give personal testimony to that effect. God Bless us in Jesus Name.

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Influx of substandard products and SON's return to seaports

About 11 years ago, former Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala directed the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and other Federal Government agencies to leave the country's seaports over what most importers, exporters and businessmen perceived to be sharp practices of officers of agencies operating at the ports. Over the years, SON and some of the agencies, especially the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) had disagreed on the need to allow SON and other agencies into the ports. However, it is now evident that efforts to allow SON to operate at the ports appear to have yielded positive results, as the Federal Government has concluded plans to approve the return of SON and other relevant agencies to the seaports, **JOHNMARK UKOKO** writes.

In 2011, former Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, announced that the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and other Federal Government agencies were asked to vacate the country's seaports.

The announcement came as a result of complaints by importers, exporters and local businesses at the local ports of sharp practices and corruption by the officials of SON and other agencies.

But the exit of officials of the agency from the ports had purportedly led to massive influx of spurious and substandard products into the country, mostly from China.

While this is going on, Nigerians continue to bear the brunt, as the country has become a dumping ground for all manner of substandard products, prompting the United Nations (UN) to declare some years ago that nearly 70 per cent of all products coming into Nigeria were substandard or fake.

Several innocent Nigerians have either died or maimed for buying and consuming or using fake or substandard products.

Curiously, while the country is being flooded with substandard products, SON that has the mandate to rid the country of substandard products continue to blame the situation on the absence of its personnel at ports to inspect the cargoes before they are allowed into the country by officers of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS).

Recently, the SON and NCS had serious disagreement on the issue, as they accused each other of being responsible for the increasing cases of substandard products coming into the country.

While the agency has consistently assured Nigerians of its determination to rid the country of all forms of substandard products, the reverse has been the case, as thousands of Nigerians are killed or maimed yearly from either building collapse or road accidents resulting from the use of fake tyres and substandard products.

Most fire outbreaks that occur yearly have also been traced

to the usage of substandard electric wires and cables in homes or offices.

In spite of the reality on ground, most of the imported and locally made products continue to secure the endorsement of the Nigeria Industrial Standards (NIS), Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) CAP and NIS 100 and various other appellations to show that the products are of high quality.

Also, as Nigerians continue to buy fake and substandard products, SON continues to lobby top officials of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration to be allowed to return to the seaports.

A source at the agency told *The Trumpet* that the imminent return to the seaports was to ensure a more effective inspection and vetting of goods and products for import and export, maintaining that the agency has got provisional approval to return to the ports 11 years after it was barred from the ports.

The source said the agency is returning to the ports to enable its officials to participate in examination of the cargoes to check the influx of fake and substandard goods into the country, as well as checkmate illegal importation of light weapons and ammunition, with the attendant rising insecurity in the country.

The Trumpet learnt that while the President was favourably disposed to the agency's return to the ports, the provisional approval for the SON to return to the ports could be reversed after sometime if it was discovered that activities of the agency was hindering free flow of goods and products in and out the seaports.

A top official of the presidency disclosed that the President had granted provisional approval for its officials to return to the seaports for inspection of cargoes.

Specifically, the SON source noted that the agency is currently in consultation with Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), as landlord of the other agencies and with the management of the Nigeria Customs Service, being the lead agency in cargo inspection, which will also work directly with SON's officials.



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

"As consultations and fine-tuning of some operational modalities with the Customs continue, the Federal Government expressed concern about the influx of illegal items into the country, especially arms and ammunition, even after the closure of some land borders of neighbouring countries to checkmate such illegal importation.

A source at the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) told *The Trumpet* that the manufacturers' body had to add its voice to the lobbying for SON to return to the seaports to check the hitherto uncontrolled influx of fake and substandard goods from Asia, especially China, which had dealt a devastating blow on the local industry.

"Over the years, the Federal Government seemed to have paid more attention to revenue generation through the customs. Although the country needs the revenue to build infrastructure and embark on other development policies and programmes, there is the need to create jobs by ensuring that the manufacturing sector, which

is currently suffocating under the huge weight of the influx of substandard products and other operational challenges, is sustained.

"Now the government has come to the realisation that it needs to strike a balance between revenue generation and creation of employment in the country and none should be sacrificed for the other, since both are needed for the overall survival of the national economy," the MAN source said.

He added that SON may have successfully lobbied the authorities to get back to the seaports 11 years after, but the question is whether the SON officers would continue to engage in malpractices when they eventually return to the ports.

It is an open secret that most of MANCAP and NIS certification are paid for, just as the fact that most of the importers of goods pay fees to SON to allow their substandard products into the country, while those who refuse to pay the demanded 'fees and levies' are arrested and paraded.

There is also a fact that either officers in the legal department are incompetent to prosecute and convict culprits, or the agency simply gets compromised and release arrested importers of fake products after they must have received bribe.

The media only hear of the arrest of substandard products cargoes, but never get to know what happens afterwards.

Speaking in an interview with *The Trumpet*, an importer, Sunny Okafor, alleged that SON's officials usually demand gratification to allow imported goods into the country through the land borders, adding that the importers either through land borders or seaports pay gratification to SON and NCS officials, who inspect the cargoes.

"It is a fact that an importer will pay the government excise duties and other levies and still pay gratification to the customers and SON's officials. This is a fact.

It would be recalled that Director-General of SON, Mallam Farouk Salim, had accused NCS of failure to allow its officials to examine cargoes with SON officials and that their absence from the seaports was responsible for the influx of substandard products in the country.

Responding to the accusation, Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the NCS, Timi Bomodi, refuted the claims and instead blamed SON's incompetence as being responsible for the menace.

Bomodi alleged that NCS regularly invites SON to the ports to inspect cargoes with customs officers, adding that SON has unrestrained access to the customs platform, insisting that it does not hide anything from the SON.

But now that the SON is set to return to the seaports, will its officials be able to shun malpractices? Will the return of SON to the seaports lead to reduction of substandard products coming into the country? Will Nigerians trust the goods or products in the market as genuine?

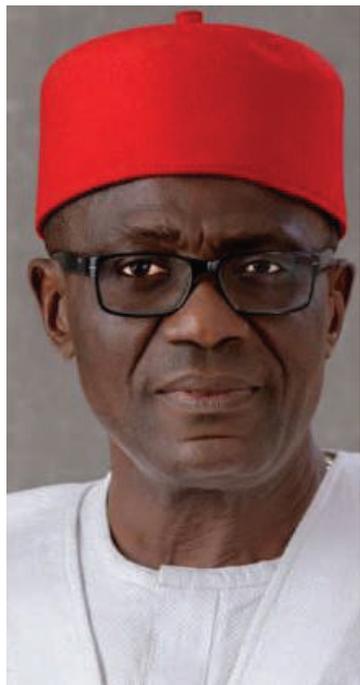
The months and the years ahead will determine if the agency's return to the seaports will be the game changer in the fight against substandard products in Nigeria.

NACCIMA tasks Obi on challenges facing businesses, states objectives

The National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) has tasked Presidential Candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, to develop a blueprint that will revive businesses and create new ones in the country.

President of NACCIMA, Ide John C. Udeagbala, gave the charge on Thursday, August 18, 2022 during an interactive session with Obi at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce (LCCI) exhibition centre along the Lagos Ibadan Expressway.

He said the interactive session with Obi was to provide an opportunity to get acquainted with the challenges confronting the business sector in the country, adding that several challenges were confronting businesses in the country.



Ide John C. Udeagbala

Lamented that businesses were not growing at the desired rate as they were having challenges on several fronts, he told Obi that NACCIMA is an association of business people, which focuses on advocacy, promotion of trade and business development.

"Our association is saddled with the responsibility of informing the government of the effects of its policies on the private sector and to ensure that the government continues to improve the business space," he said.

Explaining that NACCIMA was not a political group, he said the association would continue to inform government of its duty to improve the business environment and ensure that it provides an enabling environment that guarantees ease of doing business in the country.

He stressed that the interactive session with Obi was to ensure that the opinions and concerns of the association found their way into political sphere, especially during the electioneering year.

He pledged that the chamber was making efforts to ensure similar interactive sessions with presidential candidates of other political parties, adding that the session will provide opportunity for questions and answers as it affects businesses.

Udeagbala further disclosed that the questions centered on various issues such as insecurity, exchange rate management, port congestion, power sector reform, the on-going ASUU strike, petroleum subsidy and other topical issues.

MAN tasks FG to provide equipment for easy cargo inspection at ports

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has urged the Federal Government to provide scanners and other equipment that can help improve the delivery time for inspection of cargoes.

President of the association, Mansur Ahmed, who stated this at its 39th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the South West zone in Ibadan, Oyo State, said the Federal Government needed to inspect cargoes at ports by making scanners and other required equipment available in all the ports.

"It is important to improve on the time consumed in clearing containers and cargoes at the ports by ensuring that second trade facilitation equipment such as scanners are readily available.

"We also call on the govern-

ment to enforce, evaluate and monitor the implementation of the executive order 003 of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) to ensure compliance by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

He advised governments at all levels to work in synergy and carry stakeholders along in inventing appropriate strategies to improve and stabilize the country's economy.

Speaking, Acting Governor of Oyo State, Bayo Lawal, who charged manufacturers to create robust policies and partner with other agencies and stakeholders to boost the country's manufacturing sector, pledged that the Oyo State Government would continue to create a conducive environment for manufacturing and businesses to thrive in the state.

Reps flay CBN, summon Emefiele over N6.7tr subsidy payments

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

The National Assembly Committee investigating subsidy payments approved by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on behalf of the Federal Government has said its members are not convinced with the apex bank's explanation.

This is as the Apex bank refuted claims that it received N6.7 trillion in fuel subsidies not supported by any documents.

Governor of the CBN, Godwin Emefiele, disclosed this at a meeting of the House of Representatives Special Ad-hoc Committee set up to review Nigeria petroleum products subsidy regime between 2017 and 2021.

He told the legislators at the beginning of hearing of the inquiry that he could only respond to inquiries about the technical



Godwin Emefiele

aspects of subsidy payments, adding: "I will be able to provide answers here, but if they are outside the technical aspects of the subject's transactions, then

I will not be able to respond."

Emefiele, who was represented by CBN Deputy Director of Banking Services, Hussein Kagara, informed the legislators that the regulator was unable to print out the subsidy payment paperwork due to their size.

The CBN's claim was not well received by members of the committee, who felt disappointed.

A member of the committee, Mark Gbilah, New Nigeria People Party (NNPP) Benue State, disclosed that N6.7 trillion had been spent on subsidies in less than a year, adding that Emefiele should personally appear before the committee to address the matter with the Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

The committee, therefore, subpoenaed Emefiele to personally appear before the committee on its next sitting date.

FG nets N68b from beer, others in six months

• To begin new tariff on data, calls

The Federal Government through the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has collected over N68 billion between January and June 2022 from excise duties on beer, spirits and other alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and tobacco products, among others.

The NCS has also hinted that it will soon begin collecting the newly approved tariff on calls and data, as recently announced by the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed.

Excise duty is statutorily levied on the manufacture, sale and consumption of goods that fall under excise control, which include but not limited to beer, spirits, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and cigarettes, which are collected in all the 22 commands of the service across the country.

It has also within the six months period collected a total revenue of N1.3 trillion into the federation account, covering imports and excise duties, fees and levies.

This represents an increase of N299.4 billion or 28.83 per cent growth rate compared with the N1.003 trillion it collected in the same period of 2021.

Speaking while presenting the half year report of the service covering January to June 2022, National Public Relation Officer (PRO) of the service, Timi Bomod, a Deputy Comptroller, also disclosed that the customs commenced collections from extant traders producing carbonated and sugary drinks since June 2022, which was newly added under schedule five of the Common External Tariff (CET).

It was learnt that over N1 billion had so far been collected since its introduction in June.

He, however, announced that the service was yet to commence the collection of other revenues from the telecommunications sector, especially on data, as the digital network services were yet to be collected.

"He said: "The Nigeria Customs Service is expected to start collecting revenue on these products and services, as soon as the modalities for collection are put in place. Duties from these revenue sources are expected to boost our collections in the current year.

"Of the 42 free trade zones in Nigeria, only 25 are active with 15 of them operating in zone A, four in zone B, five in zone C and in zone D. In addition to providing employment opportunities for Nigerians, the special economic zones are expected to engender the transfer of technology, help build local capacity, provide viable market for other local producers of raw materials and increase the quality of goods, which can potentially be available in the local market on the payment of relevant duties and taxes," he stated.

On enforcement of anti-smuggling, he noted that there have been remarkable interventions in the anti-smuggling activities, adding that the efforts led to the seizure of various goods in the review period, as regulatory and policy infringements with total Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N39.2 billion.

Some of the goods include narcotics and other illicit

drugs with several bags of worth of N8.8 billion bags of foreign Parboiled rice with DPV of N8.3 billion and some illegally imported dangerous pharmaceuticals with DPV of N3.7 billion textiles made up of fabrics with DPV of N2.6 billion and motor vehicles with a duty paid value of N1.9 billion on illegal wild life-trafficking, anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism, he said.

He added that the NCS in collaboration with the United States of America embassy in Nigeria, the British and German governments have helped with the creation of a special wildlife office, which has spearheaded an intelligence-driven approach to curbing illicit trafficking and trading in endangered species.

"Their efforts have led to the arrest of 12 foreign and local suspects, the confiscation of 1,236.5kg of pangolin scales and 145.2 kg of ivory. All suspects have since been charged to court and await conviction. The Anti-Money Laundering Unit (AMLU) of the service has recorded tremendous success in the period under review.

"They made seizures of \$339,800, 12,000 Pounds Sterling, 3, 0113,500 RYD, 20,005 CFA and 133 Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards, seven persons have been arrested for alleged violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act and have been handled over to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for prosecution," he said.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government gave the NCS a revenue target of N1.03 trillion for the 2022 fiscal year, representing 78 per cent higher than the 2021 target.



LandWey gets ISO certification on quality management system

LandWey Investment Limited, a major player in Nigeria's real estate sector, has bagged the IAS accredited DMSL ISO 9001:2015 certification in recognition of its commitment, attainment and compliance with the requirements of international standards for the provision of site, services and residential developments for sale.

The certification followed a comprehensive audit and evaluation exercise conducted by the IAS-accredited Management Systems Conformity Body (MSCB-152) – DMSL in August 2022. The assessment listed Landwey as an organization providing sites & services and residential development for sale on the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) global search directory – iafcertsearch.org, the official directory for all accredited ISO-certified companies.

The ISO 9001:2015 certification applies to any organization, regardless of size or industry. More than one million organizations from more than 160 countries have applied the ISO 9001

standard requirements to their quality management systems.

Ms Adeshola Bello, Managing Director, LandWey, in a press briefing, on Monday, expressed her gratitude for the recent achievement.

She said: "Specifically, to become ISO 9001-certified, we have been independently assessed by the accredited certification body recognized globally, against ISO 9001:2015 requirements showing our commitment to quality assurance and customer satisfaction.

"This ISO certification demonstrates the commitment to our values in terms of excellence in delivery of products and services. Our processes, policies and business activities were audited to ensure compliance with the requirements of the standard. We are very excited about this achievement as we continue to grow our market share and make positive strides in the industry."

Applauding the efforts of the team in achieving this feat, Mrs Seun Eytayo, Chief Operating Officer, LandWey, said: "The ISO

9001:2015 certificate proves that LandWey demonstrates the ability and commitment to consistently provide quality products and services that meet our customer's satisfaction as well as regulatory requirements.

"Now, more than ever, we are committed to quality and excellence in the delivery of our products and services.

"As an ISO 9001:2015 certified company, LandWey will continue to follow the requirements, specifications and guidelines, set by the standard. Furthermore, we will ensure that we are consistently offering solutions that meet world-class standards.

"By achieving the ISO

9001:2015 certification, we are able to exhibit our commitment to providing quality service, to which we will dedicate ourselves to continuous improvement and development and keep investing in technology, processes, and procedures to achieve the same," Eytayo noted.

LandWey is a real estate investment and advisory services company with development projects operating within the commercial, retail and residential property segments. Its flagship project, Urban Prime One Estate, is a recipient of the 2021/2022 African Property Awards for Best Residential Development in Nigeria.



Ms Adeshola Bello

Land value in Banana Island rose by 100% in 3 years

By GENESIS ERIRIOMA

Nigeria's most expensive neighbourhood, Banana Island leads the pack of neighbourhoods in that class where land value has defied the poor state of the economy and has risen by 100% in 3 years.

The instability and uncertainty in Nigeria have had its toll on every sector of the economy with the real estate sector not left out with the rise in the price of land and building materials.

Even though all the macro-economic indicators beat the expectations and predictions of analysts, there has been an unprecedented rise in the prices for land across the upper end of the Lagos real estate market, especially the famous Banana Island.

Between 2020 and early 2022, the price of land in Banana Island has moved from N600,000 per square metre pre-COVID-19 to about N1.3 million, representing a little above 100 per cent increase.

Speaking on this development, Udo Okonjo, CEO, of Fine and Country West Africa, noted that the price increase was indifferent to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021.

"The interesting thing is that we saw a dramatic demand for land all across Ikoyi, especially Banana Island, during the pandemic, starting from around April 2020 to the dizzying heights the prices have taken by mid-2022," she said.

She further stated that besides infrastructure, which is top-notch on this Island, inflation and naira devaluation, which has given those with hard currencies buying advantage, have been fingered as the main drivers of the price increase adding that buyer psychology and profile are also major drivers.

"Banana Island was not an isolated case as other locations also saw price increases within the period under review. Within old Ikoyi and environs, she said, land prices went from between N380,000 per square

metre and N450,000 per square metre to a post-COVID 2022 average pricing of approximately N800,000 per square metre—N950,000 per square metre for the higher density roads, representing over 100 per cent increase."

Another location where land price has gone up is Lekki Phase 1 which, according to Okonjo, is traditional, a not-so-distant cousin' to Ikoyi as an upmarket location as "it benefits from the growth across the bridge."

"With average prices now at between N350,000 per square metre and N400,000 per square metre from pre-COVID prices of about N200,000 per square metre, buyers are definitely feeling the pressure here, especially as most mid-size developers scramble to acquire plots for new mini-size/cluster estates mid-size homes projects," she said.

Okonjo further explained that investors were putting money in real estate for reasons that included the need to diversify from the dwindling stock market and to protect their local currency reserves as a hedge against high inflation rates by securing appreciating assets with limited supply.

She stated that another reason was the increasing cost of creating new asset classes including investments in new businesses, or the difficulty in executing expansion plans along with the constraints and uncertainty around sourcing foreign exchange as an alternative hedge against devaluation.

"This means that most investors have begun exploring longer-term residential and commercial real estate developments, typically on a joint venture basis with experienced contractors/developers for the much bigger projects, by locking down these plots of land," she noted.

LAWMA gives deadline to obtain waste bins

By GENESIS ERIRIOMA

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of LAWMA, Mr Ibrahim Odumboni, at a Media parley in Lagos recently revealed that the Lagos State Wastes Management Authority (LAWMA) has given Lagosians up till the 1st of January, 2023 to acquire refuse bins in their homes or face the full wrath of the law for non-compliance.

He added that residents may also pay 50 percent more for the disposal of their refuse.

According to him, residents would be made to acquire the bins as from October 1 this year but was quick to point out, that a three months grace would be given to the residents with a view to complying with the directive.

He said that the grace would be to allow for total adherence to the directive, adding that after the expiration of the three months grace, those who fail to comply with the directive would be prosecuted as from the 1st of January, 2023.

Also speaking on a number of other issues, he lamented that the high cost of diesel was grossly affecting their operations noting that this development equally slowed down its schedule of work.

According to him, the state government has been magnanimous in cushioning the effect of this by providing subsidies to allow for efficient and effective operations by LAWMA. He further noted that with the influx of people into the state on a daily basis, the waste being generated has risen to about 13,000 metric tonnes daily.

According to him, efforts are at top gear in ensuring that the backlog of wastes in the state were cleared, adding that with the night operations being undertaken by its personnel, the state would



Mr Ibrahim Odumboni

be rid of refuse.

He pointed out that the PSP operators were doing all they could in ensuring that their trucks evacuate waste without much ado.

He said that its personnel move waste at night between 11 pm and 4 am daily just to ensure that the avalanche of refuse are cleared.

He was however, quick to add, that when some areas are cleared during the night operations, some people who operate early morning markets would generate another round of waste making it look like nothing happened earlier.

The President of the Association of Wastes Managers (AWAM), Mr David Oriyomi, in his remark, commended the MD of LAWMA and his team for their concerted effort at seeing that wastes were evacuated in the state.

While frowning at the high cost of diesel which he said was seriously affecting their operations, he appealed to the Federal Government to come to their aid by bringing its cost down so that they can function properly and efficiently.



Udo Okonjo

Best Western Plus Elomaz Hotel, Asaba.

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1 x 1	6,135.10	6,595.23
1 x 2	12,448.80	13,382.46
2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50

PUBLIC NOTICE

Obituary, Goodwill Message, Annual Reports & AGMS, Financial Statements

SIZE IN INCHES	AMOUNT (N)	TOTAL INCLUSIVE 7.5% VAT
1 x 1	5,664.59	6,089.43
1 x 2	11,294.45	12,141.54
2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09
3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04
4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17
5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71
6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25
6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99
6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11
7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11
7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67
7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38
7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77
8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92
8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48
8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95
8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52
8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02
9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99
9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81
9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69
9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02
9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86
10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21
10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28
10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16
10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42
11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01
11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24
14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70
14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40
14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52
HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38
FP 14.5 X 6	460,275.00	594,225.62

CORPORATE NOTICE

SIZE IN INCHES	AMOUNT (N)	TOTAL INCLUSIVE 7.5% VAT
1 x 1	4,587.47	4,931.53
1 x 2	9,174.94	9,863.07
2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64
3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20
4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60
5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34
6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41
6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90
6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94
7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48
7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21
7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48
7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71
8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54
8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05
8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80
8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23
8 x 6	250,284.32	269,911.09
9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44
9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68
9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71
9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10
9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11
10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02
10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23
10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25
10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48
11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37
11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19
14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84
14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79
HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50
14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79
FP14.5 X 5	423,373.39	455,126.39
Double Spread Half Page	832,371.68	894,805.68
Double Spread Full Page	1,334,669.15	1,434,769.344

PRODUCT, COMPULIFE AND PROPERTY

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1 x 1	3,786.98	4,071.00
1 x 2	7,573.97	8,142.02
2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03
3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05
4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70
5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09
6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10
7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61
8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14
9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95
10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02
14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61
5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13
6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67
7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18
8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80
6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41
7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90
8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082
10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22
14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73
14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88
7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93
8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40
9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66
11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91
11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08
HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89
FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72

SPECIAL POSITIONS

SIZE IN INCHES	AMOUNT (N)	TOTAL INCLUSIVE 7.5% VAT
Earpiece Front Page 1x2	201,875.00	217,015.62
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Earpiece Front Page 3x2	593,750.00	638,281.25
Earpiece Back Page 2x2	409,687.50	440,414.06
Earpiece Back Page 3x2	628,187.50	675,301.56
Inside Earpiece 2x2	199,500.00	214,462.50
Inside Earpiece 3x2	285,000.00	307,325.00
Centre Spread	1,795,500.00	1,930,162.50
Double Spread	1,558,000.00	1,674,850.00
Centre Spread (HP)	1,017,063.80	1,093,343.59
Double Spread (HP)	741,000.00	796,575.00
Page 2 (Full Page)	1,420,250.00	1,526,768.75
Page 3 (Full Page)	1,311,000.00	1,409,325.00
Page 4 (Full Page)	1,187,500.00	1,276,562.50
Page 5 (Full Page)	1,064,000.00	1,143,800.00
Page 6 (Full Page)	940,500.00	993,937.50
Page 7 (Full Page)	817,000.00	878,275.00
Page 8 (Full Page)	750,000.00	806,787.50
Page 9 (Full Page)	674,500.00	725,087.00
Wrap around 1 Front Strip 1 Back Strip 4 Full Page Pull Out	25,650,000.00	27,573,750.00
4x6 Front Page	5,187,000.00	5,576,025.00
6x6 Front Page	6,982,500.00	7,506,187.50
7x6 Front Page	9,975,000.00	10,723,220.00
10x6 Front Page	14,250,000.00	15,318,750.00
FP (Strip) 2x6	641,891.25	690,033.09
BP (Strip) 2x6	625,452.64	670,319.08
Back Page 10x6	5,320,000.00	5,782,750.00
ROP 2x12	771,400.00	829,255.00
ROP (Strip) 2x6 Colour	266,000.00	285,950.00
ROP (Strip) 2.6 (B/W)	717,000.00	771,000.00
3x6 Front Page	1,140,000.00	1,225,500.00
2x6 Under Mast Head	3,990,000.00	4,289,250.00
12x2 Front Page	4,788,000.00	5,147,100.00

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Kudirat Ogunro: Exploring acting and herbs

Kudirat Ogunro is one of the finest fast-rising actresses in the Yoruba movie industry. Besides being an actress, she deals on herbal medicines and that is how she got the name "Kudi Alagbo". In this interview with OMONIYI ALLI, she bares it all.

Q: To start with, how did acting begin for you?

A: It's been over 12 years. First, Iyabo Ojo is my boss. I started from hairdressing to acting. I love acting so I learnt from Iyabo Ojo. She had a salon at Ilupeju and I was one of her hairstylists back then. I love her movies a lot, so I walked up to her one day and told her I have an interest in acting and she advised me and put me through what it entails. From there I started following her to locations and assisting her with things. One day she called me up and said they will give me scripts; I was really surprised. She even gave me a sub lead in the movie, I was more than surprised. I did it so well and that was how my journey started. I acted alongside Liz Da Silva, which was in 2009, I made it look so real and they were impressed. I still do my hairstylist work and herbs alongside acting.

Q: How have you been juggling business, acting, and motherhood?

A: It has not been easy because acting takes a lot of time. I love money a lot and that is why I work so hard to make my money. So far I have produced 3 movies, She Boy, Okan Dudu and Abomination.

Q: How did you come about the Herbs thing?

A: My real name is Kudirat Ogunro, it was when I started the herbs business that people started calling me Kudirat Alagbo. I was born and brought up in an Agbo lineage. It is a family thing,

we all know lots about herbs and roots, my maternal grandparents all sell herbs. All my sisters also sell herbs, and my mother too. I have been selling since I was little, but my love for acting took me away from the business for a while, but I went back during the pandemic. Let me explain everything one after the other.

The hairdressing stuff started when I was in school, I got pregnant, people kept giving me this funny look on street, wondering why I got pregnant while still in school and normally, the crowd at the herb shop is usually much and they all keep giving me a usual look, it was becoming very embarrassing for me. That was how I stopped going to the herb shop, then I went to learn hair styling. After I had my baby, the first shop I went to work as a trained hairstylist was Auntie Iyabo Ojo's shop and that was how my journey into the movie industry started too. Then during the pandemic, and there was a lockdown, I detest being idle, I am a hardworking person, I like working and I hate being a liability to anybody, so I decided to do something useful with my time. I have an Instagram account for selling wigs, so I changed the name to Kudi Alagbo. My mother also encouraged me, she was like people that don't even know much about herbs are selling it, talk more to me that have vast knowledge about it, I know a lot about roots and herbs.

That was how I took my phone, and did a video about the unveiling of the herbs business, immediately people

started ordering and paying for herbs and that encouraged me a lot. And that was how the herb business started and this year may make it a year since I started the business.

Q: The business of herbs is wide; what aspect of it are you focused on?

A: I actually don't sell one particular product; I treat different ailments for people and before doing that, I ask questions in regards to the sickness or ailment before prescribing herbs to clients. I don't soak herbs; I sell roots and leaves to patients. Once a patient, I will tell him or her to go and see a doctor, run a test, after the result of the test then I can tell the person the ideal herbs to take to cure that particular sickness. I also check, if the patient has been taking drugs prescribed by the doctor, he or she will need to finish using that first, because we can't mix the two together. We treat Arthritis, typhoid, malaria, diabetes and a lot of other illnesses that are not even common.

Q: So besides being a family thing, did you go to learn more about herbs elsewhere before you started the business fully?

A: I was born into it, and when I was little, I followed my mum everywhere, so I already have a vast knowledge about roots and herbs. Also at times when I come across cases that are a bit tough, my mum is with me, I consult her because

she still sells herbs and roots too. So, I am covered everywhere, I am grounded in what I am doing.

Q: You talked about having a child at a very tender age, so do you have plans of settling down anytime soon?

A: There is no man outside, (laughs!!!) I just pray for a good man to come my way. I am patiently waiting; God's time is the best.

Q: How has life been for you as a single mum?

A: It is not easy at all, carrying different responsibilities, paying fees, paying rent and lots of others. You can't even dare owe rents in Lagos, they will make life miserable for you. My daughter is presently at the university and I believe you know what that entails. She is 19 years old.

Q: Does she wish to become an actress like you someday?

A: No, she doesn't like acting at all. But she is very hardworking like me and takes good care of me. At times if I tell her to follow me to locations she bluntly turns me down.

Q: Which has been your most challenging movie so far?

A: It is titled Tembilla". It is an old skool comedy, not my personal movie though. I played a sub-lead role in the movie and the role was very challenging for me.



AMAA 2022: College screeners consider 332 entries ahead of jury

African Movie Academy Award's College of Screeners is currently in camp to consider entries that will make the cut for the 2022 edition of the continental recognition system for filmmakers.

Dr Shaibu Husseini who has chaired the College of Screeners for many years and a member of the Board of Jurors told newsmen that 332 films were brought before the screeners after the pre-election process.

The Screening and pre-election started in June to eliminate entries that didn't meet requirements.

Husseini added that the College of Screeners is the last and fifth state of screening in AMAA before selected films are passed to the Board of Jurors.

The Chairman of Board of Jurors for AMAA 2022 is Zimbabwean, Keith Shiri.

The Jurors are expected to announce the nominations for all the over 20 categories at

a ceremony, in September while the Awards ceremony is slated for October and will be hosted by the Lagos State Government.

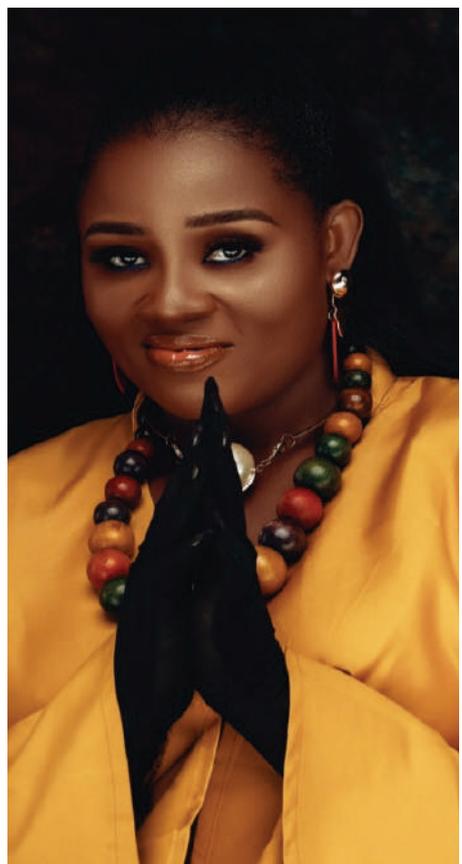
Dr Husseini said, "We have Ten (10) members in the college this year; 6 from other countries (Kenya, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Côte D'Ivoire, and Ghana) and 4 from Nigeria. Dr Cornel Onyekaba of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos is chairman of the College while Wangechi Murange from Kenya is Vice Chairman of the College."

AMAA, a continental award for motion picture practitioners, started in Nigeria in 2005 and has become the longest unbroken award system in Africa for straight 18 years.

The award ceremony was held in South Africa in 2015 for the first time and also in Rwanda in 2017 while the nomination parties for previous editions have been held in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Malawi and South Africa.



AMAA & Jurors



Funmi Ayinke clinches Peace Corps honours

39 years old Trained engineer and musician, Funmilayo Waheed-Adekojo aka FunmiAyinke, has been honoured with an ambassadorial role by the Peace Corps of Nigeria just as her upcoming EP is near its end. She was honoured as an Ambassador of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by the Peace Corps of Nigeria.

The CEO of FunmiAyinke Nigeria Limited, FunmiAyinke Humanity Foundation (FHF), and FunmiAyinke Records Label (FRL) underscores music as a strong channel to pass good messages across to her target audience saying, "If they can't read your caption, just sing it; they will listen."

As part of her re-branding process, the amazing songbird is almost done with a new body of work that plans to release soon.

As a noteworthy mechanical engineer who is making remarkable professional impacts in her industry, FunmiAyinke has been factually recognized and honoured as the Ambassador to the NORD Automobile Company.

Showmax collaborates with CANAL

● Set to premiere 'Blood Psalms' this September

Showmax has just dropped the trailer for Blood Psalms, an epic action-packed African fantasy series. A co-production with CANAL+, Blood Psalms will premiere on Showmax on 28 September 2022 with new episodes every Wednesday for 11 weeks.

Set in Ancient Africa, one thousand days after the fall of Atlantis, Blood Psalms explores the story of the five surviving houses of Kemet as they find themselves beset with fears of a prophesied end of days.

Bokang Phelane has the role of a lifetime as Princess Zazi, a fiercely determined teenage princess who must navigate primordial curses, long-standing ancestral vendettas, and her inexplicable role as the damning prophecy's chief harbinger.

Mothusi Magano, winner of four SAFTAs and an African Movie Academy Award (AMAA), plays her father, mad king Letsha, while SAFTA winner and 2022 DSTV Mzansi Viewers' Choice nominee, Zolisa Xaluva (Gomora, Knuckle City) plays her lover, General Toka, the head of her father's Akachi army.

"Blood Psalms is the biggest and most ambitious series we've ever made, completely unlike any other African series you've ever seen," says Nomsa Philiso, executive head: programming at MultiChoice. "We couldn't be more excited."

"This show was specifically created as a reimagining of ourselves as Africans, as an answer to 'Who are we?'," says Phelane. "It's done in a very entertaining way, with a lot of drama and action."

The trailer gives first glimpses of the star-studded cast, which includes SAFTA winners Bongile Mantsai (Knuckle City), Hamilton Dlamini (Five Fingers For Marseilles), Hlubi

Mboya (Isidingo), S'dumo Mtshali (iNumber Number, Is'thunzi), Siv Ngesi (DAM), Thishiwe Ziqubu (The Imposter), and Warren Masemola (The Republic), as well as SAFTA nominees Enhle Mbali Mlotshwa (Rockville), Niza Jay (The Wound), Richard Lukunku (Happiness Is A Four-Letter Word), Sello Maake kaNcube (The Herd), Thando Thabethe (Reyka), Thembekile Komani (Knuckle City) and Zikhona Sodlaka (The Wife), not to mention AMAA nominee Faniswa Yisa (Knuckle City, DAM) and the likes of Faith Baloyi (Flatland), Lemogang Tsipa (Shaka Iembe), and Thabo Rametsi (Kalushi, Silverton Siege).

Show creators Layla Swart and Jahmil X.T. Qubeka from Yellowbone Entertainment was responsible for South Africa's 2020 Oscar entry, Knuckle City. The boxing drama was the most awarded film at the 2020 SAFTAs, where it

took home six awards, including Best Director for Qubeka and Best Editor for Swart, and the most nominated film at the 2020 AMAAs, where it won two awards.

"What we're trying to do is to reclaim the continent's history from an African perspective," says Swart. "Blood Psalms has elements of every African culture's mythology and looks-various tribes - the Akachi, the Uchawi, the Ku'ua, the Chini, and Great Nziwemabwe - as they migrated south from Kemet, which is now Egypt, and formed their cultures."

Shot in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and North West provinces, Blood Psalms is a Showmax Original in partnership with CANAL+, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Eastern Cape Economic Development Corporation (ECDC) and the MultiChoice Innovation Fund.



Victoria Daniel stirs controversies with sex role

Nigerian cinema lovers appear divided over Victoria Daniel's portrayal of Jennifer in the action-comedy, 'Money Miss Road', currently showing in cinemas. The role which had the fast-rising actress play the girlfriend of Joseph (Jide Kene Achufusi aka Swanky JKA) culminated in one of the most controversial sex scenes in mainstream Nollywood in recent times and has been eliciting reactions amongst the audience.

While some applauded the portrayal as real, others believe it was a little overboard. Collins Omoruyi, who watched the film at Kada Cinema Benin, said he liked the fact that Nollywood was improving on the trend of

showing ruffled bed sheets to portray sex. "I have followed Nollywood since the days of 'Glamour Girls' to the days of 'Dirty Secret' and I can tell you that in 'Money Miss Road', which I just watched, I like the fact that the industry is improving in their craft. The kiss in the movie looked real and the romance was steamy. The director did not leave the viewers to imagine what could have happened. It's a plus for the industry if you ask me".

For Segun Awakan, the role of Jennifer must have taken a lot of guts to perform in a society like Nigeria and demanded that the character should be paid handsomely. He said: "What came to my mind while watching the

movie at Viva Cinema, was the two partners. They have a lot of guts. I like it, but doubt if I would be able to act in that kind of role."

In an earlier interview, the director, Obi Emelonye had said the steamy sex scenes were deliberately positioned to add practicality to the story-telling. According to him, "In order to get it done to this extent, I allowed the actors to bond and kept only a few crucial crew members on the filming set."

'Money Miss Road', shot in locations at Abuja and Lagos was produced by Joy Odieta of Blue Pictures and features Oma Iyasara, Josh2funny, Charly Boy Oputa, Anthony Monjaro and Melvin Oduah.



Africa U21 Volleyball: Nigeria beat Libya, book semi-final spot

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

■ As Nimrod commends resilient team

Following a defeat to the host nation Tunisia, the Nigeria U21 Men's Volleyball team has reignited their blistering campaign in the ongoing African U21 Men's Nations' Volleyball Championship in Tunisia by qualifying for the semi-finals.

On Friday, the resilient Nigeria U21 team shrugged off the defeat to the host to spank another North African side, Libya in a five-set thriller at the quarter-finals.

Nigeria in the first set defeated the Libyans 25-20 to trigger retaliation from the North African side in the second set where they tallied the scoreline with an 18-25 win.

Following the tally, while focused on their goal of seeking a podium finish and clinching a continental tourney, Nigeria repeated the first set's result to lead the contest 2-1 which the Libyans U21 men's team restored to parity with a 22-25 narrow win in the fourth set.

However, the high-spirited Nigeria U21 side, who have been technically equipped to see off the Libyans, vibrated outstandingly in the fifth round with a 15-8 win.

Meanwhile, the President of the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF), Engr Musa Nimrod has praised the Nigeria U21 Men's Volleyball team for cementing their place in the semi-finals.

Nimrod said the federation is astonished by the grits the



players exhibited in the course of taming their opponent during the quarter-final clash.

According to the statement released by the federation, the President recalled that the players have broken the feat that seemed impossible four years ago when Nigeria hosted the same event.

"I want to commend the players for qualifying for the semifinals of the U21 Nations' Championship in Tunisia," Nimrod said.

"When Nigeria hosted the U21 Nations' Championship four years ago, we could not qualify for the next round. I am a happy man today that the team has surpassed their last outing," he added.

The NVBF President noted

that while processing the match, the Nigerian team demonstrated a high level of discipline, and grit despite chants from the intimidating crowd to see off the Libyans.

He, however, commended the coaching crew for doing a result-oriented tactical job that complemented the team's quarter-final victory.

Nimrod said, "I monitored the match and all I could see were boys who were ready to make the nation proud. They exhibited a high level of discipline, maturity and resilience in the face of stiff opposition from the intimidating crowd."

"The coaching crew also showed their tactical abilities by winning the fifth set despite

pressures," the NVBF President underlined.

Moreover, Nimrod, who doubles as the Secretary General of Confederation of African Volleyball (CAVB) Zone 3, charged the players to go all out in their semifinal match against the team that emerged from the contest between Cameroon/Egypt.

"Show no respect to any team in the semifinals; they may be good but we are better. The 2023 FIVB U21 Men's Ticket is in your hands and the Nigeria Volleyball Federation will support you when you secure the ticket," he added.

Nigeria U21 primary objective in the tournament is to secure a qualifying ticket to the FIVB World Cup.

Super Falcons coach's fate hangs in the balance

Following the performance of the Super Falcons, nine times champions of the Women's Africa Cup of Nations at the 12th edition of the continental tourney in Morocco, the Executive Committee of the Nigeria Football Federation has directed its sub-committee to review the assessment report.

Recall that the Super Falcons, in the bid for their tenth continental title in Morocco, were defeated 1-0 in their opening game to later winners of the event South Africa in the group stage but were able to progress to the quarter-finals having garnered six points from consecutive wins against Botswana and Burundi.

Accordingly, the Super Falcons scheduled a quarter-final clash against fellow West African side, Cameroon, at Stade Mohammed V but narrowly brushed off the Lionesses by a lone goal scored by Rasheedat Ajibade in the 56' to seal the World Cup ticket to Australia and New Zealand next year.

However, the curtain for a drawn WAFCON title was drawn in Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium as the Super Falcons conceded two red cards for wrongly timed tackles in the second half and prolonged the cracker into penalty shootouts where Morocco won 5-4.

In the communique yesterday, after listening to the head of the delegation that led the Super Falcons to the 2022 WAFCON event

in Morocco, the Executive Committee directed the Technical Development Sub-Committee to evaluate the capacity of the Nigeria senior women's football team technical crew.

The communique read in part: "Following a detailed presentation by the Head of Delegation of Nigeria team to the 12th Women Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco, the Executive Committee directed its Technical and Development Sub-Committee to hold a meeting and make recommendations on the way forward for the Senior Women National Team, Super Falcons, including but not limited to a thorough evaluation of the capability of the coaching crew to lead the team to a creditable performance at the FIFA World Cup finals in Australia and New Zealand next year."

Super Falcons resultantly, finished fourth in the continental tourney to the dismay of Nigerians after failing to cancel the own goal conceded by goalie Chiamaka Nnadozie in the 29' to hand the Copper Queens of Zambia a third-place finish.



Jules Kounde may not feature against Real Sociedad



With the match against Real Sociedad imminent, Barcelona are yet to register former Sevilla defender Jules Kounde for La Liga matches.

The Real Sociedad match is on Sunday at Estadio Anoeta but the Catalans though were able to register Robert Lewandowski and Raphinha before Rayo Vallecano's match, are finding it difficult to do the same for the defender over La Liga rules.

According to a report from Spain, Barcelona due to financial constraints, can only register Kounde if they sell any of their players to provide the financial leverage that would see the 23-year-old Frenchman feature in La Liga.

However, Blaugrana are optimistic that the time left would not be exceeded before Kounde will be handed the pass to square up at Anoeta. Barcelona have tried to

convince Gerard Pique and Sergio Busquets to review their contract but that has not yielded fruitful results as they resorted to seeing any imminent departures from Camp Nou that will ameliorate the challenge.

Chelsea are interested in Barcelona striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang which could provide an avenue for Kounde's registration but the Gabonese is yet to heed to the English topflight's interest as he has barely completed his eighth month in Catalunya since he left Arsenal in January.

Aside from Aubameyang, Juventus are an inch close to wrapping up the deal for Memphis Depay who joined the club on a free transfer from Olympique de Lyon last season.

Following the negotiations with Juventus over Depay, Barcelona were reported to have charged a fee for the Dutch player but the relationship that exists between both clubs have seen the Blaugrana benefited from the deal indirectly.

How this came about was from a deal executed two

years ago between the Old Lady and Catalans when Bosnia Miralem Pjanic moved to Camp Nou at the cost of €60 million plus variables. Barcelona in request for a fee for Depay, have decided to ask for a forfeiture of the variables left hanging from Pjanic's deal.

Depay's deal to Turin is already in an advanced stage which would be announced the moment both clubs ratify the process. However, a report from Spanish media asserts that Depay's departure will not be enough to grant Barcelona the leverage to register Kounde for La Liga.

Meanwhile, a report from Adria Soldevila on Que T'hi Jugues said that Kounde will be 'allowed to walk away for free if he is not registered by 31st August. Further, Barça will have to pay €2.5 million of the variables included in the player's contract'.

Despite the shortfalls, there is no time limit to register a player for La Liga as Kounde at the last minute can be given the nod to play should Barcelona find a solution in the nick of time.

Nigeria not on vindictive mission, says Yusuf

Super Eagles B Head Coach, Salisu Yusuf has stated unequivocally that the mission of the team is not to avenge the defeat of Nigeria by Ghana on the road to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The coach who took the Eagles B to a silver finish in 2018 in Morocco, said his current team is more concerned about qualifying for Algeria 2023 rather than aim for a 'revenge.'

"I won't say we are seeking to get revenge against Ghana because of what happened in the last game on the road to the Qatar World Cup," said Yusuf.

"We want to win and qualify for the final stage of the competition in Algeria next year. That is basically what we are pursuing."

"However, if we beat

them to the ticket, which we definitely hope to achieve, then whatever description anyone gives it should be a matter of choice," the coach said after a session at the training pitch of the MKO Abiola National Stadium in Abuja.

The Eagles B have intensified their workouts at the venue on a daily basis. The team played two friendly games against youth teams on Thursday as part of their build-up for the matches billed for 28th August in Cape Coast and 3rd September in Abuja.

Remo Stars goalkeeper Kayode Bankole joined the team late on Tuesday to keep the number of players still in camp at 34. Bankole was called in as a substitute for injured Victor Sochima of Rivers United.



2023 FIBA WC qualifiers: D'tigers open camp in Abidjan

As federal government dissolves interim committee

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

Ahead of the fourth window qualifiers for the 2023 FIBA World Cup, the Nigeria Basketball team, D'Tigers, will on Saturday, August 20, 2022, open camp in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to prepare themselves appropriately.

The head coach, Mike Brown, said this became necessary to mitigate the repeat of the slow starts in the first and second windows that led to a defeat to Cape Verde.

He noted that early preparation will go a long way in reinvigorating the players for the challenge.

In a statement to the media department of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Brown stressed that "knowing the task ahead in its quest to qualify for the world cup, the team needs to get more training under their belt before they face host, Côte d'Ivoire, on Friday, 26 at the 3,500 capacity Palais des Sports Treichville.

"Hopefully, with us getting there a little earlier, getting three or four practices under our belt, it will show a little bit of difference when it

comes to playing the games," the head coach added.

Currently fourth on the table, D'Tigers will play its opener against host- Cote d'Ivoire on 26 Friday, before facing Guinea a day after.

On Sunday, 28 August, the team will square up against Angola. The 2023 world cup takes place from 25 August to 10 September in Japan, Indonesia, and the Philippines

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development has dissolved the constituted interim committee to oversee basketball sports.

Recall that the federal government, in furtherance of the ban on Nigeria from all international basketball competitions, constituted an interim committee saddled with the responsibility to revamp the sports at the grassroots.

However, following the series of pleas and interventions, the federal government decided to rescind its decision that paved the way for the country to continue to fight for a world cup ticket.

In a statement released on Monday, 15 August, 2022, by Manga Mohammed, director of press, it said the services of



the interim committee are no longer needed and thanked them for the job done during their brief stay.

"The Federal Government in addressing the lingering crisis in the Nigeria Basketball Federation had cause to set up an Interim Management Committee on 4th June, 2022 following Nigeria's withdrawal from International competitions for two years.

"With the Federal Government's rescission from its earlier withdrawal of Nigeria Basketball from the International scene and relisting the NBBF beginning from Nigeria's participation in FIBA Basketball World

Cup 2023 Africa Qualifiers in Kigali, Rwanda, the continuation of the IMC is no longer necessary.

"The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development hereby announces the dissolution of the Interim Management Committee for Nigeria Basketball with immediate effect.

"The Ministry in the same connection, wishes to thank the Chairman and Members of the now defunct Committee for their invaluable services to the Basketball family and the Federal Republic of Nigeria," the statement concluded.

NFF elections: Electoral committee ready for the task at hand

The Chairman of the NFF Electoral Committee 2022, Aikhunegbe Anthony Malik (SAN) has declared that he and his team are ready to accomplish the task at hand with utmost integrity and credibility, saying transparency and diligence will be their watchwords.

Speaking on Friday (a day after the Congress of Nigeria Football constituted the NFF Electoral Committee and NFF Election Appeals Committee at its Annual General Assembly in Lagos), the Senior Advocate assured that the business of giving Nigeria a new NFF Executive Committee will be done without fear or favour, and within the 42-day time-span.

A native of Edo State, Senior Advocate Malik was born and brought up in Ibadan, where he had his primary and secondary education, and attended the University of Ibadan and the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. He has a master's degree in law and certificates in international criminal justice and administration as well as public prosecution.

A former special assistant to the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Malik was the best graduating student in the library, archival and information studies at the University of Ibadan in 1993.

At its 77th Annual General Assembly on Thursday, the NFF Congress set aside the provisions of the NFF Statutes 2010 and the NFF Electoral Code 2009 that provide for a certain duration between the time of the constitution of the Electoral Committee and the conduct of elections. This enabled the Congress to set up both the Electoral Committee and the Election Appeals Committee with a mandate for the conduct of elections on 30th September 2022 in Benin City.

NFF ELECTORAL COMMITTEE 2022:

Aikhunegbe Anthony Malik – SAN – (Chairman)
Justice Abdulkadir Zakarriya (Vice Chairman)
Babatunde Ogala – SAN – (Member)

Daha Umar Daura – Danburam – (Member)
Gambo Mamman (Member)

Alternate Members: Barr. Ifeanyi Dike; Barr. Ransom Ariyo

NFF ELECTION APPEALS COMMITTEE 2022:

Barr. Gandi Umar – mni – (Chairman)

Ayo Akindele – SAN – (Vice Chairman)
Rev. Obioman Onyeaghalala (Member)

Alternate Members: Barr. Chive Kaave; Barr. Idi Halidu Ali

NFF Presidency: I'm not seeking reelection, Pinnick assures NFF Executive Committee

■ NFF Executive Committee affirm Heartland's progression to Aiteo Cup semi-final

■ Commend Falconets for wonderful performance in Costa Rica

Following the drama that engulfed Nigerian Football over the refusal of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to hold the Annual General Assembly with an alleged sinister motive by the helmsman of Glass House to ensure elective congress does not hold to elongate his tenure until 2023, the NFF President Amaju Melvin Pinnick has stated he is not seeking reelection.

Pinnick said this on Thursday, August 18, 2022, at the meeting of the NFF Executive Committee in Best Western Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, to allay tensions that may have erupted from an alleged move to elongate his tenure beyond the stipulated time.

According to the NFF President whose declaration attracted huge applause from the board members present amid commendations for the success he has achieved so far in Nigerian football, Pinnick assured of his continuous support in developing Nigeria football including assisting his successor to succeed in office.

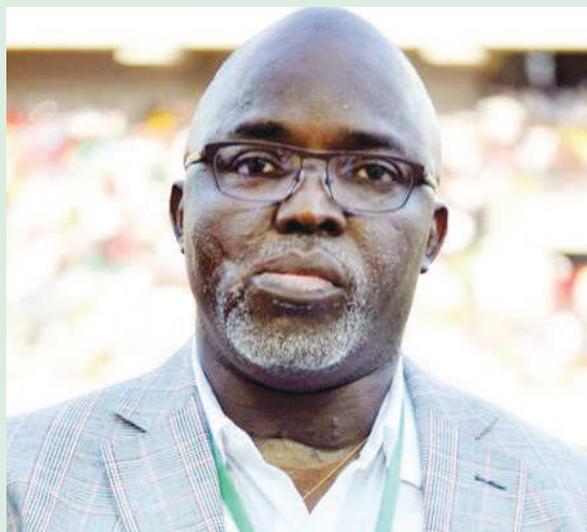
The Delta-born member International Federation of Association Football (FIFA)

council member had in April revealed would not be seeking a return following family pressure, so his declaration on Thursday was to reaffirm his earlier position as regards the NFF Presidency.

A statement by the NFF read in part: "After his solemn declaration that he would not be contesting to retain his seat as President at the next NFF Elective General Assembly, the Board greatly commended the President for his huge sacrifices for Nigeria Football in the past eight years, and wished him success and progress in his future endeavours and pursuits. The President stated that he would be ready at all times to offer his support, encouragement and wealth of experience to the incoming President and the Board."

Recall that Heartland of Owerri wrote a protest letter recently to the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, to complain of the ploy to unfairly constrain the club to replay the quarter-final match they have duly won against Katsina United at Ilorin.

"However, Heartland FC, who defeated Katsina FC in their quarter-final game in



Ilorin, are already through to the semi-finals. It was agreed that the competition (men's version) restarts after the NFF Annual General Assembly on Thursday, 18th August 2022, with the key objective of providing considerable

Consequently, the Executive Committee praised the U20 Women National Team, Falconets for its excellent performance at the ongoing FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in Costa Rica, at which the team won all three

matches of the group phase and qualified for the quarter-finals as group leader.

It noted that the achievement, as well as the triumphs of the U20 and U17 Boys in regional tournaments in Niger Republic and Ghana, and the qualification of the U17 Girls for the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup India 2022, is a marker of the dedication, vision and investment of the present NFF administration in youth development.

Rangers set to scout raw talents

■ Constitute recruitment committee

■ Extend search to hinterlands- Chukwu

Rangers International of Enugu are prepared to rejuvenate the squad ahead of the next Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) season and have constituted a committee to that effect.

The Flying Antelopes in the last NPFL season where Rivers United emerged as champions for the first time in the club's history, finished fifth on the log of 20, 2 points behind Kwara United on 56 points.

Consequent to finishing the season without silverware, knowing fully well the club last won the NPFL title seven years ago, the management of the club have swung into action to put modalities in place to bring back the Flying Antelopes to their glory days. In a report by the club's media officer, Norbert Okolie, Rangers have constituted a nine-man recruitment committee saddled with the responsibility to scout raw talents and headed by its technical director and manager, Christian Chukwu (MFR).

According to Chukwu, during the inaugural ceremony, the committee which also includes the technical adviser, Abdul Maikaba and Barrister Obinna Obuna, the secretary of the committee, should for no reason compromise on getting quality products.

"This is a ritual we have come to be known for before the start of any season," said the committee head.

"We have to do our best to see that we get the best possible quality players available to make the work of the coaches easier towards realizing our set target at the end of the season.

"I know it won't be an easy task as we will have to extend our search into the hinterland to see if we can get any 'Raw Diamond' that can be polished into a finished product for the team," Chukwu added.

Rangers technical director and manager, highlighting that coach Maikaba has spotted some players to add to his squad, admonished the committee to exploit their knowledge to achieve success in the scouting campaign.

"I urged us to put on our thinking caps to come up with the best result from this exercise," Chukwu continued.

"We know that the technical adviser has listed the players he would wish to join us for the coming season and we also know that we have some talents that have been spotted during the ended season hence, we have to work out the best set of players that will join the team for the new season," he insisted.



NVBF invites 23 players for African U21 Women's Nation's Championship

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

Ahead of next week's African U21 Women's Volleyball Nation's Championship in Tunisia, the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) invited 23 players to camp in Ahmadu Bello Stadium (ABS), Kaduna.

In a report by the NVBF, the Confederation of African Volleyball (CAVB) scheduled the championship to hold from August 26 - September 5, 2022, in Tunis, Tunisia.

This event comes after their male U21 counterpart would have completed their championship on 23 August hosted by the same Tunisia.

According to the head coach of the U21 women's volleyball team, Rakiya Mohammed, a product of the youth team that competed in national and continental tourneys, the best among the invited players will be selected for the competition.

Mohammed, a former U19 assistant coach, while being abreast with the importance of the championship, appreciated the NVBF for finding her worthy to lead the team to victory in Tunis.

"I am a product of underage championships in Nigeria and Africa; I know the essence of the U21

African Nation's Championships," said the newly appointed head coach.

"The coaching crew will select the best hands in camp when the championship proper is near.

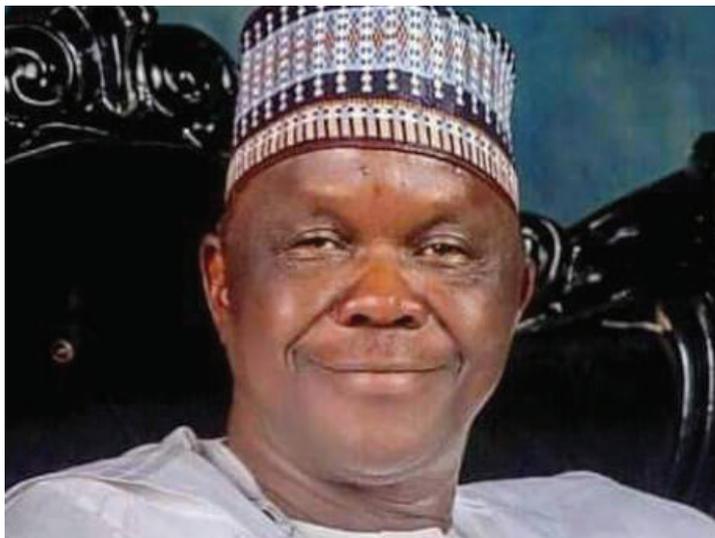
"I want to appreciate the members of the Nigeria Volleyball Federation for finding me worthy to handle the National U21 Women's Team; I promise not to let the volleyball community down," Mohammed assured.

Earlier, the Nigeria Volleyball Federation, on Wednesday, announced the appointment of Ex International, Rakiya Mohammed and Dennis Eleri as the head coach and assistant of the women's U21 team respectively.

NVBF further added that the national U21 women's team have been camped for a month at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium (ABS) in Kaduna before the announcement of the venue for the Nation's Championship.

While the board explained that the players were drawn from the different national volleyball divisions, Nigeria Volleyball Premier League, National Division 1 League and non-league teams, they noted that Mohammed, the newly appointed head coach, doubles as the coach of Plateau Rocks.

As coach assures on selecting best hands



LIST OF INVITED PLAYERS:
Queen Agbo (Kada Emeralds), Helen Ishaya (Zamfara State), Fanny Stephen (Kada Emeralds), Constance Onyegwu (Scorpion Spikers), Mary Ishaku (LifeCamp VC), Joy Idakwo (Olalomi SuperVeronica Angels), Blessing Ezeulo (Delta Force), Gyamfi (Kada Emeralds), Blessing Manyi (Taraba State), Rejoice Harrison (Spartans Spikers), Chioma Samuel (Kada Emeralds),

Queen Mary Jolasun (Kwara United), Vanessa Okike (Legend Spikers), Dorcas Ayuba (Kada Emeralds), Joy Oweniyi (Olalomi Super Angels), Lilian Sobere (Trailblazer Spikers), Rose Elipawa (COAS Spikers), Success Chinke (Heartland VC), Faiza Yahaya (Kada Emeralds), Lilian Zarka (Olalomi Super Angles), Fortuna Augustine (Jikwoyi Braves), Sarah Kabiru (Games Village) and Petra Christopher (Jikwoyi Braves)

Usyk is a quality operator, claims Fury

Ahead of the crucial heavyweight bout between Oleksandr Usyk and Anthony Joshua on Saturday, August 20, 2022, boxing coach Peter Fury said the Ukrainian is a natural-born fighter who has all the boxing qualities embedded in him.

Fury described Usyk as a proper fighter whose instincts and thoughts are overwhelmed with boxing.

According to the boxing coach, during an interview with Sky Sports, the heavyweight title holder, who defeated Anthony Joshua to claim three of the four heavyweight belts in September last year, is a quality operator.

"I'm not one of these to jump on the gravy train. I've always been impressed with Usyk, from a long time ago," Fury admitted.

"I've always known Usyk was the real deal.

"He's a good fighter, Usyk, talented and he's a natural fighter as well. That's the difference. That's why he's a quality operator.

"This guy can box in his sleep. He's born, bred to fight, this Usyk. So he's as real as it gets, he's a proper fighter in my eyes," the boxing coach added.

Joshua lost the fight against Usyk and immediately activated the clause for a rematch.

The British boxer, who defeated Wladimir Klitschko, is determined to reclaim his belts and had employed several trainers to prepare him adequately for the crucial fight in Saudi Arabia.

Fury believes that Joshua will come out with different tactics likewise Usyk who, according to the coach, knows what is coming.

"He should do, he's got different trainers and I'm sure they'll input a lot into it," he said.

"But ultimately, when that bell goes as he raises his game and changes it, so will Usyk. Usyk will know what's coming," Usyk added.

The boxing coach, preempting Joshua's tactics, explained that the British who turns 33 in October, will look to close the range in the rematch and this could have a repercussion.

He spotted that Joshua must develop the right frame of mind before going into the match and recalled that the last time he entered the ring, he was pretty not sure what he wanted.

"Joshua could be a different fighter, let his hands go, close the range more and just think, 'Right, let's get stuck in,'" Fury said.

"On the other hand, he could leave himself more vulnerable, more open and get caught. So again, it's the way you see it.

"He said to somebody when he climbed in the ring [before the first fight], 'How would you go about it?' That's hardly the right mentality going into anything," the coach continued.

"So he was already looking at it [thinking.] 'Jesus, I've got a mountain to climb here. This guy's very good. What am I going to do?' That's a recipe for disaster.

Elon Musk not interested in buying over Manchester United

The world's richest man on earth, Elon Musk, has refuted his tweet allegedly linking him with a move to acquire Manchester United FC.

Musk, whose tweet on Tuesday caused frenzy reactions on one of the world's most utilised social media platforms, said 'he was buying Manchester United'.

This singular tweet sent a shocker to Twitter users who were probably delighted to hear the news and asked further questions to ascertain if it was true.

In furtherance of Elon Musk's

tweet, records show that Twitter users retweeted it 160,000 times, commented 45,500 times and liked it 725,000 times.

However, to dazzle the growing tension over his sarcastic tweet, Musk who owns Tesla and Space X, affirmed he was only playing pranks.

"No, this is a long-running joke on Twitter. I'm not buying any sports teams," he responded to a tweet clarifying if he was serious about his proposition.

The billionaire said if he could consider owning a club it would be Manchester United, a club grew to

love while still a kid.

Musk added, "Although, if it were any team, it would be Man U. They were my fav team as a kid."

Consequent to the response by Elon Musk clarifying his position regarding his intentions over Manchester United, several of the Red Devils supporters would have been left downcasted.

A good proportion of the fans are not happy with the performance of the club and would welcome a move by the billionaire to take over ownership from the Glazers family.

In 2021, there was a growing outrage against club owners after United dropped drastically in form and were unable to compete with top Premier League clubs for major trophies, with several appeals to Musk to buy over the club.

According to Daily Mail, Andy Goldstein, a broadcaster and Manchester United fan, appealed to Musk to retract his offer to buy Twitter, and instead buy the Old Trafford side earlier this year.

"Elon, Elon. Retract your offer. Buy Manchester United. Spend £2 billion on the best players in the world. Win

everything. And then boast about it on Twitter," he said.

Another fan wrote: "Please buy Man Utd. All Man Utd fans would love it. Our club is currently being destroyed by the Glazer family. please. #GlazersOut."

Another added: "You're a top business man who fixes companies. Can you buy @ManUtd? The company needs fixing and you're the man to do it. Also, free sponsorship for yourself too!"

"Buy Manchester United, spend a few billion on the best players in the world, put tesla and spacex on the jerseys, therefore, associating the brand with success and victory and winning every trophy imaginable with club that has already won everything for 150 years," another said.

Manchester United have started the new season on a wrong footing with the club presently wallowing at the bottom of the Premier League after enduring two defeats with that of Brentford most unfortunate.

Moreover, Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk is 'trying to exit a \$44bn agreement to buy the social media company, which has taken him to court' according to Daily Mail.

