Emefiele Woos Foreign Investors in US, Markets Nigeria's Potential

IMF worries about food insecurity in Nigeria

Obinna Chima, Eromosele Abiodun, Funke Olaode and **Nume Ekeghe** in Washington DC

Following the global economic challenge exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Godwin Emefiele has invited foreign investors to consider Nigeria and other countries in Africa, stressing that they are choice investment destinations.

Emefiele stated this while receiving the EuroKnowledge Award conferred on him by FIN Banking on Emerging Markets Forum on the sidelines of the ongoing International Monetary Fund/World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington DC. United States.

This is as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) decried what it described as the emerging food crisis in Nigeria and in other Sub-Saharan African countries, urging that there should be more targeted support to the vulnerable.

The IMF disclosed this in its Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), titled, "Living on the Edge," released

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Ayu Admits Collecting N100m from Governor, Denies N1bn... Page 6

THISDAY

TRUTH & REASON

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L-R: 2022 joint winner of The Nigeria Prize for Science, Dr. Shehu Ado; NLNG's Deputy MD, Olalekan Ogunleye; joint winner, Dr. Muhydideen Oyekunle; former president Olusegun Obasanjo; joint winner, Dr. Sesan Peter Ayodele; NLNG's MD, Philip Mshelbila; and joint winner, Dr. Emmanuel Olatomilola at the NLNG Grand Award Night in Lagos...yesterday

Terrorism Surge: Zamfara Shuts 2 LGs

Matawalle: We have intelligence of infiltration from Niger Republic

Bennett Oghifo

The Zamfara State Government has shut two local government areas (Anka and Bukkuyum) and suspended all political activities

Continued on page 5

FG: We'll Take Final Decision on Nnamdi Kanu Very Soon

Warns Akeredolu, Ortom, against procuring AK-47 for security outfits Orders re-opening of Dangote Cement factory at Obajana Mandates NSA, SGF to probe crude oil theft

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The federal government has disclosed that it would soon come up with a final decision on the on-going terrorism trial of the leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu.

This was one of the resolutions at the National Security Council (NSC) meeting held yesterday at the State House, Abuja with President Muhammadu Buhari presiding.

Delivering judgment last Thursday, a three-member panel of the appellate court, led by Hanatu Sankey, discharged Kanu, ruling that the federal government flouted the Terrorism Act, Extradition Act and also violated international

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PEACE AT LAST...

L-R: Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State; Chairman and CEO of the Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote; Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State; Chief of Staff to the President, Professor Ibrahim Gambari; and the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Abdullahi Adamu, during a peace meeting in Abuja, over the Obajana Cement plant...yesterday

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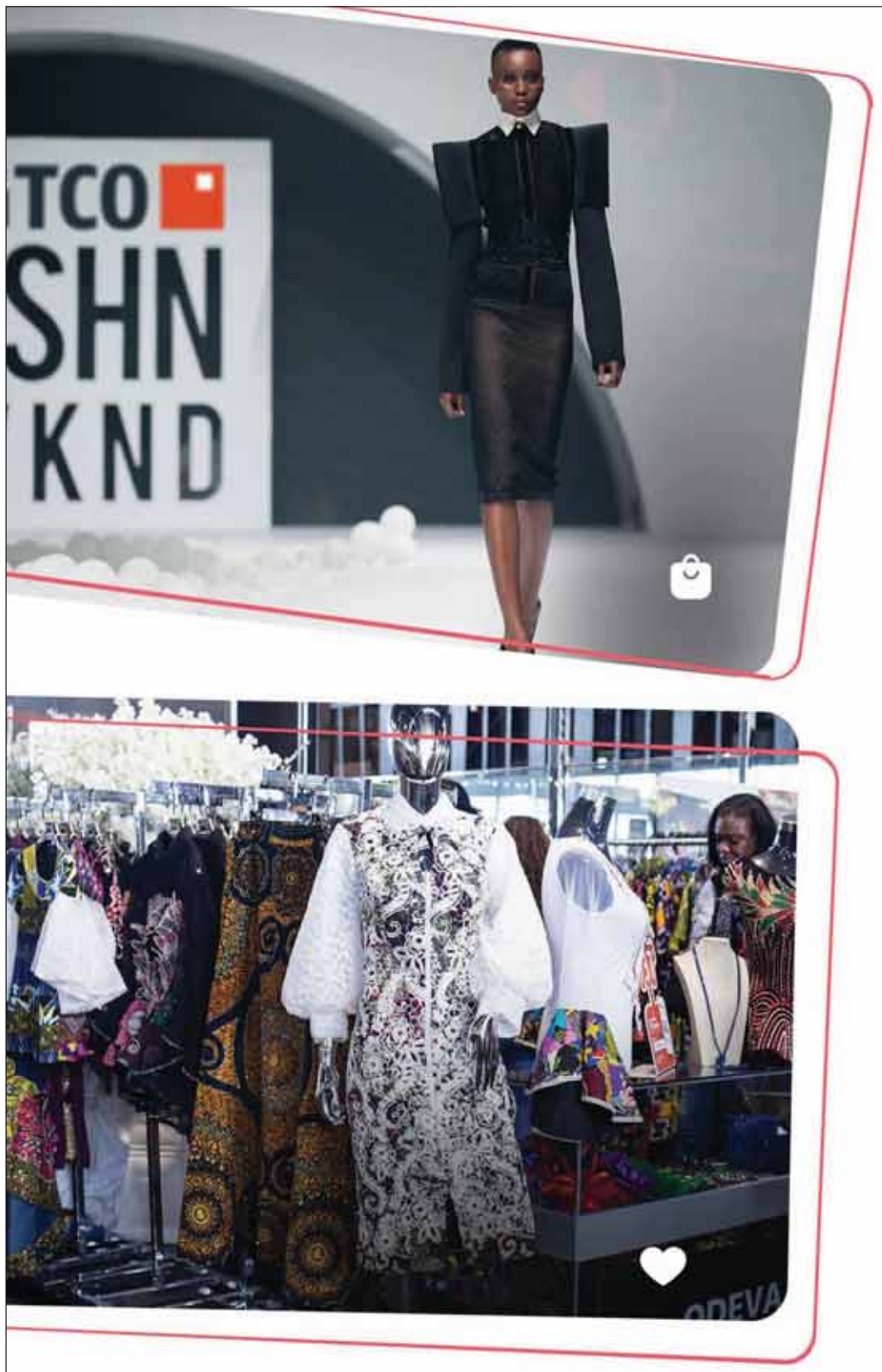
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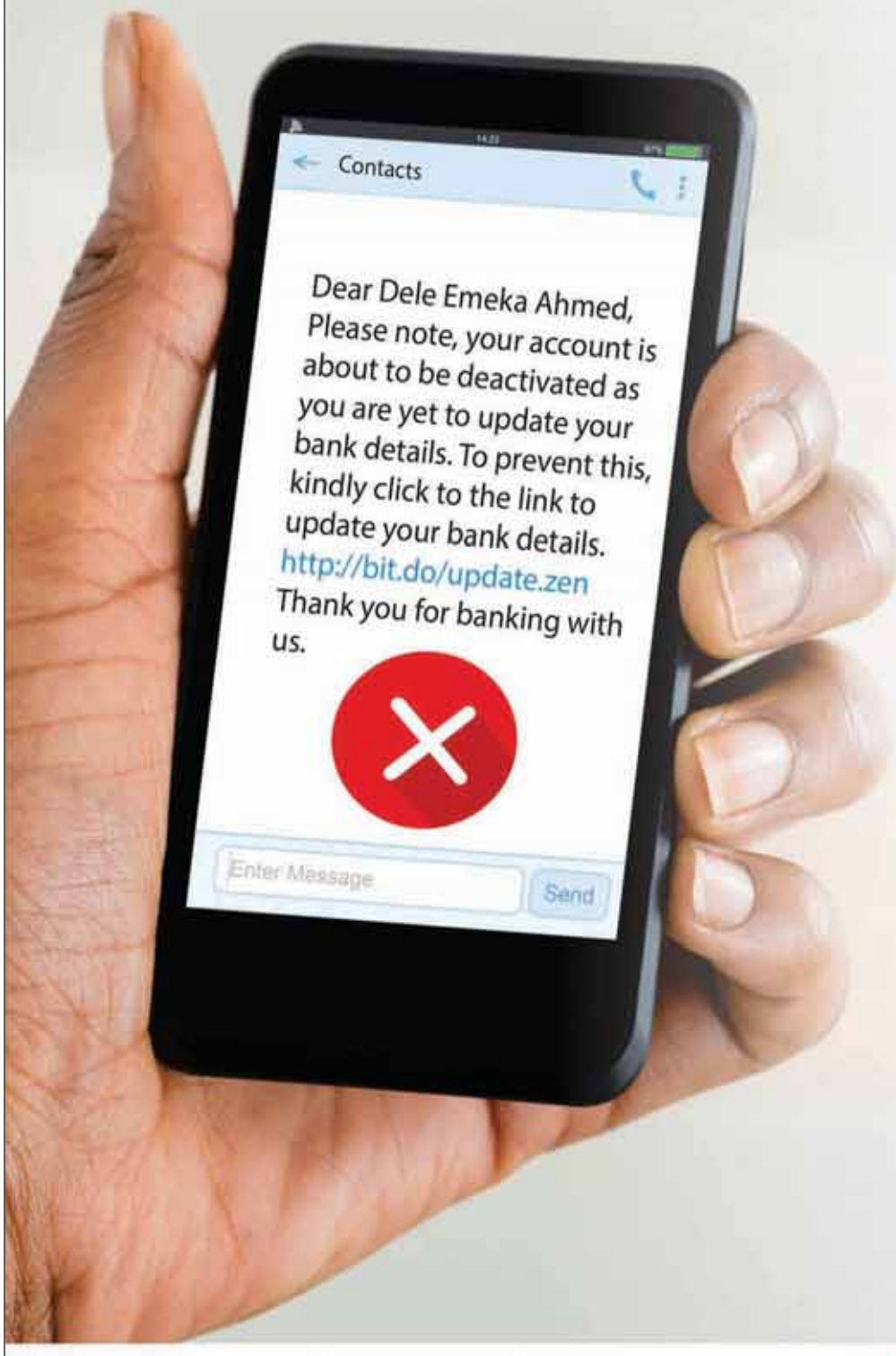
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ASUU: Issues in Dispute Yet to Be Satisfactorily Addressed

● *Reluctantly suspends strike, directs lecturers to resume immediately*

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) yesterday suspended its eight-month strike, and directed lecturers to resume immediately.

The decision was taken after its National Executive Council meeting held at the ASUU secretariat in Abuja. But the union noted in a press statement that the issues in its disputes with the federal government had not been well addressed.

ASUU embarked on strike action on February 14, 2022 to protest the non-implementation of the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding reached with it by the federal government.

The press statement, which was signed by the National President of the union, Professor Emmanuel Osodeke, however, hailed the intervention of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila.

The statement reads, "The National Industrial Court, in its wisdom, gave an order compelling ASUU to resume work pending the determination of the substantive suit. Given the nature of the order, and in the opinion of our counsel, there was the need to appeal the interlocutory injunction granted against our union at the Court of Appeal.

"The Court of Appeal acknowledged the validity of the grounds of the union's appeal but still upheld the order of the lower court and ordered our union to comply with the ruling of the lower court as a condition precedent for the appeal to be heard.

"NEC noted the series of meetings with the leadership of the House of Representatives led by the Hon. Speaker, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, as well as intervention efforts of other well-meaning Nigerians both within and outside the government and the progress made so far."

Speaking further on the status of negotiations, the union said, "While appreciating the commendable efforts of the leadership of the House of Representatives and other patriotic Nigerians who waded into the matter, NEC noted with regret that the issues in dispute were yet to be satisfactorily addressed.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the issues include: Funding for Revitalisation of public universities, Earned Academic Allowances, Proliferation of public Universities, Visitation Panels/Release of White Papers

"University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) as a broad-spectrum software to stop illegality and provide for an alternative payment platform in the university system. Renegotiation of the 2009 Agreement.

"However, as a law-abiding union and in deference to appeals by the President, and in recognition of the efforts of Gbajabiamila, and other well-meaning Nigerians, ASUU NEC resolved to suspend the strike action embarked upon on February 14, 2022. Consequently, all members of ASUU are hereby directed to resume all services hitherto withdrawn with effect from 12:01 on Friday (yesterday), October 14, 2022."

FG Apologises to Parents, Students

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has apologised to all students and parents over the prolonged ASUU strike that ended yesterday.

It expressed gratitude to all Nigerians who participated in various ways in the negotiations leading to the calling off of the strike.

A statement by the Deputy Director Press in the Ministry, Olajide Oshundun, yesterday assured Nigerians that with the steps the federal government is taking, Nigerian students will be saved from the unpalatable experience of intermittent, prolonged industrial actions in future.

"In a special way, the Minister of Labour recognises the patriotic efforts of the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, the former President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Rev. Supo Ayokunle and all members of Nigeria Inter Religious Council (NIREC) whose wisdom and intervention raised a ray of hope while the strike was at infancy but for ASUU's intransigence to negotiation.

"We were forced to migrate the matter to the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) created by the 1999 Constitution as amended, for the settlement of industrial disputes because every channel of negotiation including the tripartite plus, in which eminent Nigerians participated failed. We were left with no other option than to trigger Section 17 of the Trade Disputes Act .CAP T8, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 on dispute resolution mechanism in seeking the intervention of the National Industrial Court.

"It is our hope that now that the strike has been called off, the National Industrial Court will deal with the substantive issues as contained in the referral letter by the Honourable Minister. This is to ensure that justice is given to all parties including ASUU and their employers- the Federal Ministry of Education -who acts on behalf of the federal government."

FG: WE'LL TAKE FINAL DECISION ON NNAMDI KANU VERY SOON

conventions and treaties guiding extraditions, thus, breaching the rights of the respondent.

The court held that having illegally and forcefully renditioned the appellant, the trial court was stripped of jurisdiction to continue to try Kanu.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, the Minister of Police Affairs, Mohammed Maigari Dingyadi, said the Council resolved to take an appropriate step on the ruling and Kanu's further trial.

He said: "The issue of Kanu was raised and Council was briefed on the state of things on the matter and it was observed that Kanu was discharged, but he was not acquitted. So, the government is considering the appropriate action to be taken on the matter and Nigerians will be notified of the position that will finally be taken in due course.

The Security Council also directed that the Dangote Cement factory at Obajana in Kogi State should be re-opened for business.

The council asked the parties involved to seek judicial determination of the ownership of the cement factory.

Interior Minister, Rauf Aregbesola, who also briefed newsmen, said the commitment of government towards resolving the issue legally, made the Council to order its re-opening.

Aregbesola said: "The council noted the development in Kogi and has ordered the reopening of the cement factory; it has also advised that all issues relating to that industry or factory should be resolved legally. Nobody must take law into their hands, either as a government or an individual.

"We are committed to guaranteeing and providing employment for Nigerians, so whatever will, in any way, hinder that must be discouraged. So, in that regard, the cement industry in Obajana must be reopened and all issues that are in dispute should be resolved legally."

Aregbesola also disclosed that the Council had mandated the National Security Adviser and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to set up a strong team to investigate the crude oil theft in the Niger Delta and report back to it.

"Now, on the issue of crude oil theft, the Council has decided that the National Security Adviser should put in place a strong team to investigate all issues relating to the discoveries of either abandoned oil pipelines, or illegal crude oil pipelines, so as to determine, one, the extent of such illegalities and perpetrators of such, and put a report for the Council and the president.

"That is, a committee will be set up by the NSA, in conjunction with the SGF, to investigate this issue of oil bunkering because of the serious economic importance and to ensure that all those involved are brought to book."

On his part, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Lucky Irabor told newsmen that the Council was also briefed that 101 ex-combatants who were taken to Operation Safe Corridor are currently undergoing the process of de-radicalisation at the center.

According to him: "These were ex-combatants that have been in detention for several years, some of whom have served their terms. Others were those that were awaiting trial, but because of the long time that they've been involved and in line with the protocol or the procedure for handling anyone who has been exposed to terrorism or related offenses, the procedure for them to be taken through a process of de-radicalisation."

Irabor also stated that states have no power to procure automatic weapons for their security outfits.

While inaugurating the first batch of personnel of the state's security outfit last August, Governor Samuel Ortom had said sophisticated weapons would be provided for them.

On his part, Rotimi Akeredolu, governor of Ondo, in September said the state would procure arms for operatives of the Western Nigeria Security Network, codenamed Amotekun.

Speaking on the development, Irabor said the licence for the procurement of automatic weapons - such as AK-47 - lies with the agencies of the federal government.

He said: "Firearms fall into two major categories. You have the automatic weapons and the ones that we may classify as non-automatic weapons, which some of you may even have if you have the appropriate licences - talking about the pump action which are the very common ones, and sometimes even the dane guns some of the hunters use.

"What is involved in the class mentioned has to do with automatic weapons. There's no state that has been given a licence for that. So, you do not ask for what you do not have power to acquire."

Others at the security meeting were Vice President Yemi Osinbajo; Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha; the National Security Adviser, Maj. Gen. Babagana Monguno (retd.), the Chief of Staff to the President, Professor Ibrahim Gambari; Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Farouk Yahaya; Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Awwal Gambo; the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Isiaka Amao and the Minister of Defence, Maj. Gen. Bashir Magashi (retd.).

Also, in attendance were the Inspector-General of Police, Alkali Usman; the Director-General of the Department of State Service, Yusuf Bichi; and the Director-General of the National Intelligence Agency, Ahmed Abubakar and the Chief of Defence Intelligence, Maj. Gen. Samuel Adebayo.

EMEFIELE WOOS FOREIGN INVESTORS IN US, MARKETS NIGERIA'S POTENTIAL

yesterday.

Speaking at the award, Emefiele listed Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Egypt as countries that investors should consider.

The apex bank governor added that business confidence in the continent was on the rise

According to him, "Today, we talk about the frontier market and what I keep telling people is that as you continue thinking about growth opportunities in the world and you are looking at Africa, naturally you will have to think about some of the big economies in Africa.

"Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Egypt are economies that you would need to think about. And I dare say these economies hold a lot of strong opportunities with opportunities for high yields and profitable projects and I can only seize this opportunity to encourage our friends in the foreign investment community to continue to take a look at Africa. Africa years for growth and development.

"We cannot do this alone; we will continue to need the support of the rest of the world. But I can assure all of us that as you do this, the opportunities are there and you will not regret taking the opportunities.

"The opportunities are there; I can only continue to say let's give the support to Africa, let's give the support to Nigeria. We should all continue to work together for the growth, not just for our individual countries but for Africa as a whole," the CBN governor added.

Emefiele dedicated the award to his colleagues at the CBN as well as other Nigerians.

"When your credentials and all you have done is being read out to the public, you begin to wonder how you managed to do all these. But what this does is to encourage you to do more.

"When we talk about the challenges that we are currently facing, I can tell you that it hasn't been easy in the last seven and half years, where we have gone through two recessions.

"One between 2015 and 2016 and another short-lived one in the second and third quarter 2021 during the period of COVID-19. Usually as the Governor of a Central Bank of Nigeria, you never pray to go through a recession twice but we have managed to go through this with a lot of hard work and support from our colleagues at the CBN, all our departments and members of our monetary policy meeting. We really want to thank all of you.

"This award is not just for me, it is meant for all of us who have worked hard in the last eight and half years to keep Nigeria strong. To keep the Nigerian economy strong and going."

The IMF in its report stated: "123 million people or 12 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's population are expected to face acute food insecurity, two-thirds of the worldwide total, one-third of which have become acutely food insecure since the start of the pandemic.

"And of these, a large proportion are children in circumstances in which chronic hunger can permanently curtail future health and prospects. The rapid increase in food insecurity over the past two years is mainly due to the fallout from the pandemic and the recent war in Ukraine, a worsening security situation in some parts of the region, a four-season drought in the Horn of Africa, and other climate shocks.

"Areas of particular concern include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, some parts of Kenya, and countries in the Sahel." It further added, "given the size of the problem, countries should enhance their capacity to expand their targeted support at the scale or pace needed."

Commenting, the Director, African Department, IMF, Abebe Aemro Selassie, said: "Nigeria could have benefited even more if there were more targeted ways of supporting people rather than the generalised fuel subsidies that are being used at the moment. So, oil prices have gone up quite significantly, but the amount of resources that are accruing to the budgets, to external accounts have been very circumscribed as a result of the very generalised subsidy that the country has.

"I think we have been long on record, flagging that generalised subsidies like this one are extremely costly. Second, they're extremely regressive. So, they support families and households that are richer than the poorer households. A better policy in our view would be to find a way to redirect these resources to the most vulnerable households and supplement that with investments in health and education that Nigerians so desperately need."

He stated that the political will has been to retain the fuel subsidies but would continue to advise against it.

Selassie added that the subsidy spend could be targeted directly to the vulnerable.

He added: "Ultimately, it is a political decision for Nigeria, and if that is how the country decides how resources should be used, that's how it will be used. But, you know, our role here is to flag that there are better options that could be done where economic efficiency could be facilitated in Nigeria.

"If we keep talking as an institution about climate change, it is exactly because of what you're highlighting now. It is not a theoretical thing for our region but it is something that is impacting people in real-time."

He mentioned that the IMF is continually at the forefront of supporting SSA countries with funds to cushion the food crisis with its new programmed food shock financing window.

He said: "So, we are very conscious of that and how we can help an institution, as well as the advocacy we continue to make about every country in the world trying to do its utmost to reduce its footprint on climate change and not to contribute to global warming. We continue that advocacy and then, of course, use our policy advice and financing role to help countries as they are being impacted by this."

TERRORISM SURGE: ZAMFARA SHUTS 2 LGS, SUSPENDS ALL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

in the state until further notice following a surge in killings and kidnapping by terrorists.

Governor Bello Matawalle, who spoke to THISDAY last night, said the government was alerted to massive infiltration of the state by terrorists from Niger Republic, resulting in the surge in killings.

He said the restrictions would allow the military to flush out the terrorists.

The state's Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Ibrahim Dosara Magaji, who announced the decision to shut down the two local governments yesterday, said the government "is saddened and worried" about the resurgence of the activities of bandits and the recent killings of some innocent people in several local government areas in the state.

He said the government approved the recommendations as presented by the state's Security Council, aimed at curtailing the activities of the terrorists.

The government expressed worries over the recent killings of innocent people in Gusau, Tsafe, Gummi, Bukkuyum, Anka Bungudu, Maru, Maradun and Kaura Namoda local governments.

Magaji said: "The government, therefore, condoled the families of the victims of the bandits' attacks and prayed for the repose of the departed souls.

"The government is also touched by the killings of some of our gallant security operatives who lost their lives in our defense. May their souls rest in peace.

"The general public is hereby informed that, following the loss of lives of our fellow brothers and sisters, Governor Matawalle has ordered the immediate suspension of all political activities in the state till further notice.

"Political meetings and gatherings at individual residences are also banned with immediate effect, henceforth."

Magaji also announced that the state's government had decided to shut two local government areas (Anka and Bukkuyum) until further notice, to curtail the activities of the terrorists in the area.

Similarly, the government ordered the closure of some roads leading to some towns and villages.

The affected roads are: Colony to Lambar Boko Road, Bakura to Lambar Damri Road, Mayanchi-Daki Takwas to Gummi Road, Daki Takwas to Zuru road, Kucheri- Bawaganga–Wanke Road, Magami to Dangulbi Road and Gusau to Magami Road.

Also closed down are Danjibga and Bagega markets where animals belonging to suspected terrorists were allegedly sold to the general public.

Magaji, said, "All movements are henceforth restricted in the aforementioned local governments and towns. Security personnel have been directed to deal ruthlessly with anybody found violating the restriction order."

The measures, according to the commissioner, were taken to facilitate and enable the gallant security men to conduct their operations without hindrances.

"Government sincerely regrets any inconvenience caused to the general public by these measures," the commissioner said.

Mogaji stressed that the measures were targeted at curtailing the recent excesses of the bandits with the overall objective of crippling their capacity to attack the communities in the state.

He appealed to the general public for more support and cooperation to rid the state of the menace of banditry.

NEWS

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Ayu Admits Collecting N100m from Governor, Denies N1bn

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Embattled National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, Professor Iyorchia Ayu has admitted collecting N100 million from a governor from the South West in confirmation of the allegation by Governor of Rivers State, Mr. Nyesom Wike but denied he used it for himself.

Also, in an apparent attempt at confidence building, the Board of Trustees after a meeting yesterday asked those who made promises and commitments should tow the path of honour and unconditionally fulfil their commitments.

Ayu insisted that while he acknowledged receipt of N100 million, the allegation that he collected N1 billion bribe was false, pointing out that the said donation by a governor was used for party projects and not on himself as he claimed to have fully briefed the Board of Trustees of the party on the donation and what it was applied to, adding also that the money had not even been exhausted.

Wike had among other things while pressing for the removal of Ayu alleged that he corruptly collected N1 billion and pocketed same and later alleged collection of the N100 million which Ayu has acknowledged.

"On today's allegations, I fully briefed the BoT that one of our governors made a contribution of 100 million for the revival of the PDI which was housed in a portacabin and I explained to them that we hired an appropriate place in Asokoro, we have furnished it, renovated it.

"Three days ago, we went there, inspected it and the NWC decided that before commissioning we should invite the governor in question to come and inspect what we have done with his contribution.

"I am happy that the National Secretary of the party has since written a letter to that governor. I or the NWC never took any money to carry out that renovation in fact we have not even exhausted that N100 million donated by one of the governors," Ayu clarified.

He used the occasion to explain that he never said he would resign if a Presidential candidate emerged from the north but that he said if the party won the presidency he would resign but the BOT asked him to match his words with action when the party wins the election

After the October 2021 national convention, Ayu said on Arise News Television that if the presidential candidate of the party emerges from the northern part of the country and if the party ask him to resign that he will gladly do so.

Five PDP governor, Wike, the Oyo state Governor, Seyi Makinde, Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom, Abia State Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu and other elders of the party like Bode George had asked Ayu to resign as the south was marginalised with the continued presidential candidate and the national chairman coming from the north.

However, a communiqué of the BoT meeting read by acting chairman, former Senate President, Senator Adolphus Wababa, said, "To call on all the leaders of the party to match words with action and where commitments are made to unconditionally fulfill same".

Also, after the special Board of Trustee meeting, the following resolutions were reached, "To call on all Party leaders and persons close to them, to desist from making further inflammatory remarks or granting press interviews.

Wike: Omehia Must Pay N695m or Approach Court

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, has insisted that Mr. Celestine Omehia must refund the over N695 million he received from the state in recognition as a former governor of the state.

It would be recalled that Governor Wike had recently assented to a motion by the Rivers State House of Assembly which derecorgnised Omehia as a former governor.

Reacting to questions yesterday, during a live media chat at the Government House Port Harcourt, Wike said he did not initiate the demand that Omehia should refund all the entitlements during his six months of recognition as a former of the state.

When he was asked further on what action to take if Omehia refuses to refund the said entitlements, Wike said he (Wike) would act based on the advice by the Attorney General of the state on the issue.

The Rivers State governor said: "If the Assembly made a mistake, and they have now realised their mistake, what is wrong with that? I wasn't the one that said Omehia should refund the over N600 million but the state Assembly. He didn't support me in 2015.

"I have signed the instrument of de-recognition and he ceases to exist as a former governor. But he (Omehia) has to pay or he challenges us in court. The Attorney General will advise us on what to do because the state government has a number of options to take."

On the crisis endangering his party's stability, Wike declared that without his input and participation in the activities of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the party would lose its bid for the presidency in the 2023 general election.

Wike said some of the PDP states won elections through his financial support.

"If I leave the party today, PDP cannot win the election. If the five PDP governors say they are leaving today, we are not just ordinary governors, we are very committed and strong.

Wike restated that the National Chairman of PDP, Iyorchia Ayu, had no locus standi to stand before Nigerians and campaign for PDP ahead of the 2023 general elections, stressing that the PDP boss has no integrity and alleged that he received double pay for a single project.

Also speaking on the allegation of Ayu of collecting N1 billion as a bribe to favour a sitting governor, Wike said, "There cannot be any comment. He (Ayu) cannot say anything. Look, I am the governor of Rivers State and I don't just come out to speak.

Tinubu Mourns with Bola Shagaya over Death of Mother

All Progressives Congress (APC) Presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has extended his deep condolences to Hajia Bola Shagaya over the death of her mother, Alhaja Saadatu Abdulraheem, in Ilorin, Kwara State capital.

The mother of the business mogul died four days ago.

Asiwaju Tinubu, who had earlier sent his running mate, Senator Kashim Shettima, to visit the family of the deceased in Ilorin, noted that losing a mother no matter how old she may be is always a painful thing, adding that he too had experienced it.

The APC Presidential candidate charged Hajia Shagaya to be comforted by the good life her mother lived and the many lives she positively touched during her earthly sojourn.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to strengthen the family during this challenging moment.

In the statement issued by his Media Office, Asiwaju Tinubu said: "I extend my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Hajia Bola Shagaya and mourn with her and siblings on the passing of Alhaja Saadatu AbdulRaheem.

"I learnt the deceased was a very kind and generous mother who contributed significantly to her community. Mama touched many lives positively from the testimonies of people since her departure.

"Having experienced this before, I know the difficult moment this period represents for Hajia Shagaya and her siblings. No matter how old our parents are we don't want them to leave us especially when we want to eternally benefit from their love and wisdom. It is my prayers that the family will find comfort in the good life Mama lived and the lives she touched positively. May Almighty Allah grant her soul Aljanah Firdaus and forgive all her imperfections."



WE SUPPORT CULTURE…

L-R: Globacom's Regional Manager (South East), Michael Ehumadu; Chairman, Ofala Steering Committee, Chief Dr. Okey Mike Areh, and Secretary, Ofala Festival Steering Committee, Chief Ikechukwu Areh, at a press briefing and signing of MOU held in Onitsha on the 2022 Ofala Festival sponsored by Globacom.

Ilorin Court Orders Remand of 2 Journalists

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

An Ilorin Magistrate Court sitting in Ilorin, Kwara State capital, yesterday ordered two journalists to be remanded at Oke-Kura Correctional Centre over allegations of defamation.

The two affected journalists are Mr. Akogun Abdulrasidi and Dare Akogun.

Prior to their arrangement, the members of the Association of Kwara Online Media Practitioners (ASKOMP) and other journalists had kicked against the plan to take the two journalists to the correctional centre without trial.

The Chief Press Secretary to Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, Mr. Rafiu Ajakaye, through a petition to the Commissioner of Police accused them of defamation and inciting the public against the state government.

Ajakaye said Abdulrasheed posted a comment on the popular WhatsApp platform, inaugurated by the Kwara State Government, accusing the government of the day of being most corrupt and of facilitating N15 million to prosecute the last election of the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ), Kwara State chapter.

The government prosecutor, Nasir Yusuf, in his submissions, prayed the court for another date of adjournment pending the determination of police investigation over the matter.

He informed the court of the motion ex parte attached to the police report seeking the remand of the suspects and the 11 paragraph affidavit deposed to which was attached to it.

Magistrate Bio Salihu handling the matter, however, turned down Mr. Kehinde Eleja's (SAN) appearance for the suspects saying according to Kwara State law, he lacks jurisdiction to hear him being a Senior Advocate of Nigeria.

However, in his short ruling, Magistrate Salihu ordered Dare and Abdulrasheed to be remanded in Oke-Kura Correctional Centre.

He therefore adjourned the matter to November 19.

Glo Sponsors 2022 Ofala, Renews Partnership for another 3 Years

Globacom, has announced its sponsorship of this year's Ofala Festival which holds from October 22nd to 23rd October, 2022.

The annual event is a customary obligation performed by His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, the Obi of Onitsha.

The celebration to be held at Ime Obi Onitsha will span two days including Iru Ofala on October 22 and the Azu Ofala on October 23. This year's celebration is a twin-event as the revered monarch will be using the occasion of the Ofala to also commemorate his 20th anniversary on the throne.

Globacom said at a press conference held by the Ofala Steering Committee at Ime Obi, Obi's Palace, Onitsha, on Thursday October 13, 2022, that its sponsorship of Ofala, underscores its recognition of the huge potentials of Nigeria's tourism sector and the positive impact it can have on the economy and its key output sectors.

"Being a truly Nigerian enterprise, Globacom will continue to play a leading role in promoting this sector through support for, and preservation of our rich cultural heritage such as Ofala and other festivals that we sponsor," Globacom said.

The company referred to a recent World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Economic Impact Report which indicated that "The Travel and Tourism sector in Nigeria is expected to create 2.6 million new jobs over the next decade, doubling the number of those employed within the sector by 2032."

"The forecast shows that an average of 260,000 new jobs will be created every year for the next 10 years, to reach more than 5.1 million. It also stated further that Nigeria's Travel and Tourism contribution to GDP is expected to grow at an average rate of 5.4 per cent between 2022 and 2032, significantly outpacing the three per cent growth rate of the overall economy," Globacom noted.

The digital transformation leader also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Palace to extend the company's sponsorship of the festival for another three years, from 2022 to 2025.

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NEWS

Machina is Candidate for Yobe North, APC Notifies INEC

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has written the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to recognise Bashir Machina as the Yobe North senatorial candidate following the ruling of a Federal High Court, Damaturu.

A Federal High Court in Damaturu, Yobe State, had ruled that Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, was not the candidate of the ruling party for Yobe North in the 2023 elections.

The court ruled that Machina is the authentic candidate of the party, having won the legally-recognised primary, supervised by INEC as Lawan didn't participate in the election held on May 28.

Yesterday, in a letter signed by the party's National Chairman, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, and the Secretary, Senator Iyiola Omisore, the party directed INEC to also publish the name of Machina on its portal in line with the court order.

The letter read: "We write to notify the commission of the attached judgement dated September 28, 2022, and order dated October 5, 2022, from the Federal High Court, Damaturu Judicial Division, directing the commission to accept and recognise Machina as the party's candidate for Yobe North Senatorial District, Yobe State, and publish same accordingly."

Lawan has been in the National Assembly since 1999, beginning as a member of the House of Representatives for Bade/Jakusko Federal Constituency of Yobe State.

APC Adamawa Has No Governorship Candidate in 2023 Election, Court Rules

Bennett Oghifo

Justice Abdulaaziz Anka of the Federal High Court in Yola, Adamawa State, yesterday, ruled to nullify the candidacy of Senator Aishatu Ahmed, fondly known as Binani, as the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state.

The court also denied a plea for a fresh primary, which implies that the APC would have no gubernatorial candidate in the 2023 election.

The court, which delivered its judgement following a suit FHC/YL/CS/12/2022 filed by Mallam Nuhu Ribadu of APC, declared Aishatu Ahmed's candidacy invalid and unlawful.

The court held that the Adamawa APC governorship primary conducted on May 26, 2022 "did not comply with the 2022 Electoral Act, the nation's constitution, and the party guidelines."

Justice Anka said, "My findings are that there's non-compliance to the Electoral Act, as well as party guidelines and the constitution because there was manifest overvoting, which has been proved beyond a reasonable doubt."

The court also held that the nomination of Aishatu Ahmed contravened Section 85 of the Electoral Act because there was "manifest overvoting."



RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENCE…

The Advisor, Euroknowledge, Mr. Andreas Deutschmann, presenting the Africa Most Innovative Digital Transformation Governor of the Year Award to the Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Godwin Emefiele, at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, Washington DC, on the sidelines of the Annual meetings of the IMF/World Bank Group holding in Washington DC...Thursday.

Gov Diri Laments Flood Devastation in Bayelsa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has bemoaned the destruction of property and the hardship visited on people of the state by flood.

Governor Diri, on Thursday, undertook an on-the-spot assessment of the flood situation in some communities and described it as very dire.

The governor, who was accompanied by the state Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mr. Solomon Agwana, the Commissioner for Environment and Chairman of the Task Force on Flood Mitigation and Management, Mr. Eselema Gbaranbiri, his Works and Information counterparts, Moses Teibowei and Ayibaina Duba respectively as well as other top government functionaries, made stops at Tungbo, Sagbama Town and Adagbabiri, all in Sagbama Local Government Area.

He also visited Odi and Kaiama communities in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area.

While addressing the people in Izon dialect, the governor said he wanted to get firsthand knowledge of what the people and the communities were going through.

He encouraged them not to despair even as he acknowledged that it was a trying period for everyone.

Diri presented cash gifts to the affected communities and assured them that relief materials will immediately get to them through the task force on flooding.

He equally called on Bayelsans to look out for one another and accommodate victims as homes and communities were being sacked.

His words: "I felt this was not the time for me to sit in e my brothers and sisters are in pains, hunger and in want. So I came to see things for myself.

Delta Floods: 8 Deaths, Relief Camps Rise to 12

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

Three persons have died in Oko community on the bank of the River Niger near Asaba, the Delta State capital, while two persons drowned in Ndokwa area and three others died in Isoko area of the state.

The Director General, Delta State Bureau of Orientation, Mr. Eugene Uzum, who disclosed this while giving update on the flood crisis to journalists in Asaba, yesterday, revealed that the number of relief camps had risen to 12 as two new camps had been added to the 10 functional Internally Displaced Persons camps opened at various locations by Delta State Government to provide temporary accommodation for displaced residents.

In the light of the severe impact of the current flooding which resulted in the death of eight persons, the "state government has given marching orders to all political appointees from affected areas to go back to their communities to provide some interventions."

"We want to empathise with the victims of the flood. We specifically commend their strength and also in adhering to government's earlier warning to relocate from flood-prone areas.

"As at today, the Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) has intervened by opening two camps. The interventionist agency has also been opening up canals for water to flow freely.

"The state government, through the 2022 flood management committee, has also opened 10 functional IDP camps with the prospects of opening more. The committee also created distribution centres from where relief materials would be taken to IDP camps.

"We are collaborating with traditional rulers, community leaders to rescue people and provide the needed succour.

"As such, with assistance of the office of the Senior Political Adviser, all political appointees from affected communities have been directed to go back home rather than remaining here in Asaba," Uzum said.

According to him, tales of anguish have continued to trail the ravaging floods in different parts of Delta as communication in some areas have been hampered, making delivery of relief materials to displaced persons difficult.

Ogun: Abiodun Unveils OGUNINVEST

James Sowole in Abeokuta

Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, yesterday inaugurated the Ogun State Investment and Facilitation Agency (OGUNINVEST) disclosing that no fewer than 36 investment portfolios worth over $1billion had been attracted into the state by his administration.

Abiodun equally disclosed at the event held at the Governor's Office, Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta, that the investments altogether were able to generate over 40,000 jobs for the people and residents of Ogun.

Abiodun expressed his optimism that the newly inaugurated Ogun State Investment and Facilitation Agency would promote the state and present it to investors both locally and internationally.

He added that the Agency would strengthen the governance, thereby helping the state attract more investment and further diversify the state economy.

The governor said that the primary responsibility of the Agency would be to make the state an investment of choice not only in the country, but in the entire Sub-Sahara Africa.

This agency, its dream was preceded by the bill that was sent to the House of Assembly to give life to this agency which was passed on Friday, the 28th of September, 2019, that was barely four months into the life of this administration.

"Our administration through Oguninvest will continue to play the role of the enabler and facilitator to help the private sector grow, to create jobs and generate wealth for all in Ogun State.

FG to Unbundle NRC for Efficient, Effective Service Delivery

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The federal government said it's considering unbundling the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) to make its services more efficient and effective.

The government, through the Minister of Transportation, Mu'azu Jaji Sambo, made the disclosure in Abuja when members of the NRC Governing Board paid him a courtesy visit.

Mu'azu, in a statement in Abuja yesterday, pointed out that the Nigerian Railway Corporation cannot be the owner, operator and regulator at the same time, noting: "The private sector is the engine of growth. Let someone else operate your lines efficiently.

"We cannot have an agency that is owner, regulator and operator at the same time," he queried.

Briefing the Board on what the government is doing concerning resumption of rail services, the minister said commercial operations will resume after security measures were installed to forestall reoccurrence of train attacks in the country.

According to him, "We are looking at how the rail lines can be safe by putting 24 hours surveillance and immediate response apparatus.

"The security measures will include short and long term plans, with the short term plans taking effect from November."

Four Feared Dead as Trailer Knocks Cars off Bridge in Rivers

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Four persons have been killed in a fatal accident that occurred yesterday at Aleto Eleme Bridge on East/West Road in Rivers State.

THISDAY gathered that a 40feet tanker lost its balance on the bridge pushing a moving Toyota Sienna car and Toyota Hilux from the bridge into the Aleto River.

This is happening barely one week after a tanker fell on a commercial bus between New Town Junction and Onne trailer Park axis of same East/West Road, where eight people were later confirmed dead in the accident.

It would be recalled that the same road which was in a deplorable state at the time of incident, has received so much media publicity, seeking the attention of the government to the road leading to the Port Harcourt Refining Company and other major multinational companies.

The incident of yesterday has attracted so many reactions as residents and commuters have lamented, stressing that wondering how many lives will go down on the road before attention is given to the deplorable road.

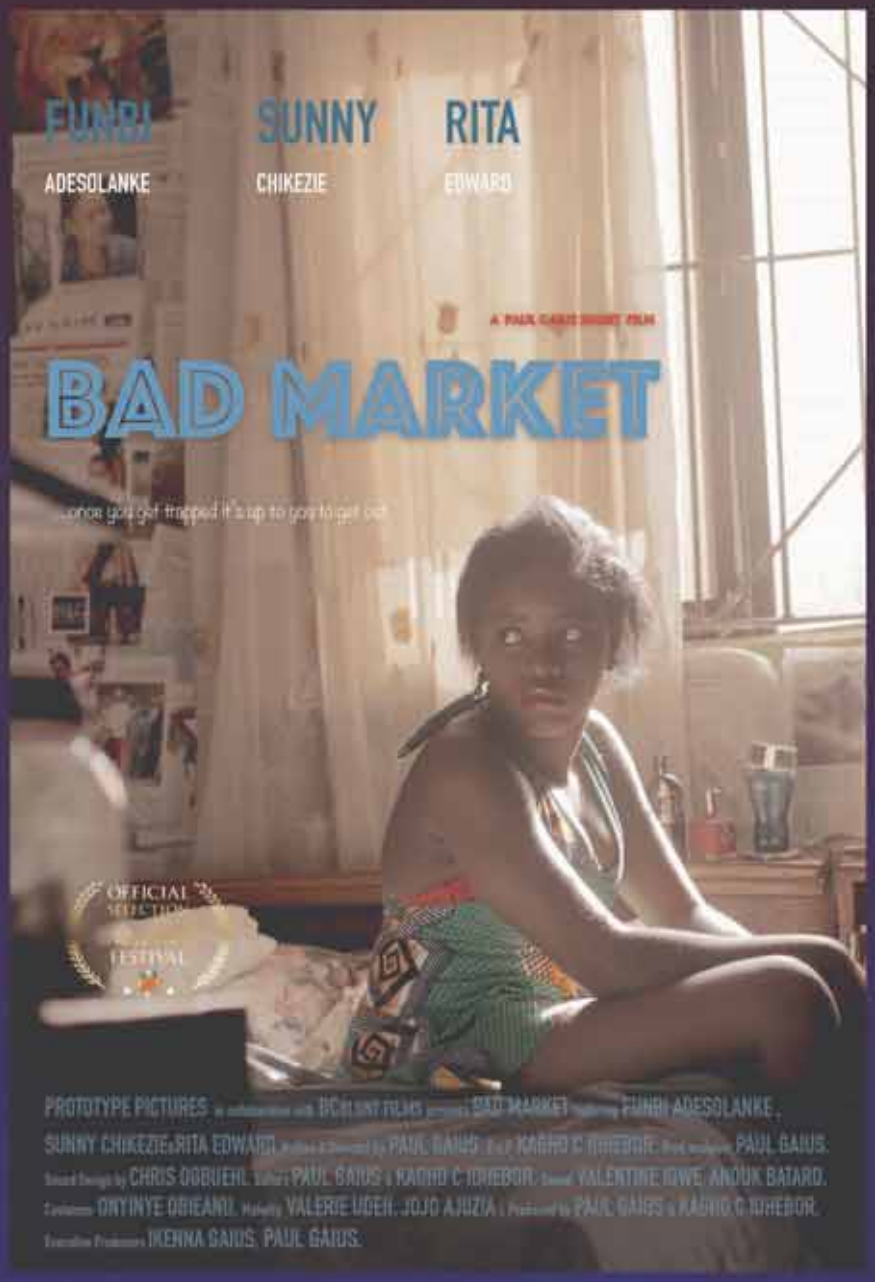
The President General of Ogoni Youth Federation, Comrade Legborsi Yamaabana and his team who went on a rescue mission at the scene, have given the federal government an ultimatum to fix the road, accusing the government of being responsible for the deaths of the victims.

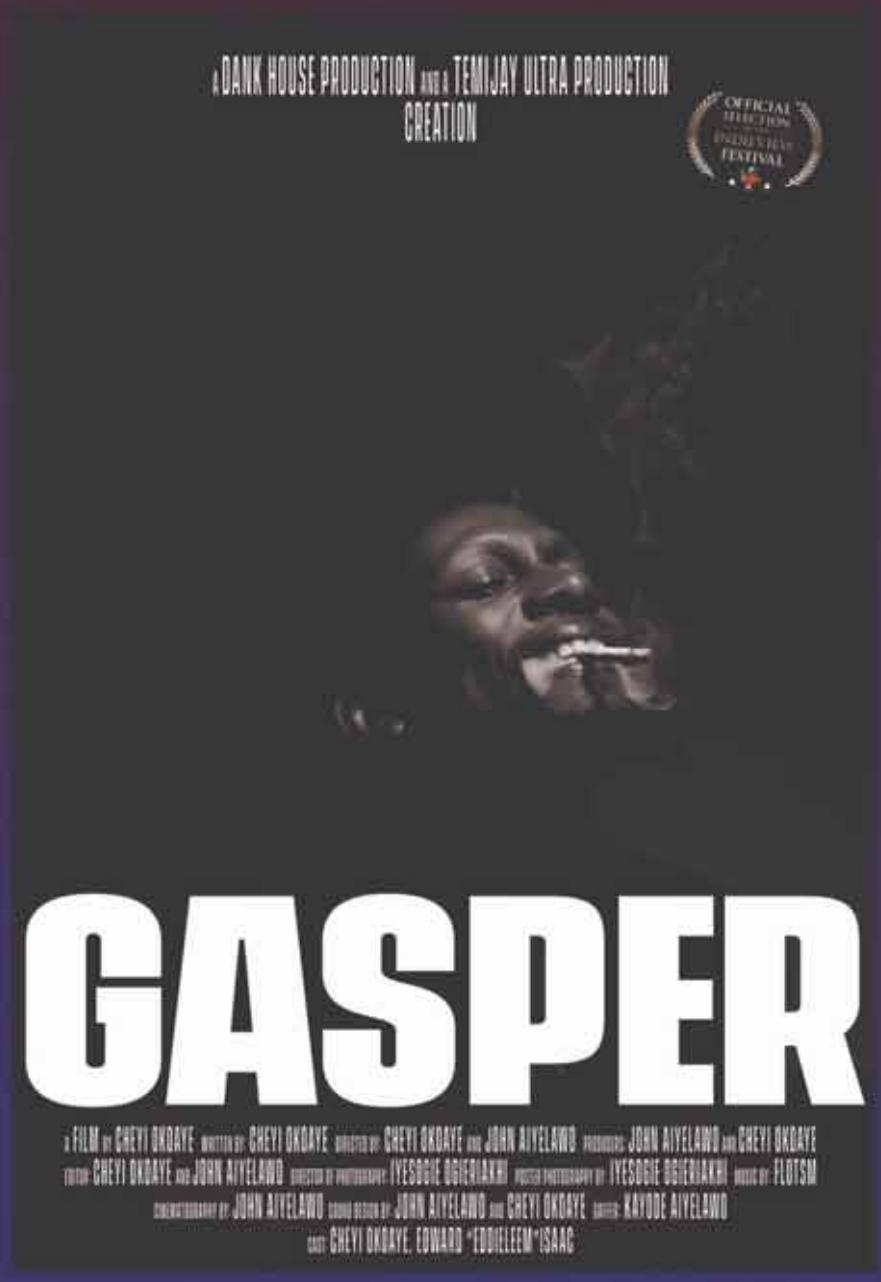
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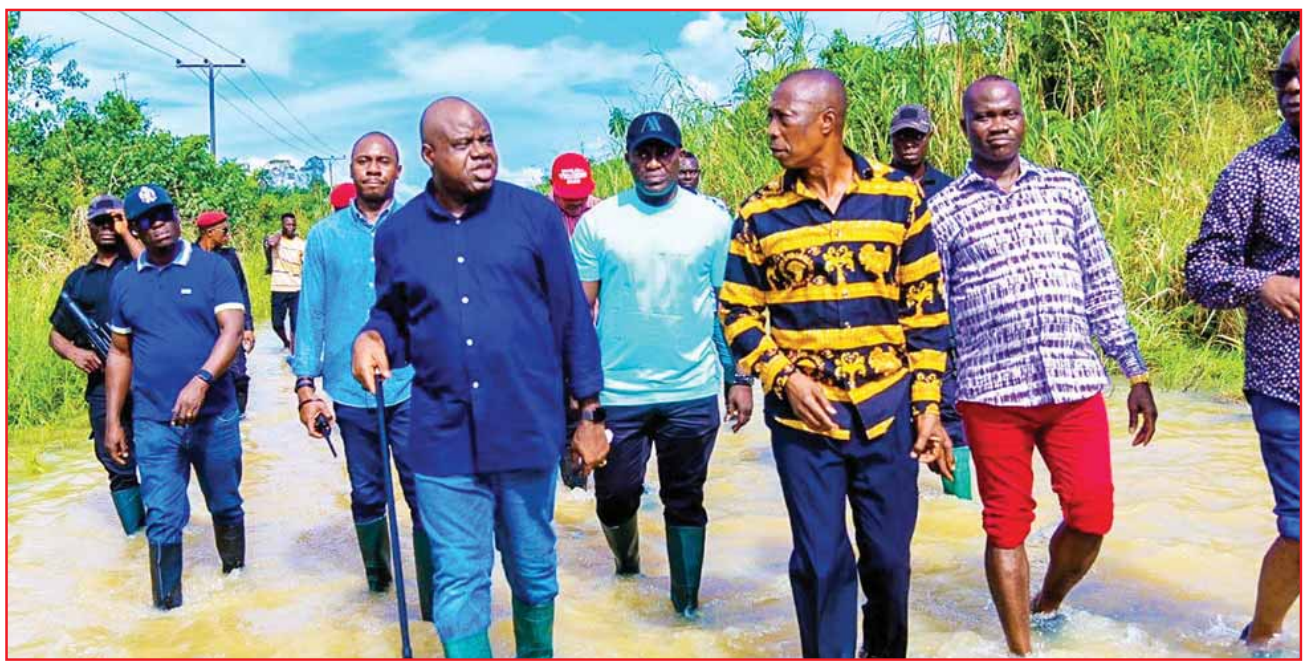


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NEWS



WADING THROUGH THE FLOOD…

Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri (left), the Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Moses Teibowei (2nd right) and the Special Adviser on Religious Affairs, Rev. Godspower Asingba, during the governor's visit to flood-impacted communities along the Sagbama-Ekeremor road in Sagbama Local Government Area of the state…Thursday.

Obasanjo Crowns Obi, Calls for Regional Inclusion in National Development

Ahamefula Ogbu and **Yinka Olatunbosun**

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo was yesterday at his theatrics as he symbolically stood up and serenaded the Presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Mr. Peter Obi to the seat he occupied and sat him there in a move considered an open endorsement by supporters of Obi.

The act of vacating his seat and asking Obi to take it over from him drew a lot of applause after which Obasanjo announced, "ehen, my job is done".

At the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Award Night, Obasanjo who gave the keynote address at the event called for inclusiveness of the six geopolitical zones of the country which he said was vital in building a better Nigeria.

Both statesmen were at an event to celebrate a national award given to the President of the Africa Import Export Bank, Professor Benedict Oramah when Obasanjo vacated his seat for Obi before giving a short speech and exiting the event afterwards.

The video begins as Obasanjo is rounding off his speech, saying, "... the president of Nigeria..." while looking in Peter Obi's direction.

Obasanjo went to Obi, he stood from his seat and shook hands with him before he jocularly led him to the table where he sat, offered his seat and walked away.

Obasanjo who spoke on 'Touching the Stars', at the awards night identified science, technology and innovation as the pathways to national development at the giving of three prizes namely, The Nigeria Prize for Science, The Nigeria Prize for Literature and The Nigeria Prize for Literary Criticism.

"As a farmer, I am really impressed with the theme for this year's Nigeria Prize for Science. Agric is the most ancient and proven industry. Agric is synonymous to human survival and development. Science and technology must influence food and security."

Earlier, the advisory board for the Nigeria Prize for Science announced two most outstanding works titled Gains in Grain Yield of Released Maize (Zea Mays L.) Cultivars Under Drought and Well-Watered Conditions by Muhyideen Oyekunle and Shehu Ado; and Development of Process Plant for Plantain Flour by Sesan Peter Ayodeji and Emmanuel Olatunji Olutomilola as winners of the $100,000 prize money for the NLNG Prize for Science.

The Chairman of the Advisory board, Prof Barth Nnaji revealed that the decision was reached on the 2022 theme "Innovations in Sustainable Food Security."

For the Nigerian Prize for Literary Criticism, the prize money was raised to $10,000 for the first time since 2018 when it was awarded to Prof. Isidore Diala. Sakiru Adebayo emerged as the 2022 winner.

Atiku to Feature in Kaduna Arewa Town Hall Policy Dialogue

Presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar will be a guest of the Arewa Joint Committee interactive session with presidential candidates today in Kaduna.

The event is meant to x-ray the policy positions of presidential candidates of six respective political parties, and will feature Atiku at 1:00 pm.

Several groups like the Arewa Consultative Forum, Arewa House, Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation, Northern Elders Forum and Arewa Research and Development Project, among others are the organisers of the interactive session.

The dialogue promises to be another opportune time for the PDP frontline presidential candidate to relay his policy document titled: 'My Covenant with Nigerians' to the audience at the event.

FG Given 14 Days to Release NDDC Forensic Audit Report

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

A Non Governmental Organisation, Niger Delta Anti-Corruption Network, has urged the federal government to make public the forensic audit report of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

The group, a coalition of 26 Nigerian-based Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations, stressed that it is imperative for the government to make public the NDDC Audit Report to enable Nigerians know how public funds are spent over the years by the agency.

The anti-corruption group who made the demand yesterday, during a meeting with journalists and some stakeholders in Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital, gave the government 14 days ultimatum to release the report or face legal action.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr. Arochukwu Ogbonna who spoke on behalf of the group, revealed that the coalition had in the past one year advocated for the NDDC Forensic Audit Report to be made public, adding that they have written to relevant government agencies and departments.

FG, Delta, Stakeholders Launch National Self-care Guidelines for Reproductive Health

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

In order to ensure an effective and nationwide dissemination of the national guidelines on Self-Care Interventions for Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health, a high level meeting of stakeholders was yesterday held in Asaba, the Delta State capital.

The meeting, which drew participants from relevant international, national and sub-national levels, was organised by the Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Delta State Government and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Delta State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Mordi Ononye, said that the state government warmly embraced the initiative of the federal government in line with the guidelines designed by the WHO, adding that the national guidelines will greatly enhance the process and targets of the Universal Health Coverage in Delta and other states of the federation.

He noted that the meeting would "provide important deliberations and further support on the actualisation of the Delta State Government's commitment to improve the Health and well-being of all Deltans" through the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and Universal Health Coverage.

Edo Govt Allay Fears of Those Affected by Land Reacquisition

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

The Edo State Government, yesterday, said it is committed to ridding the state of land grabbers, adding that it is doing everything to ensure those whose land was forcefully taken would be compensated.

It also pledged to return the state owned newspaper, the Nigerian Observer back to the newsstand.

Commissioner for Communication and Orientation, Mr. Christopher Nehikhare who stated this at a news briefing in Benin City, said the Governor Godwin Obasek-led government was resolute in tackling the ugly menace of land grabbing and protecting property rights in the state.

According to him, persons who have been defrauded by criminal elements at the New Town Development area along Irhirhi-Obazagbon-Ogheghe Road are enjoined to present complaints to the New Town Development Authority office at the site.

"So far, a total of 202 persons have come up and their data have been documented.

"One Mr. Sunday Oghumah, an alleged land grabber has also been arrested.

"Victims of land grabbers need not fear arrest as only those with reasonable land grabbing accusations will be apprehended.

Gov Bagudu Swears-in 9 New Commissioners

Ismail Adebayo in Birnin Kebbi

Kebbi State Governor, Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, has sworn-in nine new commissioners.

All the nine commissioners were members of the State Executive Council (SEC) he dissolved a few weeks ago.

While speaking after the swearing-in of the commissioners at the Government House, Birnin Kebbi, Bagudu lauded the State House of Assembly for being magnanimous in considering and clearing the nominees for the position.

He said, "We thank them for always being magnanimous in considering requests from the State Executive, we still look forward to them because we will be presenting another list and other outstanding issues.

"Equally, we thank the Chief Judge, who always makes himself available personally even at a short notice to support us, we appreciate you and thank you for your kind magnanimity."

The governor congratulated the commissioner for their re-appointment, recalling that all of them were members of the previous SEC with some of them serving as cabinet members for many times.

Press Week: Enugu Journalists Laud Ugwuanyi

Acting in full conviction and satisfaction with the peaceful disposition of Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State, the Correspondents' Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Enugu State Council, led by its Chairman, Mr. Lawrence Njoku, yesterday conferred on the governor, the award of the "Most Peaceful Governor in Nigeria".

The Enugu NUJ Correspondents' Chapel bestowed the award on Ugwuanyi during its 2022 Press Week / Annual Lecture in Enugu, with the theme: "2023: The New Electoral Act and The Media".

Profiling Ugwuanyi's uncommon leadership qualities and remarkable achievements in spite of the nation's economic, security and public health challenges, the correspondents said that the governor "has demonstrated in clear terms that successful governance of a people, especially the provision of the proverbial democracy dividends can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peace," disclosing: "That explains why Enugu today, stands tall as the most peaceful state in the country."

Katsina Shari'a Courts Record 71,961, Civil, Criminal Cases

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The Katsina State Chief Judge, Justice Musa Danladi Abubakar, has disclosed that Shari'a courts in the state have recorded a total of 71,961 civil and criminal cases across the state in the last one year.

Abubakar, who disclosed this during the 2022 / 2023 new legal year, said out of the 71,961 cases, 46,750 were civil, while 25,211 are criminal cases.

The state Chief Judge explained that the courts had disposed of 28,329 cases within the period under review while the remaining 43,632 were still pending at different Shari'a courts in the state.

According to him, "The Shari'a courts, which are the grassroot and most patronised courts, registered a total of 71,961 cases comprising 46,750 civil and 25,211 criminal cases. Out of these, the courts have disposed of 28,329 cases with 43,632 Pending."

He, however, said 11 High courts in the five judicial divisions registered a total of 2,392 first instance cases comprising 708 civil, 445 criminal cases and 755 motions, adding that 1,400 have been disposed of and 1,050 are pending.

Justice Abubakar added that the appellate division of the High Court recorded 423 civil and criminal appeals from the lower courts and disposed of 282 appeals with 141 still pending.

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COMMENTARY

CHILD ABUSE IN THE ACTS OF WARLORDS

Fabian Amadi canvasses the strengthening of child-based laws to function as deterrent to leaders craving for war

Some years ago in the mid-1990s something remarkable happened during a special programmes at the church where I used to worship. I had come outside and was met by a man who appeared familiar but unfortunately, I couldn't place where I knew him. He beckoned to me and requested my assistance in calling a brother for him. As I moved to do that, I turned back to ask for his name. The man displayed surprise and asked "Don't you know me?" The question was arresting and I was immediately caught between reckoning that question as loaded with pride or accepting a situation in which a church member felt offended that one of the ministers who should have known better was not caring enough.

Since the incident took place right in our church premises, I chose to indulge the second option and tendered an unreserved apology. But when he mentioned his name, my feeling was transmogrified to the other idea of branding him a proud man. He had said with excessive confidence, "I am Yommie Johnson." On recognizing him, I was overtaken by a severe pain of seeing a bloodstained villain standing before me. He was one of the warlords alongside Charles Taylor that started the civil war in Liberia; a civil strife which severely exterminated human lives. When the war became too hot to handle, Mr. Johnson ran to Nigeria to save his own life after triggering death and inflicting pains on many innocent people especially children and the infirm.

I almost changed my mind about running an errand for him. But I didn't. As I dawdled hesitantly towards the Liberian man he asked for, my mind raced to a street called Idejo Street on Victoria Island in Lagos where the Liberian Embassy was situated. I used to see a lot of Liberian children aged between mid-infantile to late teenage ages walking about without destination except to beg for food and money. You would hear them say "Sir, you don't need to give me money, just buy food for me, I have not eaten for two days." When you bought food for the children, the way they would gobble it would prove that they were not exaggerating their hunger. Ask for their parents or family and they would respond, "I don't know where they are. I don't know if they are still alive, I saw a ship coming to Nigeria and ran away from the bullets flying all over the place. I had to joined everybody to escape."

That is now history, but what resurrected the memory is the contemporary warlord, the Russian leader called Vladmir Putin. He is at one polar end of the conflicting pulls presently rocking international affairs. With the benefit of hindsight, a clarification I may need is the position of human feeling in his driving force. That would have been irrelevant but for the fact that many of his compatriots are languishing in prison for opposing him at the onset of his war decision. Yet let's spotlight the fall outs of his ambition of which he had initially envisioned himself as an unopposable colossus bestriding the narrow world. The war has been causing multiple strands of casualties, the death of innocent children and the orphanage of many others. Children have been rendered inconsequential sacrifices to his ambition of remaining relevant in international politics or the fear of becoming irrelevant among world leaders strategically holding the bottleneck.

I repeat that the present war recalls my memory of Liberian Yommie Johnson's bloated ego. Actually, Ukrainian children may not be exposed to the same poverty level as those Liberian children who if they are still living are now men and women. What is plausible is that over the years, children in war conditions experience a plethora of nightmare across the board. This usually entails irredeemable loss of life or denials of family structure necessary for wholesome upbringing. War experience is never palatable to any child just like no part of hell is a comfortable zone.

Now, I hasten to declare my willingness to be quoted that currently between Russia and Ukraine, orphanage in its fallouts has been spiraling in collateral leaps and bounds. I could concede that simulated bold faces notwithstanding, those who ignited it find in time to secretly embrace "had I known" when it becomes clear that what was initially hoped to be an easy run over is now shrouded in an uncertain or inconsequential pyrrhic victory. What is equally too late to reverse is that innocent children are suffering what should have been avoided if natural love had partnered with wisdom or permitted external outcries to weigh down selfish plunge into showcasing "who I am".



THE WAR HAS BEEN CAUSING MULTIPLE STRANDS OF CASUALTIES, THE DEATH OF INNOCENT CHILDREN AND THE ORPHANAGE OF MANY OTHERS. CHILDREN HAVE BEEN RENDERED INCONSEQUENTIAL SACRIFICES TO HIS AMBITION OF REMAINING RELEVANT IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Let's at this juncture, pose some questions to all the warlords of this world. What if your life had been terminated at infancy? What if your own childhood had been one of struggling for survival or confined to an orphanage home without ever escaping from your trauma of a constraining cocoon? I put it to those culpable that given the above streams of thought as their experience, they would not have chosen a path of making some innocent children miserable. Definitely, the initial target of war mongers is not the innocent minors who could get killed by stray bullets and explosives, but no review of war consequences can be complete without adding their pains to the general record.

Prove me wrong if you can, one thing characteristic of the so-called warlords is that behind their swashbuckling façade conceals a veritable cowardice. They value themselves and their family members as too coated with honey to lose their lives. They cannot arm their own with their most trusted arsenal to the battle front or expose them to the smallest piece of the quantum pain they inflict on others. The belligerent warlords as loving parents cannot stretch their imaginations to seeing their own children residing in orphanage homes. To this end, prior to unleashing their evil machinations, they send their families to other safe sides of the globe. If otherwise they are brave enough, when they foresee their security apparatus imperiled or crumbling to heavy bombardments, they generously embrace any feasible cost of escape with whatever they find in public treasury.

Apart from that as reason why Yommie Johnson ran to Nigeria probably with his family, he was avoiding the experience of the torture he meted out to the former president of Liberia, late Samuel Doe whom he had ambushed, mutilated while alive and forced to eat his own ears before finally killing him. Imagine the mental torture of that incident to children. War incidents breed or carry along, several evils that potentially enmesh the psyche of young people as hostages for life.

So far, I have seemingly singled out Mr. Yommie Johnson for judgment simply because he came very close to me. I am suddenly frightened that he may have genuinely repented before the God of infinite mercy and received pardon for his sins. God had said in the Bible "thou shall not judge". For this, I crave God's forgiveness; then let's converge on what remains for those who are still brandishing their acts and bravery as warlords. They can still make amends, sheath their swords or if you prefer to say bury the hatchet while there are still lives to save and I will keep repeating concern especially for those innocent children and their future that naturally needs soft handling.

The reason for the above plea will not be farfetched if we review once more the immediate and remote consequences that war imposes on innocent children and young people. Its major crime of causing premature death is popularly called Infanticide. Separation from families engenders serious psychological pains and aftermath. There is also the social evil of denying them formal and informal education. From some countries reports were available about several recruitments (mobilization?) of minors for war which involved at times drugging their malleable psyche to embrace violence and insensitivity leaving no room for compromise.

Amadi is Creative Consultant, Febis Multi-Concepts Lagos

'MESSENGER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'

Dan Aibangbe celebrates a foremost evangelist, Chukwuebuka Anozie Obi

Coinciding with the occasion of his birthday, Prophet Chukwuebuka Anozie Obi, this article is intended to draw attention to the phenomenon of a peculiar Christian movement, its leadership, essence and contribution to nationhood.

It is a popular cliché that we should always give honour to whom it is deserved. I write to showcase the works, industry, influence and relevance of a young man operating under the mandate of the creator to shine light unto the darkness of this world as the Spiritual Director of the trail-blazing, rapidly growing prayer ministry named Zion Prayer Movement Outreach.

Located off Ibro-Way, Okota Lagos, this movement is led by none other than Evangelist Chukwuebuka Anozie Obi and his select team of youths, mostly of the charismatic catholic mold.

In today's world of woes and calamities, frauds, yahoo-yahoo, drugs and innumerable variants of crime, this humble but hardworking gentlemen is changing lives positively and purposefully, preparing a large congregation of God-fearing, devout followers, whose critical mass is capable and already making positive impacts in the society.

Born a twin on October 16, under a Samuel-styled covenant, into the seven-membered royal family of Mr & Mrs Vincent Obi of Ubulu-Ihejifor in Orlu-West L.G.A of Imo State, Evang. Chukwuebuka Obi was raised right from his childhood on the raw word of God in the staunch Catholic tradition.

The fact of his anointing and calling became evident right from the early age of eight, through the uncanny visions and the precision of his utterances. Many people thronged his father's compound to witness and benefit from the small boy who speaks by word of knowledge and prophecy. Even the late Reverend Father Luke Odinkemere from Awo Idemili came by to confirm his gifts by the time he was 12. He gave a three-pronged warning to him through his parents – he should never get involved in pre-marital sex; he should never establish a separate church and must desist from money-consciousness in his work with God.

Evang Ebuka Obi, despite his apparent anointing, grew to be a man of great industry, just as his twin brother Engr Chinweike Chiemeziem Obi. From his modest onset, he became very successful in the cable business, before he was eventually convinced by the Holy Spirit to go full-time into the evangelical ministry, now popularly known as Zion Prayer Movement Outreach. It is therefore not surprising that he prefers to call himself 'Messenger of the Holy Spirit." This assertion goes beyond mere rhetoric in his apparent humility, boldness and radical approach in tackling knotty cases.

Zion Prayer Movement Outreach, founded about a decade ago with the vision to draw all men closer to God, has grown in leaps and bounds to become a mighty oak, with many branches locally and internationally. The core value has been obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit!

Outstanding and unbelievable works of healing, deliverance, financial breakthroughs and every good thing that God Almighty has ordained for his people has become the norm in most meetings. Believers have come to experience the Truth of the Gospel and reality of God's sovereignty, even in the physical! The ministry has also taken extra care to cater to the needs of the needy, through the Zion Foundation! Another special arm dedicated to caring for the mentally challenged and homeless is the Seraphic Homes Foundation.

With a deep passion for Youths Empowerment, he devotes huge resources into rehabilitation and empowerment of the delinquent and also provides spiritual guidance to enable them appreciate God as the viable alternative to delinquent way of life, which the Evangelist found to result mostly from hopelessness!

Evang. Chukwuebuka Obi's ministry bears the trademark of direct 'Word of Knowledge' with confirmation, healings and deliverance. He trains his adherents in discipline of the flesh through extended periods of annual fasting and prayers. He is seriously dedicated to teaching and defending the Christian faith. In spite of all this, the Man of God has effortlessly remained humble and adheres strictly to the three-pronged principles of success with good morals, dictated to him far back in his youth.

As a consequence of his fearless ministration of the Gospel truth, attempts have been made on his life by envious and aggrieved opponents to terminate his ministry. But then, the Holy Spirit has used these events to confirm his backing by foiling the attempts in miraculous ways!

Chukwuebuka Obi is an apostle of peace, love and unity, a staunch believer in the nation. This principled philanthropist detests indiscipline, hypocrisy and nepotism. That's why his ministry is reputed for uniting people of different backgrounds and shaping characters of people from diverse cultures.

Today Prophet Obi has become an epitome of the Spirit of prophecy, philanthropy, benevolence, discipline, open truth, resilience, competence, excellence, dexterity, spontaneity and all flavours of the fruits of the Spirit. He is a fearless man who only fears God in all his ministrations. In fact, he is an open book of God.

In celebrating this man of God, I want to remind all that God Himself delights in the prosperity of His people. The Bible encourages us in the Book of Proverbs Chapter 4 verse 7, to number our days as a recipe for wisdom. Wisdom here, is a principal thing that we must embrace with all our resources. Numbering our days helps us to calibrate our time and achievements, with the full awareness that life is in stages and that a day of reckoning awaits each and every one of us.

Aibangbe, a Media and Public Relations Consultant, writes from Lagos



The fury of floods...

TO OUR READERS

Letters in response to specific publications in THISDAY should be brief (150-200 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contact details to **saturdayeditor@thisdaylive.com**. We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should also not be longer than (950-1000 words). They should be sent to **saturdayeditor@thisdaylive.com** along with the email address and phone numbers of the writer.

ASUU's Eight- Month Strike

Every country serious about the happiness of its citizens and their future must always be seen to handle public affairs with the requisite seriousness. This is often easy to spot in how promptly such a country attends to the issues that are capable of piling costs and inconvenience on its citizens.

Thus, all over the world, in countries where the citizens have become sophisticated enough to hold their government to account, citizens are often conscious of how the government treats the challenges that nibble at their lives. Often times, the action and the body language of those in government go a long way in shaping how citizens vote in elections. The ability to make this choice often runs to the very heart of a democracy.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has finally called off its eight-month-long strike and would resume academic activities on Monday, October 17, 2022. According to the union, it decided to call off the strike following the agreement of the government to pay off the salary arrears of its members as well as concede to some of its other demands.

Undoubtedly, the decision was also given no little helping hand by the decision of the Court of Appeal Abuja which mandated ASUU to call off the strike as a precondition to pursuing its appeal against the judgment of the National Industrial Court which had mandated the union to call off the strike it embarked upon on February 14, 2022.

For hapless and helpless undergraduate students who saw their academic calendars brutally disrupted in February before going on to spend eight agonizing months at home, brooding over their increasingly bleak future, the decision by ASUU to return to class is a welcome one. However, the question of the costs of the strike must be considered.

At what cost has the disagreement between the union and the federal government kept Nigerian undergraduate students at home for eight months? Now, that academic activities are about to resume, have the problems which precipitated the strike in the first place been fully and finally settled?

The history of the disruption of academic activities in Nigerian universities is replete with strikes by ASUU. Over the years, the cost of these regrettably frequent disruptions has increased to a level where they have become incalculable.

If the argument remains that Nigerian universities are not adequately funded and the people who staff them adequately remunerated, has anything been done in these eight moments to finally put those concerns to bed or are the parties involved merely sheathing their swords only to sharpen them and resume hostilities at a future date?

Answering these questions are critical for the future of education in Nigeria. It is common knowledge that with the passage of years, the standard of education in Nigeria has continued to deteriorate rapidly.

With the rot eating up many aspects of life in Nigeria also feasting on education, that most critical area has apparently fallen into ruin.

In many ways, the sorry state of education in Nigeria remains a mortal blow because there is no doubt that for the country to be able to fix its many problems, it has to get education right. The alchemical power of education can see it prove an effective catalyst in reviving Nigeria as a country.

It is in the interest of education in Nigeria, Nigerian students and every Nigerian child born and unborn for ASUU and the federal government to ensure that the last time the union declared a strike was on February 14, 2022.

The circus has gone on for far too long.

Kene Obiezu, Twitter: @kenobiezu

Nigerian Universities' Global recognition

I remain excited with the way Nigerian institutions continue to go higher, especially in the just-released World University Rankings, 2022 by the Times Higher Education. To date, this ranking is regarded as the largest and most diverse university ranking worldwide, as it cuts across 99 countries and territories, covering more than 1,600 universities. It obliges the heart to see that we have attained this height, despite the many months' old strike by the country's public universities. It is very remarkable to see many of our institutions ranked high among the best 500, 1000, and 1500 institutions in the world. Overall in Nigeria, the University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, and Covenant University (a privately-owned university in Ogun State) topped the list, followed by Bayero University, the only university listed from Northwestern Nigeria.

Out of all the 10 Nigerian universities listed in the best 1600 globally, universities located in the Southern part of the country came on top, with the University of Ibadan (436), University of Lagos (449), Covenant University (642), Bayero University Kano (1,017), Federal University of Technology Akure (1,055), University of Benin (1,231), University of Ilorin (1,309), University of Nigeria Nsukka (1,376), Obafemi Awolowo University (1,381) and Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (1,571). Bayero University Kano and the University of Ilorin are the only two institutions from the North. With the way things are going, the Northern universities are far left behind. There is a need for them to sit up, re-strategize, and be ready for the challenging task of institutional reform in every way possible.

Going by the milestone achieved by the Nigerian universities, this calls for celebration and as we rejoice, we need not forget some key points, as a significant number of our institutions are left out in the rankings. This is indeed a wake-up call to all our universities, covering both the federal, state, and privately -owned universities. A call to increase quality teaching via the implementation of novel teaching methodologies that are centered on student active engagement, scholarly research output, as well as community service, as the rankings are strictly done based on carefully calibrated performance indicators, centered on measuring an institution's key performance across four core areas, teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

In Africa, two Nigerian universities (University of Ibadan, 7th and University of Lagos, 9th) appear in the best nine universities, with South African universities topping the list, having four different universities.

Ismail Rabiu, Lecturer, Department of Microbiology, Skyline University, Nigeria

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NEWS

Abia 2023: Emenike Wins Again as Appeal Court Reaffirms His Candidacy

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in **Umuahia and Alex Enumah** in Abuja

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abia State, Chief Ikechi Emenike, yesterday scaled another legal hurdle as the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division further affirmed his candidacy.

The appellate court gave the affirmation while dismissing the application filed by Obinna Oriaku Eze seeking to appeal against the judgment delivered on September 2, 2022 in appeal No. CA/OW/269/2022.

Oriaku, who was a governorship aspirant, had initially filed the appeal at Owerri Division but secretly moved it to Abuja Division in his desperate efforts to overturn the verdict of an Abia State High Court delivered by Justice Benson Anya which validated Emenike's candidacy.

The Court of Appeal in its ruling held that Ikechi Emenike is the candidate of APC in Abia State and as such both APC and INEC are bound to accept his candidature as ruled by the Abia State High Court.

It did not spare the appellant, Obinna Oriaku as the Judge lambasted the former Abia Finance Commissioner for bringing "the frivolous application" having conceded in his evidence that Emenike won the May 26, 2022 governorship primary of APC in Abia State.

The application was dismissed with a cost of N100,000 in favour of APC, APC chairman and Chief Ikechi Emenike, who were joined as the respondents.

With this Appeal Court verdict in his favour, Emenike has so far triumphed in 20 out of 24 suits, most of which have been described by courts as frivolous, filed against the APC governorship standard bearer by his opponents and their surrogates.



ECOLOGICAL MENACE…

Abia State Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, during a visit to the site of the gully erosion menace at Ovom Street, Ogbor Hill Aba...yesterday

Osinbajo: Nigerian Federation Benefits our People When FG, States, Collaborate

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

Effective collaboration between federal and state governments with the private sector is a sure catalyst for boosting economic growth, economic diversification and improved productivity, according to Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

Osinbajo, who stated this yesterday at the closing of the maiden Gombe State Investment Summit, also noted that improving the business environment is critical to "the prosperity of our great country."

He added that state governments can further boost economic growth and investments in their respective states by approaching development like a sovereign state while improving the business environment for small businesses to thrive.

"The future of our country rests in the hands of business owners, the entrepreneurs, all over this state and all of our country.

"The successes that we have seen here in Gombe are substantially on account of the effective collaboration of the private sector, the states and the federal government. Our federation benefits our people when the states and federal authorities alongside private actors think and work together."

The VP, who highlighted significant improvements recorded by the Gombe State Government in this regard noted that "as a progressive government, we remain committed to policies and reform efforts that are geared towards economic diversification and improved productivity."

Bashir: We'll Retire Kwankwaso, Ganduje, Wali

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The Kano State governorship candidate of Labour Party (LP), Mr. Bashir Ishaq Bashir, yesterday, said his party has concluded plans to send Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and Ambassador Aminu Wali to political retirement in 2023.

Bashir, who spoke during the Media Dialogue organised by the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Kano Correspondents Chapel accused the political leaders of not having the interest of the people at heart, stating that the three politicians are leaders of their respective parties and have a strong grip on Kano politics.

"In the last 20 years, we have had leaders who came into power unprepared. Our leaders do not prioritise the priorities of the people. We will make sure that Kano is economically viable," he stated.

"In every society, and in times of great difficulties and challenges, there rises a group of committed and like-minded individuals whose collective resolve and tenacity surpasses the sum total of the monumental economic, social and moral decay of their society.

"These are men and women with a vision of what their society should and shouldn't be. People of strong moral authority whose commitment to service to the people is never in doubt. Men and women who sacrifice their personal comforts for the sake of their people."

2023: APC Chieftain Promises to Deliver Delta for Tinubu

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Prince Yemi Emiko, has promised to deliver Delta State to Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in next year's presidential election.

He said his decision to mobilise support and votes for the former Lagos State governor is based on the premise that Tinubu will engage competent hands to help him deliver his vision for the development of the country.

Prince Emiko made the promise yesterday while receiving a volunteer group, 'Warri For Jagaban' in his Warri country home, assuring that he will align with the body to ensure victory for Asiwaju Tinubu in the 2023 presidential election.

"I can assure you that Tinubu has a knack for identifying and assembling competent and talented people, who will constitute a formidable team to rescue Nigeria.

"Our principal, Tinubu, will win the presidential election in 2023. He has built men across the country that are ready to work and deliver him next year. They believe in him because of his track record in Lagos State," he said.

Emiko, who is the Coordinator of the APC campaign council for Delta South, said he was impressed by the brilliance of the group and members clear understanding of why Nigeria needs Tinubu at this tempestuous time.

"I commend your initiative at volunteerism," he said, noting that Nigeria needs young people like them to stand firm and solidly behind a man with a track record at using government resources to build communities and empower people.

Leader of the group, Mr. Jemine Idundun, commended Prince Emiko for carrying the youths along in his quest for the emergence of Asiwaju Tinubu as the next president of Nigeria.

Dafinone Commiserates with Victims as Floods Destroy Property in over 40 Delta Communities

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

No fewer than 46 communities in Ughelli North and South local government areas of Delta State have been ravaged by floods which destroyed their property and left many displaced.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) Delta Central senatorial candidate, Chief Ede Dafinone, who made the disclosure in a statement personally signed by him yesterday, called on the federal government, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Delta State Government and other relevant agencies to speed up emergency operations and bring relief materials to the affected victims.

While commiserating with victims of the flood disaster and affected communities, Dafinone urged them to move to safer places while waiting for government intervention.

"Over 46 communities in Ughelli North and Ughelli South local government areas in Delta Central senatorial district are currently flooded with many families displaced and goods and properties worth several millions of Naira completely destroyed.

"I wish to commiserate with our people in Ughelli North and Ughelli South and other parts of Delta who are affected by the ravaging flood that has displaced a number of families and destroyed means of livelihood, my heart is with you at this trying moment.

Nigerians Get Message of Hope as Economic Hardship Deepens

Mary Nnah

Deacon Philip Okuabor, President, Grace Foundation, a welfare arm of House of Grace Church Satellite Town, Lagos, has encouraged Nigerians not to give up on their hope, even as the economic situation in the country gets bad day after day.

Speaking during the organisation's annual reach out programme which is 9th edition tagged: 'Heads Up Nigeria' held recently in Lagos to commemorate Nigeria's Independence Day celebration, Okuabor said "In this time of economic hardship, we strongly believe that there is hope for all."

While urging Nigerians not to lose hope, he noted, "Nigerians should keep working and doing what they know how to do best. Things are going to get better. We believe that no matter who takes over power come 2023 as the president of Nigeria, such person will not allow things to get worse than they are now but will make things better."

He noted further that Nigeria's problems are not difficult to solve only if those in authority were sincere and transparent in all that they do, adding, "Nigerians are not insatiable, with every little thing we get, we become happier, so Nigeria's problem is easy to solve."

World Mental Health Day

The world on October 10 marked the World Mental Health Day.

The theme for this year, according to the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) is 'Make mental health for all a global priority'.

It is marked every year to raise awareness about mental health around the world and to mobilise efforts to support those experiencing mental health issues. This campaign has been spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2013.

"A major challenge accessing mental healthcare is stigmatisation" says Dr Fisayo Adesokun,

According to a consultant psychiatrist at the University of Port Harcourt, Dr. Fisayo Adesokun, "A major challenge accessing mental healthcare is stigmatisation."

He said that mental health and physical health are complementary and should not be seen as a taboo subject.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **ADESHINA OLADIPUPO JELILI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ADESHINA JELILI ALANI.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS OZIOMA UGOCHI IHENACHO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS OZIOMA UGOCHI UMEH.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **DATORU URIAH**, now wish to be known and addressed as **DATORU JOSHUA.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS VIVIEN AKHERE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS VIVIEN AKHERE IGIDI.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **DENWIGWE CHIJINDU DAMILOLA BLESSING**, now wish to be known and addressed as **DE-NWIGWE CHIJINDU BLESSING.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **TERNGU FAVOUR TERNGU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **TERNGU FAVOUR TARTOR.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **ALAO GANIYU BABATUNDE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEYEMI RAIMI ADESHOLA.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS DIALAEKWE VICTORIA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **UFUOMA VICTORIA EZINNE.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

CORRECTION OF NAMES

That my BVN registration with Ecobank PLC that my name was wrongly captured as **WAIT FORTUNE** instead of **EKPELU FORTUNE**, and my correct date of birth is 12th June 1995 instead of 29th June 1993 . All former documents remain valid and the general public should please take note.

RingTrue

08054699539 yemi.adebowale@thisdaylive.com

Yemi Adebowale



Obajana Cement and Gov Bello's Fairy Tales

Anybody listening to Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State on the Obajana Cement Plant's dispute with Dangote Cement PLC would think there was a cement production company owned by the Kogi State Government and sold to Dangote Industries Limited in 2002. NO! There was never anything like that. The Kogi State Governor has been dishing out fairy tales about Obajana to weep up sentiments for personal gains. Back in 2002, all that the state's government had on ground was a cement bagging company. It was importing bulk cement and bagging "Kogi Cement."

There was no cement manufacturing by the defunct Obajana Cement PLC. It did not also own a mining licence for the vast limestone deposit in Obajana. Even the bagging of cement was done for only a few months before it went under. This is the truth that must be told. Regrettably, Yahaya Bello has been going about blackmailing Dangote Cement with a view to exploiting the company.

Now, let's critically look at the sales agreement Governor Bello has been twisting. Obajana Cement Plc was the idea of the late Abubakar Audu in 1992, during his first (brief) tenure as governor – January 1992 to November 1993. His ultimate dream was to have a cement manufacturing plant in the state in view of its huge limestone deposit. When late Audu returned as governor in 1999, Obajana Cement was still dead with no assets. In a bid to stimulate manufacturing in the state, he invited Aliko Dangote to buy the dead Obajana Cement PLC and use it as a springboard for cement manufacturing in Kogi State.

That was what gave birth to the July 30, 2002 agreement signed by late Audu, selling Obajana Cement to Dangote Industries Limited (DIL). It was an outright sale of all the shares of Obajana Cement PLC to Dangote. It is on record that Kogi State Government and Dangote entered into a binding agreement to document their understanding

The agreement was amended in 2003 and remains binding on them. Governor Bello acknowledges that he has this agreement as reported by the Judicial Commission of Inquiry he established to probe the sale of Obajana. So, let him print out and show the world the portion of the sales agreement that gave 10 per cent of Dangote Cement to the Kogi State Government. The deal was that Kogi State Government would buy five per cent of the Obajana plant within



Bello

five years. It did not take up this offer.

It is also preposterous for Governor Bello to assert that there was no evidence of payment by Dangote Industries Limited to Kogi State Government from the transfer of Obajana Cement and that no dividend was paid to the state "from the profits realised from the inception of Dangote Cement Company Plc to date."

If Governor Bello truly wants evidence of payment by Dangote Industries Limited for Obajana Cement, he should consciously check the records of the state's Ministry of Finance. After Audu left in 2003, there were four governors after him – Ibrahim Idris, Clarence Olafemi, Ibrahim Idris again and Idris Wada. None complained about non-payment for Obajana Cement Plc. Bello has no facts and figures to back his claims.

Likewise, governor Bello can't be talking about "unpaid dividends" when the Kogi State Government is not a shareholder of Dangote Cement PLC. According to documents released by Dangote, it was agreed, inter alia, that "Dangote would establish a cement plant with a capacity of 3,500,000 metric tonnes per annum; DIL shall hold 100% of the shareholding in OCP, and source for all the funds required to develop the cement plant; KSG shall have the option to acquire five per cent equity shareholding in OCP within five years; and KSG shall grant tax relief and exemption from levies and other charges by KSG for a period of seven years from the date of commencement of production."

Dangote commenced manufacturing of cement at Obajana in 2007 as agreed, providing vital assets like machinery and a vast limestone deposit covered by mining leases issued under licence by the federal government.

While demanding a share of the plant, but without any evidence that the Kogi State Government is a shareholder of Dangote Cement PLC, Governor Bello invaded Obajana cement plant with touts last Wednesday, to shut the multi-billion-naira cement company. Hundreds of armed non-state actors, under the command of Governor Bello, attacked the plant, destroying property and inflicting grievous injuries on many of the workers. I was shocked that the Kogi State Police Command did not respond to distress call from the plant. The police obviously compromised.

Bello admitted the invaders acted on his instructions to shut the plant. I have never seen this kind of lawlessness in my life. This governor, who has spent almost seven years trying to force Dangote into a deal that will solely benefit him, remarked last Thursday that he invaded Obajana Cement in line with his mandate "to safeguard the lives and livelihood of the people of Kogi State, including residents, and to ensure their wellbeing."

Bello said this was also coming on the heels of protests by the people of the state "who felt they had been suppressed and marginalised by the Dangote Group which he alleged was ripping them off."

Bello declared: "I am here to defend my people, and from all reports, it is clear that Obajana Cement Company does not belong to Dangote". What nonsense! This governor is talking about a sale at the instance of the duly established government of Kogi State, done in accordance with all enabling laws, and the papers effectively, lawfully and duly executed by the governor and Attorney General of the State at the time, after approvals were obtained from the government.

This man shut a plant providing jobs for thousands and sustaining economic activities on a very large scale in his state because of selfish desires. Private citizens, bearing arms to shut down a corporate citizen of Nigeria? This action is illegal, worrisome, irrational, insensitive and capable of discouraging investors. It is likewise a danger to Nigeria's quest for foreign direct investment as investors will be concerned about the security and legal system of this country. I'm surprised that relevant authorities have not sanctioned Yahaya Bello. I'm also shocked that Yahaya Bello has not shown any remorse for his gangster tactics. His action in Obajana last Wednesday was pure brigandage.

This Kogi State Governor must not be allowed to get away with his shenanigans at the Obajana plant. As a first step, the Kogi State Police Command and all other security agencies in the state must rise and protect Dangote Cement. Allowing Governor Bello's goons to take over the factory speaks poorly of these security agencies. Those who carried out the dastardly invasion of the Obajana plant must similarly be apprehended and prosecuted. Governor Bello should approach a court of law if he thinks he has a case against Dangote Cement.

Chibok Parents Still Waiting for their Girls

Parents in Chibok, Borno State are still waiting for their abducted daughters, eight years after the gory incident. Last Wednesday, the Kibaku Area Development Association, also known as Chibok Community, said over 110 girls were still with their abductors. The community raised the alarm over the neglect of the schoolgirls abducted in their school by Boko Haram in 2014.

No fewer than 276 Chibok schoolgirls were abducted, 57 escaped on their own, 109 were released after the payment of ransom and 110 are still unaccounted for. That's the grisly story.

The release of the remaining Abuja-Kaduna train abductees has encouraged Chibok parents to renew pressure on the federal government to free their daughters.

The National President of KADA, Dauda Iliya, said: "The issue of the abandonment of the Chibok schoolgirls has come forth again following the release of the remaining abducted train passengers…The statement on the release has caused the Chibok people pain, despair and a deep feeling of neglect by the federal government."

Aside from the pain of still waiting for their girls, eight years after abduction, Boko Haram has not ceased attacks in Chibok. The statistics are frightening. In the last 10 years, there have been 72 attacks by Boko Haram, with 407 people killed and 332 people abducted. Scores of houses, churches, farms, vehicles and businesses were also burnt.

Iliya Laments: "The parents and the community have continued to be subjected to persistent and sustained attacks, killings, abductions, maiming, arson and other myriads of criminality without adequate government protection. Chibok has been for all intents and purposes abandoned by all layers of government in Nigeria.

"Last January, Kautikari, the second largest town in Chibok was attacked with five girls abducted, three persons killed, many houses and churches burnt. Piyemi, another big town in Chibok was attacked on January 20 with 19 persons, mostly girls, abducted and one person, the Vigilante leader, beheaded. The town was razed and virtually all the recently harvested agricultural produce completely burnt or looted."

The promise of Buhari when he assumed office was that all abducted Chibok schoolgirls would be freed. He must fulfil this promise. The President still has seven months to do this. I challenge him today to actualise his pledge.

Huge Holes in Budget 2023

Budget 2023 is dead on arrival. That's the plain truth about the junk submitted as federal budget by President Muhammadu Buhari on October 7. Virtually everything in the budget is depressing. The budget, which is almost N3 trillion more than the N17.126 trillion for 2022, will have a record N10.78 trillion deficit. Yes, the total fiscal operations of the federal government in 2023 is expected to result in a deficit of N10.78 trillion. This represents 4.78 per cent of Nigeria's estimated GDP, slightly above the three per cent threshold set by the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007. Our President is evidently a lawless man.

Buhari has decided to sink Nigeria into bigger debt with Budget 2023 because the deficit would be financed mainly through borrowings, totaling N8.80 trillion. This same Nigeria is expected to spend N6.31 trillion servicing debt in 2023. The budget has a paltry N5.35 trillion for capital expenditure. The money expected to go into debt servicing is more than what is set aside for capital projects. So, how will this kind of country develop?

The total revenue available to fund the 2023 Federal Budget is estimated at N9.73 trillion. Estimated federally-collected revenue is under N20 trillion. This includes the revenues of 63 government-owned enterprises. Crude oil revenue is dwindling because of huge theft. It is a shame that the federal government will be struggling to obtain estimated N9.73 trillion revenue. Nigeria will not be in this financial mess if the massive fraud in federal revenue generating agencies are blocked and the agencies properly managed.

So, there is a big problem with revenue, a lot will be going into debt servicing while new borrowings will be greater than the revenue, with little for capital projects. This is clearly not how to manage the economy of a country that wants to develop. The revenue side is poor because of massive corruption. How can estimated federally-collected revenue be under a paltry N20 trillion in 2023? Customs alone can generate N10 trillion in 2023 if the holes are blocked. Big revenue agencies can double federally-collected revenue within a year and substantially fund budgets at all levels. This has always been my position.



Happy 65th birthday to my amiable mentor/father, a revered Senior Advocate of Nigeria, and a seasoned constitutional lawyer, Chief Mike Ozekhome, SAN, CON, OFR, PhD, llD.

I celebrate you Sir, as you turn 65 today. God shall continuously shine His light brighter and brighter upon your life today and always. Indeed this month of October has bestowed upon you several blessings and favours.

Just few days ago, on 11th October, 2022, you were conferred with the very prestigious national honour of Commander of the Order of Niger (CON), by the, President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. In addition to that, you have just courageously won your Nnamdi Kanu's case at the Court of Appeal against the same Federal Government.

This could have only come from a place of grace and divine favour from God.
I join the heavens in celebrating the hand of God upon your life Sir, and I pray that God shall open the heavens and shower upon you blessings that your cup will over flow.

I must add Sir, that your achievements in life generally has never come to me as a surprise, knowing your glittering track record of immense contributions in courageously speaking truth to power.

Thank you for being a positive trailblazer to our generation.

Congratulations Sir and welcome to a new era of more open doors.
Happy, happy, happy birthday to my mentor/father.

DR. STANLEY UZOCHUKWU
CHAIRMAN/ CEO, STANEL GROUP

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Ayra Starr, The Rising Star

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

In 2021, Ayra Starr, real name Oyinkansola Sarah Aderibigbe made known her entry into the music industry with her smash hit 'Bloody Samaritan', which was closely followed by an album '19 & Dangerous'. A remix of the 'Bloody Samaritan' single featuring American artiste and former Destiny's Child member, Kelly Rowland, dropped days back.

As noted, this remix keeps the original structure, but Rowland's top vocal runs take it to a higher level. A music video for the "Bloody Samaritan" off "19 & Dangerous" which was her first album followed successively. The remix, a deluxe version of "19 & Dangerous" was released yesterday.

With charm and attitude, the 19-year-old singer is one of Nigeria's most promising new voices. Between her emergence year and 2022, the Mavin star girl has dropped hit songs that threw her into the limelight. Some of those hit singles include 'Away' and 'Bloody Samaritan.' With her recent single 'Rush' in September 2022, Ayra Starr has been on the trend table in the music industry.

Hitting number one on the charts in another country in the last few days, she has hopped on several charts. Last week, Ayra Starr became the first female artiste to record multiple No. 1 entries in Nigeria and only the second artiste to have multiple No. 1 songs off a debut album (Asake is the first).

Since Ayra's Bloody Samaritan peaked at No. 1 back in 2021, no female artiste has reached the top of a chart in Nigeria until 'Rush' debuted at No. 1. The longest time ever without a female artiste having a No. 1 single is 40 weeks. '19 & Dangerous' also became only the fifth album to have multiple No. 1 entries in the country.



Ayra Starr

Raised in Lagos and Cotonou, Ayra is dedicated to preserving African rhythms and language in her work. She sings in English, Pidgin English and Yoruba. She chose the stage name Starr because she knew what she could be. Then she chose the Arabic name, "Ayra," meaning honorable and respected.

At the age of 19, she made the country pause with the release of her eponymous EP early in 2021. The young songstress went from being relatively unknown to becoming a strong contender for Nigeria's best new artiste — viral doesn't even begin to explain what Ayra went through with the release of that EP.

Ayra is deliberate about doing music. That deliberateness comes from spending a lifetime getting ready for today.

Ayra said in a recent chat: "Before I became famous, I wrote the pros and cons of fame. I wrote about what I would do and how I would do it. Because I've always known it was going to happen. I've worked hard to be where I am today and I've been saying since I was young that I was going to be popular and famous. I've been Ayra Starr since I was born. I was that annoying child who would tell everyone that I was going to be a superstar."

Today, Ayra is living the life she has always known was for her and a huge part of that is the confidence with which she approaches her music.

She started recording with the storied Nigerian producer Don Jazzy the day they met in December of 2019. Even that encounter, according to a music journalist occurred at a breakneck pace. Jazzy reached out to Ayra just three hours after she posted an original song, "Damaged" (now called "Toxic" on her album). One even joked that through Ayra, Don Jazzy recouped his investment on label-mate, Di'Ja. Funny...

By June of 2020, she signed to his label, Mavin Records. She released her first EP in January, roughly a year after her first studio session. "Oh my god, I was so nervous," Ayra says of her first meeting with Don Jazzy. She brought her brother with her to Mavin's Lagos office and studio. "We were waiting, just by the gate. We would make Snaps. We were just jumping. We were so nervous."

The family Ayra grew up with is a cornerstone of her musical ability. Her mom is a former singer and she has an aunt who rapped. The women would covertly coax her and her siblings into songwriting competitions. "We didn't even know that's what it was then," says Ayra. Her mom and aunt would give the kids an hour to come up with something and a word to start them off.

By 10, Ayra was imagining whole albums. After starting college at 14, she continued to pursue music at her mother's behest, even though she started to become cognizant of gender imbalances in the West African music industry. She says she saw the way men in some parts of the region could sing of vices and challenges that wouldn't be tolerated in women's lyrics.

She thought of becoming her brother's manager rather than a star herself, but her mom encouraged her to still upload videos of herself performing online and, well, by now you know how that turned out for her.

Lugard Set for January Release

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Barring a last-minute change, Lugard, one of the most anticipated films of 2022, will hit theaters on January 13, 2023. Earlier slated for August 27, 2022 release, following a successful premiere, the movie was postponed for unspecified reasons. As announced by the producers, after embarking on a more effective strategy, "We had to position ourselves for the wide audience we intended to reach. It was made with purpose and entertainment in mind."

From the stable of 3 Knights Film in conjunction with B5Films and Monomania Entertainment, Lugard, the film explores the need to educate youths of today on the dangers of joining different confraternities in the universities. It was produced by veteran Nollywood producer Lekan Ayinde and directed by Tunde Olaoye.

"There is no better time for this type of film to be released, especially during election season, because the film will educate our youths about election violence and its consequences," the producers revealed.

The movie is the story of an intelligent new entrant in a university who was initiated into cultism due to his intimidating brainpower. After his first assignment, which led to the death of a rival confraternity leader, Lugard's life is being hunted. The Hype Agency, promoters of Lugard said the audience are in for a period of entertainment come January.

To be distributed by Silverbird Distribution, Lugard boasts of an ensemble of stellar cast, starring actors like Gabriel Afolayan, Kehinde Bankole, Zack Orji, Norbert Young, Kalu Ikeagwu, Debo Adebayo (Mr. Macaroni), Rotimi Salami, Omowunmi Dada, Chinyere Wilfred, Adeniyi Johnson, Hafeez Oyetoro (Saka), Laduba Quadri Qidad, Tunji Adeyemo among others.



Gabriel Afolayan and Quadri Qidad lead stars in 'Lugard'

'Cock Crow at Dawn' Remakes

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

For those who may not know, Peter Igho is the brain behind some of the most popular drama series on NTA that dominated Nigerian households in the 70s up to the 90s. He shot and produced the series, Cockcrow at Dawn, and played vital roles in bringing other series such as New Masquerade, Samanja, Village Headmaster, Things Fall Apart, and Behind The Clouds to Nigerian homes.

He also discovered some of the big names that shone through the years and made a mark in Nigeria's television and movie industry. While at NTA, the Jos-born broadcaster handled programme content, management, and marketing for 33 years, until his mandatory retirement at the age of 60 in 2008. Now one of the television drama series Igho pioneered, 'Cock Crow at Dawn' is coming back!

"Television Series Agreement between Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Peter Igho Consults Ltd for the Co-Production/Co-Marketing of the New Version of 'Cock Crow At Dawn'" was recently signed, thus kick-starting the reboot of the hit 1980 television series which is currently in preproduction and will be recreated by Peter Igho and his son, Tosin Igho, a fast rising director.

Written by Peter Igho and directed by Matt Dadzie, 'Cock Crow at Dawn' premiered in April 1980 on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and aired a total of 104 episodes. The original drama series featured several of the country's brightest stars, mostly deceased, including George Menta who played the role of Bello, and Ene Oloja played his wife, Mama Bitrus.

Sadiq Daba played the couple's son Bitrus with Tola Awobode playing the role of their daughter Lare, amongst several others. George Menta as protagonist Bello and Tola Awobade Akimjobi Cottage as his daughter Lanre in Cock Crow at Dawn, following the conclusion of the series, its stars went on to have successful careers both home and abroad with actors like George Menta staring in several local TV dramas like Mister Johnson and several other Hollywood films before his death in 2013 at age 80.

Sadiq Daba featured in several hit Nollywood films like Kunle Afolayon's October 1st as 'Inspector Waziri for which he won the Africa Movie Academy Award for Best Actor. He also, most recently, stared in another of Kunle Afolayan's, Citation in 2020 before his death in 2021.

Ene Oloja has starred in Nollywood productions like Zero Hour and the Hollywood film The Brave Ones, to mention but a few.

Tosin Igho is well-known for his directorial Seven (2019) and Nneka The Pretty Serpent (2020). While his father, the veteran broadcaster, writer and producer of the original 'Cock Crow at Dawn' series for Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is lauded in recognition of his tremendous contribution to the film and television industry.

Duktor Sett Shares 'Doktor's Appointment'

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Emerging music producer, Ezeoke Saviour Eni professionally known as Duktor Sett has been making waves on the music scene and one factor that goes for him is that he actually does know his onions. After successfully producing songs for top rated artistes and releasing some singles, the multi-award-winning producer delivers a new album titled "Duktor's Appointment".

According to the prolific music producer and Afro R&B artiste, "it's all about mending broken sounds and making sure that people connect to the right lyrics that will heal their soul best".

The album's Executive produced is multi-talented comedian and artiste, Bright Okpocha (Basketmouth), under the record label, Royal Wall Studios.

Duktor Sett's debut album is comprised of well-chosen songs, including the massive "Another Messiah," written and performed by Duktor Sett and Paladin, and mixed and mastered by T.U.C.

Another standout track is "I Believe Me," which was produced by Malvina, mixed and mastered by Duktor Sett and T.U.C. "Ori," which tells the story of a man's destiny and journey, is sure to be a fan favourite.

Duktor Sett means business with his first project, written and performed by Toliban, mixed by Duktor Sett. On the album, The Cavemen creatively performed 'Duktor' with additional vocals by Paladin.

SHOWBIZFLAIR

AFRIFF Opens in Lagos with Horror Film, *Nanny*

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

The 11th edition of the Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) is holding in Lagos between the 6th and 12th of November 2022. In the international film showcase in Nigeria's biggest city, Lagos, AFRIFF presents a complete immersion into the world of film making, with participation from all over Africa and the diaspora, celebrating the best African films and stories.

Speaking with journalists during this year's festival programme launch and media parley at Alliance Française Lagos, the founder and festival director, Chioma Ude announced "Indigenous for Global" as the theme for 2022.

She said, "Filmmaking has evolved rapidly in Africa over the last two decades and this year's edition is designed to influence global perspectives of African films and storytelling."

Continuing, the ardent film lover and entrepreneur said: "We intend to continue to empower our storytellers to explore ideologies and techniques that appeal to a larger global audience."

Buttressing her point, she explained that the keynote conversations for the 11th edition feature high-profile speakers and facilitators from all over the world, with high-value networking as a preconceived outcome.

The festival's 10th-anniversary edition was applauded for multiple achievements, including the hosting of Amazon Prime Video in an interactive session with filmmakers that saw licensing deals of short, feature and animated films.

As part of activities at this year's festival, Chioma Ude has announced the continuing collaboration with Prime Video and Amazon Studios while introducing Nanny as the Opening Night Film of the festival.

Nanny represents the often-overlooked immigrant working mother in the domestic space, who walks the tightrope of adaptation and assimilation. It tells the real story of a mother's pursuit of a better future, for herself and her child, while trying to maintain her own identity. Nanny is the winner of the 2022 Sundance Dramatic Grand Jury Prize, marking the first time a horror film and the second time a Black female director received the award.

The film will screen in theaters in Nigeria and select territories on November 25. Nanny will be released on Prime Video in more than 240 countries and territories worldwide on December 16. Nanny joins Prime Video after the streamer recently announced its increased investment in Nigeria with its first two Nigerian originals, Gangs of Lagos, and LOL: Last One Laughing Naija, its first exclusive overall deals in Africa with Nigerian director / writer, and producer Jáde Osiberu and Greoh Studios.



Chioma Ude

Nollywood in Hollywood Revived, Shakes off Covid-19

Godwin Ifijie

Against all odds, Nollywood in Hollywood Festival again came on stream recently for Nigerians in the Diaspora, after the Los Angeles film audience had a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Though, only two films were screened at this year's festival, one of which was a three-part anthology, but staff and attendees were ecstatic as they experienced and discussed the next generation of emerging Nigerian cinema.

Nollywood in Hollywood for five years had consistently featured an annual presentation of top three Nigerian films for the Hollywood film industry, screening the selected films by the festival jury all over Los Angeles, from the American Cinematheque theatres to movie theatres in university campuses, including the well-known film school at the University of Southern California until the COVID-19 pandemic impediment.

The first of the two movies screened this year was the Daniel Ademinokan's film, Gone.

Held at the Norris Cinema Theatre at the University of Southern California, festival staff rolled out a red carpet, and many varsity students were excited with numerous young people from across Los Angeles schools, showing so much eagerness for Nigerian cinema.

A volunteer Nigerian environmental studies major, who enjoys taking classes at the film school on the side, stated that she was happy as a Nigerian watching movies from her home country on the big screen and sharing the experience with her peers.

The Ademinokan Netflix-produced film



'Juju Stories' at the Aero Cinema in Santa Monica

tells the story of a Nigerian boxer, Any, who finally returned home after about 25 years in an American prison without ever telling his family about his imprisonment and falsely making them to believe that he simply left his wife to raise their two children alone to meet another woman in the US, making life difficult for his son he met for the first time upon his return to Nigeria, a no easy situation for them both.

At the friendly and open conversation stage, a much excited Ademinokan thanked the festival founder, Ose Oyamendan, EP and principal partner of O2A Media, for rejuvenating Nollywood in Hollywood, explaining that the most important aspect of his film, Gone was exploring the complexities of a father and son relationship, a usual common theme in Nigerian cinemas, stating that his intention was to show this important theme in a more accessible emotional way.

Aside Gone, Ademinokan in the last 14 years has written, directed and produced many feature films, including the crime drama, Black Friday, that earned five nominations at the Africa Movie Academy Awards, just as he played multiple musical instruments from childhood, wrote stories constantly to hone his skill at screenwriting, started earning money from script sales to producers in Nollywood as a Nigerian university Computer Science student in the 90s, returned to filmmaking after a college degree, and then traveled to New York to study film at both the Digital and New York Film Academies.

Ademinokan's varied backgrounds allow him to assume different roles in his projects-director, producer, screenwriter, colourist and music producer, among others.

"I love focusing on details, and wearing multiple hats as it helps me to see the film from many perspectives," he said, adding, "I may have all these skills that I'm into, but I can never do them alone without an amazing team behind me."

He described Nollywood as "a huge industry," labeling it an important "source of wealth for many people."

But the endowed filmmaker hates delivering stereotype stories about Africa, sadly pointing out: "It's like "Jumping off trees, the only thing Hollywood wants to see," urging producers to be more interested in what Africa truly is instead of how the general audience wants to see her, the reason, he says, he refuses to label Nigerian filmmakers Black filmmakers, arguing, "We are filmmakers; at the end of the day, we're all telling stories, regardless of what it is."

Ademinokan produces not only his own films, but those by fellow Africans, taking for example, Here Love Lies by Tope Oshin, and Sam Dede, who starred in Gone. The same for Psychological Thriller screened on September 29, 2022 at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington D.C, a unique five-day cinematic and exhibition experience.

A celebration of African creativity and expression, it derived its title from the Nigerian telephone code, +234 Connect.

But aside the Nollywood in Hollywood Festival this year, a three-part anthology Juju Stories were on September 24, 2022 presented at the Aero cinema in Santa Monica. As its name suggests, the film features stories that explored juju (magical) stories rooted in Nigerian folklore.

All three stories, Love Potion by Michael Omonua, which told a timeless story about a love spell that had an unexpected ending, YAM by Abba Makama, which presented a crazy tale about how a witch transformed an arrogant and annoying beggar into a vegetable, Suffer The Witch, by C.J. Obasi, that also told a story about a witch, but an untraditional one.

Celebration of Nigerian culture generally teaches others not only about witchcraft, but the daily life in the country, and particularly leaving many in a surprise about Lagos, the largest city in Nigeria, being surrounded by water, and the Island and the Mainland just linked with three bridges.

Nollywood is the second largest film industry in the world after the India's in terms of output, but despite its widespread cultural influence, it's yet to make its mark globally, including in the United States as many other foreign (mainly western) film industries.

No thanks as well to the fact that Nigerians speak English and their films are not acceptable to non-English award contests.

Participating in prestigious awards' competitions have, therefore, not been too attractive to Nigerian filmmakers.

Mr Macaroni Appreciates Pefti Film Institute

Tosin Clegg

During PEFTI Arts Festival which took place from September 5 to 10, 2022, popular comedian and actor, Mr Macaroni, donated N500,000 to PEFTI as a show of appreciation for what he gained as a student there in 2011.

According to Abiola Adenuga, Managing Director, PEFTI, "We are pleased at this kind gesture from Mr Macaroni. PEFTI is proud of everything he has achieved since he graduated. We also appreciate two other celebrities who attended – Judith Audu, producer of Just Not Married, Rattlesnake, Blood Sisters, The King's Horseman and more; as well as Kayode Kasum, who graduated from PEFTI in 2011, and has gone on to direct Fate of Alakada, Quam's Money, Soole, Sugar Rush, and other blockbusters."

Established in 2004, PEFTI offers 2-year National Innovation Diploma Programmes in Film& Television Production, Performing & Arts, and Music Technology; as well as 3-month, and 6-month Professional Practical Training in Script Writing, Directing, Acting and Presentation, Music, Music Studio Production, Digital Photography, Cinematography, Video Editing, Styling, Costume & Makeup and Producing & Production Management.

PEFTI is located at two campuses: 5, Joy Avenue, Ajao Estate, Isolo, Lagos State; and 32, Oyo Road, Coca-Cola / Leventis Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.



Mr Macaroni

Naija Star Search: Contestants Dazzle as Competition Enters 'Pair Battle'

Episode six of Naija Star Search brought a new twist to the competition as the pair battle stage kicked off.

The group phase of the competition ended last week with the eviction of Thekhaleed and Esjay.

The pair battle phase began on Sunday and saw the contestants perform contemporary Naija songs in pairs.

Also, the baton of eviction from the show has exchanged hands from the audience to the judges as the music talent hunt show hits up to discover who becomes the next superstar.

The competition gradually becomes fiercer as the weakest in each team goes on probation and then possible eviction. At this stage, each episode becomes a hot seat for the contestants to unleash their hidden creativity or leave the stage.

In the end, Skyffy, eMzez, Denerio, TOMs, Jaydboy, and MB Dre were selected by the judges for probation. On Sunday, four will be evicted.

Singer Uwale Okoro, aka Essence, made a guest appearance on the show, ushering in Denerio and Skimzo to join her in performing one of her classics, 'Facebook Love',

Naija Star Search airs every Sunday at 8 pm on the following StarTimes channels: ST Nollywood Plus, ST Nollywood and ST Yoruba. You can also watch on the StarTimes-ON mobile app.

TRIBUTE

Boniface Okonkwo Nwankwo: 1939-2022

Dozie Nwankwo

Death is the inevitable end of every man's earthly sojourn. Mr. Boniface Okonkwo Nwankwo, Eselu Enugwu Ukwu na Umunri, on Thursday 11th August 2022 answered the ultimate call to eternity. It was the fateful day the town lost one of its illustrious sons, a pioneer banker who rose to a top managerial position in the defunct African Continental Bank (ACB).

Born on 5th December, 1939 into the family of Pa Onwuatuegwu Nwankwo of Enuagu village, Enugwu Ukwu (Njikoka LGA) and Mrs. Elizabeth Mgbafor Nwankwo (Nee Azodo) of Agulu (Anaocha LGA), both late, Mr Boniface Okonkwo started his primary education at St. Anthony's Primary School, Enugwu Ukwu where he excelled in both academics and extra-curricular activities. He was a celebrated athlete during interschool tournaments and was also spectacular with his dancing skills of the popular Atilogwu and the use of the flute.

Having passed his Standard Six Examination with excellent grades and in search of a greener pasture, he voluntarily decided to relocate to Jos with one of his uncles to begin an apprenticeship in his transportation business.

As one interested in academics, he seized the opportunity to enroll in a commercial school in Jos and expectedly performed creditably thereafter.

Shortly after, he secured employment as a Clerical Officer with Shell BP, and later African Petroleum (AP) in Jos. Impressed by his dynamism and business prowess, as his employers were transacting with African Continental Bank (ACB), the bank offered him employment as a clerical officer. He later became a cashier in the same bank. As a gold fish which has no hiding place, his diligence took him to some branches of the bank including Minna, Sokoto, Kano, Benin, Ibadan, Nsukka, Abakaliki, Nnewi and finally Enugu where he rose to the managerial position.

During his sojourn in some Northern State branches of the bank, he related very well with both Hausa staff and customers of the bank. He learnt and spoke Hausa language fluently, thus got



Boniface Nwankwo

nicknamed Alhaji 'Eselu'. While working in the Ibadan branch of the bank, he successfully completed a part time special programme in banking at the University of Ibadan. These successes resulted in his promotion to the Senior management cadre. His many years of hard work with deep sense of honesty, integrity, loyalty and commitment to duty in the bank earned him an "Award of Excellence" by the bank management. He eventually rose to the position of an Area Manager in the Enugu branch of the bank.

Beyond this point, he was spurred to venture into private businesses-including transportation in attempts to sustain his family and became successful in these areas. His implicit trust and faith in God proved that "after the darkness comes a glorious dawn".

Being a skilled writer with good command of English language, he became a Community Leader in Enuagu Village and Enugwu Ukwu doing charity and philanthropic gestures as well as conflict resolutions.

In appreciation of his numerous selfless and dedicated services, his community appreciated him with the title of "Ochudo Enuagu" (He who finds peace for Enuagu village), while his kinsmen fondly called him 'Umunna nwezuo aku' (Let wealth spread to all and sundry). The Enuagu Development Association also gave him an "Award of Excellence" while many socio-cultural organizations including Enugwu Ukwu Widows Association, Umuada Enuagu and the Women Wing of Enuagu Development Association respectively appointed him their Grand Patron.

His earliest marriage was short lived by the death of his first wife, Mrs. Maria Nwankwo (Nee Enebeli) who hailed from Ndoni in Rivers State. He was later joined in marriage to Mrs. Pauline Nwankwo (Nee Odunukwe) from Adazi Nnukwu in Anambra State, also dead. He much later married Mrs. Lucy Nkemdilim Nwankwo from Nkanu in Enugu State.

Eselu Enugwu Ukwu na Umunri wasx survived by a wife, many children and grandchildren, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and a host of other relatives. They include Mrs. Lucy Nkemdilim Nwankwo (wife); Rev. Wilfred Nwankwo, (son); Dame Judith Amaechi, former First lady of Rivers State (daughter); Emeka Nwankwo, (son); Hon. Dozie Nwankwo, Member House of Representatives representing Anaocha/Njikoka/Dunukofia Federal Constituency (son); Mrs. Onyinye Uwaleke, (daughter); Mrs Vivian Adamma Anorue, (Nee Nwankwo/daughter); and Mr. Uche Boniface Nwankwo (son).

His sons-in-law include Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, former Governor of Rivers State; Mr. Chijioke Blessing Anorue and Mr. Emmanuel Uwaleke. Two daughters-in-law - Mrs. Gloria Nwankwoand Mrs. Fabia Dozie-Nwankwo are also mourning him.

His remains will be laid in state at his residence in Enuagu village Enugwu Ukwu on 21st October, 2022 at 7:00am, while Funeral Mass will be held for him at St. Anthony's Catholic Church Enugwu Ukwu at 10am, followed by interment.

We, his descendants are proud of the good life he lived and the attributes of hard work, patience and perseverance, trust and faith in Almighty God that he imbibed in us because he was indeed a peaceful, quiet, focused and caring man whose warmth and personality we will greatly miss.

The scripture in Ps 112:6b strengthens this family resolve by stating that "…… the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance".

We also believe that "Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near still loved, still missed and very near".

So, let it be with Eselu Boniface Okonkwo Nwankwo, Eselu Enu Ego Enugwu Ukwu na Umunri. May his noble soul rest in perfect peace, until we all meet to part no more.

Chief Ferdinand Dozie Nwankwo, Onyendozi Enugwu Ukwu na Umunri, writes from Abuja.

In appreciation of his numerous selfless and dedicated services, his community appreciated him with the title of "Ochudo Enuagu" (He who finds peace for Enuagu village), while his kinsmen fondly called him 'Umunna nwezuo aku' (Let wealth spread to all and sundry)

CISLAC Boss: Nigerian Debt, More of an Accountability Crisis

Funke Olaode in Washington, D.C.

The Executive Director, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani) has called on the federal government to address the economic crisis facing the nation before it gets out of hand. Rafsanjani stated this during an exclusive interview with THISDAY during the on-going IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings holding in Washington, D.C., United States.

While lamenting that the public finance integrity of the nation is probably at the lowest debt, he noted that the debt profile had defiled all economic prudence frameworks existing in the laws.

While analyzing the 2023 budget presented by President Buhari on the 7th of October 2022, the budget estimate as contained in the bill is N20.5 trillion with borrowing to the tune of N8.8 trillion, he said if the budget scales through, Nigeria's debt stock will move to N50.8 trillion. He said it is worrisome and also scary, considering the state of the economy. "In this situation, it looks like nothing else than escalated poverty and exacerbated austerity."

On the cause of the economic woes, Rafsanjani said one of the problems is tax administration, which has led to the leakages that exist within the financial architecture of Nigeria as a country. This, he said, has created a default opportunity for ineffective taxation and consequently failure in optimizing revenue required for national development.

Another problem identified by the renowned activist is extractive sector governance. He observed that the organised corruption in the oil and gas sector is a major issue that is expressed in several ways including oil theft and all other forms of sabotage within the trade value chain – fuel subsidy and other unproductive incentives.

Rafsanjani said: "This trend has consistently left us in a situation where this revered sector is rather sapping revenue from the government instead of contributing substantially to fund developmental projects in Nigeria.

"For me, absence of an economy has contributed largely to the economy woes. Like the saying goes, 'If you fail to plan then you are planning to fail.' Every government should constitute an economic team of technocrats saddled with the responsibility of advising the President on economic issues at any given time in the life of every regime.

The absence of such a critical team leaves room for knee-jerk approach to economic policies and interventions which lots of time falls short of. Although this essential spending is being made by our governments today, the debate over how to deal with the debt generated by the COVID-19 crisis will be of vital importance to Nigerians.

"The consistent and ever-increasing budget deficit trend is a strategic way of getting capital projects out of the space as most of the revenue are channeled towards debt servicing and at most recurrent expenditure. This means that Micro, small and middle industries who are unable to provide basic infrastructural needs to operate will be closed down and the ones that can, will be producing at a very high cost and in-turn cannot compete comparatively with their international counterparts."

"The legislature's primary mandates are oversight, law making and representation. The legislator is never saddled with the responsibility of implementing projects at any level of government. This is arguably putting the constituency project concept as an economic misplaced priority.

Also, owing to the fact that these funds has never been accounted for, nor has it ever had any resemblance of proper management in the past. We believe that it is better for the law maker to concentrate on their primary mandates but ensure that the executive implements any project as provided by the appropriation Act within a fiscal of the government."

In his recommendations, CISLAC boss said to get out of this mess, the National Assembly mustn't be in a hurry to just pass the 2023 Appropriation bill until they have assembled a team of economic experts in conjunction with the executive, who will work out alternative source of funding the budget deficit other than borrowing.

Also, use of tax incentive must be productive and reduce budget size and waste by weeding out frivolous items which have always been featured in the budget year in year out.

"This will also look at a possible reduction in the budget size and make it more reasonable and realistic as we are not in any budget increment contest," he concluded.

FCMB

FCMB GROUP PLC
RC No: 1079631

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF FCMB GROUP PLC DELAY IN PUBLISHING Q3 2022 UNAUDITED ACCOUNT

FCMB Group (the Group) wishes to notify Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) and the investing public that it will not be able to file its nine months (Q3 2022) Unaudited results for the period ended 30 September 2022 by the due date of 30 October, 2022.

The delay is due to the audit of the Company's largest subsidiary, First City Monument Bank Limited (the Bank) for the period ended 30 September 2022, which accounts for close to 68% of the Group's profitability and which results would have material impact on the Group's consolidated accounts.

The Consolidated third quarter 2022 result of the Group, will be published on or before 29 November, 2022.

For: FCMB Group Plc

Olufunmilayo Adedibu(Mrs)
Company Secretary

More information can be found at www.fcmbgroupplc.com
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Tel: +234 (0) 1 279 3030 and +234 (0) 1 279 30 33.

Congratulations
my brother and friend



Chief Mike OZEKHOME
SAN OFR, Ph.D, LL.D.

Whom The Cap Fits

Three major honours, awards and recognition coming back-to-back for he whom the cap fits: **High Chief (Dr.) Mike Ozekhome, SAN, OFR, FCIArb, LL.M, Ph.D, LL.D, D.Litt.**
An accomplished court room gladiator, Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Senior Advocate of the Masses (SAM), Voice of the People (VOP); leading constitutional lawyer, human rights Activist, pro-democracy campaigner, humanist and philanthropist.

Congratulations as you **turn 65 on the 15th October, 2022;** get conferred with the prestigious National Honour of

COMMANDER OF THE ORDER OF THE NIGER (CON),

by **His Excellency, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari;** and as you **deliver the 10th Convocation lecture** and get conferred with the **LL.D Doctorate degree (HC)** by Africa and Nigeria's leading University, the Afe Babalola University (ABUAD), Ado-Ekiti.

More feathers to your already decorated cap.

Ramachandran Viswanathan

FEATURE

Flooding: A Disaster Fortold

Ahamefula Ogbu

While preparations for the future of Nigeria was being made, everything was well laid out so that what plagues the nation today were planned to be positively harnessed but years down the line, they were like every other thing intended to positively impact on the development of the country, brazenly abandoned.

In an interaction some years ago with former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Alfa Modibo Belgore, he brought out a document to show what power and water resources chart of the country was planned to be; how Nigeria was to have built dams that would not only hold excess water coursing down states of the country but also to generate electricity to serve the entire country and export the excess to neighboring countries. In that plan was also elaborately designed how many dams Nigeria would have built after Cameroun was expected to have built theirs and what penalties for any country that failed to implement their part of the Memorandum of Understanding.

If that was implemented by the country, we would not have had the flood disaster we are witnessing today and even If due to climate change, we did, it would have been mitigated and not at the magnitude presently bedeviling us. So it could be said that we are now suffering the effect of not doing what we were expected to do and paying very high cost for it.

Coming down to most recent time, the Nigerian Meteorological Services in February warned that volume of rainfall expected and states about relocating people living on flood plains but as happens yearly, such are implemented more in breach and the result is the disaster that has befallen us.

Director General, National Emergency Management Agency, Mr. Mustapha Ahmed now left with handling the mitigation of the disaster had identified 233 local government areas in 32 states and the Federal Capital Territory that would be adversely affected this year and suggested remedial steps. This was in addition to 2022 Seasonal Climate Prediction released by Nigerian Meteorological Agency and the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency.

To drive home his point about the effect of not heeding his warnings, Ahmad stated that flash floods across Nigeria before the latest flooding had affected about 508,000 people, killed about 372, injured 277 and destroyed 37,633 houses while 70,000 hectares farmlands and livestock lost were also within the last eight months. His report was to bring to bear the dire effects of allowing the same problem to predictably befall the country yearly.

At the last count, 31 states across the federation and Federal Capital Territory have taken a dangerous hit with over 500 dead, 1546 injured, 1.4 million displaced while 790,254 persons as at the last count have been relocated. Reports put building partially or totally destroyed at 90,000, most, if not all submerged with property worth billions. Farmlands have either been destroyed or totally washed off with the biggest rice farm in Nassarawa State said to have suffered millions of dollars loses from their farm being submerged in floodwaters.

The above picture may not have captured all the devastation given the poor statistical culture and the fact that there will be areas inaccessible to the authorities and figures of dead, displaced or damage done to properties would not be captured in present figures pushed out by the government.

So far, states worst hit are Adamawa, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Anambra, Imo, Delta, Bayes from where some of the casualties were recorded. Also, this year's flood is said to be unprecedented and that it was that of 2012 that came close to what has been witnessed though the storm is said not to be over yet as though the rains would subside in some states, rise in water level due to release of water from holding points to avoid dams busting from holding beyond their capacities is expected to continue for the next one month.

In Adamawa where the country is supposed to construct a holding breaker, peasants and those living on the river planes were hardest hit with low casualty figures though but farms and belongings were swept away by rain engendered floods. However, when the water from Lagdo dam in Cameroun arrived, it became overwhelming.

In Taraba State which is also largely agrarian, the flood left in its wake tales of woes as farmers lost a season harvest as well as newly planted crops. Houses were not spared but their luck was that the level receded within days to enable them start recovering from the tragedy. It however made refugees of most of those living in lowlands.



Lokoja



Yenogoa

At the last count, 31 states across the federation and Federal Capital Territory have taken a dangerous hit with over 500 dead, 1546 injured, 1.4 million displaced while 790,254 persons as at the last count have been relocated. Reports put building partially or totally destroyed at 90,000, most, if not all submerged with property worth billions. Farmlands have either been destroyed or totally washed off with the biggest rice farm in Nassarawa State said to have suffered millions of dollars loses from their farm being submerged in floodwaters

Benue State which has had the unfortunate problem of witnessing the flooding yearly as the Benue River is always a natural course down to River Niger to the ocean had the double misfortune of higher volume of rains and the swelling banks of the Benue River. The result was the flooding of residential areas with bungalows disappearing in the swollen banks of the river. Those who had gone to sleep before the river burst its banks simply died in their sleep as they were submerged. Worst hit were women and children.

The casualty figure in Benue State was put at 23 dead and 76 injured while over 100 communities were adversely affected which they said would have a telling effect on the agrarian state referred to as the food basket of the nation. Farmlands were not spared where over 50 per cent of the population engage in agriculture. Their means of livelihood were simply wiped out. In the Makurdi metropolis, rising water level got as high as roofs, forcing residents to flee. Nigeria Air Force Base, Kilometre Five, Gyado Villa, Wurukum, Kucha Utebe, Wadata and timber market were worst hit among others.

In Katsina, windstorm and flooding combined to wreak an unprecedented havoc in the state which spread across 34 local government areas with death toll between 24 and 42. Officials said 16,625 houses were destroyed while 1,620 farmlands were submerged in at least three council areas of Kafur, Danja and Ingawa.

In Niger State, authorities listed Rafi, Kontagora, Lavun, Wushishi, Mashegu, Magama and Gbako as the most impacted Local government which at the last count, no fewer than eight persons were confirmed dead while culverts, roads and bridges were washed away. People whose homesteads were affected have been camped in public buildings while those with relatives that could harbour them have moved to such places.

Some states were however lucky as in Gombe figures of displaced people were low with authorities quoting 500 though lamentations were rife over loss of farmlands and personal effects. The same could be said of its neighboring Bauchi State where casualty figures was put at three while 1450 houses were damaged. Farmlands and home appliances were also among part of the losses recorded in the state.

Kwara which is contiguous to Niger State recorded four deaths where the flashfloods swept a vehicle into the river. Farmlands and residential houses were affected while some bridges linking important places were washed away. It was so serious that public affairs almost ground to a halt as people feared being washed away by floods and rising water level.



Yenagoa flooded



Aerial view of Lokoja

Flooding: A Disaster Fortold

Kogi State which is popularly called the confluence state took a double portion of the flooding being host to the meeting point between Rivers Niger and Benue. Though it is not new to flooding, it had never been that bad for the state as Lokoja which is the link city between both the East and Western Nigeria to core northern states was cut off as flood waters covered both the road and bridges. The bridge across the River Niger in Ajaokuta was covered while the Murtala Mohammed Bridge at Oweto was also covered by flood waters thereby rendering them impassable.

The biggest problem of both residents and those transiting through the state was that the flood cut them in-between whereas it became incurable optimism for those who waited for the flood to subside as they ended up sleeping on the road for up to a week with expected collateral damage. Being the gateway between the north and the south, those transporting perishable goods lost them while those transporting livestock also lost them as most of them died while waiting for the flooded road to reopen. Some who attempted to wade through the flood, including heavy duty trucks and trailers were washed into the river.

Of course, houses that were where people confidently built as upland became middle of rivers and boats became the means of transportation to move about inside Lokoja town. While storey buildings still had their first floors visible, bungalows cast the picture of a broad river as a single body of water without any sign of any roof because they had been submerged.

Hotels, schools and markets were hurriedly abandoned while a save our soul messages were urgently sent to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Ministries that could help mitigate the problem which produced its brand of refugees. So severe was the issue that President Muhammadu Buhari asked States to articulate the problems they were facing, proffer solutions and submit representations to him for urgent intervention.

If Kogi and semi urban towns in the state were helped, villages cut off by the flood were helpless, moreso with their farms submerged without access to food and potable water. Health officials feared that an outbreak of diseases were imminent.

Anambra State which borders Kogi and has the river Niger as a known landmark saw the rage of the river as it burst its banks and completely submerged its numerous riverine areas. The rate at which the flood rose in those towns and villages were so severe that a family of six that wanted to salvage few belongings before fleeing were pushed inside their house by force of the water and they all perished in Anaku which is in Ayamelum Local government. About eight local government areas of the state are in lowlands and therefore flood prone aside the fact that they are riverine.

Places hitherto considered upland in those areas were overwhelmed with flood and most of the deaths were said to have occurred at night while people had gone to bed but were drowned in their sleep so that most of the mansions which dot the area now look like palaces inside an ocean and their integrity may no longer be guaranteed after staying weeks inside water which shows no sign of abetting.

Early reports were mainly of churches which collapsed while adherents bent of going for church service deployed boats to attend only to have the force of the water weaken their foundations and they came crashing down, some on worshippers.



Anam Community

The most painful was a loaded boat with about 48 passengers who were fleeing upland when they noticed the rage of the flood. In a situation not yet clarified whether it was due overloading or fast moving current but reports had erroneously put the number at 85 but the boat driver who survived said he had 48 passengers out of who 37 were unaccounted for.

Trust Nigerians, in the midst of that tragedy came what may qualify as comic relief; a local water goddess priest and traditionalist, Onyeso Ezendu claimed to have consulted the spirits on cause of the tragedy and claimed the water mermaid told him she was not happy with the traffic on the waterway because of the poor state of the road in the area as its peace was constantly being disturbed.

Hear Ezendu, "We did some consultations with the queen (water goddess) and she told us that she was angry with government.

" We asked her why she was angry with government? She said the state government has refused to do a major road in the area that got spoilt recently. She said the bad road has made most people in the locality to travel by river to disturb her (water goddess) peace.

"She said before the road got spoilt, majority of the people in the area travelled by road. She said the river is meant to be quiet for aquatic life to thrive.

"We are looking for ways to appease the queen to avoid more mishaps because she threatened that more harm would occur on that route of the river if the government refused to do the road."

The man who manned the capsized boat confessed that he wasn't the one that use to handle it, adding that his elder brother was but because he was not available, he was asked to convey the passengers. It was while midstream that the engine went off and while he was trying to restart it that the current rocked the boat and shifted it off course and it hit one of the pillars of the submerged Osamala Bridge that has been abandoned and the boat capsized

Surprisingly, death toll in neighboring Delta State has not been on the scale of Anambra next door as so far, three deaths have been reported and that was when flash flood swept away a child and the mother though it wreaked havoc on infrastructure like roads and bridges that it washed away and buildings. At least 3,233 houses were submerged while inland towns, villages and settlements have been rendered inhabitable.

Oguta area of Imo State which is prone to flooding also had its fair share this year especially Abacheke in Ohaji/Egbema Local government where over 15 communities were also submerged. They had to set up temporary abodes in schools not affected and called on government to come to their aid. Communities in Bayelsa State which have been affected include Biseni, Odi, Tombia-Ekpetiama, Sampou, Kaiama, Gbaranma Sabagreia, Okoloba, and some places in Southern Ijaw like Azuzu Ama. Being mainly riverine, most people heeded the warning to relocate but those that refused have had their abodes overtaken by water. Places which had water barriers are so far protected especially in the Kolokuma/Opokuma areas up to Kaiama

In Rivers State which is expected to bear the final brunt of the flooding as they host the last channels for the water to empty into the sea, four local governments have so far been impacted, added to rising sea levels due to the melting of the ice cap, they are expected to be more impacted what with the prediction that more rains and flooding should be expected but so far, there have not been damning results of the flooding in the state.

However, Omoku and Obrikom areas which feed straight from Orashi River and its tributaries have always had coastal erosion issues which they blame on activities of companies prospecting in oil and gas. The two areas have had their houses submerged and their farms destroyed by flood. The natives complained so bitterly and took the press round their flooded areas that Governor Nyesom Wike pledged N1 billion to cushion the effect on flood victims in the state. Two days after the worst floods in Lokoja and Anam area of Anambra State, the water moved down and took over the East-West Road, sweeping vehicles off the road, cutting the road in several places and totally halting vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the ever busy road.

Speaking in a gathering to assess and plan towards better management of the flooding disaster at the Hydro-meteorological status and outlook system (HydroSOS) in Abuja, Director General of NiMet, Prof. Mansur Bako Matazu warned that the north central and south east zones should brace up for more flooding.

Matazu while assessing the current flood impact across the country, explained that though flooding as a result of rainfall may have reached its peak, the opening of dams and other water holding facilities could still affect states in north central and the south-east.

"You remember, we issued the forecast in February and we followed up with the monthly updates that we are going to have above normal rainfall in most part of the country.

"So in terms of the rainfall-induced floods, we have seen the peak, but remember we told you that this rainwater gets collected into the reservoirs and dams, and whenever they are filled, it gets filled.

"So on September 13, the Lagdo dam was released. Other dams were also released. So what we are witnessing now is riverine flooding. And from the information we are getting, we are going to see more flood.

"And now the rains are concentrating in the north-central and the southern states. So that will be a combination of short duration, high intensity rain, with riverine flooding. "We are going to see more of these floods in the north central states as we have seen in Kogi and also south eastern and south-western states as we are beginning to see in Anambra and some of parts of south-west," he explained.

Matazu while speaking on the HydroSOS workshop added: "It is no longer news to anyone here that water-related hazards and threats has become a global challenge in the face of a changing climate coupled with population growth and increasing socio-economic activities.

"Every year water-related hazard affects millions of people globally and cause damages to properties worth billions of dollars. It is expected that water-associated risks are going to intensify in the coming years as the full weight of climate change begin to bear on our earth.

" In Africa, water-related hazards such as flood, drought have become a major cause of food insecurity, strains on livelihoods, health risks and conflicts in many parts of the continent.

"Water-related challenges facing governments at all levels include securing water supplies, designing appropriate water governance schematic, sustaining the management of trans-boundary basins, managing flood and/or drought as well as ensuring the protection and conservation of our ecosystem.

"It has been observed that one of the major factors to effectively manage water resources and address some of the above challenges is the availability of hydro-meteorological information and products targeted to serve the needs of the different sectors."

If what Matazu has predicted comes through, given the level of flooding and devastation already witnessed, then the country would be in a catastrophe the magnitude of which will require global attention and help.

POLITY

Nigeria Air and Many Unanswered Questions

James Nweze

When John. F. Kennedy affirmed in his historic quote: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country", he was inspired by spirit of patriotism rooted in the ideals of selfless and visionary leadership. Patriotism is the propelling force that drives the development of any nation. Check all the developed countries vis-a-vis their tumultuous journey towards greatness, you will see at the bedrock one critical factor called patriotism. When actions and inactions of leaders of any nation is driven by this core value—patriotism, it is usually easy to inspire same virtue in the citizens. Most of the countries still struggling with development, lack of patriotism is always at the foundation of their underdevelopment.

Nigeria Air and the crude processes birthing it shows one thing—most of Nigerian leaders do not have the spirit of patriotism imbibed in them. They see political power as opportunity for state capture and its attendant resources which they misuse at will. They can throw the collective interest of the nation under the bus as long as their own parochial goal is achieved. Why am I saying this?

Since Federal Government announced its plan to float a national carrier, it has been one controversy after another coming from the proposed Nigeria Air. Firstly, it was the design of its logo which was done by a foreign company at a ridiculous amount of money. Secondly, it was the poor quality of the logo, especially when compared with humongous fund spent on it. After a long delay, Aviation Minister, Hadi Sirika commenced processes of heralding the national carrier which has been described by experts as shady, unethical and unpatriotic.

The proposed "national carrier" will have 49% ownership by a foreign investor, 46% of local investors, while FG retains 5%, according to Aviation Minister, Hadi Sirika, who told Nigerians recently that Ethiopian Airlines had been penciled down as the "foreign partner" while local investors would be SAHCO, MRS and Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA). But NSIA has vehemently denied having anything to do with the proposed "national carrier", which has further raised more suspicion.

In the face of the embarrassment, Aviation Ministry made a u-turn and replaced NSIA with "institutional investors". So, the proposed national carrier will be owned by Ethiopian Airlines, MRS, SAHCO and institutional investors. Discerning Nigerians are raising salient and thought-provoking questions the authorities have not been able to answer. How did Federal Government arrive at the equity investors? What criteria did it use? Why give Ethiopian Airlines, owned by government of another country, controlling stake of 49%, why the supposed real owner—Federal Government of Nigeria retains only 5%? What then makes it a national carrier? SAHCO mentioned as one of the "local investors" had been linked to Ethiopian Airlines in the past.

Who evaluated the equity stake given to Ethiopian Airlines and the local investors? How was the percentage arrived at? How much is Ethiopian Airlines attracting to the nation's aviation to warrant a massive 49%? Nigerians what to know 49 per cent of what exactly, was ceded to Ethiopian Airlines? The Federal Executive Council (FEC) recently approved humongous amount for lease of three aircraft for the take-off of Nigeria Air. So, what exactly is Ethiopian Airlines bringing to the table that gave rise to allocating 49% equity stake to it? Who is trying to kill indigenous airlines in the country because of parochial interest of rent seeking and royalties?

MRS was mentioned as one of the local investors that would benefit from the 46 per cent equity stake. It is a known secret that the majority shareholder in MRS is a known ally of Hadi Sirika, aviation minister. Is this not conflict of interest and abuse of public trust? Where lies spirit of patriotism in all these conspiracies to shortchange Nigerians? Simply put, someone in government is using public funds and government apparatus to setup a private



Sirika

airline for himself as retirement benefit why using Ethiopian Airlines as his technical partners and his cronies as corresponding "local investors". There is nothing "national" about the proposed Nigeria Air.

Calling proposed Nigeria Air "national carrier" is deception and an insult on our collective intelligence as Nigerians. There is nothing national about it. Please don't get me wrong. It is not bad for an indigenous airline to be floated using Nigeria as part of its name and branding. Afterall, United Nigeria Airlines owned by Prof. Obiora Okonkwo has Nigeria in its name. But everything is wrong when someone entrusted with public office tries to set up private airline using public funds while disguising it as "national carrier". Why give a false impression of a national carrier when federal government will only have five per cent stake in the proposed Nigeria Air?

With controlling stake of 49 per cent in the proposed airline, it can be concluded that Nigeria Air will be a subsidiary of Ethiopian Airlines in Nigeria. So, the thought-provoking questions are: why use public funds and government apparatus to float subsidiary of Ethiopian Airlines in the country to compete with local airlines? Those pushing this heinous agenda to achieve entrenched interests, have they considered the economic challenges and national security threat it can pose to indigenous airlines and Nigeria as a nation? In fact, it is tantamount to bringing in Ethiopian Airlines to take over Nigerian aviation market because of few individuals in government who have placed parochial personal interests above national interests. The sole end goal of these unpatriotic elements is rents and royalties at the expense of a strategic industry of the economy like aviation.

The implication of this ill-conceived project called Nigeria Air, if allowed to scale through, is that it will hand over the nation's aviation market to Ethiopian Airlines who might in turn flood the country with its planes to takeover both the domestic and foreign markets. Its attendant job loss is better imagined than experienced. Nigeria is the most populous black nation on earth with over 200 million people. Our population is not only the biggest in Africa, Nigerians are the most-travelled blacks on the face of the earth. You can see why aviation behemoth like Ethiopian Airlines has been trying—whether hook or crook, to have access to Nigeria's aviation market. Unfortunately, our policymakers are aiding and abetting the potential eclipse of the indigenous airlines.

I can remember vividly that in 2019 Ethiopian Airlines approached Air Peace for such anti-Nigerian arrangements, to come into Nigeria via such partnership, where the Airline would be able to have access to our aviation market; do local flights and also use the country as one of its takeoff points for international flights. When Air Peace got the details of the arrangement, which had the dangerous consequences of handing over the nation's aviation market to foreign interest, it rejected the offer. Air Peace did not only back out of such retrogressive cum unpatriotic deal but ensured that its rejection was documented and signed for posterity sake. Allen Onyema would have accepted the offer, and be making millions of dollars from royalties, but Nigeria's aviation market would have been mortgaged by Ethiopian Airlines.

While as Nigerians we wish and lobby investors to bring in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to boost our local economy, we should not shoot ourselves in the foot by contriving an arrangement that will outsource a strategic sector like the aviation to a foreign interest. Nigeria Air will be a subsidiary of Ethiopian Airlines, it is as simple as that. Anyone telling us anything contrary is pushing a personal agenda against national interest. There is nothing national in the proposed carrier. Rather, it will strangulate indigenous airlines and stifle their potentials to compete with other legacy airlines in the world.

The suspicious manner of which the Aviation Minister, Hadi Sirika, is rushing the processes against laid down guidelines, and even dissing indigenous airlines in the media, recently, one might be tempted to ask whether what is being floated is Nigeria Air or "Sirika Air". In the face of daunting challenges facing the aviation industry like high cost of aviation fuel, scarcity of forex for spareparts, poor infrastructure at the airports, etc., should floating a supposed national carrier where Federal Government will have only five per cent stake be of paramount importance? Isn't high time public office holders, for once, put national interest above selfish interests? Many questions yearning for answers.

With controlling stake of 49 per cent in the proposed airline, it can be concluded that Nigeria Air will be a subsidiary of Ethiopian Airlines in Nigeria. So, the thought-provoking questions are: why use public funds and government apparatus to float subsidiary of Ethiopian Airlines in the country to compete with local airlines? Those pushing this heinous agenda to achieve entrenched interests, have they considered the economic challenges and national security threat it can pose to indigenous airlines and Nigeria as a nation?

POLITY

34-Year-Old Burkina Faso's Military Leader Becomes World's Youngest

Just two weeks ago, 34-year-old Ibrahim Traore was an unknown, even in his native Burkina Faso.

But in the space of a weekend, he catapulted himself from army captain to the world's youngest leader – an ascent that has stoked hopes but also fears for a poor and chronically troubled country.

Traore, at the head of a core of disgruntled junior officers, ousted Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who had seized power just in January.

The motive for the latest coup – as in January – was anger at failures to stem a seven-year jihadist insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives and driven nearly two million people from their homes.

On Wednesday, Traore was declared president and "guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity… and continuity of the State."

At that lofty moment, Traore became the world's youngest leader, wresting the title from Chilean President Gabriel Boric, a whole two years older. Traore's previously unknown face is now plastered on portraits around the capital Ouagadougou.

His photo is even on sale in the main market, alongside portraits of Burkina's revered assassinated radical leader, Thomas Sankara, and of Jesus. Traore's previously unknown face is now plastered on portraits around the capital Ouagadougou. His photo is even on sale in the main market, alongside portraits of Burkina's revered assassinated radical leader, Thomas Sankara, and of Jesus.

Traore was born in Bondokuy, in western Burkina Faso, and studied geology in Ouagadougou before joining the army in 2010.

He graduated as an officer from the Georges Namonao Military School – a second-tier institution compared to the prestigious Kadiogo Military Academy of which Damiba and others in the elite are alumni. Traore emerged second in his class, a contemporary told AFP, describing him as "disciplined and brave." After graduation, he gained years of experience in the fight against the jihadists. He served in the badly-hit north and centre of the country before heading to a posting in neighbouring Mali in 2018 in the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission. He was appointed captain in 2020.



Cap. Ibrahim Traore with guards

But it was a move that ironically would sow the seeds of Damiba's own downfall.

The regiment became a cradle of discontent, and Traore, tasked by his colleagues with channelling their frustrations, made several trips to Ouagadougou to plead their case with Damiba.

Disillusionment at the response turned into anger, which appears to have crystallised into resolve to seize power after an attack on a convoy in northern Burkina last month that left 27 soldiers and 10 civilians dead.

"Captain Traore symbolises the exasperation of junior officers and the rank and file," said security consultant Mahamoudou Savadogo.

The new president faces a daunting task in regaining the upper hand over jihadist groups, some affiliated with Al-Qaeda and others with the Islamic State. They have steadily gained ground since they launched their attacks from Mali in 2015.

Yet Traore has promised to do "within three months" what "should have been done in the past eight months," making a direct criticism of his predecessor.

Savadogo warned that one soldier overthrowing another illustrates "the deteriorating state of the army, which hardly exists any more and which has just torn itself apart with this umpteenth coup d'etat".

Traore's takeover comes during a struggle for influence between France and Russia in French-speaking Africa, where former French colonies are increasingly turning to Moscow.

Demonstrators who rallied for him in Ouagadougou during last weekend's standoff with Damiba waved Russian flags and chanted anti-France slogans.

Traore seems – for now – to bring hope to many in a country sinking steadily in the quagmire. Last Monday, L'Observateur Paalga newspaper, went with a decidedly biblical headline: "Ibrahim, the intimate friend of God, will he be able to save us?"

The Okezie Ikpeazu Leadership Colloquium

Chinenye Nwaogu and **Sam Hart**

On Tuesday, October 18, 2022, the creme of Igbo Leaders across all strata will gather at the Ishmael Ikpeazu Memorial Library and Centre for Scientific Leadership, Umuobiakwa, Obingwa LGA, Abia State. Their mission is to hold a Colloquium on a pressing and timely subject: How Ndigbo can leverage their God-given abilities in every sphere of human endeavour to better the lot of AlaIgbo.

This conversation series is the contribution of Abia State Governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu to scholarship in AlaIgbo and Nigeria. Ikpeazu has already cemented his place in the historical firmament in Nigeria as a scholar in governance, a title bestowed on him by another erudite scholar, Prof. Eleazar Uche Ikonne.

It will also be noted that the incumbent President-General of Ohaneze Ndigbo, Prof. George Obiozor had, at a function in Lagos a couple of years ago, named Ikpeazu as the emerging high priest of Igbo renaissance. This Colloquium, therefore, is Governor Ikpeazu's further offering on the altar of socio-political discourse to properly situate the place of Ndigbo in Nigeria's evolution.

There is no gainsaying the fact that since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, Ndi Igbo have distinguished themselves individually, politically and economically. The story of the struggle with British colonialists reveals Ndi-Igbo as a very strong race. The prowess of Ndigbo in commerce and enterprise from that period till date is well documented.

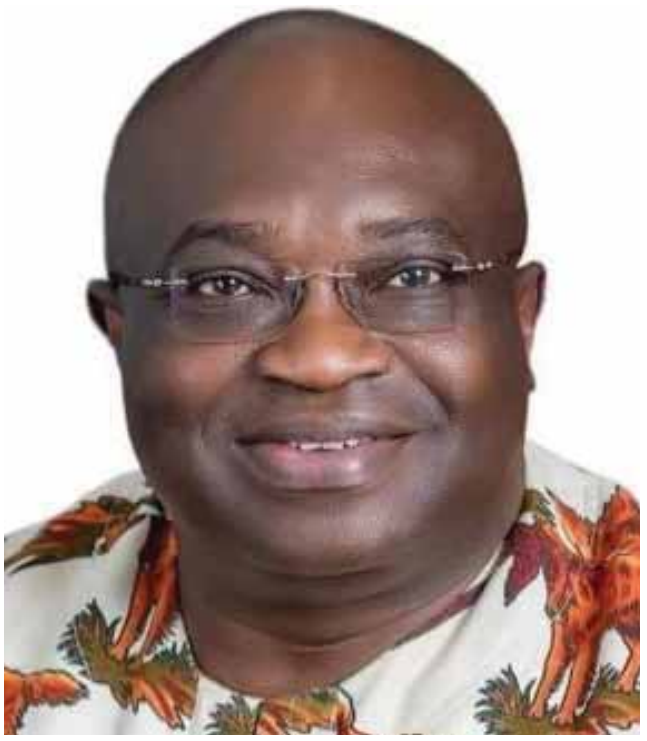
However, these recognizable strengths have not been leveraged to forge a united, social cohesive strength to engage in the Nigerian polity.

Igbos have made global and national history as a people blessed with inherent capabilities to build strong and positive foundations for growth. However, over the years, these individual exploits, even at the global stage, have not reflected in a collective political and socio-economic development of Ndi Igbo and indeed, AlaIgbo.

Igbos have been noted as the biggest investors in the Nigerian economic space. Across the length and breadth of Nigeria, Igbos have visible business and commercial interests running into trillions of naira.

The Igbo apprenticeship model has been noted even by no less a reputable institution than Havard University, as the most formidable and robust entrepreneurial incubation platform in the world. It is a globally recognised system of wealth transfer and economic empowerment.

In academics, records available from ivy league institutions in the best centres of learning across the globe reveal that Igbos have made remarkable success amongst their peers in egalitarian environments where level playing



Ikpeazu

ground and fairness is practiced.

In a nutshell, Ndi Igbo remain a race that no sane society desiring to make progress can ignore. However, the realities on ground within Ala-Igbo shows a people who have not harnessed these advantages to turn Igbo land into the region of strength in the Nigerian economic and political space.

The biggest question on the lips of all Igbos today focuses on the future of Ndi Igbo in the contemporary Nigerian political and socioeconomic firmament.

Several opinions, groupings, fora and thesis have been articulated and advanced to resolve this seemingly intractable quagmire. This colloquium is therefore Governor Ikpeazu's avowed desire to elicit strong conversations and add to the avalanche of ideas, but more importantly, to narrow down with a more practical, functional and tangible roadmap that Ndi Igbo can reflect on.

It is for this reason that such Igbo great thinkers as Prof. George Obiozor, Prof. Bart Nnaji, Sir Frank Nneji, Darl Uzu, Dr. Pascal Dozie and Ide John Udeagbala will gather at Umuobiakwa to synthesise this thesis.

Governor Ikpeazu believes that glowing tribute should be paid to our forerunner leaders in all shperes of life who have laid this enviable and solid foundation for Ndi-Igbo to remain a force to reckon with even on the global stage. He believes that our 'What Next' questions should henceforth occupy the minds of Ndi-Igbo.

The big question should revolve around if Ndi Igbo have properly accessed their strengths - politically, economically and socially. The next series of questions will then reflect on how Ndi Igbo have leveraged these strengths to really make Ala Igbo the centre of excellence in these spheres.

It is submitted that how we as a people reflect and resolve these issues will form the foundation of whatever efforts needed to position Ndi-Igbo in the Nigerian project. It will also reignite the igbo values, norms and character of ingenuity, hardwork, enterprise and selflessness and make Ndi Igbo a solid race in the political and socioeconomic landscape called Nigeria.

Dr Okezie Ikpeazu has a big idea for Igbo Renaissance having been around for sometime now and from the vantage position as Governor of Abia, a state nature conferred with strategic geographical advantage as the epicenter of the old eastern region and its commercial confluence. He believes that for Ndi Igbo to play big in the Nigerian project, beyond having a united and enlightened group agenda, Ndi Igbo must also make use of their best and biggest assets.

Whilst it will be arguable that Ndi Igbo have done well politically, nobody, even our most virulent critics, can dismiss our entrepreneurial and business showing in Nigeria and beyond.

What Governor Okezie Ikpeazu wants to leave on the table for discussion however is how will Ndi-Igbo leverage their most formidable advantage to secure a permanent and prominent seat on the table called Nigeria.

This thought process is what led him to conceive with strong private sector flavour, the Enyimba Economic City project as a global business hub supported by world class infrastructure and services that will become the industrial, manufacturing, trading floor through which Nigeria and the rest of Africa can become a major global production centre.

This pan-Nigerian project fits into the bill of making Nigeria a strong player in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area regime. The project is our window into the global market space. This project is the deal maker that will redefine the industrial and economic landscape of Nigeria and position Ndi Igbo properly on the economic space that cannot be ignored in political conversations in Nigeria.

For Ikpeazu, weaving this through successfully should be the Agenda for the future of Ndi-Igbo in the Nigerian political and socioeconomic firmament and that is the conversation we are having. This event is designed to be an annual conclave of ideas and will be held on the 18th of October every year which coincides with the birthday of Governor Ikpeazu.

POLITY

Agbaja: Building On Legacies of Their Past

Peace Nwakaego

Severa decades before Nigeria's independence, Agbaja was one of the flourishing kingdoms in Igboland, made even more prominent by the discovery and exploitation of coal within the kingdom. The discovery propelled Enugu into importance while the kingdom became one of the most dominant even after the amalgamation of the protectorates that formed the new Nigeria.

The kingdom, under King Onyeama and long after, would go on to produce several sets of accomplished men who left their marks in public service, industry, politics and public service.Their position in Nigeria's post-independence politics, the civil war of 1967-1970 and the fight for a separate identity for the Wawa Igbo and the creation of Enugu State, are well documented.

A lot has since changed. The area, it would seem, has lost its pre-eminent leadership position in Igboland and especially in Enugu state where their fathers led the struggle for its creation. The turnaround was due to a combination of factors, some natural, others not. The dominance of King Onyeama of Eke has since fizzled out, just like the loud roar of Chief Christian Chukwuma Onoh. The elucidation of legal luminaries like Dadi Onyeama, Nnaemeka Agu, Eze Ozobu, Enechi Onyia and Anthony Aniagolu, now belong to history, just like the towering public service records of Professor Godwin Odenigwe, Isaac Ugwu, Professor Chiweyite Ejike and Chief Malachy Ezeilo.

Their personal attributes were varied but they had one thing in common; they were united in pursuing Agbaja interests.

Most profound today is the seeming lack of unity in the area and the inability of its sons and daughters to speak with one voice or pursue common interests with oneness of purpose. This is perhaps why the effort to relaunch the Agbaja consciousness and return the area on the path of unity and glory, keep receiving attention.

Not only did those great Agbaja sons of yore play a leading role in getting Enugu state created, they left their people legacies of leadership, industry, social and cultural unity. Over the past few decades, however, efforts are being made to sustain those legacies and build on them for the wellbeing of Agbaja people. This is the philosophy behind the formation of Agbaja Leaders of Thought (Nzuko Agbaja) as a non-partisan socio-cultural umbrella association of Agbaja people.

The group which is championing the rebirth, plans to hold a 2-day Summit which essentially will bring together sons and daughters of the area in Nigeria and the diaspora,



Ugwuanyi

as well as their friends, in-laws and well-wishers from across Nigeria and beyond.

Led by erudite scholar and former Minister of Power, Professor Chinedu Nebo, the group says the major objective of the event which will hold in Enugu, the State Capital,

was to provide a platform to foster unity and rekindle the bonds of kinship among the various communities that make up Agbaja.

Nebo, in a recent statement, said "we are a people with a rich history and heritage; our forefathers left us legacies of a rich culture, industry and political leadership. Aside their collective accomplishments in the advancement of the Wawa people, they boasted great individual attainments, some of which were recognised globally".

While he described the forthcoming Agbaja Peoples Summit as a defining moment in their history, he said it was an opportunity to build on these legacies and launch Agbaja --the people and the locality -- into the next level. "We can achieve this if we speak with one voice, act individually and collectively in our common interest and reunite our people along our age-long social and cultural history".

The Summit will be a 2-day event starting from Wednesday, November 2, 2022. It will commence on Day 1 with an Economic Summit which will identify the development potentials in Agbaja land and produce a blueprint for harnessing them for the benefit of the people.On the second day, Thursday November 3, 2022, Agbaja people, their friends, in-laws and well-wishers from Nigeria and beyond, will converge in their thousands at the Michael Okpara Square for a Cultural Carnival. Though an event for social and cultural interaction, they will also confer awards and recognize sons and daughters of Agbaja land who have in their various endeavours impacted the people.

The event which will be attended by the State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi will feature cultural dances, goodwill messages from Enugu State and beyond, while people who have made positive impacts in Agbaja land or distinguished themselves in their various endeavours, at home or in the Diaspora, will receive awards.

Ugwuanyi who was excited with the initiative to focus the Summit on social and economic development of the area, promised to lend his unalloyed support to Agbaja people who are well known for leading by example.

In all, it will be two (2) loaded days of speechmaking, cultural displays and presentations that will make positive impact on the people and their communities as well as exhibitions of the 'trademark' products that the area is known for.

Nebo who led members of the Planning Committee on a courtesy visit to Ugwuany to discuss the summit, told him that apart from using the event as a vehicle for unity, industry and socio-cultural advancement, it was the peoples attempt to drive rural and community development through the public sector and self help.

He appreciated the perfect working relationship between the governor and his Deputy, Lolo Cecilia Ezeilo and in the confidence he so generously reposed in his former Chief of Staff, Dr. Festus Uzor. Both of them are of Agbaja stock.

He also noted the cordial relationship that the governor enjoys with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama, "another Agbaja son who belongs to a different political party".

The Summit promises to be a groundbreaking event with several of Agbaja sons and daughters at home and the Diaspora signing up for the event. Some of the branches for instance, have expressed willingness to raise funds for the establishment of centres for skill development.



L-R: Secretary to the panel of Judges for the awards ceremony of Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAN) Akinola Dosu, Chairperson, panel of Judges for the awards ceremony of OAAN, Prof. Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika, President, OAAN, Chief Emmanuel Ajufo, representative of Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), Susan Agbo and Chairman of the Planning Committee, OAAN, Babs Fagade at the inauguration of the panel of judges for the OAAN award ceremony in Lagos….yesterday



L-R: Past President CIBN, Dr. Uche Olowu, FCIB, Ubangarin Nasarawa, Dr. Dalhatu Jibril Usman; Rector, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Dr. (ESV) Abdullahi Alhassan Ahmed; President Chairman of Council CIBN, Ken Opara FCIB; Registrar/CE, Seye Awojobi FCIB; 2nd Vice President CIBN, Mr. Dele Alabi, FCIB at the Commissioning of CIBN Bankers Hall endowed to Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa …. yesterday



L-R: Supervisor, Grace School Primary, Mr. Paul Ibe; Headmistress, Dr.Nike Akindayo;Teacher, Ms. Esther Arigidi; Chairman, Parent Teachers Association (PTA),Mr. Omoruyi Edoigiawerie; Teacher, Mr. Adegoke Adekunle; and Executive Director, Grace Schools, Mrs.Olatokunbo Edun, at the Teachers Day programme of Grace Schools in Gbagada, Lagos yesterday ETOP UKUTT



L-R: National Coordinator, Indomie Fan Club, Mrs Oge Faith Joshua; Group Corporate Communications & Event Manager, Dufil Prima Foods Plc, Mr. Ashiwaju Temitope; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Nedwig Consult, Mrs. Gloria Udanang, and Head, Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Prof. Sunday Adeyemo, at the 2022 Annual Indomie Teachers Seminar in Lagos…recently… ABIODUN AJALA

GLOBAL SOCCER



REVIVAL BATTLE FOR REDS

PAGE. 29

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

15.10.2022



Terem Moffi

Proving His Mettle with Ligue1 Big Boys

GLOBAL SOCCER



Terem Moffi continuing his goal scoring form in Ligue 1

Terem Moffi

Proving His Mettle with Ligue1 Big Boys

With eight goals in 10 matches, Super Eagles forward, Terem Moffi has not only found his rhythm but also competing with Ligue 1 big boys- Neymar and Kylian Mbappe as the trio have found the net eight times as the contention for the French league Golden Boot hots up

Super Eagles forward, Terem Moffi scored twice against Brest in the Ligue 1 game on Sunday to equal Neymar and Mbappe's tally for the season.

The Nigerian has now scored eight goals, making it a goal in every 101 minutes, the third best rate in the league behind Paris Saint Germain's attacking duo.

Moffi has been one of the best in the league this season and has matched his last season goals return in just 10 games.

The attacker has earned rave reviews this season and may have played his way into the current Super Eagles setup despite the avalanche of player at coach Jose Peseiro's disposal.

The former Kortrijk star has gone on to become a real star for Lorient this season and would cause teams to raise their heads in his direction after being linked with a transfer away from the club last season.

Moffi is powering Lorient to an impossible title push as they have won their last five games and currently sit second on the log with 25 points, just a point behind league leaders, PSG.

Unsurprisingly, Moffi has earned a Team of the Week inclusion for his outstanding performance during Lorient's 2-1 win at Stade Brestois in the tenth round of matches in the French Ligue 1.

Lorient are one of the most in-form teams in the top five European Leagues at the moment with six consecutive wins in the top-flight, same as La Liga giants Barcelona.

Moffi has been their key player in that run, with his brace at the Stade Francis-Le Blé adding to his efforts against Olympique Lyon and Auxerre.

The 23-year-old has been recognised by football statistics website Whoscored in its Team of the Week.

With a rating of 9.1, Moffi was the best-rated player in the Team of the Week ahead of Rennes' Martin Terrier (9.0) and Clermont Foot's Grejohn Kyei (8.8).

Against Stade Brestois, the Super Eagles striker registered a game-high three shots on target, made three key passes, won two aerial duels and was accurate in 81.3 per cent of his passes while making 34 touches.

With 14 goals in Ligue 1 last season, bettered only by Mbappe, many felt Lorient will find it hard to hold on to their jewel but against all odds, the Enugu-born striker stayed put.

Bundesliga giants Borussia Dortmund trailed the Lorient's new kid on the block as the German side were in search of a replacement for striker Erling Haaland who moved to Manchester City.

Just 21 last season, Moffi took the French top-flight by storm, netting 14 goals for lowly FC Lorient in just his debut season in France.

Six of the Nigerian's goals have come in his last three games as he powered struggling Les Merlus away from relegation troubles.

Indeed, Erstwhile Nigeria manager, Gernot Rohr believes Moffi can become a great striker in future given his qualities.

Moffi made the headlines back in his homeland after netting his first career hat-trick in the French Ligue 1 against a club very close to Rohr's heart, Bordeaux.

"Christophe Pelissier (the Lorient coach) is in a better position than I to know, because he sees him every day in training," Rohr had told French newspaper Ouest France.

"Personally, I am waiting to see him in training. I think he can be a good striker; although the bar is quite high in Nigeria, there have always been good center-forwards.

"But I must say that the progress he is making at Lorient is impressive."

Rohr added: "He gained confidence. You can see it in his game; he dares to dribble, to perform technical gestures that can only be done when you are confident.

"He is in great shape, in full physical possession of his means."

For now Moffi is not thinking of any other club aside Lorient inspite of dreaming to play for a bigger club in future

"Like any footballer, I dream of playing for top clubs. But now, I am focused on Lorient.

"Soccer is the most important sport in Nigeria. When the national team plays, the country stops. Everyone is in front of their TV. I wouldn't say it's a religion, but everyone loves football back home.

"I grew up watching Jay-Jay Okocha, Obafemi Martins, Nwankwo Kanu, then Victor Osimhen play. I watch him play a lot, we played together (with Golden Eaglets), he's a real example.

"Otherwise, I am very often compared to Romelu Lukaku, but I am far from his level! Otherwise, I love Didier Drogba, especially when he was playing for Chelsea. I am also a big fan of Robin Van Persie. He was the best, for me."

Moffi grew up in a football family as his father played as a goalkeeper. His father, Leo, was a teammate of Alex Iwobi's father, Chuka, at Vasco da Gama of Enugu.

The two played together in the local league during the 80s and developed a bond which has now been passed on to their children.

According to Ligue 1 official site, Moffi and Iwobi spent a lot of time growing up before the latter moved to London at the age of six.

A few years later, Moffi also left Nigeria for London to complete his education at the Buckswood Football Academy.

"I managed to get into an English school at the age of 17 because of football. I chose this life, and I wanted to succeed in football," Moffi told Ouest France per Ligue 1 website.

The 21-year-old joined Lithuanian side, Kauno Zalgiris, shortly after arriving in England before signing for another Lithuanian club, FK Riteriai.

His spell at Riteriai got the attention of Kortrijk, who brought him to the Belgian top-flight in January 2020. Eight months later, Lorient paid eight million euros to bring him to Ligue 1.

GLOBAL SOCCER

Can Liverpool Halt Man City's Unbeaten Run?

The last five Premier League titles had been between Liverpool and Manchester City and every meeting between the two sides have been a potential title battle. Their first meeting in the league this season will however take a different dimension. While Pep Guardiola's side are placed second on the log and a point behind leaders-Arsenal, Jurgen Klopp's men are 10th in the table. Sunday's meeting between the two is an avenue for the Reds to put their season back on track, but against a rampaging Etihad side marshaled by free-scoring Erling Haaland not many would put their money against the blue half of Manchester



Erling Haaland failed to impress in his first meeting with Liverpool in the Community Shield, but has gone to score 15 Premier League goals

Liverpool Manager, Jurgen Klopp could not have been clearer when he replied bluntly, "We're not in the race," when asked about his team's Premier League title chances following their 3-2 defeat by Arsenal last weekend.

Given that the Reds are already 14 points adrift of top spot, Klopp is almost certainly right. That is a hugely disappointing position for Liverpool to be in before we have even reached the pause for the 2022 World Cup in November.

Klopp's side pushed Manchester City all the way last term. In the end they were edged out by a point. Liverpool also came up just short in the Champions League, going down 1-0 to Real Madrid in the final. They may have won the FA Cup and the EFL Cup in 2021/22, but it was hard to shake the feeling of 'what might have been'.

Any silverware would be an achievement from the position the club finds itself in right now. Liverpool have endured a poor start to the campaign, failing to win six of their first eight Premier League games. They sit below Bournemouth and Fulham in the table and the top four may now be the best Liverpool can hope for this term.

The most alarming thing for the Reds is that they do not look like themselves. They were beaten last Sunday by an Arsenal team that played with the sort of energy and intensity that once characterized Klopp's side.

Liverpool have often looked leggy and one-paced this season. Several key players, including Mohamed Salah, Fabinho, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold, are out of form.

There is no question of Klopp being sacked, but there is an argument that this team has reached the end of the road. A major rebuild may be needed next summer. Before then, Liverpool must ensure they at least qualify for the Champions League.

Arsenal may be top of the table heading into the weekend, but Manchester City is still the strong title favourite team to win the title.

That is in part because of doubts over Mikel Arteta's men, who have played superbly so far this term but have yet to prove that they have what it takes to maintain this sort of level over the course of a 38-game season.

Indeed, City would not be quite so heavily fancied if it was Liverpool that sat at the summit of the standings in the middle of October.

As it is, the team that has pushed them all the way in recent seasons has dropped off, potentially giving Pep Guardiola's side a free run at the championship. Little wonder pundits believe City will triumph by 10 points or more.

The champions have the joint-best defensive record in the division to date, while they have scored considerably more goals than any other team: 33 versus the 23 of next-best Arsenal. Erling Haaland is on course to be the Premier League top scorer by some distance. Kevin De Bruyne is the division's best all-rounder.

City have not been perfect, with dropped points against Newcastle United and Aston Villa. But this is a side that knows what it takes to win titles. Another is probably on its way to the Etihad Stadium trophy cabinet.

However, Man City midfielder, Kevin De Bruyne said he expects to face an in-form and full-throttle Liverpool at Anfield this weekend despite their poor start to the season. Klopp's side have won just two of their eight Premier League games so far and trail Manchester City by 13 points already, with their manager already declaring their title challenge over.

Liverpool have been the only side to push City close in the league in recent seasons but they've lost a little spark this term, while the Blues have gone to another level in front of goal since the arrival of Haaland.

However, De Bruyne still expects a difficult game for City.

"I expect them to be at the best Liverpool possible," said De Bruyne. "Obviously they lost some points but they are still Liverpool and I expect them to be good, that's the only way I see it.

"I like big games, I like good atmospheres. It's a game like any other, obviously, it's hard playing away at a top-six team always, I think the last few years we've done well, even last year if we didn't win so I think it's probably going to be a good game again."

City were excellent in drawing 2-2 at Anfield last season and they won 4-1 on Merseyside the year before. While they've lost the FA Cup semi-final and Community Shield to Liverpool in the last two meetings, Pep Guardiola's side are unbeaten in the last five Premier League fixtures between the two teams.

De Bruyne puts City's improvement against a team who have often posed them problems down to their ability to control games and take the sting out of Liverpool.

"Maybe we have more control of the game, they are more of an up-and-down team and we are a team who has more control of the game, so if you can control that style of play then maybe you have more of a chance," he said.

"Last year I thought we played great but we didn't win any of the games so sometimes it goes that way."

Meanwhile, Klopp believe the victory over Rangers in the Champions League n Wednesday could help transform Liverpool's mood ahead of Man City's visit to Anfield.

He believes Liverpool's mood is now "completely different" as they prepare to welcome Manchester City to Anfield on Sunday on the back of a 7-1 win at Rangers.

Klopp has admitted several times this term that confidence has been low within the Liverpool camp but he claimed the thumping win in Glasgow could have a transformative impact on the season as a whole ahead of Sunday's showdown with City, a team he labelled as the best in the world.

"We will see, I am always ready for a change in the right direction, but we will see. We don't have to make a big thing of it but the best football team in the world right now is coming to Anfield on Sunday. We will see what we can do," Klopp said.

Premier League Table

Arsenal	9	13	24
Man City	9	24	23
Tottenham	9	10	20
Chelsea	8	3	16
Man Utd	8	-2	15
Newcastle	9	8	14
Brighton	8	5	14
Bournemouth	9	-12	12
Fulham	9	-4	11
Liverpool	8	8	10
Brentford	9	-1	10
Everton	9	-1	10
West Ham	9	-2	10
Leeds	8	-1	9
C'Palace	8	-2	9
Aston Villa	9	-4	9
Southampton	9	-9	7
Wolves	9	-9	6
Nottm Forest	9	-15	5
Leicester	9	-9	4

Premier League

TODAY

Leicester v Crystal Palace 12:30
Fulham v Bournemouth 15:00
Wolves v Nott'ham Forest 15:00
Tottenham 17:30 Everton 17:30

SUNDAY

Aston Villa v Chelsea 14:00
Leeds Utd v Arsenal 14:00
Man Utd v Newcastle 14:00
Southampton v West Ham 14:00
Liverpool v Man City 16:30

LaLiga

TODAY

Girona v Cádiz 13:00
Valencia v Elche 15:15
Mallorca v Sevilla 17:30
Bilbao v Atlético 20:00

SUNDAY

Celta Vigo v Sociedad 13:00
Real Madrid v Barcelona 15:15
Espanyol v Valladolid 17:30
Real Betis v Almería 20:00

MONDAY

Villarreal v Osasuna 20:00

Hot Shot

PLAYERS	CLUB	GOALS
Erling Haaland	Man City	15
Harry Kane	Tottenham	8
Alek Mitrovic	Fulham	6
Ivan Toney	Brentford	6
Phil Foden	Man City	6
Roberto Firmino	Liverpool	6
Gabriel Jesus	Arsenal	5
Leandro Trossard	Brighton	5
James Maddison	Leicester	5

GLOBAL SOCCER



Anthony-Joshua-1

Wallin may Emerge as Joshua's New Opponent

Otto Wallin is in talks for a heavyweight clash against Anthony Joshua, according to promoter Dmitriy Salita.

Joshua's proposed all-British showdown with Tyson Fury fell through earlier this month, following weeks of negotiations, with talks breaking down between the rival camps.

The 32-year-old is searching for a new opponent ahead of a return to the ring, potentially as soon as December, with Salita - who also promotes Claressa Shields - confirming that Wallin is "in the mix" to face Joshua.

"Eddie (Hearn) and I spoke after the Usyk fight and he expressed interest in the fight with Otto Wallin," Salita told Sky Sports. "Then there was the conversation with Tyson (Fury) fighting Joshua, so he (Hearn) and I spoke and he said he was pursuing that possibility, so those talks were on hold.

"I know that Otto's name is in the mix with some others and it's something that we're very interested in and we've expressed interest to Eddie.

"From what I know and from what I understand, Otto is in play for a possible fight with Anthony Joshua."

Joshua insisted he was keen to return to the ring before the end of 2022 after his split-decision loss to Oleksandr Usyk in August, a second successive defeat against the Ukrainian, although no provisional date or venue has yet been confirmed.

"I don't know when Anthony Joshua's next fight is, but if it's December, January or later then it's something we're interested in," Salita added. "Obviously not too late, but if it's Joshua's next fight - which is what we're talking about - then it's something we're very interested in.

"Otto feels very confident about his chances to win, while it's possible that Joshua may feel a little intimidated coming off a loss against a southpaw in Usyk. He did a great job, but he lost.

"There haven't been some good discussions, we love the fight and we're ready for it, any time, any day of the week."

The Swede offered Fury a tough test and left him with a horrendous cut requiring 47 stitches, while Salita believes a meeting with Joshua could produce a future opponent for the "Gypsy King".

"He (Wallin) is ready [to fight Joshua] without a doubt," Salita said. "Otto wants to fight Tyson Fury as well. He gave Tyson the toughest fight of his career - many felt he won and some felt the fight should have been stopped.

"Anthony Joshua wants a fight with Tyson Fury, so I believe that the winner of that fight is a bona fide people's contender for Tyson Fury.

"As a boxing fan, the fight (for Joshua) with Otto Wallin makes good sense."



L-R: AFD Country Director, Xavier Muron; French Ambassador to Nigeria, Her Excellency, Emmanuelle Blatmann; Executive Chairman, Lagos State Sports Commission, Sola Aiyepeku; and Vice President NBA Africa and Country Head, NBA Nigeria, Gbemisola Abudu at the Official Launch of the Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience Program in Lagos ....Wednesday SUNDAY ADIGUN

NBA Africa, AFD Launch Basketball Experience in Lagos

NBA Africa and Agence Francaise de Development AFD) on Wednesday announced the official launch of the Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience program in Lagos.

The flagship initiative, which was introduced in Lagos in November 2021 as a pilot program, aims to use basketball as a platform to promote social inclusion and support secondary school children to become changemakers in their local communities.

The program's weekly basketball and life skills sessions will educate youth participants about issues including physical wellbeing, mental health, life skills and healthy living. As part of the initiative, with the support of new partners, including the Lagos State Sports Commission, the collaboration will also support the renovation of outdoor basketball courts in Lagos and scale-up the program to reach more youth across the city.

The announcement was made at an official ceremony in the presence of H.E. French Ambassador to Nigeria, Emmanuelle Blatmann; AFD Director for Nigeria, Xavier Muron; NBA Africa Vice President & Country Head of Nigeria, Gbemisola Abudu; Dream Sports Africa's (DSA) Nigeria Country Director, Michael Anejo and representatives of the Lagos State Government.

"This program demonstrates AFD and NBA Africa's shared vision of using sport as a tool to foster gender inclusion, sustainable development and social cohesion in Nigeria," said Muron. "After the successful first steps in Lagos, we look forward to continuing to work with NBA Africa and engaging with the Lagos State Government to expand the initiative to other parts of the city."

"The benefits and values that come from playing basketball extend far beyond the court, which is why we are committed to making the game more accessible to Nigerian youth," said Abudu. "Nigeria has a strong basketball tradition, and through the Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience program, we are able to create more places where youth can learn the game and develop as players and leaders."

This flagship initiative, which is part of AFD and NBA Africa's larger collaboration to support basketball infrastructure in youth development across the continent, builds on the inaugural Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience launched in Zenata, Morocco in 2019. In November 2021, AFD and NBA Africa initiated a pilot phase in Lagos implemented by international non-governmental organization DSA. To date, the pilot phase has reached more than 21,000 boys and girls ages 12-17 from 55 public and private schools in Lagos State.

Man-of-the-Match Performance against Man Utd Delights Uzoho

Super Eagles goalkeeper, Francis Uzoho was all smiles after he made 12 saves in Omonia Nicosia's tough 1-0 loss at Manchester United.

Uzoho was handed a starting shirt in Omonia's game against his boyhood-fan club Manchester United. And he proved that the decision from his boss Neil Lennon was the right one.

Uzoho was the man of the match after making 12 saves on the night. However, Scott McTominay broke Omonia hearts with a goal in stoppage time to give Manchester United the win.

Speaking after the game, Uzoho, who is a Manchester United fan shared his disappointment with the result, but he was happy with his performance.

"I am not disappointed with the result because we had a great game, but we would have preferred to get at least a point," Uzoho said as per BT Sports.

"But I'm happy, it's not an easy Stadium to play in with these big players."

Playing at Manchester United is a dream come through for me. I have dreamed to play here for a long time. So when I saw the draw, and I figured that we would be playing at Old Trafford, I wanted to play and I prayed to God to get an opportunity. I got it, and I'm happy I played here.

" I think this is one of the best performances of my career. I am proud of myself and my teammates because it was not a one-man job. We worked hard on the field.'

Overall Winner to Emerge as 27th BCGS Ladies Open Championship Ends Today

The overall winner in the ladies category will emerge today as the 27th Benin Club Golf Section (BCGS) Ladies Open Championship ends at the BCGS golf course, Benin City, Edo State.

The four-day golf tourney which attracted over 150 golfers teed-off on Wednesday, October 12, with caddies and eaglets event while Thursday was arrival and registration of golfers. BCGS ladies hcp 29-36, veterans, men's and guest men hcp 19-28 had their matches as well as cocktail later in the evening.

Yesterday was the colourful ceremonial tee-off performed by Captain of the Ladies Division, Dr. Isoken Osagiede, wife of Edo State Deputy Governor, Mrs. Maryam Shaibu; LGAN Southern Zone National Vice President, Sandra Emina, current and past Lady Captains and host of others.

After then ladies hcp 0-28 day one play and men's hcp 0-18 played at the golf course while ladies that made the cut yesterday will feature in day two play holding today to determine the overall winner just as presentation of prizes and dinner party will hold later in the evening. Guests are expected to depart tomorrow.

However, guests have praised the Lady Captain and her team for the hitch-free championship and for exhibiting the quality that the BCGS is known for, as home of hospitality for golfers in Nigeria.

In the same vein, they hailed the BCGS Captain, Ikponmwosa Osayande led executive for the innovation currently going on across the club, noting that BCGS facility was of international standard ready to host an international event in due season.

Meanwhile, various trophies and prizes will be presented to winners in different categories as well as individual awards such as men's and ladies nearest the pin, longest drive and many others.

El Clasico, Liverpool vs City Clash to Air on DStv, GOtv

The first El Classico of the 2022/23 season between Real Madrid and Barcelona will be broadcast on SuperSport this weekend.

The top of the table clash between the two giants which is set to be aired on SuperSport La Liga (DStv channel 204 and GOtv channel 32) at 8:00pm on Sunday will see both teams challenge each other for the top spot at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Carlo Ancelotti's men surrendered their lead at the table after they were held to a draw by Osasuna and the Los Blancos will be keen to return to the summit when they host their arch-rivals on Sunday night.

Barcelona will be heading into the clash without some of its key players, as Ronald Araujo, Jules Kounde, Hector Bellerin, Andreas Christensen and Memphis Depay are all injured currently while Frank Kessie remains a doubt.

However, Xavi Hernandez, who is set to take charge of his third El Clasico as a manager will be banking on the strength of his squad to secure a victory.

In England, struggling Liverpool will host an in-form Manchester City at Anfield on Sunday at 4:30pm. The much anticipated match will be broadcast on SuperSport Premier League (DStv channel 203).

Jurgen Klopp's men defeated City to win the Community Shield back in July, but their form in the league has been inconsistent. The German will be hoping his team will bounce back against a blazing City team inspired by the free-scoring Erling Haaland.

On the other hand, Pep Guardiola's team have remained unbeaten in the league while scoring for fun in the process. Having demolished the club's city rival at the derby, Guardiola's team will brace to replicate such a performance against the Merseysiders.

Another Premier League game to catch up with is the tie between Aston Villa and Chelsea at the Villa Park on Sunday at 2:00pm.

The match will be broadcast on SuperSport Premier League and GO Football (DStv channel 203 and GOtv channel 31).

ABUJA INTERNATIONAL MARATHON

Top Nigerian Runners Set for Kenya, Ethiopia Challenge

Nigeria's top elite runners have stepped up their preparations for the maiden Abuja International Marathon billed to take place in the Federal Capital Territory on December 17, 2022.

The organisers of the Abuja International Marathon have already promised an elite cast of runners with some of the world's top runners from Kenya and Ethiopia already confirmed for the race.

AIM organisers are determined to achieve its objective of becoming the first race in Nigeria to have an elite men's field that will return a sub 2:10 minutes.

Instead of being jittery about the world-class runners that would be in Abuja for the marathon, Nigerian elite runners are excited and ready for the challenge.

Leading the line of Nigerian runners hoping to make a mark at the Abuja race is the duo of Emmanuel Gyang and Sarah Pam who have both won several accolades in the past years.

In a chat with the Abuja International Marathon Media team, Gyan particularly expressed delight that he would be rubbing shoulders with some of the best runners across the world in a few months' time.

According to Gyang, his preparations have been going on well and his major mission in the December race is to lower his Personal Best time which is at 2hrs 25 minutes presently.

"Of course, I am delighted we are having an international race of this magnitude in Abuja, unlike other races that I have to embark on long journeys, this is very close to my base in Jos and it should have a positive effect on my performance" Gyang declared.

"I am aware that there will be runners from across the world in Abuja, especially the Kenyans and Ethiopians, what I can say is that we would give them a good challenge, beyond anything else, my target is to lower my PB to at least 2hrs.18mins thereabout" he added.

Ademola Lookman

Leicester's Loss, Atalanta's Gain



Lookman

With Leicester City rock bottom on the English Premier League table, Foxes Manager, Brendan Rodgers is already ruing not signing Nigerian forward Ademola Lookman as the player is riding high with Serie A side, Atalanta having contributed six goals so far this season while Leicester are finding goal scoring hard to come by

Super Eagles forward, Ademola Lookman continued his impressive form with Serie A side, Atalanta as he was yet on target last weekend in La Dea 2-2 draw at Udinese.

Atalanta were looking to beat Udinese and usurp Napoli at the top of the Serie A log when they traveled to the Dacia Arena and Atalanta coach Gian Pero Gasperini handed Lookman a starting shirt and the Super Eagles forward did not disappoint.

La Dea were the better side from the start, but it took them 36 minutes to break the deadlock. Luis Muriel played Lookman through on goal, and the Super Eagles forward showed great technique and smashed the ball into the roof of the net to give his side the lead.

The 24-year-old is proving to be one of the best signings of the season, as he has now scored two consecutive goals for Atalanta, in crucial games.

The former Leicester City loanee is continuing to impress in Italy after his loan move was not made permanent in the summer.

The winger spent last season at the King Power Stadium on a season-long loan from Red Bull Leipzig. In his one campaign at the club, Lookman played a total of 42 times, scoring eight goals and providing five assists. One of his goals was the winner in the memorable 1-0 victory over Liverpool at the King Power Stadium at the end of December.

City were said to be keen on making the deal permanent when the summer window came around. However, both the squad size and financial restrictions over the transfer window meant that a move never materialised

The 24-year-old has had a successful time in Italy, scoring three goals and providing a further three assists in his nine Serie A appearances so far. His latest goal came in the 2-2 draw with Udinese Calcio and was the winger's second goal in as many games in the competition.

That goal prompted a reaction from City fans on social media, with one writing: "Not buying this lad is the single most baffling thing that's happened at the KP for years." A second just simply wrote: "Pain.

Speaking after City's first game of the season back in August, Brendan Rodgers admitted that he was looking to have made Lookman's loan deal permanent in the summer. "I would have loved to have signed Ademola who was great here last season and got over 10 goals and assists but we weren't able to do that," he said .

"Unfortunately, that means we then have to look at the squad and the team and try to adapt, and then put them out to be as best organised as they can be."

After his goal last weekend, Lookman performed his signature glasses celebration but was then strangely booked by referee Daniele Doveri for his actions. The Nigerian international questioned the official's decision but was pulled away by his teammates, making sure he wasn't given any harsher punishment.

Lookman was utterly bemused and made clear to Doveri that this was his celebration rather than any sort of remark that could be perceived as offensive.

The former Leicester man has performed this pose with regularity and has never previously been punished for doing so. The decision to award a booking has been met with as much surprise among supporters.

"People get offended at anything these days," one social media user wrote while another put: "Truly pathetic stuff from the referee here."

Lookman's yellow card did not affect the visitors too much, but it was the decision to book Lookman that ultimately overshadowed the match, with the winger taking to Instagram afterwards with the message: "A draw today but looking ahead to next game. Another goal," accompanied by an image of him celebrating his opener.

Lookman has made a great start to his time at Atalanta, having plundered three goals and as many assists after just nine games played in Serie A and had previously performed the celebration on his league debut in a 2-0 win at Sampdoria and last time out in a 1-0 success over Fiorentina.

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MEDIA AND MARKETING

Makume: Why Lawson's Scotch Whisky is Being Unveiled

Lerato Makume is the Customer Marketing Manager, Bacardi-Martini Nigeria. He talks to **Olaoluwakitan Babatunde** on why Bacardi-Martini decided to formally unveil William Lawson's Scotch Whisky to Nigerians

William Lawson's Scotch whisky brand has been in the Nigerian market for a while. Why have you chosen to unveil it now?

Yes, our product has been in Nigeria for about six years now. But this is not just about a product unveiling but bringing the William Lawson's unconventional brand experience to consumers in Nigeria for the first time. We want to immerse consumers in the brand world and bring it to life in a bold and bigger way, so Nigerians truly understand what it means to enjoy a WL drink and be a Highlandah.

You are using The Naija Highlandah Challenge as the primary vehicle for the unveiling; kindly break down its mechanics. What is in it for participants?

It is a competition for bold and daring Nigerians, challenging them to show their grit for a chance to be crowned Nigeria's first Highlandah. With this challenge, we are looking for the boldest, most rugged, unconventional man or woman to be the face of William Lawson's. The challenge embodies our key brand attributes, namely, bold, unconventional, and good humour. So, to become the Naija Highlandah, the winner must possess these attributes; he or she must be someone who lives by his or her own rules.

The competition is scheduled to run from 6th October to 12th November, 2022 and will be carried out in two main phases. The first phase will focus on recruiting the participants and having them take part in the challenges. The competition is open to all individuals aged 18 years and above who dares to take up the challenge.

To enter, interested participants must register via our microsite or scan the QR code on any of the campaign communication assets in various retail outlets. They will then receive an invitation to participate in challenges staged at our various partner outlets, including bars and lounges. There they will be pitted against each other to prove their Highlandah attitude. From these challenges, we will select the Top 10 contestants for the semi-final phase where they will compete at the grand finale event to be held on November 12, with one winner emerging as the Naija Highlandah 2022.

In terms of reward, the triumphant Naija Highlandah will go home with N2 million cash and a trip to Scotland, the home of William Lawson's whisky.



Makume

Are there connections or similarities between Nigerians and the Highlandah brand?

A lot, I must say. Nigerians are some of the most humorous, bold, daring and unconventional people and we all know of the much talked about never-say-die Nigerian spirit. Today, in the entire continent of Africa, Nigeria has arguably the highest number of comedians. Nigerians are a very unique and special people; they do their things differently and in a very unique way. As such, it is no surprise that their music and artists are making waves internationally.

These are qualities that are synonymous with our brand attributes. Like Nigerians, William Lawson's is known for defying the norm and being brazenly different. In fact, I believe that Nigeria is full of Highlandahs, but for our challenge, only one person will have the guts to be the William Lawson's Highlandah. So, I challenge everyone to participate if they dare – we look forward to bumping fists with Nigeria's #1 Highlandah.

That was quite a spectacle earlier in the day; the power bike riders and the touching gesture of paying BRT fares of some commuters; why did you do that?

It is the Highlandah way. We do things differently. We are unconventional. We are bold, we are good natured, and we had to find a very unique way of appreciating Nigerians.

Talk to us about some of the challenges and why people should participate.

Some of the challenges the Highlandahs will have to go through include Spin the Bottle, Wrong Answer Only, Balloon Games, Planking, Walk-A-Plank, and Pull No Spill, among others. Worthy of note is that each of the games has been selected and designed with our key attributes in mind. For instance, while some of the challenges like Spin The Bottle, Wrong Answer Only, Animal Imitation, and Alphabets are good humoured, Planking, and Walk-A-Plank where contestants must put on heels and walk on a plank from one side of the bar to the other, are bold challenges. The Kaku Meter and Pull No Spill represent the unconventional challenges, and we invite everyone to participate if they dare. Only the most daring and unconventional participants will get past these challenges, and there is an amazing prize to be won – N2 million cash and a trip to Scotland.

Kilts are part of the dress culture in Scotland, it's not in Nigeria, so it was interesting seeing people parading them on the streets of Lagos. Do you think Nigerian men will buy into the idea of wearing kilts or skirts as your campaign progresses?

William Lawson's is not really trying to impose the kilt, or any dress on Nigerians. This is just about reflecting the attributes of William Lawson's brand - being bold and unconventional, living by your own rules, and not caring what anyone thinks of the way you dress - and it's not a skirt, it's a kilt! Made to be worn by the most daring and bold man or woman.

Is the brand working with entertainers on this campaign?

William Lawson's is a fun brand, and we always identify with the passions of our customers. So, yes, there will be lots of music and entertainment throughout the campaign at all the outlets, as well as the grand finale event. In fact, for the grand finale, we will have some of the best Nigerian artists performing. It is going to be wild!

What were the factors you considered before launching William Lawson's in Nigeria?

As you know, Nigerians really know their whisky, and it's not surprising that William Lawson's is doing quite well in the market. It's all in the taste, the flavour. William Lawson's is a classic blended Scotch whisky with a sweet, medium-bodied flavour. Made with a high malt content, the blend was first produced by William Lawson himself in 1849. According to data from the IWSR on whisky in Nigeria, William Lawson's is the leading entry whisky in the country at the moment.

What's the brand's relationship with trade partners, lounges and other players in the value chain?

We have an excellent relationship with all our trade partners, including bars, lounges, and other key outlets around the country, and we are committed to these relationships. They are key to our success. From our partners' perspective, it is not only about bringing an internationally acclaimed whisky brand to Nigeria but creating a unique and unconventional experience for our consumers in Nigeria.

If you were to do a critical appraisal, where does William Lawson's stand presently in the Nigerian market?

At William Lawson's, we don't really believe in comparing ourselves with others. We are different, we are bold, and we are daring. We are a disruptive brand. Ours is a unique product like no other, steeped in tradition. William Lawson's is a classic blended Scotch whisky with a sweet, medium-bodied flavour, made with a high malt content, a special blend that was first produced by William Lawson himself in 1849.

Adulteration or fakery is an issue with some brands in Nigeria; how are you ensuring that doesn't happen with Willian Lawson's?

Product adulteration is not only a crime but has serious health implications for consumers. To guard against this, all William Lawson's bottles are fitted with an anticounterfeit stopper or closure on the cap to prevent anyone from refilling the bottle with fake liquid. Additionally, we ensure that all William Lawson's are distributed through authorized partners / distributors only, so we can trace where each bottle has come from.

Night of Razzmatazz as Barrels.Ng Holds Hennessey Night

It was a night of fun and razzmatazz when the Chairman of Media Specialties Group, Adebola Olabode, gathered friends and business associates to witness the latest addition to his business endeavours, Barell.Ng. Located at the highbrow Ikeja GRA, the outlet is the nation's first online store for premium alcoholic beverages and brainchild of the chief executive officer of the Media Specialties Group, Ade Olabode.

The opening of the new retail centre, located at highbrow Isaac John street, inside Ikeja GRA, Street, Ikeja GRA was also tagged Hennessy Night owing to the main sponsorship by the leading wine brand.

The hip experience centre has unofficially opened its doors to customers recently and it has quickly become the favourite one-stop hub of exotic spirits and wines seekers.

Olabode told newsmen that since they opened for business, they have been able to attract wine and exotic drinks lovers to have an experience of their upscale services.

"Since we opened the barrels.ng as an online store of premium alcoholic beverages a few years ago, we have upped the ante in delivery of satisfying value to our numerous customers. Now, we are opening this new experience centre as a retail hub where everyone can come in to have extraordinary tasting experiences of their favourite spirits and wines, buy to take home or order to be delivered to them anywhere. Our grand opening is a statement of service excellence and customer-centric indulgence like never before and everyone is welcome," Olabode said.



Some of the guests at 'Hennessey Night'

Barrels.ng has been a leading dealer in the wholesale supply of premium liquor brands in Nigeria with a unique online supply and swift delivery-to-doorstep approach. It continues to attract more customers through exceptional customer-centric service and a wide assortment of trusted brands. Clients from anywhere across Nigeria can order their choice alcoholic drinks and have them promptly delivered to their homes, parties and other important events without stress.

The choice of location for the outfit was not only strategic but also instructive. Situated at Isaac John Street in the heart of GRA, Ikeja, overlooking Maryland gives fun seekers opportunity to peep in once in a while and pick wines of the choice or go to the second floor where there are opportunities for small clustered meetings with round tables that could sit six persons each.

Speaking to THISDAY, the General Manager of the outfit, Layi Aderibigbe, said there are catering services too for those who want to come and have a meeting or a small event in the place. He added that all the organisers of such meetings or events needed to do was to inform them ahead and they would make arrangements.

"We have an in-house chef," Aderibigbe explained. "So there are food and catering services that go with the purchase of wines and other assorted drinks. However, people might bring their foods from outside. What we do is that we quantify the food, value it and the person will then pay fifty per cent surcharge of the cost before he or she is allowed to bring in the food. The essence is to discourage bringing in off food any way because we are so sure of our services."

A more than cursory look around the ground and first floor indicated that the wine cabinets were branded in the names of the producers or marketers of such wine brands. Olabode said the ideas of Barrel.Ng were sold to these brands and they bought into it. In fact, the night of the unveiling of the outfit was tagged 'Hennessey Night'.

Olabode said the leading wine brand saw sense and marketing and promotional opportunities i in what they were doing and they bought into it. He said that was an indication that perhaps, the idea of Barrels.Ng was a not bad one after all.

And nothing confirmed this than the sheer number of fun seekers who thronged the place and were reveling still the early hours of the following morning. With a DJ on stand and music blaring away from almost deafening loudspeakers, a club-like situation was created in front of the building with dancing and drinking ruling the air.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Job Creation, Afolabi Imoukhuede, a personal friend to Olabode was on hand to grace the occasion. He said the idea of Barrels.Ng was one for which Olabode should be commended for. Also gracing the occasion was veteran movie and television producer, Zeb Ejiro.

Apart from physically coming to pick wines from the place, buyers can also order online; which is the whole idea behind the outfit in the first place. Some of fun seekers who thronged the place on the night of the opening expressed delight at being part of the groundbreaking ceremony but would want the night club atmosphere created that night to be repeated regularly.

MARKET PLACE

with Omolabake Fasogbon... 08155131874



L-R: Presiding Bishop at iCan Community Church, Bishop Wayne Malcolm; Founder/CEO and Senior Pastor of The Lighthouse Church and Ministries, Pastor Keion Henderson; First Lady of The Lighthouse Church and CEO, Amirah Inc; Lady Shaunie Henderson; Co-Pastor of House On The Rock, Ifeanyi Adefarasin; The Metropolitan of House On The Rock, Pastor Paul Adefarasin and Founder and Senior Pastor of Kingdom Church, Dr Dharius Daniels at the Word Conference 2022,hosted by Adefarasin in Lagos, recently



L-R: Head, Strategic Communications and Advocacy, Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), Mr. Yinka Iyinolakan; Deputy Director, Policy Innovation Centre (PIC), Dr. Osasuyi Dirisu; CEO, NESG, Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola; and Gender and Inclusion Advisor, PIC, Kemi Omole, at a press conference on the PIC's upcoming Gender and Inclusion Summit 2022 in Abuja…recently

Pernod Ricard Partners 'Let's Do it Nigeria' to Mark World Clean-up Day

Pernod Ricard Nigeria, a subsidiary of world's second highest producer of spirits and wines, has partnered 'Let's Do It Nigeria', the franchise holder of World Cleanup Day in Nigeria, to organise cleanup exercises in more than 300 locations across Nigeria-to clear more than 10,000 tons of waste.

The clean-up exercise, which took place on September 17, 2022, was aimed at marking World Clean-up Day, which was simultaneously observed in about 164 countries around the world.

The day is an annual global social action programme that unites millions of volunteers, governments, and organisations worldwide to tackle the global waste problem with the aim of building a sustainable world.

Commenting on the exercise, the Sustainability and Responsibility Manager for Pernod Ricard Nigeria and Western Africa, Eunice Osei-Tutu, said her outfit was very excited to join in the World Cleanup Day exercise which corresponds with the Circular Making Pillar of Pernod Ricard's Sustainability and Responsibility roadmap which supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG) 12, Responsible Consumption and Production and 14, and Life Below Water.

She said: "It is a very fulfilling moment for us at Pernod Ricard, as we join the world to preserve our natural environment and minimise waste. At Pernod Ricard, we always look for opportunities to advance sustainable actions that preserve the environment.

"Every step of operation at Pernod Ricard has been laced with processes that optimise and help preserve natural resources. For example, we have banned all promotional items made from single-use plastic since 2021, and are working to ensure that 100 percent of our packaging will be recyclable, reusable, compostable, or bio-based by 2025. We also adopt eco-design principles to reduce impact for all new product development."

On his part, the Country Leader of 'Let's Do It Nigeria', Mr. Olumide Coker, thanked all Nigerians who participated in the cleanup exercise, and encouraged them to do well for the earth by ensuring that they imbibe the 5 Rs of circular economy to save the world.

Nigerian Writer Shines at New York's Global Translation

Nigerians have been commended for their creative ingenuity at the just concluded Global Translation Night held in New York.

The event saw poets from across 10 countries in Africa, Europe Latin America, and the United States converged in New York to celebrate art and poetry.

At the event, US-based Nigerian writer and professor of poetry, Gbenga Adesina came on the spotlight, following his delivery that attracted a prolonged ovation.

According to the organisers, the Global Translation Night is an effort to break language boundaries through poetry by having a bilingual celebration and festival of words in both English and Spanish.

Adesina's performance which became a highlight of the two-day bilingual event also earned him more recognition at the global stage.

Commenting, he said, "I live inside the dream of language. Since I was a child, I have had an affinity for human languages and stories across different cultures, countries, and nationalities. We just need to listen. We are surrounded by stories."

An award-winning poet and essayist, Adesina is the first Nigerian to win the Brunel International Poetry Prize. He is a recipient of scholarships and fellow of Norman Mailer Center, the Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, New York University.

In his remark, Editor of the Narrative Magazine and convener of the annual Narrative Prize, Carol Edgarian said, "Adesina's works honors and humanises the personal and historical grief of immigrant families, the joys and complexities of familial love, and the abiding belief that poetry can carry us across the water.

Leaders Charged on Skills Dev't at Confab

Leaders across the various sectors of the economy have been charged on skills and capacity building at the just concluded Word Conference that held in Lagos.

The conference themed, "Take the Lead" had players from the market place and ministries empowered with relevant skills needed for growth and sustainability.

The four -day event had speakers from different fields engaged audience in thought provoking sessions, while sharing their personal leadership experience.

According to the host and the Metropolitan of House On The Rock, Pastor Paul Adefarasin, the conference aims to equip aspiring leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to deal with leadership and its related provocations.

He said, "The Word Conference is one of the highlights of the year for us, and this year is especially more critical for so many reasons because it doesn't just come at a pivotal time history, but at a time when the very lessons of effective and discerning leadership are very much in demand."

While addressing the audience, one of the speakers and Founder, CEO, and Senior Pastor of The Lighthouse Church and Ministries, Pastor Keion Henderson advised on the need to remain secret about one's strength.

He said, "If you're going to take the lead, keep your strength a secret because some people benefit off your weakness. You must be a secret keeper when it comes to your strength as the leader".

Also speaking, Founder and President of the International Christ Ambassadors Network iCAN, Bishop Wayne Malcolm urged the attendees to learn to maximise the power in words." There is a word planted in you to take over. The only people God plants in the kingdom are those who understand the word, take it seriously, and prioritise it", he said.

Firm Releases Report on Countries Compliance to FATF

The Global South Dialogue on Economic Crime ((GSDEC) has released a new report analysing how countries have adhered to Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) standards.

The 83-page report titled, "An Analysis of Compliance and Effectiveness Status of Assessed Countries under the 4th Round and its FRSB Equivalent" was published on Economic GSDEC 's website.

The report evaluated countries' technical compliance and effectiveness based on the FATF's 4th Round of evaluations.

It further explores factors that determine compliance outcomes of countries, including the influence of factors such as the FATF methodology, the composition of assessment experts and language.

Studying 99 countries, the report authored by renowned academics, Dr Nkechikwu Azinge-Egbiri and Dr Kolawole Ebire, examined best and worst complied countries while giving a breakdown performance of West Africa countries in its analysis.

Findings from the report revealed that countries that conduct robust risk assessments have a deeper understanding of their risks and comply strongly with the FATF standards.

It further contended that the much-improved FATF methodology comes with its challenges, given that its applicability has unintended consequences for developing countries.

Commenting on the report, Assistant Professor at University of Warwick and Founding member of GSDEC, Dr Joy Malala said, "The report is timely and demonstrates the challenges Global South countries face with transplantation. For instance, 2020 was a turning point for digital financial services across the globe as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, yet it brought on challenges. The resulting FATF digital identities directive ushered to address the challenges associated with digital financial services is one developing country will struggle with due to the likely unintended consequences such as its exclusionary nature.

NGO Stresses Partnership to Bridge Skills Gap among Youths

A non-governmental organisation, Regalo Hope Foundation has underscored the importance of partnerships to address the challenge of skills gap among Nigerian youths.

The organisation which identified skill gap as a trigger for unemployment, urged government to explore partnership with NGOs and stakeholders to address the menace.

Founder of the NGO, Mrs Chinenye Onuorah while addressing the youths at a forum in Lagos, noted that partnership was necessary to aid in designing and implementing high-impact policies and initiatives needed to build the capacity of youths.

She maintained skillful youth population remained Nigeria's biggest export to the world, stressing the need for partnerships and sufficient funding to enable youths development.

She further lamented inadequate funding of the education sector as well as the dilapidated state of several educational facilities including computer and science laboratories in secondary and tertiary institutions across the country.

She stated that the glaring socio-economic challenges in the country inspired her to set up a foundation which was committed to education growth as well as children, youths and education development.

She said, "The foundation has trained more than 3,500 youths in web development and graphics design, 1,375 students in data analytics and granted back-to-school scholarships to more than 600 out-of-school children across the country. Furthermore, Regalo has delivered free practical training to 5,200 youths and women in bag, shoe and soap making. We have also offered training on health, wellness and first aid care, amongst others."

Onuorah further expressed readiness to partner with stakeholders and government to be able to reach a larger youth population and empower then with relevant skills.

AUTO WORLD

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L–R: General Manager, Marketing and Corporate Communications, Coscharis Group, Mr. Abiona Babarinde; ED, Sales and Strategy, Coscharis Group, Mr. Jonathan Maduka; President/CEO, Coscharis Group, Dr. Cosmas Maduka; the Ambassador of France to Nigeria, Mrs. Emmanuelle Blatmann; GMD, Coscharis Group, Mr. Josiah Samuel; ED, Aftersales and Special Duties, Coscharis Group, Mr. Cosmas Junior Maduka; Head, Coscharis Motors Assembly Plant, Mr. Sola Afolayan, when the French Ambassador paid a courtesy visit to the Coscharis team at their Group head office in Lagos… recently

All-new Renault Kangoo E-Tech Electric, Plugged-in Combispace

Twenty five years after ushering in the ludospace age with an unrivalled, practical design – including a sliding side door for the first time ever –, Renault Kangoo has stayed true to its genes, pioneering and plugged into its day.

Kangoo is also a success story: Renault has sold 4,4 million of them in 50 countries around the planet. It's the best of both worlds: a car for families with an elegant design plus plenty of space inside, and a vehicle for professionals with a generously-sized boot and sturdy build.

After non-stop upgrading and trailblazing over the years, Renault Kangoo is now available in an E-Tech Electric version for the first time in its history.

ALL THE STRENGTHS AND FRESHNESS KANGOO HAS ALWAYS HAD, PLUS THE ELECTRIC POWERDRIVE

All-new Kangoo E-Tech Electric comes with all the practical features, safety and comfort equipment, as the combustion version:

A comfortable second row and more roominess than any other vehicle in its category: three proper places that comfortably seat three adults, and an air nozzle treating all passengers at the back to optimal comfort

More than 49 litres of storage space including the Easy Life drawer

An ample 850 litre boot, the best in its category, and the possibility of expanding it to 2,500 litres with the sliding second row bench (exclusively on All-new Kangoo E-Tech Electric)

Innovative roof bars, which you can adjust without using tools, so you never run out of space and can carry practically anything

14 driver assistance systems, including Level 2 automation, for added safety

Outside, Kangoo still has its horizontal ribbed bonnet and strikingly vertical front, with a grille housing the charging outlet behind the logo.

Like the combustion version, the inside includes the new dashboard (with a dark brushed wood finish in some versions). The cockpit is comfortable and the driver's seat more ergonomic. The only change is the in dashboard, which displays the E-Tech information.

The new lithium-ion battery has 45 kWh of fully usable capacity, and comprises 8 standalone and easily repairable modules. All-new Kangoo E-Tech Electric can drive up to 285 km (WLTP cycle), which is plenty for most everyday requirements and shrinks cost of ownership and use to new lows.

The batteries come with an 8 year or 160,000 km warranty. Before that, Renault will replace them free of charge is their capacity drops under 70% of their nominal capacity (SoH).

All-new Kangoo E-Tech Electric comes with a 90 kW motor delivering 245 Nm of instantly available torque for smooth driving and peace of mind in any circumstances. An Eco mode limiting the vehicle's maximum speed (110 km/h) and power (56 kW) optimises its range.

Ford Mustang Gt Revealed at Bathurst

Ford has today revealed the first race-prepared seventh-generation Mustang, with the 2023 Mustang GT 'Gen3' Supercar uncovered at Mount Panorama ahead of the famous Bathurst 1000.

Ford's challenger for the 2023 Australian Supercars Championship was shown in pit lane this afternoon, in a global first appearance of the seventh-generation Mustang in racing guise.

The road-going variants of the seventh-generation Mustang were revealed in Detroit last month, with computer-generated images of the race cars shown at the same time.

"It is fantastic to be able to show, for the very first time globally, the seventh-generation Mustang in racing form," said Mark Rushbrook, Global Director, Ford Performance Motorsports.

"The reveal of the Mustang Supercar is the first of many, with Mustang to race in GT3, GT4, NASCAR and NHRA competition globally.

"Mustang has been an iconic brand on and off the track for 58 years and its legend will continue around the world. We always say Mustang was born to race, and that is more true today than ever. The Mustang GT Supercar is ready to race in 2023."

The Mustang Supercar has been built by Ford's homologation team Dick Johnson Racing, in conjunction with Ford Performance, in preparation for the 2023 season when a new era of Supercars racing begins.

The Gen3 Mustang GT Supercar more closely resembles its road-going counterpart, with production-based Coyote V8 engine, low roofline and long hood that makes Mustang the world's favourite sports car.



The 2023 Mustang GT

Ford supported teams in 2023, who will race the new Mustang, include Dick Johnson Racing, Tickford Racing, Grove Racing, Blanchard Racing Team and new to the Mustang stable, Walkinshaw Andretti United.

Johnson, the Ford legend whose namesake team is celebrating the incredible milestone of 1000 races this weekend, will drive the car for the first time this afternoon.

"We're very proud to be showing the world our new Mustang Supercar, and what better place to do it than at the Great Race here at Mount Panorama," said Andrew Birkic, president and CEO, Ford Australia and New Zealand.

"It's a special moment to be able to uncover this car in front of passionate Ford fans, alongside all of our Supercars drivers. It's very fitting that Dick will take the car for its first laps this afternoon. He's a legend of the sport, and an incredible ambassador for Ford.

TIPS OF THE WEEK

Why do People Steal Catalytic Converters?

Catalytic converters are increasingly a target for thieves due to:

The current market value of a catalytic converter's precious metals

The ease of removing a catalytic converter for an experienced thief

The inability to track catalytic converters

In the current market, catalytic converters can be resold to recyclers for as little as $50 or to precious metal dealers for as much as thousands of dollars per ounce, reported the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB).

Because advanced models of catalytic converters include even more precious metals than older models, thieves have an increasingly attractive opportunity to make quick cash.

Experienced thieves can remove a catalytic converter in minutes, especially with modern power tools, according to Edmunds. Plus, there are no tracking systems on a catalytic converter.

Cars that are often targeted for catalytic converter theft

Fuel-powered vehicles manufactured after 1974 have catalytic converters, so there are a lot of cars on the road that might appeal to catalytic converter thieves. However, thieves often target taller vehicles, like pickup trucks or SUVs, because they can easily fit under the vehicle to access the catalytic converter.

Another attractive target for catalytic converter thieves are hybrid cars, according to Forbes. Because hybrid cars don't run as hot as gas-powered vehicles, their catalytic converters offer an even greater supply of precious metals.

How to tell if your catalytic converter has been stolen

You may not be able to tell your catalytic converter was stolen by looking at your car, but you'll know as soon as you start the engine. When the catalytic converter has been removed, your vehicle will make a loud roaring sound that'll get louder as you push the gas pedal.

Your car might also make a sputtering sound as you change speed, or you'll notice it's not driving smoothly.

An increase in the exhaust — or the exhaust smells — can be a definite sign of a stolen catalytic converter.

In summary, here are the key symptoms that your catalytic converter has been removed:

Loud roar when you start the car, louder as you accelerate

Increase in exhaust fumes, or unusual exhaust smells

Missing parts under vehicle leading to muffler

Uneven or sputtering acceleration due to lack of exhaust regulation

Check engine light or inspection failures

5 ways to protect against catalytic converter theft

Consider these tips to help protect your car from catalytic converter theft:

Know if your car is a likely target: hybrids, SUVs and trucks have valuable or easily removable catalytic converters. Etch your license plate number or VIN onto your catalytic converter — this may help alert a scrap dealer that it was stolen and make it easier to identify the owner.

Park in well-lit areas close to public entrances, regularly move your car's spot or use a closed garage.

Install an anti-theft device

Install motion-sensitive lights and cameras in your parking area

Paint your catalytic converter to deter buyers – some local police departments even offer free programs for painting

Understanding when your car might be a target for catalytic converter theft is the first key to preventing it. By following these protective measures, you may help deter thieves from targeting your car.

Insure your vehicle against catalytic converter theft

The cost to replace and install a new catalytic converter can be as much as $3,000. Insurance claims for a stolen catalytic converter in 2020 ranged from $500 to $3,000, according to the Highway Loss Data Institute.

Most comprehensive vehicle insurance can help cover a stolen catalytic converter. Check with your insurer to see how your policy can minimize the impact of a stolen catalytic converter.

It's important to have full coverage to keep you on the road even when opportunistic thieves strike.

(Source: Allstate)

AUTO WORLD

Mercedes-Benz Deliveries up 21% in Q3 with Robust Demand

Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars deliveries reached 517,800 units (+21%) in the July to September period, the strongest sales quarter in 2022 so far even as production and sales continue to be affected by semiconductor shortages and disrupted supply chains.

Mercedes-Benz is transforming at full speed: On the way towards a fully electric future, Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars increased Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) sales between July and September to 30,000 units, up 28% compared to Q2 and an increase of 115% compared with the year-earlier period. In the first nine months, sales of BEVs doubled to 75,400 units (+126%). September deliveries of 13,100 BEVs represent a new monthly sales record. BEV sales were lifted by the EQB, with 3,400 deliveries, and the EQE which recently arrived in showrooms in China and saw more than 2,000 units sold worldwide. Sales of the EQS are steadily rising and hit over 5,400 units, its strongest quarter ever. Its SUV sibling, the EQS SUV, started production and hit showrooms in the United States. Deliveries of xEV models (PHEVs and BEVs including smart) reached 75,900 units (+23%) in the third quarter, equivalent to an xEV-share of 15% and reached 215,400 units (+17%) in the first nine months of the year.

"In a challenging business environment – primarily defined by ongoing semiconductor shortages - we continue to see robust demand for Mercedes-Benz resulting in the strongest sales quarter this year,"said Britta Seeger, Member of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, responsible for Mercedes-Benz Cars Marketing and Sales. "With the EQS SUV and EQE SUV, which celebrates its premiere in Paris on October, 16th, our customers can choose a fully electric vehicle in every segment served by Mercedes-Benz. We offer a choice of eight all-electric Mercedes-Benz models – more than any of our competitors."

In addition to accelerating the transformation of the vehicle portfolio towards an all-electric future, Mercedes-Benz is working continuously on improving the charging network for its customers. In the past year, Mercedes-Benz increased the number of charging points within its Mercedes me Charge service to over 850,000 (+70%) worldwide, increasing planning certainty for long-distance journeys.

The Nigerian Society of Engineers

NOTICE OF THE 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 55th Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Society of Engineers will hold at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Abuja, at 10:00.a.m Prompt on Thursday, November 17, 2022.

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. President's Address
4. Adoption of the Minutes of Meeting of the year 2021
5. Report of the Council for the year 2022
6. Report of the 2021 Election Investigative Tribunal
7. Announcement of the Result of Election into the Executive Committee for the year 2023 and Election of Three (3) Members of the Audit Committee for the year 2022 /2023.
8. Financial Statements and Audited Accounts for the year 2021/2022 and Report of the Audit Committee.
9. Appointment of Auditors for the year 2022/2023 and Authorization of the Council to fix their Remunerations.
10. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

By Order of the Council

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Secretary to Council
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World Premiere of new All-Electric Lexus UX 300e Holds

The diverse powertrain line-up of the Lexus UX series welcomes an updated Battery EV model with enhanced electric range and further refinement

Lexus announces the global debut of the new UX 300e, a significant evolution of the brand's first production BEV model. The updated UX 300e joins the new UX 200/250h announced earlier this year, with deliveries scheduled to begin in spring 2023.

Since the 2005 launch of the RX 400h, the world's first hybrid SUV, Lexus has been a pioneer of electrification in the luxury market. Based on the electrification vision "Lexus Electrified" announced in 2019, Lexus aims to meet the diverse needs of global customers through a broad range of electrified vehicles, from HEVs to PHEVs and BEVs. Using electrification technology to significantly enhance fundamental vehicle performance, Lexus continues to refine the timeless joy of the automobile, through hallmark precision and sophistication. In 2020, Lexus launched UX 300e as the brand's first production BEV model. In 2022, this was followed by the introduction of the Lexus RZ, a dedicated BEV model. As of the end of August 2022, cumulative sales of Lexus electrified vehicles stand at approximately 2.3 million units, as the brand accelerates their development and adoption to contribute to the realization of a carbon-neutral society.

In addition to its maneuverable body size and unique "UX" urban compact crossover design, the UX 300e is highly regarded by customers seeking a distinctly quiet and refined BEV driving experience. The enhancements announced for the UX 300e are based on the relentless pursuit of perfection under an "Always On" philosophy. Enhancements unique to the BEV powertrain include a newly developed battery pack with capacity increased from 54.4 kWh to 72.8 kWh, resulting in a cruising range of 450 km*1—over 40% longer than the current model.

Are You a Tailgater?



SAFE DRIVING

with

Jonas Agwu

amnipr,mcipr,mprsa,arpa
Assistant Corps Marshal
Zonal Commanding Officer
Federal Road Safety Corps.

It first happened to me sometime in 2021.I can't remember exactly when in 2021. For more than seventy-two hours, I couldn't get my act together. October 11,2022 was my second experience. I can't remember how long but the October 2022 experience was perhaps the worst. I just couldn't scale through what to write or how to go about it. My brain practically went numb.

Then I remembered Louis Odion; my friend ,colleague and a gifted writer. Louis once schooled me on the challenges of writing; especially a writer's block .He told me it is the creative slump that writers face when they don't know what to write. Louis reminded me that the slackness to write is not as a result of loss of commitment or lack of the skills to write.

When the recent one happened, I rolled out all the tips and practically applied them to break through the wall, yet, I couldn't determine the problem. I couldn't bring myself to read any of my favourite writers' or books. I tried to change my writing routine. I even tried doing something different such as movies and music. Even my early morning walk,and spending time to prepare my morning apple tea with toasted bread couldn't break the ice.

I also tried showering with hot water which is an easier task than writing. I just couldn't help myself. As a proper Nigerian, I thought a glance at some crispy Naira notes or even a dollar would lighten me up. This also failed me. My thoughts then flashed through to the superlative reviews of the recent victory of Arsenal over Liverpool where we took Liverpool to the cleaners. Even this sweet victory also failed to raise my creative arsenal.

While I was reminiscing on how to navigate out of my dilemma, my phone rang. I glanced at my phone and behold it was my precious and gifted eight years old friend, Bernice. My excitement I must confess was boundless for several reasons. First is that Bernice is a bundle of joy to behold. The second is that I love her smiles and how she teases me whenever we see. Thirdly,I love her naive way of saying,"I missed you".There are others but for now let me just inform you that,just before her call which threw me off my feet,I had spent some time reflecting on how much I have missed her.

So when her call came, we spent some time 'gisting'{talking}. For over ten minutes , she took me through school activities for the day and her school friends as well as other talking points.She then iced our gist by telling me how much she had again missed me. I was so glued to our discussions,her innocence and naivety that I just didn't wish the call would end soon. As usual, the network played the usual trick and ended the call abruptly. As soon as the call ended,I realised that Bernice's call was the elixir I needed to come out of my block. I immediately got my grove back all because of my sweet,lovely Bernice that I fondly call Princess.

Just then,my mind raced through one of the most dangerous driving habits. I then surfed the net and stumbled on a piece that painted the picture of how the sight of a driver in your rear-view mirror following too closely can be upsetting. The picture painted was based on a survey that revealed strangely that drivers in the United Kingdom rate tailgating as the driving behaviour that distracts them most.

According to the survey, a thousand drivers were asked to rate driving occurrences' based on how distracting they are. Thirty percent of those surveyed tagged tailgating as the most distracting which according to the National Highways is a leading cause of driver distraction and accounts for one-in-eight crashes on Britain's roads. The survey stated that a driver travelling at 70mph will 'cover 62 metres every two seconds. What this means is that that driver will need around 96 metres to stop, making adequate stopping distances absolutely critical to curtail the tailgating problem."

Next to tailgating, the survey identified children or other passengers which accounted for twenty-six percent while traffic accounted for twenty-one percent. What the survey showed is that distraction could either be from a reckless driver or a screaming child in the car, especially one that is not properly strapped depending on the age as provided in the National Road Traffic Regulations.

So what is tailgating?Why do some drivers tailgate and how should you prevent this bad driving behaviour. Before I dwell on this subject,I must remind you that as a driver,the one antidote for driving safely is driving defensively. Tailgating therefore is when a driver indulges in the typical kiss me driving peculiar with Lagos drivers and impatient drivers. It is when a driver drives behind another vehicle without leaving sufficient distance to stop to avoid a collision should the vehicle in front stop abruptly.

Tailgating means the driver behind is not keeping a safe distance between his vehicle and the vehicle in front. Safe distance in driving is a factor of the speed at which you are travelling, visibility and other environmental conditions. This is why a driver at all times should keep a safe distance that should be greater than almost half of the speed in meters or alternatively a time gap of two seconds as provided in the Highway Code which I know most drivers rarely read and internalise.

When a driver tail-gates, it means that the driver is not keeping a safe distance between his vehicle and the vehicle ahead. So what is the two seconds rule? The two-second rule is a rule of thumb which enables a driver to maintain a safe distance no matter the speed. What this rule says is that a driver should in practice stay at least two seconds behind the vehicle that is in front of his vehicle. This rule is not cast in stone and as such what I do when driving is to adopt the three or even five seconds rule to stay alive.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Lai Mohammed Canvasses Seamless African Air Connectivity

Justina Uzo

Tourism stakeholders have long sought for seamless travel across the West African sub-region. Many complain that travel within the region is not only stressful but it's also expensive.

The issue was recently in the front burner again at the 65th Meeting of the UNWTO-CAF in Arusha, Tanzania.

Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, who spoke at the event, said effective air connectivity within Africa is key to unlocking the potentials of tourism in the continent.

He urged African ministers of Tourism to co-operate and collaborate with their African ministers of aviation to achieve Single African Air Transport Market.

Mohammed who supervises Nigerian Tourism, in a statement signed by his media aide, Segun Adeyemi, harped on the way forward focusing on air travels.

"There is no doubt that air transportation is pivotal for any international tourism development (more so in Africa), owing to the need for tourists to move to the product destination. Air travels continue to be the dominant mode of travel for international tourists, accounting for over 50 per cent of all international arrivals," the minister said.

Mohammed also stressed that growing air transportation into and within the African region, including effective connectivity through the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on a Single African Air Transport Market, are important to unlocking Africa's tourism potential.



Lai Mohammed

Reeling out statistics to back his assertion, the minister, who also listed unfavourable visa regimes, insecurity, high cost of air transport and low quality of tourism support services, among other factors hindering the growth of tourism in Africa.

He said Africa's share of global international arrivals remains a paltry five per cent.

"The truth is that the performance of the region's aviation industry, though improving, continues to lag behind that of the rest of the world, accounting for a dismal three per cent of the global air transport traffic. Of the 1,431 country pairs between the African Union countries, only 19 per cent had some form of significant direct service in 2019.

"As of 2019, only 35 per cent of the African routes were operated daily, and only 13 per cent were operated twice daily while many operated at less than daily frequency. Such services offer passengers very limited choices in terms of their journey timing and prevent passengers from obtaining a convenient itinerary.

"This negatively impacts productivity and ultimately has a cost implication. New routes and more frequencies, he said, will shorten flying time between many cities in Africa. For example, as of 2019 there was no regular direct service between the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The most convenient routing available then was via West Africa or Morocco. This could take between 9 and 15 hours while a direct service would take about two hours only," he said.

Mohammed said the liberalisation of Air Transport in Africa is so important as it will lead to an additional 145 country pairs that will receive direct service, boost tourism and also increase frequencies on existing routes by 27 per cent.

The 65th UNWTO-CAF Meeting 2022 was hosted by Tanzania from October 5 to 7. The forum focused on "Rebuilding Africa's Tourism Resilience for Inclusive Socio-economic development."

Ayodeji: Security Concerns Affecting Tourism in Nigeria

Justina Uzo

The Principal Executive of Flyzone Tourism, a Dubai destination management company, Mr. Awomoyi Ayodeji, has identified some of the problems travel agencies in Nigeria are having despite the huge resources that abound in the country.

He said Nigeria has a lot to offer the world in terms of tourist products but security concerns had become the challenge making travellers to look elsewhere.

"Once insecurity is dealt with, we will get out of it," he said. Ayodeji also pointed out that travel business in Nigeria is still contending with the issue of fraudulent agents as there are many of them in the sector.

He regretted that some Nigerian travel agents have been known to scam one another, advising them to build trust among their clients.

It is for these reasons he said supporting travel agencies had become a major concern of Flyzone Tourism.

For five years, he said Flyzone Tourism had processed Dubai visas for over 4,000 travel agencies.

He said when procedure for United Arab Emirates (UAE) visa was made easy for Nigerians, visiting that country was easy, "until some unfortunate events resulted to visa restriction to certain persons.

Explaining further, Ayodeji said part of the issues include the tendency by Nigerians to get a 30-day visa and 90-day visa yet insist on spending more days than allowed.

He said it was partly responsible for new requirements like bank statements and hotel reservations, by the UAE authorities.

Notwithstanding, he said, "There are so many Nigerians living legally and doing good business in the UAE." Ayodeji, who has been in the aviation industry since 2019, said Flyzone Tourism offers services to bridge the space between Nigeria travel companies and Dubai.

Flyzone Tourism offerings include tour packages, hotel reservations and procurement of visas on a business-to-business basis.

He said packages like these have addressed issues of delivery which in turn makes their clients happy.

He continued, "Dubai has evolved over the years to become one of the world's most prestigious and popular tourism destination, attracting visitors from different parts of the world to its shores to experience what they have to offer."

Citing some research, he said over 11.95 million people travelled from across the globe to the Emirate in 2014, up from 11.12 million in 2013, "invariably, demonstrating that the appeal of Dubai as a tourist destination has grown further."

"As a place famous for superlatives such as the world's biggest skyscraper and largest mall, it's unsurprising that people flock to its shores to set their eyes on its great feats and achievements. Some of the new attractions include Ain Dubai, Madame Tussauds Dubai, and Museum of the Future."

He recalled that in 2019, Nigeria was one of our top performing source markets with a year-on-year increase of 33 per cent in visitor numbers, supported by the increase in seat capacity from Emirates Airline between Dubai and Nigeria in the summer.



Ayodeji

Marriott Clarifies Position on Abuja Sheraton's Planned Closure

Justina Uzo

Marriott International which manages top hotels around the world including the Sheraton hotels in Nigeria has clarified its position following the announcement that the new owners of Abuja Sheraton Hotel, 22 Hospitality Limited, plans to close the luxury hotel.

It is learnt that 22 Hospitality Limited, a subsidiary of NIIPCO PLC, which recently acquired the majority shares, to become new owners, said they were desirous of carving a niche for itself by becoming a leading hospitality firm, offering premium services to customers, in accordance with global standards.

At present, there is a disagreement between the new owners of Abuja Sheraton hotel, 22 Hospitality Limited and the international hospitality management group managing the property, Marriott International, over the decision to close it.

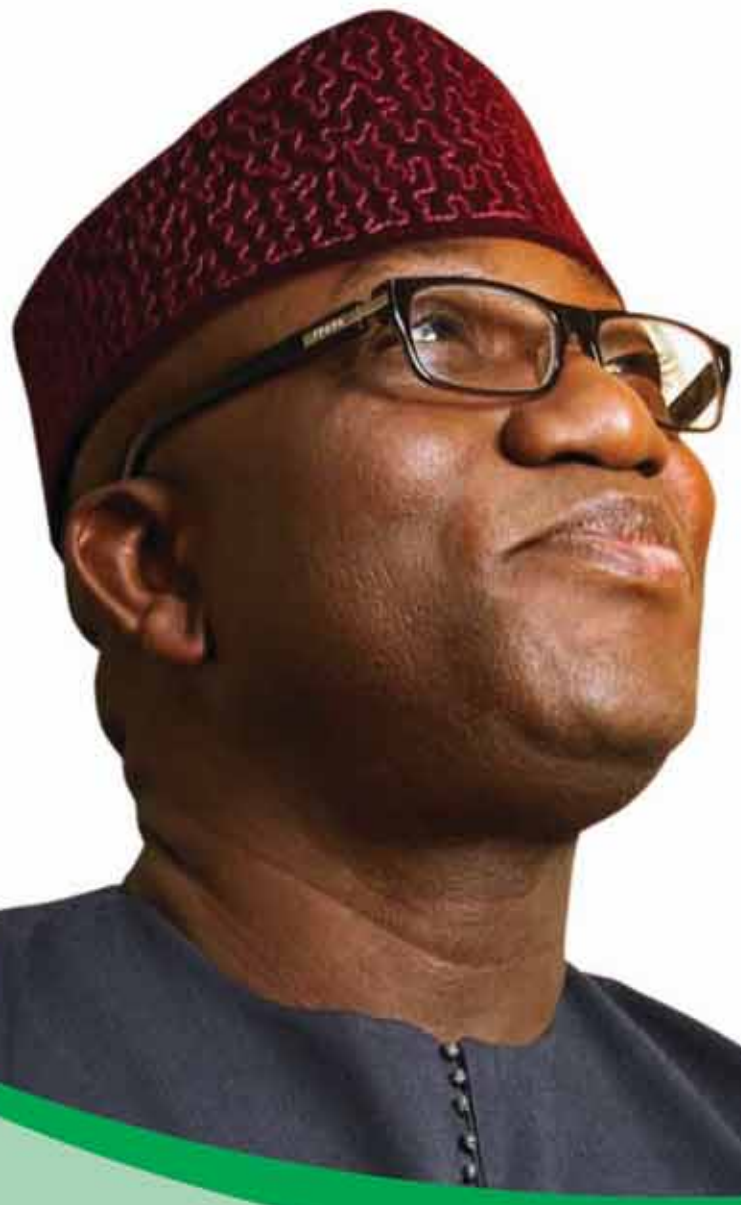
Marriott said "notice for closure was short."

Marriott, in a statement yesterday said the decision to close down the hotel in a matter of days was hurried and that it would cause a lot of distress to the hotel employees, as well as disrupt the guests. Commenting on the saga, Marriott spokesperson said: "The owners of the Sheraton Abuja Hotel have informed us that they intend to close the hotel in a matter of days. Whilst we acknowledge that the owners need to carry out significant renovation works at the hotel, we have objected to the closure on such short notice.

"We are concerned that the hurried manner of such closure will cause distress to hotel employees, and significant disruption to guests, suppliers and partners."

After more than 30 years managing the Abuja property at Ladi Kwali, the hotel management group hinted that "we are now working with the HAPSSSA and NUHPSW unions to support the 291 hotel employees impacted by this rushed closure."

NIPCO Plc is a key downstream operator in Nigeria's oil and gas industry with footprints across the country.



NIGERIA HEALTH
COMMISSIONERS FORUM

Farewell

His Excellency,

DR JOHN KAYODE FAYEMI, CON

Governor of Ekiti State
Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF)

The Nigeria Commissioners for Health Forum congratulate His Excellency, Dr John Kayode Fayemi on the successful completion of his tenure as the Executive Governor of Ekiti State and Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum.

His Excellency, Dr John Kayode Fayemi's tenure is characterised by valiant leadership and immense dedication to duty. As Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum, His Excellency provided the astute leadership that steered the collective subnational response to the trying COVID-19 outbreak. As a strong advocate for Universal Health Coverage, Dr Fayemi boldly led the prioritisation of Primary Healthcare at the Nigerian Governors Forum, leading to success in increased financing for Primary Healthcare in many States of the Federation.

Under His Excellency's tenure, the Nigerian Commissioners for Health Forum has enjoyed great support and guidance as subnational health leaders. His tenure has advanced good governance and increased development performance at the subnational level and his passion for peer learning has advanced inter-state collaborations to improve healthcare in Nigeria. His Excellency's leadership is proof that where there is a will, there will always be a way.

As his tenure draws to an admirable close, we at the Nigeria Commissioners for Health Forum send our best wishes to His Excellency as he continues his journey of leadership and service.

Dr Joe Osuji
Dr Abdullahi Isa
Prof Augustine Vincent Umoh
Dr Afam Obidike
Dr Sabiu Gwalabe
Dr Pabara Igwele
Dr Joseph Ngbea
Prof Mohammed Arab Alhaji
Dr Mordi Moriah Ononye
Dr Umezurike Daniel
Prof Akoria Obehi
Dr Oyebanji Filani

Dr Obi Emmanuel
Dr Muhammed Kawu
Dr Habu Dahiru
Dr Prosper Ohayagha Success KSC
Dr Salisu Muazu
Dr Amina Mohammed Baloni
Dr Aminu Tsanyawa
Dr Yakubu Nuhu Danja
Dr Ja'afar Mohammed
Dr Zakari Usman
Dr Raji Razaq
Dr Muhammad Lawan Gana

Prof Akin Abayomi
Dr Ahmed Yahaya
Dr Muhammad Muhammad Makusidi
Dr Tomi Coker
Dr Banji Ajaka
Dr Abdulrafiu Isamotu
Dr Taiwo Olabode Ladipo
Dr Lar-Ndam Nimkong
Dr Princewill Chike
Dr Mohammad Ali Iname
Dr Innocent Vakkai
Dr. Aliyu Tsafe

EXPRESSION

'Fail Woefully' Incorrect



MEDIAGAFFES

EBERE WABARA
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"THE Management of Dangote Cement Plc. (sic) yesterday firmly declared that the Obajana Cement plant in Kogi State is owned 100 per cent by it…." Get it right: PLC (Dangote Cement PLC—no lower case and no full-stop) in this context.

"Stakeholders and members of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) city of Imeko, (sic) said recent inauguration of Oke-Ola by Governor Dapo Abiodun has (had) broken the jinx of neglect of the entire council area…."

"Saliu Mustapha donates houses to widows of late Ilorin cleric" Would they have been widows of a living cleric" What's going on here?

From the front and inside pages of The Guardian of October 2 come the following infelicities: "In just 4 years, etisalat became the fastest growing (fastest-growing) network with over 14 million subscribers nationwide." Almost all the networks are making this same claim! Can the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) give us periodic and authentic data on this and other issues and stop the fraudulent ascriptions by GSM companies?

"Delta may relocate residents of flood prone areas" What about this: flood-prone areas?

"Four officers charged for (with) killing Cote d'Ivoire's ex-leader"

"Ford workers' union in Canada approve (approves) four-year contract"

Lastly from The Guardian under review: "Once an action is statute barred, right to institute same (the same) elapses"

DAILY INDEPENDENT of September 27 goofed: "It's shameful that African leaders have woefully failed to find a remedy to malaria which kills over one million victims yearly in (on) the continent…." Yank away 'woefully' for 'terribly'/'abysmally.' Let us do an unprecedented didactic work here: synonyms for 'woe' (evil/bane/sorrow—all nouns); 'woebegone' (suffering/unhappy/melancholic/lamenting—all adjectives); 'woe betide' (curse—an interjection); and 'woeful' (suffering, distressing, melancholic, lamenting—all adjectives). Obviously, 'woefully failed' is incorrect by any stretch. Source: Penguin (The authorized Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases—one of the greatest reference books of all time). In the same breath, 'woeful failure' is faulty, too.

"However, while these arguments are going on, a dubious precedence has been set with the arrest of a former…." No round-up yet: a dubious precedent (not precedence).

"Here in Nigeria, there have (had) been instances where people have (had) supported coup d'états...." Never again: coups d'état.

"As if reading the terribly terrified minds, the organisers (organizers, preferably) distributed condoms to the invitees (guests)."

"The institutionalization of these aberrations are (is) even more worrisome."

"To her greatest surprise, she caught her husband, red handed, making love with their landlord's daughter, on their matrimonial bed." Better than with a housemaid: in (not on) the bed, contextually speaking.

"The cost of petroleum products affect (affects) virtually the cost of every activity in the economy."

"It afforded participants the opportunity to rub minds (converse, discuss or exchange ideas) and keep a tab on developments in various economies...."

"It will present events in the two chambers, record achievements, gossips and behind the scene (no hyphenation?) moves of the assembly men." 'Gossip', as a pastime, is non-count, but count when it refers to persons who gossip. For instance, Bola and Ahmed are gossips.

"Like water and oil, they can never mix, talkless (let alone) blend."

"Meanwhile, the university's senate, ASUU and NASU have passed a vote of no confidence on (in) the VC."

"It seems the bickering between the two unions is deepening?" Between the unions (without 'two') confirms class, even as the excerpt is correct.

"They are little aware that our great men of yesteryears were able to achieve…" Again, 'yesteryear' does not admit any inflexion.

"This is the reason we see the oil industry as the life wire (livewire) of the Nigerian nation."

"Contrary to apprehensions making (doing or going) the rounds, an open disclosure of the sordid deeds of the past will see Nigeria emerge a stronger and more united nation."

"The issue has become such a grassroot (grassroots) topic…."

"They simply do it to add to their casualties and to wreck (rake) in something for themselves in return."

"Those of us in prison then unable to witness the madness of the million matchers (marchers) have the opportunity to witness a re-enactment."

"In our confused state, people who can afford it give their money, wisdom and sometimes influence to organize vigilante groups, construct street gates" We need a new police force: vigilance groups.

"In fact, health officials would seem to be in a dire strait about how to check the menace." The AIDS debacle: in dire straits (plural); not in a dire strait.

"In passing, please note that we, Northerners, believe in true justice and not double standards." Advertorial: double standard.

"The carnage occurred after the Afenifere leader gave a fake shoot-at-sight order on Boko Haram." Get it right: shoot-on-sight.

"Arms and ammunitions have been moved to Lagos and Ondo ahead of this month's governorship election." 'Ammunition' is uncountable.

"The uncontrolled disposal of raw sewage in the lagoon and rivers poses a serious threat of epidemics on (to) the residents."

"The chairman of the bank…at (on) the occasion"

"…they demanded for the key to his Mercedes Benz car." Delete 'for' in the interest of newspapering, lexical sanity, excellence and exactitude.

"So, what's the big fun about crazy convoys if they only leave tears and woes in (on) their trail?"

"LAUTECH re-opens (reopens) with prayer"

"Usually as early as 5. a.m. in the morning…." What then is a.m.?

"…many of them already have subsidiaries that are engaged in some of the anciliary services available under the universal banking…" The 2022 CBN policy guidelines: ancillary services.

"…the agriculture sector did not fully succeed because the banks were not committed to the principle." Get it right: agricultural sector, Noun: agriculture; adjective: agricultural.

"The trio of…added additional feathers to (in) their caps recently."

"…how the white elephant project will impact positively on the economy". Simply erase 'project' which is implied in 'white elephant.'

"Police lied in its (their) report (a comma) says…."

"In the past, one has (had) tried the path of objective and constructive criticism...."

"We should be thanking God that armed bandits…" Remove the needless 'armed'.

Once Upon A Hollow Ritual



COUNTERPOINT

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While we are still in the celebratory mood on account of Nigeria's 62nd independence anniversary, it is in order if we step back on this column to revisit what we lamented at this time last October in an article titled 'Independence Day: A Hollow Ritual'. Without much ado, let's step in:

"I was born at the end of the same month as Nigeria. And almost the same year. So, like Dele Momodu, Bukola Saraki and Nuhu Ribadu, I can claim a right to govern Nigeria. I can claim complete innocence from the atrocities and pilferage of the tribe that has bled Nigeria, even as far as from the colonial days. I can shout from the rooftops, without being burdened by any trace of guilt whatsoever, that I have not benefited officially or unofficially from any government that could have rubbished my ambition to govern Nigeria. While at it, I can also claim affinity with the youth of Nigeria; and proclaim to be a credible voice, and march with them to seize our country from the geriatric grip of perverts who label themselves as patriots. I can say all that and truly believe it myself, because I was born a year after Independence day!

Now, whether that is enough is another matter for discussion. If the fact that I have created and run successful media businesses makes me a genuine aspirant for the highest duty is up for debate. I also don't know if the fact that I have created and nurtured entertaining, self-sustaining and wildly popular award 'properties' all over the place can translate to managing the complexities and absurdities inherent in the largest black nation on earth... that is also debatable. If all these, and more are open to debate and could in fact expose my naiveté or vaulting ambition, no one can stand against my right to contest or engage in political activity of my desire. That is constitutionally guaranteed.

But that is where dreams stop. To most of us born after independence, all we know how to do very well, either for good or evil, is to make laws. In primary school, with the independence still fresh in the air, most of what is civic education was "constitutional conferences" - Richardson, Anderson, Wilberforce…and on and on. Today, all sorts of laws have been enacted, promulgated, decreed at all levels of governments, such that we are now working overtime to fashion some kind of law to outlaw multiple taxation, multiple penal codes, multiple this and that. Yet, as crazy as this may initially appear, we generally make laws to feel cool with ourselves, with absolutely no intention to obey them.

For instance, we have legislators, scattered across the country, whose unflagging penchant for lawlessness has not ceased to amaze their people. They seek means and opportunity to flout rules, even their own house rules meant to moderate their conduct and protocol. They flout them flagrantly without any iota of shame. After all, according to their spineless mantra, "our democracy is still developing". Excuse me; most of these legislators are youth born after independence! Born into a so-called organised society where certain culture and traditions ought to be implanted from childhood.

Sometimes, without thinking, our leaders quote great "one-liners" of great leaders of great nations that we cannot bring our candle near their exotic lamp stands in another 60 years. They quote J. F. Kennedy: Do not think of what your country can do for you….blah, blah, blah…that is what it becomes in their mouths…. hollow bleating of a shallow mind. A nation that destroys its best minds; a nation that wipes ambitious youth out of the equation so they can filch and pinch the treasury dry. Such a nation is unfeeling and ignorant of what to do with its army of young minds who are expected to "think what they can do for their country". This country misjudges their intentions and willingness to participate, contribute and recreate…this "country" attacks her children… destroying, oppressing, blackmailing, disgracing, scattering her children for fear they may "get it right" and change Nigeria for good.

Do not fool yourself that Nigeria is one indivisible entity. It is a lie. We all live a huge big black lie of a so-called nationhood. There is one Nigeria that exists only in the heads of those who have never stopped growing fat from stealing the country dry. As far as they are concerned, Nigeria is an ongoing construction work, undergoing relentless re-engineering and restructuring… read their language…they are always reforming, retooling, revisiting, rebranding, revising, remoulding, reinvesting, reclaiming and all such reactionary measures. That is the language "mindset" of a contractor-caretaker leadership.

All they do is react to global and continental initiatives. Everything around their lives and thinking is to respond to an urgent need. If you expect them to create, motivate or act in a manner similar to what you see in other climates, you will be sorely devastated. It is alien to them. They have no capacity to lift themselves beyond where they currently operate. They are fatally flawed by the shape and colour of their ambition and passion. It does not matter if they are pre- or post independence; they just are unable to deliver at a certain level, up to a certain expectation. And do not blame education, exposure and cultural values. Most of our top-flight rogues and nitwits are well educated; they attended great schools; some bear surnames that should evoke respect and endearment. The matter is deeper, and personal. I doubt if anyone has a clue to the problem.

However, for starters, the seeds of our retrogression and stagnation are in the countless laws and regulations and statutes, and such nonsense which affect the future and happiness of our children as they grow. By the time they grow into leadership, if we do not change and respond wisely, they will continue the current dross, and elevate it to the loudly empty rhythm of our trendy music. All noise. Mostly nonsense. Happy celebration?

First thing first: We must remove foolish laws, and not pretend all will be well, if we do nothing… It's just a matter of time. We cannot be that foolish. No, we cannot be 'a fool at 61' (or 62). Grow up, Nigeria!"

EXIT OF AN UGHELLI GEM

LADY EDITH IWHEWHE CAME, SAW, CONQUERED AND DEPARTS



The Ughelli people of Delta State recently lost an illustrious matriarch. That was Lady Edith Mary Iwhewhe, a thoroughbred teacher, church leader and socio-cultural mobiliser. Based on her contributions to national development, especially in the area of education, Lady Iwhewhe's death is indeed a national loss.

But for the Ughelli, Delta State-born gem, her family and other loved ones, there is a big consolation. This borders on the fact that hers was a roundly impactful life. Apart from making a robust success of her cherished profession, which is teaching, she was able to raise an enviably successful family despite the fact that she lost her husband, the late Mathew Diyeri Iwhewhe, just 21 years after their marriage – when they already had six children whom she then had to single-handedly bring up. Six tender daughters! By the time the widow of value and valour was joining her creator on August 10, 2022, however, the amazing damsels had stepped up educationally, professionally and socially. As a matter of fact, one of them is no other person than the Managing Director of Shell Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO), Mrs Elohor Aiboni. Interestingly, Aiboni is the first female to attain the height in the top-rate company.

The other children are Mrs Okiemute Linda Uwadia, Mrs Ochuko Wendy Afa, Miss Ovonmo Regina Iwhewhe, Miss Onajiyovwi Theresa Iwhewhe and Miss Oghenetega Patricia Iwhewhe.

The story of the life of Lady Edith Mary Iwhewhe, indeed, harbours a lesson in dedication, perseverance, godliness and the principle of cause and effect. She invested all in her passion, calling, family and dedication to God's work and she reaped abundance fulfilment. So, she must have returned to her creator armed with a beautiful report to submit to the angels. Below is a summary of the account of her eventful journey through life.

Born on 21st April, 1944 to Chief Peter Akpomedaye of Ekakpramre in Jeremi clan of Ughelli-South LGA and Madam Winnie Sokoh of Ovwian in Udu clan of Ughelli South LGA of DELTA State, Lady Iwhewhe attended the African Church Primary School Dawudu in Warri from 1949-1958.

After completing her primary education, she stayed with her maternal grandmother in Ovwian, a town in the Udu Clan, Delta State, from 1958-1961. In 1962, her uncle took her into his home to further her education. She got into St. Theresa's Teacher's Training College, Ughelli, after her secondary education from 1964 to 1968, where she earned a NATIONAL CERTIFICATE EDUCATION.

She met her husband, MATTHEW DIYERI IWHEWHE (MDI), who she got to know through a close senior school friend (Theresa Iwhewhe) who was a younger sister to her husband. They got married in 1969 at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Warri, Delta State. MDI worked with U.A.C Foods and, as a regional manager for the southern region, there was no other better place to settle down than Lagos. In 1974 he got transferred to the East and the family moved to Port Harcourt which soon became home for his beautiful family. This union produced six Damsels and this beautiful family devoutly practised their faith in the Catholic Church. The couple both enjoyed working and supporting church activities and joined several Pious Societies. Not surprised that they got nominated to join the Order of Knights of St Mulumba in 1986.

Lady Edith Iwhewhe enjoyed teaching, she did this passionately and had close bonds with her students and their parents. Her quest for education saw her go back to school in 1988 to further her education (part time with the University of Ibadan) while raising her lovely girls in Port Harcourt. MDI supported her through this and was always veryo proud of her. Sadly, he didn't see her complete the programme when tragedy struck in March 1990! Her charming husband became sick and passed on in June 1990, leaving her alone with their beautiful damsels who were still very young.

Lady Edith had no one except God and taught her girls the same. She held on to her faith in the Catholic Church and was strongly attached to OUR LADY. She devoutly said her daily devotion to Our Lady and joined societies dedicated to Our Lady (Five Sisters, Block Rosary).

Lady E, as she was fondly called, also joined other Pious societies in the church (Sacred Heart, St Jude, Infant Jesus of Prague, Divine Mercy, Purgatorial Society). She was active in the Catholic Women Organisation (CWO), zonal wards in the church and was a Silent Preacher (training of seminarians to become priests).

Mummy was simply graceful and an epitome of humility. She mentored and loved all around her. She had so many adopted sons and daughters as she opened her home and heart to all. She loved travelling and wouldn't miss any opportunity to learn about different cultures. Settling in Port Harcourt made it easy for her to learn about the eastern culture – she grew to know 60% of the states and villages including their culture and food. Mummy did not leave her girls out of her travel adventure as she would visit them regularly and kept abreast of news in their locations.

In her last trip, she was not in any hurry to leave – I guess that was her way of leaving her girls with fond memories of her for years to come. She prayed for a Happy and Peaceful exit in life and God granted her that. A lot of people have asked – was she sick? How did it happen? Mum started 9th of August full of life, she was planning to attend two weddings that weekend and spent the day planning for it and in-between made several calls to loved ones – little did they know it was her way of saying 'Goodbye'. She had her evening stroll with one of her grandsons and thereafter ate her dinner with much enthusiasm. Mummy retired to her room where she listened to Mass and finished her Thank you Jesus Rosary afterwards, then laid down in bed at about 11pm.

She got up shortly afterwards with a cough, asking for water and we noticed she had difficulty in her breathing and rushed her to the hospital. The medical team was so sure that mummy would pull out of this as she still had pulse upon our arrival at the hospital. Sadly, our thoughts were not her Maker`s thoughts as He called her home at 12.40am 10th of August. She is survived by Children, Grandchildren, Brother, Sisters & In-laws

The Song of LADY EDITH MARY IWHEWHE has ended but the melody will always linger on in our hearts.

By Akeem Lasis



THISDAY

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MISSILE

Kwara Government to PDP

"Unlike the PDP era when loans were used for their aggrandisement, Governor AbdulRazaq is leveraging on loans to create a brighter future for the young people of Kwara State"

–The Kwara State Government punching holes in the opposition PDP's criticism of loans it obtained.



UZOR MAXIM **UZOATU**

GUEST COLUMNIST



Ekwueme: The Democrat Who Gave Abacha Red Card

The soft, gentlemanly features of Dr. Alex Ifeanyichukwu Ekwueme belie the heart of steel inside the late first ever Vice-President of Nigeria. Back in 1998, Nigeria's Head of State, General Sani Abacha, had perfected plans of transmuting from a military leader to a civilian president. Abacha got all the five existing political parties to adopt him as the sole presidential candidate. Ekwueme met with his fellow politicians, 17 from the North and 17 from the South, that became G-34. As the chairman of G-34, Ekwueme took charge of forwarding a letter to General Abacha, warning him not to ever dream of turning himself into a democratic president. It was akin to giving a red card to a murderous dictator by an unarmed civilian.

Many Nigerians waited with bated breath, believing that there was no hiding place for Ekwueme and his group of crusading politicians. Then Abacha suddenly died. And soon after, the winner of the June 12 1993 presidential election, Chief MKO Abiola, whom Abacha had kept in captivity also died. General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who took over after Abacha's death, announced a 9-month transition to civil rule programme. The Ekwueme-led G-34 decided to turn into a political party that became People's Democratic Party (PDP). Alhaji Isa Kaita came forth with the suggestion that Ekwueme should be named as the presidential candidate of the party. Ekwueme said he would only accept the nomination if it came through an all-encompassing democratic process. That is the essence of Ekwueme – a democrat through and through.

Ekwueme simply means a personage who does what he says. In his chequered lifetime, Ekwueme was a man who lived up to the exact letters of his name. He was an architect of the first order, town planner, philosopher, attorney-at-law, sociologist, historian, politician, educationist and statesman. He backed up every discipline with a well-earned university degree.

Ekwueme was barely three months into his second tenure as the Vice-President of Nigeria in the Second Republic regime of President Shehu Shagari when the military overthrew the government on December 31, 1983.

In his memoir, From State House to Kirikiri, published by Nwamife Publishers, Enugu, in 2002, Ekwueme gave a candid account of his multiform experiences in detention for about 30 months, to wit, from December 31, 1983 to July 3, 1986. The military men who took over power detained Ekwueme in the following Lagos addresses, namely: Bonny Camp, Victoria Island; Temple Road, Ikoyi; Kirikiri Maximum Security Prisons; Ikoyi Prisons; Hawksworth Avenue, Ikoyi; Barlow Street, Ikoyi; Ruxton Road, Ikoyi; and Milverton Road, Ikoyi.

When he was eventually released from detention, he was ferried to his country home in Oko in the then Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State where he was not allowed to travel farther than his local government in the first 18 months. Then gradually, he was allowed to venture within the state, and later other parts of the Nigerian nation. It was in 1989 that he earned the special permission to travel outside Nigeria for some two weeks. About eight years after his detention, in 1991, he was allowed the full freedom of movement as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution.



Ekwueme

According to Ekwueme in the preface of From State House to Kirikiri, "The story was written between 1984 and 1986 and, for the most part, smuggled out of prison. I took the decision at the time of writing that it would be published only when the civilians had finally and firmly taken over the reins of democratic governance in Nigeria. The idea was that it might point civilians to the danger and consequences of playing into the hands of the military. I had thought that the waiting period before publication would be a matter of a few years."

Ekwueme's optimism could not be borne out as the military stayed put in power, and the book could only be published some 16 years after it was initially written.

It was in the wee hours of the last day of 1983, at 4am, that the military coup-makers came knocking on the then Vice-President's door. Four guns were pointed at him, and he was told by the gun-toting soldiers that their mission was to bring him to the Army Headquarters. Ekwueme thought he was being taken to the Independence Building at that ungodly hour only to be told by the Army Major that Army Headquarters was now at Bonny Camp.

He had no suspicion that a military coup was imminent, as the coup broadcast was a surprise, thusly: "Fellow countrymen and women, I, Brigadier Sani Abacha of the Nigerian Army, address you this morning on behalf of the Nigerian Armed Forces…"

Ekwueme took note that of the 15 members appointed to the Supreme Military Council by the new Head of State General Muhammadu Buhari, 12 were from the North while only three were from the South.

While being detained at No. 4 Temple Road, Ekwueme took to abstinence from food. It was on January 17, 1984 that Ekwueme saw the inside of a prison for the very first time in his life, and it was the dreaded Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison. It dawned on him that not all who found themselves in prison were actually criminals. When he overheard the ACP of Kirikiri Maximum discussing the matter of confining him in a cell, Ekwueme said: "I mentioned the matter of my claustrophobic propensities to the ACP and suggested half threateningly that it might be wiser for him to leave my cell door unlocked if he expected to find me alive the following morning."

Of course after the overthrow of Buhari, the Justice Samson Uwaifo Tribunal set up by Military President Ibrahim Babangida to try the detained politicians eventually set Ekwueme free, stating that punishing Ekwueme would amount to "setting a standard of morality too high for saints in politics in a democracy to observe."

Another sterling testimonial for Ekwueme came from the erstwhile Communications Minister Audu Ogbeh who stressed that "ministers and key government officials with frivolous memoranda at Federal Executive Council meetings usually feared Dr. Ekwueme," revealing that Ekwueme saved Nigeria a loss of N800 million in 1983 alone.

Born on October 21, 1932 in Oko, an erosion-ravaged town in present-day Orumba North LGA that was carved out of the old Aguata LGA in Anambra State, Ekwueme lost his Anglican Church pioneer father at the age of nine. A child prodigy, he passed the competitive entrance examination into King's College, Lagos, and had to make the long journey from rural Oko to metropolitan Lagos. He topped his class, winning a Fulbright scholarship along the line.

He studied architecture and city planning at the University of Washington, and later obtained a Master's degree in urban planning and a Doctoral in architecture from University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom. Ekwueme also earned degrees in sociology, history, philosophy and law from the University of London. He was called to the Nigerian Bar later in life after undergoing the grind of the Nigerian Law School.

He established Ekwueme & Associates, the first indigenous architectural firm in Nigeria that designed the splendid structures showcasing Lagos, Abuja, Enugu and sundry Nigerian cities.

A self-effacing philanthropist, he ensured that almost every family in his native Oko hometown benefitted from his facility of sending outstanding students to universities in the United States of America for further studies. He undertook from scratch the building of the institution that is now known as Federal Polytechnic, Oko.

As resourceful political thinker, he put forward his political philosophy in the book Whither Nigeria? Thoughts on Democracy, Politics and the Constitution, 1999-2000.

At the 1995 Constitutional Conference, he courageously fought for a just and equitable power-sharing formula that posited the inclusivity of zoning based on the six geopolitical zones. This initiative of Ekwueme has helped in many ways to stabilize the Nigerian polity.

On his role in making Obasanjo, who failed to win his local government, the president, Ekwueme said: "If am a troublemaker, Obasanjo would not have been civilian president because at the Jos convention where he was elected, I had in my pocket a copy of the NEC (National Executive Council of PDP) decision of November 1998 showing that to qualify you must win your local government. The NEC had taken a decision and only a convention can change that decision, and no convention has been called to change that decision…"

He played the gentleman so that democracy could survive, but unfortunately, PDP, the political party he helped to found, being its first Chairman, and then Chairman of Board of Trustees, is today embroiled in crisis as a result of its failure to adhere to his principles of sportsmanship, inclusivity and zoning.

Ekwueme died on November 19, 2017 at the age of 85 years, and the Federal Government on February 2, 2018 renamed the Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo in Ebonyi State as Alex Ekwueme Federal University (AE-FUNAI) to immortalize him.

•Ekwueme would have been 90 years on October 21, 2022, whence this 90th posthumous birthday tribute.

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