68 Abducted Train Passengers Spend Day 34 in the Dungeon of terrorists, Freedom Still Not in Sight, Families Frustrated

Our Correspondents

The 68 passengers abducted by terrorists on March 28 after the bombing of an Abuja-Kaduna train are today 34 days old in the prison of the terrorists, with families and relations frustrated by lack of information on the drive to free their loved ones.

Dr. Abdulfatai Jimoh, who speaks on behalf of the relatives of the abductees in Kaduna State, told THISDAY last night that they are being further traumatised by the fact that there was no contact with them either by the terrorists or the government for almost five weeks.

Last Tuesday, the terrorists released three new photos showing 62 of the abducted passengers, including children and women.

They followed this up on Thursday by releasing photograph of a new-born baby girl delivered in the terrorists' den by a mother abducted during the attack on the Kaduna-bound train.

Clad in a thick pink dress and a light lemon sweater cap,

Continued on page 5

Ukraine-Russia War: Guterres to Visit Nigeria, 2 Other W'African Countries... Page 14

THISDAY

Saturday 30 April, 2022
Vol 27. No 9881

www.thisdaylive.com

N250

President Backs Ultramodern Royal Museum at Oba of Benin's Palace

Germany to return 1,130 looted Benin bronzes to Nigeria

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday backed the planned ultramodern international standard Benin Royal Museum that would house the Benin Bronzes and other artefacts being returned to Nigeria, for the purpose of preserving history, tourism and education.

The President announced his support while receiving in audience at the State House, Abuja, the Oba of Benin, H.R.M. Omo N'Oba Uku Akpolokpolo Ewuare II, accompanied by members of the Royal Court of Benin and the Board of Trustees of the Benin Royal Museum.

The Royal Majesty was at

Continued on page 5

Abdullahi Adamu: No Decision Yet on Zoning of APC's Presidential Ticket

Says no regret over N100m presidential forms 'aimed at hindering unserious aspirants, moles'

Party's presidential aspirants lengthen to 13, Fayemi joins race, 5 pick forms

PDP screens Atiku, Obi, Saraki, 14 others, disqualifies Nwachukwu Anakwenze, Cosmas Ndukwe

Deji Elumoye, Chuks Okocha and **Adedayo Akinwale** in Abuja

The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), yesterday declared that it had not taken a decision on where to zone its presidential ticket in the 2023 elections.

On the same day, the number of presidential aspirants on the platform of the party jumped to 13, with the Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi, sending out a notice that he would formally declare for president next Wednesday in Abuja.

The PDP likewise screened all its 17 presidential aspirants yesterday and disqualified two aspirants - Dr. Nwachukwu Anakwenze and Cosmas Ndukwe.

The National Chairman of

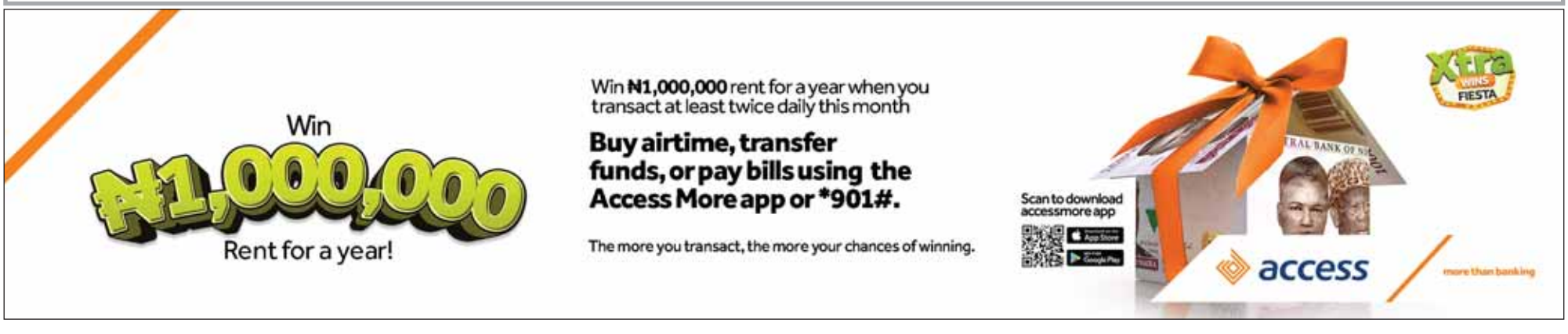
Continued on page 5

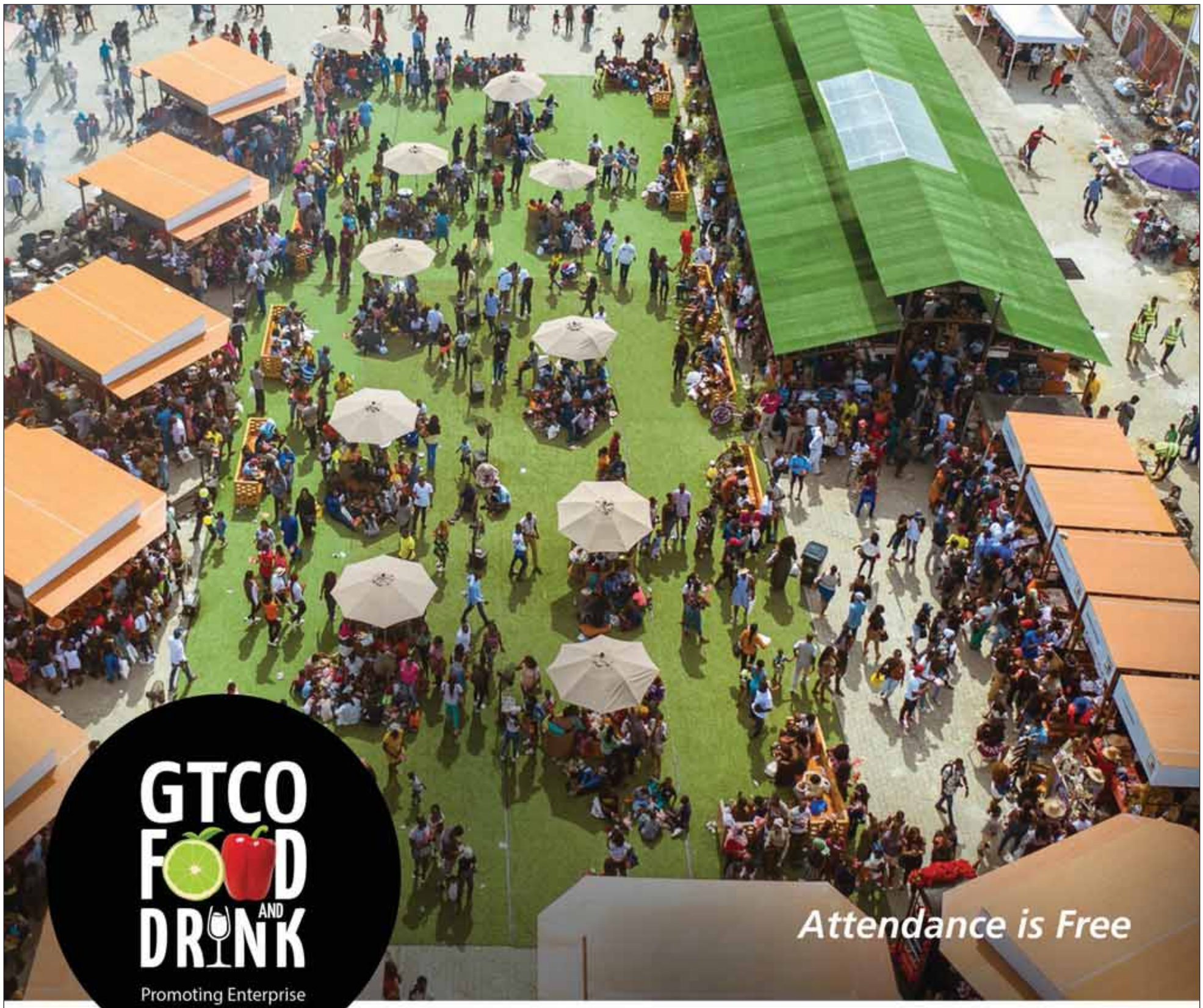


OBA OF BENIN AT THE VILLA...

L-R: Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed; President Muhammadu Buhari; Oba of Benin, H.R.M. Omo N'Oba Uku Akpolokpolo Ewuare II; Prince Aghatise Erediauwa and the Chairman/Editor-in-Chief, THISDAY Newspapers/ARISE News, Prince Nduka Obaigbena, when members of the Benin Traditional Council led by Oba Ewuare II, visited Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja...yesterday GODWIN OMOIGUI

Soldiers Foil Terrorists' Attempt to Infiltrate Maiduguri... Page 8





30th April, 1st & 2nd May, 2022

- Masterclasses
- Street Food
- Retail Stalls
- Children's Play Area

Venue: Plot 1, Water Corporation Drive, Oniru, Lagos

Time: 10am to 7pm daily

Proudly African, Truly International

Banking . Fund Managers . Pension Managers . Payments

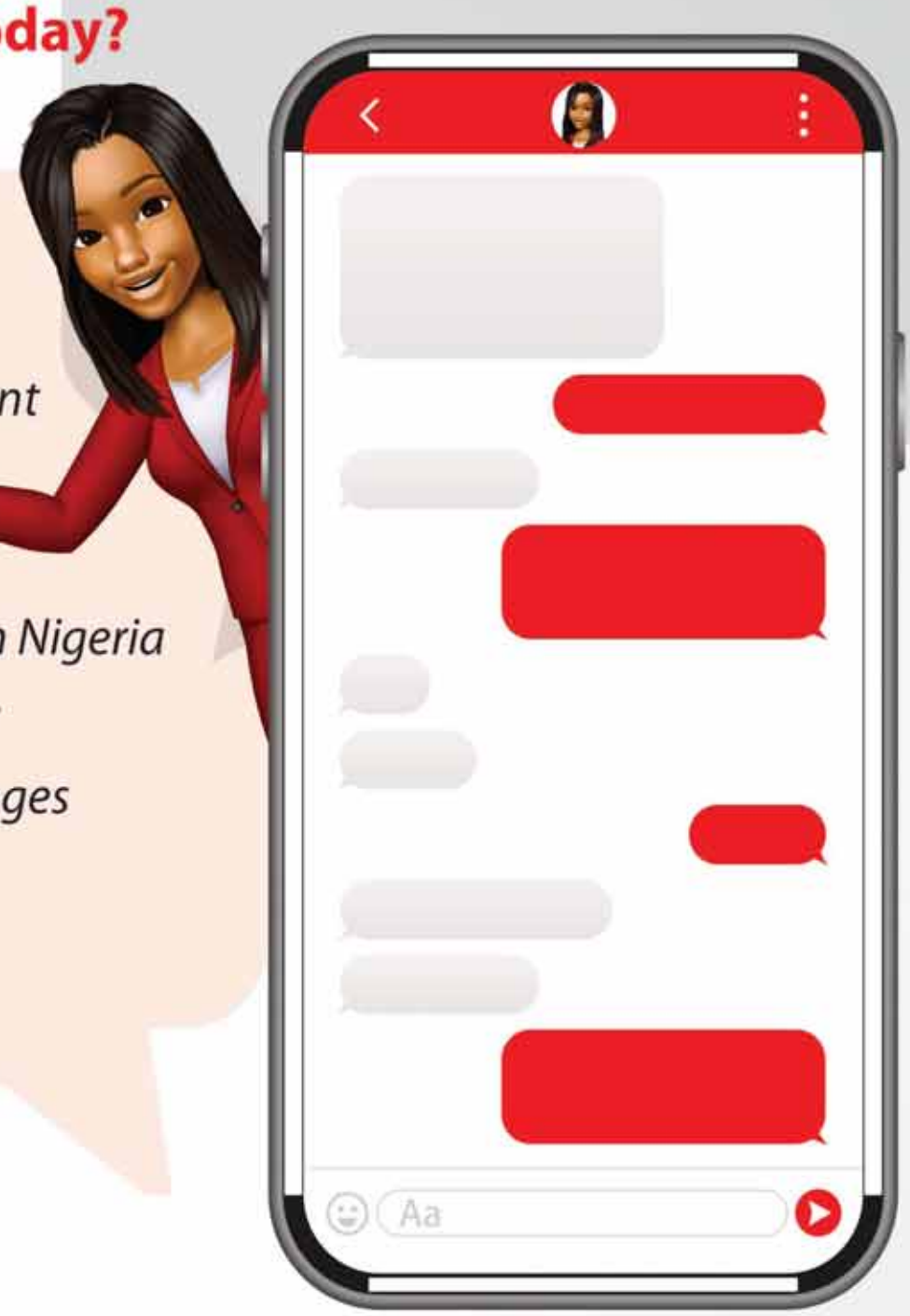
GTCO

ZENITH

Hello, I'm **ZiVA,**

the Zenith Bank Intelligent Virtual Assistant.

What would you like to do today?



I can help you:

- *Open a Zenith Bank Account*
- *Reactivate your account if it is dormant*
- *Check your account balance*
- *Buy airtime or data*
- *Transfer funds to any bank account in Nigeria*
- *Restrict transactions on your account*
- *Log dispense errors and other challenges*
- *Block your debit card*
- *Request for a loan*
- *…and so much more.*

Chat with ZiVA

Chat with ZiVA ... on WhatsApp "07040004422"

Bank the EaZy way with *966# EazyBanking *NO DATA REQUIRED*

For enquiries and feedback, kindly contact ***ZenithDirect,*** our 24hr interactive Contact Centre:

+234 1 278 7000, 0904 085 7000, 0700ZENITHBANK
zenithdirect@zenithbank.com
Zenith Intelligent Virtual Assistant (ZiVA) - 0704 000 4422 (WhatsApp)
www.zenithbank.com

Xtra WINS FIESTA

Win

₦1,000,000

Rent for a year!



Scan to download accessmore app

App Store

Google Play

Win ₦1,000,000 rent for a year when you transact at least twice daily this month

Buy airtime, transfer funds, or pay bills using the Access More app or *901#.

The more you transact, the more your chances of winning.

Banking with Access: branch | ATM | online | mobile | contact centre

More information:
0700-300-0000
accessbankplc.com

Facebook.com/accessbankplc | twitter.com/accessbankplc
gplus.id.com/accessbankplc | youtube/user/accessbankplc
accessbankplc.blogspot.com

access

more than banking

PAGE FIVE

ABDULLAHI ADAMU: NO DECISION YET ON ZONING OF APC'S PRESIDENTIAL TICKET

the APC, Abdullahi Adamu, who spoke on the controversial zoning issue after presenting the party's candidate in the forthcoming Ekiti State governorship election, Biodun Oyebanji, to President Muhammadu Buhari at the State House, Abuja, said such decision would be the job of the entire party, which he said was bigger than himself as Chairman.

Adamu, who was accompanied by Ekiti State Governor and Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Kayode Fayemi; Kebbi State Governor and Chairman of the Progressive Governors' Forum (PGF), Atiku Bagudu; and the National Secretary of the APC, Senator Iyiola Omisore, said he could not preempt what the party's decision would be on the issue.

He said: "I am today privileged to be the Chairman of the party. The party is greater than me. The party has not made a decision and I cannot preempt what the party's decision will be."

Governor Nasir el-Rufai of Kaduna State had, just before the party's National Convention, said even though the APC had not decided on zoning the presidential ticket, the swapping of national offices was an indication of where its presidential candidate would come from.

The APC swapped its national offices between North and South, leading to the emergence of Adamu from the North-central as the National Chairman in March.

Responding to the issue of when political appointees who intend to contest in the election are expected to resign, especially in the light of the party's recently issued guidelines for people in that category, Adamu declined comment, saying "the matter is currently in court."

He said: "Our luck on this end is that I happen to be a lawyer and the issue you are raising is in court right now. So, it will be subjudice for me to discuss it at all."

On the issue of the cost of the party's nomination and expression of interest forms, which many considered rather high, the Chairman said the party had no regret setting the prices at the current rate, citing the need to protect the party from unserious aspirants, moles, as well as the need to generate money to run the election processes.

He said: "Yeah, I've been listening, with rapt attention, to the hues and cries from our lovers and from our adversaries. We have no regrets whatsoever. We did some homework, we know what it takes to go through primaries, go through presidential campaigns, go through election for the President. We know what it takes.

"We also do know that there are citizens who are qualified to contest, but who are not serious contenders, who will just want to take anything cheap by the roadside, and assert what they call their rights and create problems for our party.

"We're also aware that some parties that have no chance whatsoever to win the presidential election in Nigeria, they will sponsor people into parties that have prospects for winning the election, to create problems for us, to divert our attention.

"Over and above that, yes, we are the ruling party. Yes, we need to set examples in what we do, but I ask you, I don't know which part of the country you come from. If, God forbid, your traditional ruler dies today, contestants to that office will go for more than N100 million, it's no news.

"When I contested for the Senate, all I paid was just a token; N5 million, N10 million, including the expression (of interest). When my colleague wanted to be chairman of the party, in the days of Adams Oshimhole, it cost him N500,000. Today, for me, just as an example, to contest the national chairman of our party, I had to pay N20 million.

"Alright, and even the enormity of work that has to be done, and this work will be done with money. We don't want to continue begging.

"So, I want to say that we're able to mobilise sufficient funds to support our efforts to win the election. Some protests may be well founded, I have no quarrel with that, but the propensity of this, that people just assume 'it's the ruling party', is quick… in our democracy.

"I will not quarrel with that, everyone of us has the right to express himself, and I'm in full support of these obligations, but we wear the shoes for our party and we know where it pinches us the most."

On reports that the process of settling for a presidential candidate could tear the party apart, if not carefully handled, Adamu said: "God will not allow that to happen to us. We will come out, by the grace of God, at the appropriate time, our great party will choose the candidate at the convention.

"I do not want to speculate, but my duty as chairman is to listen to party men, party leaders, stakeholders, to see what is going to be best when the time comes and I've always found it easier and more noble to get a bridge before I jump to cross it. We are not there yet."

APC's Presidential Aspirants Lengthen to 13

The number of presidential aspirants on the platform of the APC jumped to 13 yesterday as the Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi, sent out a notice that he would formally declare for president next Wednesday in Abuja.

Fayemi joins a long list that includes Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo; former governor of Lagos State, Bola Tinubu; former governor of Abia State, Orji Kalu; ex-governor of Imo State, Senator Rochas Okorocha; Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State; Governor Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State, Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi; Minister of Labour and Employment, Senator Chris Ngige; Minister of State for Education, Emeka Nwajiuba; former president of the Senate, Ken Nnamani; Governor Ben Ayade of Cross River State and Senator Ibikunle Amosun.

Five of the presidential aspirants have so far paid N100 million and picked up their forms. Those who did were Tinubu, Umahi, Bello, Nwajiuba and Okorocha.

Nnamani, while declaring his intention to run for president yesterday, promised to improve on the legacy of President Buhari, while also demanding for the reduction of the cost of interest and nomination forms for aspirants seeking elective posts under the APC.

He said compared with other aspirants, he was the most suited for the job of the President.

Nnamani said his pedigree as the President of the Senate and Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Constitutional and Electoral Reform make him the right candidate.

Okorocha picked his presidential expression of interest and nomination forms yesterday, insisting that Nigeria's biggest challenge remains the inability to create wealth.

Okorocha, who was presented the documents by "The New Nigeria Team", in his Unity House office in Abuja, maintained that he remained the right candidate to take over from Buhari, promising that his government would be pro-people.

Tinubu Support Groups (TSG) yesterday picked the N100 million Expression of Interest and nomination forms on behalf of Tinubu.

The TSG team was led by a member representing Ikeja Federal constituency in the House of Representatives and the Chairman House Committee on Finance, Hon. James Faleke.

Faleke said Tinubu paid for his form personally but asked them to pick it up on his behalf because he was out of the country.

The lawmaker stressed that Tinubu was the candidate to beat, no matter the mode of primaries adopted by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

"Asiwaju at the appropriate time will deliver his address to us, but I know that this country under Tinubu will be better off. Economy will be better off because he is an economist, he is not a lawyer, he is an economist. He will deal with the economic situation of this country. He did it in Lagos, the security challenges in Lagos were solved by him. He will solve the same security challenges. He is a man who rewards loyalty, who ensures that people who work are also taken care of."

On his part, the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Babachir Lawal said Tinubu is a branded product, adding that every Nigerian knows that he is the man to beat.

On his chances, he noted, "If we were not sure we have chances to win this election we would not waste our N100 million. Everybody's free to buy the forms if he has N100 million. The choice is his own. He has the money. But as far as we are concerned, we are only fulfilling the constitutional requirement of campaigning and going for election. We don't foresee any opposition in the contest."

PDP Screens Presidential Aspirants

The PDP yesterday screened all its presidential aspirants ahead of its National Convention slated for May 30.

Former senate president, David Mark headed the presidential screening committee.

All the presidential aspirants like the former vice president, Atiku Abubakar, former Senate President Bukola Saraki, former secretary to the government of federation Anyim Pius Anyim, Chief Dele Momodu, Peter Obi, Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, Governor Emmanuel Udom, Governor Aminu Tambuwal, Mohammed Hayatu-deen and Ayo Fayose, were at the screening.

The committee at the end of the sitting disqualified two aspirants.

Mark confirmed this after the conclusion of the exercise at Legacy House, Abuja, at 7pm yesterday.

He, however, refused to disclose the identities of the disqualified aspirants or the reasons for their disqualification.

Mark simply noted that the aspirants did not meet the requirements.

But sources told THISDAY that the likely disqualified aspirants were Dr. Nwachukwu Anakwenze and Cosmas Ndukwe. Ndukwe took the party to court over zoning.

Mark also affirmed that the report of the screening will be transmitted to the PDP National Working Committee for consideration Friday night.

Anyim, who spoke to reporters after screening, described the process as simple, explaining that they were asked about their financial capabilities for campaigns, when they became members of the party and their tax papers.

Also speaking after screening, former governor of Ekiti State, Ayo Fayose warned the party against jettisoning zoning "as it will hurt the PDP in the future."

But Governor Emmanuel disagreed saying, "any decision taken by the PDP on zoning is supreme and must be obeyed."

Also Peter Obi who described the screening exercise as perfect said that he would respect the position of the party on zoning.

68 ABDUCTED TRAIN PASSENGERS SPEND DAY 34 IN THE DUNGEON OF TERRORISTS, FREEDOM STILL NOT IN SIGHT, FAMILIES FRUSTRATED

with her eyes closed, the baby looked healthy, with credible sources saying the terrorists invited a doctor to take the delivery of the infant.

Three weeks back, the terrorists released a two-minute video, showing scores of abductees sitting in a forest, including men, women and children. Behind them was a group of gunmen standing in a line.

The abductees are evidently in anguish with some believed to be carrying bullet wounds.

Families and relatives are worried that they are being traumatised in the forest, amid mosquitos, hash conditions and many other dangers.

Some of the elderly among the abducted passengers are clearly experiencing deteriorating health conditions.

A disturbed relative told THISDAY last Thursday that his uncle was among the abducted passengers and that his health was worsening.

"He spoke when the second video was released on the need to hasten their release in view of the fact that his health is deteriorating. He was among the elders in one of the pictures," he said.

The released Managing Director of the Bank of Agriculture, BOA, Alwan Hassan, while recounting his ordeal, said 41 women, 22 men, 5 kids were with the terrorists.

The federal government had assured that it would do everything necessary to ensure the release of those still being held hostage but families and friends of the victims said they had not seen anything concrete being done in this direction.

The spokesman of the affected families based in Kaduna, Dr. Jimoh, during his interview with THISDAY yesterday reiterated their demand that government must go into negotiation with the terrorists to secure the release of their loved ones alive.

Jimoh, lamented that they were yet to establish contact with their loved ones or even the hoodlums since the incident.

He urged the federal government to open a channel of communication with the terrorists.

Jimoh restated that affected families remain in serious anguish in the past 34 days and living like corpses.

The terrorists insist that they are not after a ransom, but an exchange of the abducted passengers with their commanders, who were in government custody.

The former military governor of Kaduna State, retired Col. Abubakar Umar has also reiterated his call on the international community to intervene and help free the abductees.

He stated, "The world must know what is happening. This government is trying to cover up this and we all must keep talking about this. Before you know it, these people would spend 10 years, like the Chibok girls. There are thousands of kidnapped victims in northern Nigeria, but the governments don't want people to talk about it."

No fewer than 362 passengers were onboard the train at the time the terrorists struck on March 28.

PRESIDENT BACKS ULTRAMODERN ROYAL MUSEUM AT OBA OF BENIN'S PALACE

the State House to thank the President on the recent return of two important Benin Bronzes to its original place of abode by the University of Cambridge and the University of Aberdeen, both in the United Kingdom, after 125 years.

The Royal Museum, to be housed in the palace of the Oba of Benin, is in conjunction with the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM).

The Oba of Benin told the President: "We want to reassure Mr. President that the Royal Court of Benin and NCMM are working closely to ensure safe custody, preservation and enhancement of these Benin Bronzes and artefacts, not only for their cultural and economic benefits, but more importantly towards the promotion of the tourism industry in Nigeria."

The Royal Majesty reassured Nigerians that the Benin Bronzes and artefacts represent the country's cultural heritage in particular and Africa in general, saying "we hold these objects in trust as the original owners in conjunction with NCMM for the benefit of all."

Earlier, the President declared that the federal government would continue to vigorously pursue the repatriation of Nigeria's looted artefacts from abroad, including 1,130 Benin Bronzes in Germany's public museums and Ife terracotta/ bronze heads in Netherlands and United States museums.

Speaking on the returned artefacts, Buhari expressed delight that it had brought immense goodwill and acclaim to Nigeria, the ancient Benin Kingdom, as well as happiness to the Oba of Benin.

He noted that while it was widely acknowledged around the world that some of the best ancient arts belong to Nigeria, including those from Benin, Ife, Nok and Igbo-Ukwu, many of these beautiful works were illicitly taken away, particularly during the colonial period.

Affirming that these great cultural and artistic works were records of history, the President vowed that Nigeria would not permit these great works to become properties of others, adding that this administration had made it an important task to ensure the return of the artefacts.

The President, therefore, assured the first-class traditional ruler that the federal Government would continue in this great cause with his support and that of other traditional rulers.

He said: "In furtherance to these efforts, an agreement between Nigeria and Germany is currently being prepared. When concluded, it will signify the return to Nigeria by Germany of all the 1,130 Benin Bronzes in Germany's public museums. This will be a monumental achievement.

"Furthermore, on the 7th of this month, the Glasgow City Council agreed to return 17 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria. The legal issues are in the process of being sorted out.

"Other success stories include the return by the Netherlands in October 2020 of a 600-year-old Ife Terracotta; the return in April 2021 of a bronze piece from Mexico; as well as the repatriation, in November 2021, of two Benin Bronzes and an Ife Bronze head from the Metropolitan Museum, New York."

President Buhari announced that because of the determined efforts of this administration, "Nigeria is now regarded to be in the forefront globally in the struggle to repatriate illicitly-exported artefacts to their countries of origin."

The President acknowledged the efforts of officials of the NCMM currently working with the Oxford University, the Great North Museum of Newcastle University, Rhode Island School and numerous other places on the modalities for the return of Nigerian antiquities, particularly the Benin Bronzes.

He expressed optimism that with careful planning and management, Nigeria could generate revenue from the repatriated antiquities.

Buhari said: "We look forward to a future when these returned antiquities and our arts and culture shall be deployed in generating revenue for the nation.

"I am glad to hear that the Ministry of Information and Culture and the NCMM are already working towards this by reaching out to other nations and cultural institutions on travelling exhibitions to showcase the rich culture of Nigeria through these antiquities.

"This can happen if officials in charge of these priceless artefacts take due care to maintain and preserve these treasures in good condition at all times."

Also speaking, Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, affirmed that Nigeria would continue to assert its rights over all its antiquities around the world.

He added that the country would not hesitate to implore nations, institutions, men and women of goodwill to see the unfairness in the affairs of one body holding on to the cultural property fashioned by the genius of another.

NEWS

News Editor **Charles Ajunwa**
09157401421 (sms only) Email charles.ajunwa@thisdaylive.com

Chekwas Okorie: APC, PDP Will Not Give Presidential Ticket to South-east in 2023

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

Former national chairman of the defunct United Progressive Party (UPP) and now a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Chief Chekwas Okorie, has said that neither APC nor the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is likely to give Igbos their presidential ticket in the 2023 election.

Okorie, who was the pioneer national chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), said his former party is the last resort for any Igbo politicians seeking to contest presidential elections next year.

He made the assertion on the occasion of the public presentation of his book, 'APGA and the Igbo Question' in Abuja.

Speaking to journalists on the prospects of a Nigerian president of Igbo extraction, Okorie said: "There is an opportunity for APGA to still serve its intended purpose. It is only APGA that gave the Igbos presidential candidate 20 years ago and it is still APGA that can give Igboman the presidential ticket for 2023 election. I have said time without number that neither the APC nor the PDP will give an Igbo man a presidential ticket. This is a power tussle and no one gives power on the milk of human kindness."

Okorie said that for the Igbos to make real impact in the next presidential election in 2023, the Ohanaeze leadership, "may need to go to Governor Charles Soludo and sit down with him and say this is the only party we have and we want to present our own candidate and we want support it to win the presidential election."

On regrets leaving APGA, Okorie said that the party was not just formed as a political party but was intended to be a movement, platform for engagement with the rest of the country.

He said that he tried everything humanly possible to resolve the crisis in APGA when it began, using lobbying and persuasion of various people for intervention but that the efforts failed.

In addition, Okorie said that he tried to highlight the tragedy that ndi-Igbo had suffered from APGA's misfortune in one of the chapters in the book.

Okorie said that he founded UPP with the same of APGA but that it was unfortunate that UPP did not live up to expectations of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and it was deregistered.

He also explained his adventure into the APC, saying he felt tired of opposition politics and decided to taste the other side.

He said though he was not all that disappointed with APC but that Nigerians were not satisfied with the party's performance.

On whether he may consider going back to APGA, Okorie said: "APGA being my child, I still have that passion and that was why I added the last chapter in my book, a new vista take off, showing the way forward for APGA."

"Yes, it is a possibility if certain conditions are met but these are being discussed. The idea is that even if I decide to return to APGA, it would be to take it back as a platform for negotiations, reconciliation and engagement. That is the part of the condition of which I will go, because no group, no section can do it on its own. Nigeria is so big, negotiated engagement is the best way to go.

"If APGA gets its act right, I am not in the party now, there is no reason an Igbo man should fly its presidential flag. The Igbo man doesn't need to beg the APC or PDP for tickets," he said.

Okorie said that APGA already has a recognised structure even if not we'll spread out but we still have eight months within which to campaign and make the party reclaim its pride of place in the country.



OUR STANDARD BEARER…

L-R: President Muhammadu Buhari and the Ekiti State APC Gubernatorial Candidate, Biodun Oyebanji, during the presentation of the party's flag to Oyebanji by the President in Abuja...yesterday. GODWIN OMOIGUI

Peterside Kicks as Court Remands Rivers Federal Lawmaker

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

A Member representing Bonny/Degema Federal Constituency, Hon. Farah Dagogo, has been remanded in police custody by a Magistrate Court sitting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Dagogo, who is a governorship aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Rivers State, was arrested on Thursday, while attending the gubernatorial screening of his party ahead of its primaries at the South-south zonal office of the party in Port Harcourt.

It would be recalled that Governor Nyesom Wike, had on Wednesday declared the lawmaker wanted on allegation of cultism.

When the PDP Governorship aspirant Dagogo arrived at court for arraignment yesterday, his team of lawyers opposed the application for the charge to be read by the Prosecution Counsel, Chidi Eke.

The lead counsel for the defense, N. Daye, argued that since count two in the charge against his client is one that Magistrate Court lacks jurisdiction to hear, that the court should obey the session of the state Magistrate law.

However, the trial Chief Magistrate Amadi Nna after observing the second count charge of conspiracy to felony and cultism against the defendant, cited a new rule which did not empower Magistrate Court to hear a case of cultism.

Considering the available information on the charge, Nna ordered that Dagogo be remanded at the police custody and adjourned till May 9, 2022 formal arraignment and possible consideration of bail.

Meanwhile, a former Member of the Federal House of Representatives, Dr. Dakuku Peterside, has issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, for the immediate and unconditional release of the Member representing Bonny/Degema Federal Constituency, Dagogo, from detention.

Peterside, who said Dagogo's arrest has no locus standi in any known Nigerian Law or Statue, including the Miscellaneous Offences Act, described Wike as "a neo-fascist and dictator desperate to gag free speech and democratic rights of Rivers citizens."

He challenged the governor to justify his reasons for the arrest of the lawmaker other than his quest to remain "a political alpha and omega who would not brood over any fair contest."

Bamidele Joins Senatorial Race, Says Reelection Bid for Service, Consolidation

Victor Ogunje in Ado Ekiti

Chairman, Senate Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters, Senator Michael Opeyemi Bamidele, has procured the All Progressives Congress (APC) nomination form to return to the Senate representing Ekiti Central Senatorial District.

Bamidele disclosed that the intention behind his second term bid was to further consolidate democracy dividends and attract more benefits to his constituents as an influential ranking Senator.

He said this in a statement made available to journalists in Ado Ekiti, yesterday, after obtaining the nomination and expression of interest forms in Abuja.

The federal Lawmaker posited that his first term in the Red Chamber was characterised by sponsorship of several bills and motions for the advancement of Ekiti Central and Nigeria at large, vowing to further bring his wealth of experience to facilitate robust lawmaking that will transform the country's economic hemisphere if reelected.

He said, "I have decided to again offer myself for service by procuring the Senatorial form in order to ensure more dividends of democracy for the people in Ekiti Central and enhance good governance in Nigeria.

"Within a spate of three years I have been in the saddle, the Ekiti Central and Nigeria have benefited from numerous bills and motions that I sponsored and I am ready to do more for my people if accorded an extended mandate to serve.

"I, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele says with all sense of candour and responsibility that this ambition is without personal aggrandizement and any ulterior motive, but it is all about service to the people of Ekiti Central and Nigeria at large."

Cataloguing his achievements as a Senator, Bamidele said he was instrumental to the sponsorship of a bill for the Establishment of the Federal University of Medical and Environmental Sciences in Ekiti and the already assented Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) Establishment Act Amendment Bill of 2021, seeking to strengthen and extend the life of AMCON.

"In various capacities as Chairman of the Senate Committees on Judiciary, INEC and Downstream Petroleum, I played a leading role in the passage of the new Electoral Bill and the Petroleum Industry Bill, all of which have been assented to by President Buhari and already having positive impact on the nation's polity and economy."

Tahir Fadlallah, Kano Billionaire Hotelier is Dead

Billionaire hotelier, Tahir Fadlallah, owner of Tahir Guest Palace in Kano is dead.

Fadlallah's death was announced on Instagram yesterday by the Senior Special Assistant to President Muhammadu Buhari on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu.

The SSA, who posted a picture of himself and Fadlallah said, "We have lost Tahir. May Allah grant him Aljannah."

Late Fadlallah, who was the chairman of the Lebanese Community in Kano, was flown in an air ambulance to Lebanon in May 2020 over suspected complications of COVID-19.

In 2017, Fadlallah was one of the 82 people honoured by the Kano State Government for their contributions to the development of the state.

'Gulf of Guinea Still at Risk of Piracy Attacks, Crew Kidnappings'

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The Gulf of Guinea still remains at risk of piracy attacks and crew kidnappings, the International Maritime Bureau has raised the alarm.

The International Maritime Bureau is a specialised department of the International Chamber of Commerce, saddled with the responsibilities of fighting crimes related to maritime trade and transportation, particularly piracy and commercial fraud, and in protecting the crews of ocean-going vessels.

A statement yesterday by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said while the efforts of the international and regional navies and coastal response agencies in the Gulf of Guinea have resulted in a decline in piracy and other maritime incidents, the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in its recent global piracy report has warned that the region remains at risk of piracy attacks and crew kidnappings, thus calling for continued efforts from the international navies and coastal response agencies in ensuring that piracy and other maritime crimes are permanently addressed in the region.

The statement said the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through its Global Maritime Crime Programme (GCMP) had organised a Table-top Exercise (TTX) from 4-6 April 2022 in Lagos for the Nigerian Maritime Security and Law Enforcement Agencies, an event which had in attendance 32 officers from 16 different agencies and aimed primarily at providing a platform for the participants to further strengthen inter-agency collaboration on evidence collection through various practical exercises developed based on scenarios used during the OBANGAME Express 2022 covering cases of piracy, drug trafficking and fisheries crime.

According to the statement, the Command Operations Officer of the Nigerian Navy Western Naval Command (WNC), Commodore G.J Kachim, representing the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) of the Western Naval Command, speaking during the exercise, stated that the exercise was important given the impact of maritime security to the economic growth of Nigeria and the entire sub-region.

He expressed gratitude to UNODC and the EU for the initiative in organising the exercise, noting that inter-agency cooperation and collaboration was key in sustaining the progress in the fight against maritime crimes in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea.

FirstBank
Since 1894

How to protect your account with SIM lock



Here are 8 easy steps to lock your SIM and protect your account in case of a phone theft:

1. Go to settings click on 'Security'
2. Select 'Set up to SIM card lock'
3. Enter the default SIM PIN (Default PIN for Glo, MTN, Airtel and 9mobile is 0000)
4. Click on 'Change SIM PIN'
5. Enter old SIM PIN and press OK
6. Enter new SIM PIN
7. Confirm the new four digit PIN
8. Select 'OK' and exit

Protect your phone to protect your account, stay scam free.

FIRSTBANK IS AN FBN HOLDINGS COMPANY PREMIUM BOARD LISTED

-You First-

Contact us: 01-4485500; 0700-34778-2668228 / firstcontact@firstbanknigeria.com / complaints@firstbanknigeria.com / RC 6290

NEWS

How Plot to Scuttle PDP Presidential Screening Was Foiled

Alex Enumah in Abuja

But for the presence of counsel to the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Mr. Kalu Agu, in court last Thursday the scheduled presidential primary of the party would have been scuttled following an application for the suspension of the primary by a presidential aspirant.

The aspirant, a former Deputy Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly, Mr. Cosmas Ndukwe, while challenging the party's decision against zoning, had also asked the Federal High Court, Abuja, for an order of injunction restraining the party from going ahead with the primary pending the hearing and determination of his main suit.

Recall that the PDP had fixed May 28 for the conduct of its presidential primary election.

The party on Thursday also closed its sale of expression of interest and nomination forms, after which 17 aspirants were listed for screening on April 29.

The 17 aspirants who obtained the PDP's presidential form which was sold for N40 million cuts across the geopolitical zones in the country, a situation which the plaintiff said ought not to be.

In the case marked FHC/ABJ/CS/508/2022, and filed by his lawyer, Mr. Paul Erokoro (SAN), the applicant is challenging the scheduled presidential primary on the grounds that it breached its own constitution on zoning.

According to Ndukwe, the PDP has a rotation of elective offices in place and that it ought to be the turn of the South to produce the president.

At Thursday's proceedings before Justice Donatus Okorowo, while Erokoro announced appearance for the applicant, Agu announced appearance for the PDP.

Although the business of the day was meant for the mentioning of the suit, but Erokoro, informed the court of an ex parte application he brought to court and sought the court's permission to move it.

Agu however, quickly drew the judge's attention to the Cause List of the court wherein the business of the day in respect of this matter was for mention.

But the judge told Erokoro to proceed to move his motion, wherein the senior lawyer urged the court to restrain the PDP, its National Chairman, Dr. Iyochia Ayu and Senator Samuel Anyanwu from going on with the activities for the Presidential Primary of the PDP pending the hearing of the substantive matter.

He submitted that the restraining order is necessary because the PDP is in breach of its constitution on the policy of rotation of the presidential ticket to the South.

Reacting, PDP's lawyer however, addressed the court on the inappropriateness of the application by the Learned Silk having served the Peoples Democratic Party the Originating Processes and should not come before the court with an ex parte application excluding the Peoples Democratic Party from being heard in a serious political matter that has very grave implications on its preparations for the 2023 General Elections.

In a short ruling Justice Okorowo ordered the PDP to come to the court on May 5, 2022, to show cause why the injunctive reliefs in the Plaintiff's ex parte motion would not be granted against the PDP.



CONGRATULATIONS...

GMD/CEO Esso Properties Limited, Dr. Smith Ezenagu (R) congratulating his ADC, newly decorated Inspector Adamu Sunday Danzaria recently in his Sangotedo office, Lekki-Epe, Lagos State...recently

2023: Ogun West Leaders Present N50m to Abiodun

James Sowole

Political leaders and businessmen from Ogun West Senatorial District of Ogun State, have donated the sum of N50 million to the state governor, Dapo Abiodun, to assist in his campaign expenses for the second term in office.

The governor had on Thursday declared his intention to run for a second term while hosting the DA Mandate Group from Remoland, which presented him a cheque of N50m to purchase his nomination form.

But presenting the cheque on behalf of the Ogun West group to Abiodun, yesterday, at his Oke Mosan Governor's Office, Otunba Akeem Adigun said the gesture was borne out of love the people of the district have for the governor, particularly the brilliant way he is executing projects across the state.

"We had planned to buy you the nomination form as part of our contribution to your re-election process, but our brothers from Remo beat us to it. Nevertheless, we are presenting this N50m cheque to help you take care of your campaign expenses," Adigun stated.

Also Speaking, a former deputy governor in the state, Alhaja Salimot Badru, lauded the governor for treating all sections of the state equally in the area of project execution, adding that the district was also happy that the governor has again chosen his deputy who is one of them as his running mate.

2023: Delta State APC Pledges Support for Amaechi

Presidential Aspirant and current Transport Minister, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, has taken his consultations for the 2023 presidential primary to Delta State where the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state declared total support for his candidacy.

Amaechi, who met with the leadership of the APC and delegates in Asaba, yesterday, urged delegates to vote for him for his competence and not just because he is from the South-south. He also paid a visit to the Asagba of Asaba, Obi Chike Edozien.

Speaking to the delegates, Amaechi said, "There are two essential elements that take people to power, governance and infrastructure. If you combine these two, you create an economy. I am ready for you to run a referendum on my past activities. Governor for eight years, Speaker for eight years, and Minister for seven years. Let anybody who says Amaechi should not be President ask 'what is his capacity?' As Minister for Transport, I was on this track, the Warri-Itakpe rail line. When we came, there were bushes and trees on the track. And knowing that South-south is part of Nigeria, I got the President to approve money, it wasn't a loan, it was funded from the budget. Today, you can travel from Itakpe to Warri, Warri to Itakpe and then to Abuja.

Nigerian Army Repels Terrorists from Maiduguri, Gajiram

Bennett Oghifo

The Nigerian Army has said it neutralised scores of terrorists belonging the Islamic State West Africa (ISWAP) that launched a night time attack yesterday on Gajiram in Nganzai Local Government Area of Borno State.

Also on Wednesday night, the army said it repelled the ISWAP terrorists that attempted to infiltrate Maiduguri around 11:50pm from Polo, fighting them back with heavy artillery.

This is the second night in succession that the terrorists would be prevented from infiltrating Maiduguri, a few days to the end of Ramadan.

According to a source, "The army sighted the terrorists in the bush, they were seen moving in large numbers not far away from the cashew plantation around Polo area and the military fired their artillery at the terrorists.

"Reliable information had it that they (the terrorists) were planning to throw mortal bombs to Maiduguri town. As such when they were sighted, the army immediately dispersed them."

The terrorists came to Gajiram, located about 73 kilometres from Maiduguri, in their large numbers on gun trucks and motorcycles, but succumbed to superior fire power of the Nigerian troops, with air support by the Operation Hadin Kai.

According to the military, "Our troops dealt with them decisively. They retreated and escaped through the Gudumbali area. The troops were supported by the Nigerian Air Force.

"Fighter jets were immediately mobilised to provide aerial support to the ground troops, who were already in a fierce gun battle with the terrorists."

Southern, Middle Belt Leaders Reject Fulani as Nigeria's Next President

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

The Southern and Middle Belt Alliance (SaMBA) has rejected alleged plans by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to present a Fulani Presidential candidate for the party in the 2023 presidential election.

The leaders maintained that a Fulani man cannot end his eight year rule and handover to another Fulani man in 2023.

SAMBA therefore warned that if the PDP under the leadership of its current chairman, Iyorchia Ayu succeeded in their plan to allow a northern Fulani to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari, the people of middle belt would hold the PDP national chairman responsible if herdsmen killings continue in the country.

The group made this known in a statement yesterday by its Spokesman, Prince Rwang Pam Jnr., and made available to our correspondent in Abuja.

The group also accused former vice president, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, former senate president, Bukola Saraki, Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, and Governor of Bauchi State, Bala Mohammed for allegedly rejected zoning the Presidency by the PDP.

It wondered how Atiku, Saraki, and Tambuwal who are Fulani by tribe had the effrontery to come out and declare for Presidency in 2023 when a northerner, Fulani, and a Muslim is about completing his eight years in power in 2023.

SAMBA also described Atiku, Saraki, Mohammed and Tambuwal, "as selfish and greedy leaders who are only desperate to grab power, asking what they have done with the offices they have occupied so far."

The group added that "for the likes of Atiku, Saraki, and Tambuwal to talk down on zoning is like laying a foundation for the disintegration of Nigeria."

Part of the statement read, "The country's constitution was established on the basis of equity, fairness, and justice.

MTN Records N96.8bn Profit, 1.7m Subscribers in Q1 2022

Emma Okonji

MTN Nigeria, yesterday, announced its unaudited results for the quarter ended 31 March 2022, where it recorded N96.8 billion profit after tax, which is a 31.3 per cent increase in profit.

The telecoms company also recorded an additional 1.7 subscribers to its network, within the same period.

It however said its cumulative mobile subscribers declined by 1.3 million to 70.2 million year on year (YoY), impacted by the regulatory restrictions on new SIM sales and activations.

According to the financial statement released yesterday, active data users increased by 3.4 million to 35.9 million YoY. It added 1.6 million active users in Q1 2022 vs Q4 2021. Active fintech subscribers rose by 6.2 million to 10.7 million YoY, and it added 1.3 million subscribers in Q1 2022 vs Q4 2021. Its service revenue increased by 22.0 per cent to N469.8 billion

Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) grew by 25.7 per cent to N257.1 billion.

EBITDA margin increased by 1.5 percentage points to 54.6 per cent.

The statement further said that earnings per share rose by 31.3 per cent to N4.76 kobo, while capital expenditure (Capex) rose by 80.8 per cent to N162.5 billion, up by156.8 per cent to N81.2 billion, excluding right of use assets and final dividend of N8.57 kobo per share for 2021.

Analysing the financial results, MTN Nigeria CEO, Mr. Karl Toriola, said: "We have continued to make good progress in the first quarter, building on the momentum we achieved in Q4 2021 and delivering several key milestones as we grow our connectivity business and platforms.

UBA

United Bank for Africa Plc
RC 2457

STATEMENT TO THE NIGERIAN EXCHANGE LIMITED AND THE SHAREHOLDERS ON THE UNAUDITED RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 31, 2022

THREE MONTHS RESULTS

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the three months ended 31 March	Group	
In millions of Nigerian Naira	2022	2021
Interest income	125,076	108,590
Interest income on amortised cost and FVOCI securities	124,861	108,482
Interest income on FVTPL securities	215	108
Interest expense	(40,207)	(34,209)
Net interest income	**84,869**	**74,381**
Fees and commission income	42,103	34,955
Fees and commission expense	(17,806)	(14,589)
Net fee and commission income	**24,297**	**20,366**
Net trading and foreign exchange income	14,959	10,469
Other operating income	1,764	1,432
Total non-interest income	**41,020**	**32,267**
Operating income	**125,889**	**106,648**
Net impairment loss on loans and receivables	(4,184)	(2,028)
Net operating income after impairment loss on loans and receivables	**121,705**	**104,620**
Employee benefit expenses	(25,579)	(21,311)
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,739)	(4,848)
Other operating expenses	(46,324)	(38,295)
Total operating expenses	**(77,642)**	**(64,454)**
Share of profit of equity-accounted investee	421	415
Profit before income tax	**44,484**	**40,581**
Taxation charge	(2,988)	(2,426)
Profit for the period	**41,496**	**38,155**
Other comprehensive income		
Items that may be reclassified to income statement:		
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	(22,776)	11,212
Fair value changes on investments in debt securities at fair value through other comprehensive income(FVOCI):		
Net fair value gain / (loss) during the period	2,226	(11,142)
	(20,550)	**70**
Items that will not be reclassified to the income statement:		
Fair value changes on equity investments designated at FVOCI	-	-
	-	-
Other comprehensive income, net of tax	**(20,550)**	**70**
Total comprehensive income for the period	**20,946**	**38,225**
Profit attributable to:		
Owners of Parent	38,933	35,567
Non-controlling interest	2,563	2,588
Profit for the period	**41,496**	**38,155**
Total comprehensive income attributable to:		
Owners of Parent	21,135	36,378
Non-controlling interest	(189)	1,847
Total comprehensive income for the period	**20,946**	**38,225**
Basic and diluted earnings per share expressed in Naira	1.14	1.04

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at	Group	
In millions of Nigerian Naira	Mar. 2022	Dec. 2021
ASSETS		
Cash and bank balances	1,982,497	1,818,784
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	86,310	13,096
Derivative assets	33,321	33,340
Loans and advances to banks	101,310	153,897
Loans and advances to customers	2,869,670	2,680,667
Investment securities		
- At fair value through other comprehensive income	1,481,256	993,791
- At amortised cost	1,814,667	2,341,839
Other assets	173,899	149,154
Investment in equity-accounted investee	9,365	8,945
Property and equipment	168,233	178,117
Intangible assets	30,771	30,450
Deferred tax assets	42,766	43,329
	8,794,065	8,445,409
Non-Current Assets Held for Sale	94,319	95,909
TOTAL ASSETS	**8,888,384**	**8,541,318**
LIABILITIES		
Deposits from banks	684,368	654,211
Deposits from customers	6,653,742	6,369,189
Derivative liabilities	79	98
Other Liabilities	283,750	216,209
Current Income Tax Payable	4,322	21,415
Borrowings	417,536	455,772
Deferred tax liabilities	18,834	19,617
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**8,062,631**	**7,736,511**
EQUITY		
Share capital	17,100	17,100
Share premium	98,715	98,715
Retained earnings	374,776	335,843
Other reserves	306,718	324,516
EQUITY ATTRIBUTABLE TO OWNERS OF PARENT	797,309	776,174
Non-controlling interests	28,444	28,633
TOTAL EQUITY	825,753	804,807
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**8,888,384**	**8,541,318**

The Board of Directors is optimistic that barring unforeseen circumstances, this performance trend will be sustained

By Order of the Board

DATED THIS 8TH DAY OF APRIL, 2022

BILI A. ODUM
Group Company Secretary
FRC/2013/NBA/00000001954

TIN No. 01126011 – 0001

Nigeria Ghana Cameroon Cote d'Ivoire Burkina Faso Uganda Liberia Sierra Leone Rep. Benin Senegal Chad Kenya Tanzania Gabon Zambia Guinea Mozambique Mali Congo DR Congo Brazzaville USA UK France

www.ubagroup.com | Africa, USA, UK, France

Africa's Global Bank

BUA Cement PLC RC 1193879

Unaudited Financial Statements

FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Board of Directors of BUA Cement PLC is pleased to announce the unaudited results of the Company for the 3 months ended 31 March 2022, together with the comparative figures for the same period ended 2021.

	31 March 2022 Unaudited	31 March 2021 Unaudited	▲ %
Net Revenue (₦'000)	96,988,392	61,192,879	58.5
Cost of Sales (₦'000)	(48,791,723)	(32,058,515)	52.2
Gross Profit (₦'000)	48,196,669	29,134,365	65.4
Operating Profit (₦'000)	42,381,899	25,649,495	65.2
Profit Before Tax (₦'000)	42,351,582	24,770,760	71.0
Profit After Tax (₦'000)	33,142,336	22,366,618	48.2
Earnings Per Share (kobo)	98	66	48.2

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Abubakar Magaji
COMPANY SECRETARY
FRC/2013/NBA/00000001627





Headquarters 5th Floor, BUA Towers, PC 32, Churchgate Street P. O. Box 70106, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria

Obu Factory KM 164, Benin-Okene Expressway, Okpella Edo State, Nigeria, info@buacement.com
Sokoto Factory KM 10, Kalambaina Road, P.M.B. 02166, Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria. T. +234 (0) 808 666 4470 - 71. E. info@buacement.com

POLARIS BANK

POLARIS Wise ACCOUNT

Interest rate at your best interest

with Polaris Wise High Yield Savings Account!



Start earning now!

Download VULTE to get started.

Google Play App Store

0700 POLARIS (0700 765 2747), 0806 988 0000,
01 297 9500, 01 448 2100
yescenter@polarisbanklimited.com
@polarisbankltd

www.polarisbanklimited.com
Member NDIC (DIS)

COMMENTARY

Akinwumi Adesina's Rescue Mission

The AfDB plans to support smallholder farmers in Nigeria, writes **Femi Adesina**

Anytime he traverses the land, air or sea like a troubadour, he must bring good tidings. Each time the Nigerian President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) comes to see President Muhammadu Buhari, he never comes empty handed. He must bring goodies and goodies for his home country.

Tuesday this week was not different. Dr Akinwumi Adesina, former Minister of Agriculture, came on a proactive rescue mission. Something was severely threatening food security in Africa, and Nigeria particularly. It calls for urgent action.

Each time the two gentlemen meet, they start with banters. So comfortable are they in each other's company. The jokes and bonhomie over, the AfDB President burst the speaker: "Urgent actions are needed to prevent a food crisis in Africa."

Why? How? When? What can be done? The questions came tumbling out, like water cascading from a burst dam. Dr Adesina provided all the answers.

"I am here Mr President to brief you on the impacts of the Russian-Ukraine war and its implications for food security in Africa, and Nigeria; and to intimate you with decisive actions being taken by the African Development Bank to avert what is a looming food crisis."

"Russia and Ukraine dominate export of wheat and maize to Africa. With the disruption of supplies arising from the war, Africa now faces a shortage of at least 30 million metric tonnes of food imports from Russia and Ukraine, especially for wheat, maize, and soybeans."

As the man spoke, suddenly Russia and Ukraine were not so faraway again. They were right there in the Diplomatic Room of the Presidential Villa.

More statistics: "Price of wheat has soared in Africa by over 45% since the war. Prices of fertilizers have gone up by 300%, and the continent faces a fertilizer shortage of two million metric tonnes. If unmet rapidly, food production in Africa will decline by 20%, and the continent would lose over $11 billion in value of food production."

Holy Moses!

The AfDB boss quoted the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, who had said: "We are now facing a perfect storm that threatens the economies of developing countries."

If there's anything President Buhari is concerned about, it is that Nigerians should be able to feed themselves, without recourse to massive food importation. That was why he encouraged us to return to the land, put his money where his mouth is by funding agriculture massively, and today, we have a lot to be thankful for. Food security is almost a reality in the country.

But because the world is now a global village, and no nation is an island, the Russian-Ukraine war could still affect some fundamentals of our food security. So, what to do? Fortunately, we have our own 'export' to the world at the AfDB. He unfolded what he has in store for Africa, and for Nigeria, our own dear native land.



MR PRESIDENT, I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFECTS ON NIGERIA...THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, UNDER MY LEADERSHIP, IS FULLY PREPARED TO MEET THIS NEW CHALLENGE HEAD ON. THE BANK HAS DEVELOPED A $1.5 BILLION AFRICA EMERGENCY FOOD PRODUCTION PLAN TO SUPPORT COUNTRIES TO PRODUCE FOOD RAPIDLY, TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON FOOD PRICES

"Mr President, I know that you are also worried about the effects on Nigeria...The African Development Bank, under my leadership, is fully prepared to meet this new challenge head on. The Bank has developed a $1.5 billion Africa Emergency Food Production Plan to support countries to produce food rapidly, to mitigate the effects of the war on food prices.

"The plan will support countries to produce 38 million metric tonnes of food. This will include 11 million metric tonnes of wheat; 18 million metric tonnes of maize; six million metric tonnes of rice; and 2.5 million metric tonnes of soybeans.

"The total value of the additional food production is $12 billion. This plan, which is before the Board of Directors of the Bank for its approval, will be rolled out by the end of May and will cover all countries of the Bank."

What is in it for me, that is the question people often ask. What's in it specifically for Nigeria?

"Nigeria is top priority under the emergency food production plan. For the wet season of 2022, the plan will support five million smallholder farmers in Nigeria. They will cultivate 2.5 million hectares: one million hectares for maize; one million hectares for rice; 250,000 hectares for soybeans; and 250,000 hectares for sorghum.

"For the dry season of 2022/2023, the plan will support one million farmers across 10 northern states. We expect that this will support 500,000 hectares of wheat. Overall, the Emergency Food Production Plan for Nigeria will produce 9.5 million metric tons of food."

Call this being proactive, or preparing adequately for the rainy day, and you are right on the money. Since 2015, President Buhari had seen into the future, repositioned the agriculture sector in the country, and he is now receiving viable support from outside. Support that won't end up in private pockets. God bless leaders who care for their people, particularly the weak and vulnerable.

Dr Adesina said the AfDB will also support Nigeria to develop Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones.

"We have helped to mobilize $540 million for the program. The African Development Bank has approved a total of $210 million. The Islamic Development Bank, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have approved $170 million, and $160 million respectively, towards the program."

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones will be initially rolled out in seven states: Kano, Ogun, Oyo, Kaduna, Kwara, Imo, Cross River, and the Federal Capital Territory.

Adesina is Special Adviser to President Buhari on Media and Publicity

'Santa Claus' And Ponzi Schemes

Victor Agi urges *caution with investment decisions*

December 2016 was a tipping point in Ponzi investment in Nigeria with the crash of the popular Mavrodi Mundial Moneybox, otherwise known as MMM. Several Nigerians across different social economic class, including celebrities, clergymen, business tycoons and low income earners who invested in the scheme, with the hope of reaping their Returns on Investment (RoI), were left disappointed when the operators announced it was freezing accounts of investors.

The reason the scheme's operators gave for freezing the investment platform that promised its subscribers 30 percent ROI after one month, was to "prevent problems during the Yuletide." Six years on, Nigerians are still expecting the "yuletide" to be over so they can recoup their investments.

The Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) estimated that about three million Nigerians lost N18 billion to MMM, with the then Managing Director of the corporation, Umaru Ibrahim declaring:

"The ponzi scheme is the phenomenon of illegal fund managers, popularly called "WonderBanks" which have continued to defraud unsuspecting members of the public of their hard-earned money. This phenomenon has been a source for concern because despite our repeated warnings over the years, some members of the public have continued to fall victims of their fraudulent practices.

"We would like to reiterate the fact that these fund managers are illegal as they are neither licenced by the CBN to take deposits from members of the public nor are those who patronise them covered by the NDIC deposit insurance scheme."

Despite these warnings from authorities, including the Central Bank of Nigeria and Security and Exchange Commission distancing the agencies from their activities, it was not long when other similar platforms emerged, and Nigerians again, invested with the hope of making "quick cash."

Some of the platforms that emerged after the crash of MMM include Loom, Twinkas, Donation Hub, MyBonus2u, RackSterli, Shadow Net Global Limited, Quintessential Investment Company, Inks Nation, and Wales Kingdom Capital Limited, and subsequently disappeared with investors' money and their founders are at large.

It is important to point out that the popularity of these platforms is indeed driven by harsh economic reality, high rate of unemployment, job losses and financial desperation among the populace; the result of which is an avaricious desire to get quick wealth by many Nigerians who are not careful to do due diligence.

In recent years, these investment platforms have changed their modus operandi, with some deceiving unsuspecting publics with unrealistic physical investments to attract more investors before either executing their grand plan of disappearing into thin air, or running into troubles with authorities as a result of their illegal operations.

It was reported that over 4000 investors were yet to be refunded when one of the platforms finally crashed in March, following expiration of the last deadline it promised its investors. Similarly, another ran by a popular Facebook celebrity was said to have collapsed following his recent arrest by officers of the Nigeria Police.

Public opinion about operators of the many financial platforms has shown one common trend which is that they were known to be living a lavish lifestyle. One is said to be fond of distributing gifts to social media influencers as a promotional strategy to earn trust so as to recruit more investors.

As earlier noted, amid claims of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission, the Security and Exchange Commission has disassociated itself from these investment platforms and severally warned Nigerians of the risk of staking their money with them. In fact, Section 38(1) of the Investments and Securities Acts (ISA) 2007 provides that "no persons shall (a) operate in the Nigerian capital market as an expert or professional or in any other capacity as may be determined by the commission, or (b) carry on investments and securities business unless the person is registered in accordance with this Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder."

However, activities of fraudulent investment platforms continue to take new fashion in several parts of the country, with Nigerians losing their hard-earned money when these platforms became unsustainable. Like in recent cases, the authorities have paraded operators and arraigned some in courts, with SEC reportedly winning its case against the founders of Bara Finance & Investment Limited for "engaging in illegal capital market activities and operating an unregistered investment scheme, contrary to the provisions of sections 38, 54 and 67 of the Investments and Securities Act 2007."

This is therefore clarion call to Nigerians to be more circumspect with investment decisions, and to beware of these disguised Ponzi platforms and "Santa Claus" founders. Authorities must strengthen mechanisms to detect these platforms at formative stage, before innocent members of the public are trapped by their schemes.

The Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch (CeFTIW) believes that Nigerians must be partner with authorities in entrenching culture of transparency in the system. The public service can be transparent to the extent the wider public is ready to cooperate in the fight against corruption in every aspect of our national lives. The current unwholesome desire for quick wealth without recourse to basic principles and values of hard work, dignity of labour and patience, known of traditional African society, is distasteful and a recipe to more societal decay.

Agi is the head of public affairs at the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch, and writes from Abuja



What future?

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.

Nigeria and High Vaccine Hesitancy

It affected our lives, hitting every corner of the world. Airports shut, borders closed, businesses embracing a work from home policy, physical distancing measures and mask policies put in place. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic is still very much around, coming in waves and variants. One thing was for sure, that in the heat of the pandemic, scientists, virologists and infectious diseases experts brainstormed to find a panacea to this muddle. It took about two years for vaccines to be developed and finally approved by the World Health Organization.

An Eureka moment came eventually, where many options became available in the market. From single to double doses and eventually boosters, many countries began their vaccination campaigns. However, vaccine rollout has been lopsided in Nigeria ever since donations were received from the global north. In fact, the latest records per the World Health Organization puts 6.5% of Nigeria's eligible population as fully vaccinated. One might wonder why the population is highly hesitant to get vaccinated. Even though there has been evidence of vaccine inequity in distribution to low- and medium-income countries, vaccine skepticism is a big player too.

Just as the famous Tuskegee study in the United States accounted for a significant portion of the African American population to remain vaccine hesitant, in Nigeria instances like the 1996 Trovan case for paediatric meningitis is one ringing in the ears of the COVID-19 vaccine skeptics akin to America's Tuskegee study. The World Health Organization has renewed usage of the word "infodemic" these surreal times. The infodemic is a cocktail of a fast and far-reaching spread of information, both accurate and inaccurate. In the case of COVID-19, the infodemic has centered around vaccines connected to 5G telecommunication satellites, chips and alteration of genetic material. The infodemic has further propelled vaccine skepticism, keeping the percentage of the fully vaccinated low even after a satisfactory equitable distribution of donated vaccines to Nigeria.

Vaccine hesitancy is generally linked to a mistrust of the health systems and authorities, and to fight it there has to be community level engagement. Trusted leaders such as religious and political figures have to be actively involved. Furthermore, there has to be transparency on the part of the health systems in keeping the population informed about the vaccine manufacturing process, contents, potential side effects and overall benefit.

The billion-naira question remains with such low vaccination rates in Nigeria, how do we explain the less than 300,000 cases in three years of the pandemic? Many schools of thought have postulated a discrepancy in case reporting due to lack of resources for accurate data measuring, while others have attributed the low incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 to the presence of sunlight, vitamin D and even histories of previous infections with malaria. In the light of all these postulations, just as scientists came up with an answer to vaccines, I hope we find answers to this paradoxical relationship someday.

Olawale Adeyemi is a family medicine physician and COVID-19 researcher in the United States

World Praise Day and World Peace

As turmoil, in the shape of terrorism, robberies, wars and other violent forms of criminal activities engulf many parts of the world, Deacon Banjo Omole, an author, politician and educator, is canvassing the idea of offering praises unto God, to attract divine intervention for peace to reign in the world.

The deacon has been spreading this message since last year, after publishing a book, May 7 World Praise Day, in November,2021, in which he explained the vision he received from God seven years ago on the need for all living creatures to praise God on May 7 every year.

Omole disclosed how God spoke to him: "One bright afternoon at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ), Ogba, Lagos, where I was undergoing a course, God spoke to me about the May 7, World praise day.

"The momentous message came in a small, still voice, at precisely 1:45p.m. on March 15, 2014. I heard God say to me clearly, that I should commence a global programme of praise by everyone in the world community, with the theme, "MAY 7 WORLD PRAISE DAY", and that the programme should be held on May 7, each year. It should be understood that God Himself gave this date in that vision.

"I have struggled with this vision for seven years, trying to actualize it, until I decide to put the message into a book.

"God does not make mistake. Why He chose to give this awesome message through a humble servant like myself, rather than an exalted minister, is beyond reason; but I know that his counsel cannot be questioned, and his ways are past finding out. For He has used the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, like the Bible says.

"I invite you to join me as we obey the word of the Lord to conduct a MAY 7 WORLD PRAISE DAY every May 7, in your locality, anywhere you are in the world," he explained.

Fired up by this vision, besides writing a book on the subject, he has met several pastors in different denominations to enlist their support for the maiden event slated for next week Saturday, May 7, 2022.

The inaugural event comes up at the Victory Parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Iju road, Age, Lagos. The Convener said, the coordinators of the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN in the local government areas of Ifako-Ijaiye, Agege Ikeja axis have asked member churches to hold a Praise event on Saturday, May 7, 2022.

Omole, the current chairman of the APC in the Ifako-Ijaiye local government area, assured that leaders of the major churches in the area are part of the project.

Ladi Ayodeji, Lagos

THE SATURDAY NEWSPAPER
EDITOR YEMI ADEBOWALE
DEPUTY EDITOR AHAMEFULA OGBU
MANAGING DIRECTOR ENIOLA BELLO
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR ISRAEL IWEGBU
CHAIRMAN EDITORIAL BOARD OLUSEGUN ADENIYI
EDITOR NATION'S CAPITAL IYOBOSA UWUGIAREN
MANAGING EDITOR BOLAJI ADEBIYI
THE OMBUDSMAN KAYODE KOMOLAFE

THISDAY

THISDAY NEWSPAPERS LIMITED
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/CHAIRMAN NDUKA OBAIGBENA
GROUP EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS ENIOLA BELLO, KAYODE KOMOLAFE, ISRAEL IWEGBU, IJEOMA NWOGWUGWU, EMMANUEL EFENI
DIVISIONAL DIRECTORS SHAKA MOMODU, PETER IWEGBU, ANTHONY OGEDENGBE
DEPUTY DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR OJOGUN VICTOR DANBOYI
SNR. ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR ERIC OJEH
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR PATRICK EIMIUHI
CONTROLLERS ABIMBOLA TAIWO, UCHENNA DIBIAGWU, NDUKA MOSERI
DIRECTOR, PRINTING PRODUCTION CHUKS ONWUDINJO

TO SEND EMAIL: first name.surname@thisdaylive.com

NEWS

Ukraine, Russia War: Guterres to Visit Nigeria, 2 Other W/African Countries

Bennett Oghifo

The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, would visit Nigeria, and two other West African countries, beginning from today, the UN secretariat has said.

The UN deputy spokesman, Farhan Haq, said at a daily press briefing yesterday that the visit was to explain the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the African continent.

Guterres, who was on a peace mission to Russia and Ukraine, this week, would arrive this evening in Senegal for an official visit tomorrow and Monday, May 1 and 2, respectively.

He would then be in Niger until May 3 before rounding off his tour in Nigeria on May 3 and 4.

In Senegal, Haq said the UN Secretary General would take part in a traditional Ramadan sunset meal with President Macky Sall, the current chairperson of the African Union.

During his tour, Guterres would also hold talks with Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum and his Nigerian counterpart, Muhammadu Buhari.

The spokesman said the UN Secretary General is also expected to meet with civil society representatives and religious leaders.

Talks had also been planned with victims of violence, instability, and terrorism in the Sahel.

Concerns over the wider impacts of the war in Ukraine had been especially acute in the Middle East and Africa, where knock-on effects were already playing out.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation warned earlier in April that the disruption to exports resulting from the February 24 invasion, coupled with the international sanctions on Russia, had spurred fears of a global hunger crisis.

The FAO estimated famine in West Africa and the Sahel regions both highly dependent on Russian and Ukrainian grains, could worsen and affect over 38 million people by June unless deliberate efforts were made to prevent it.



FOR ROYAL BLESSINGS…

Presidential aspirant Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi (R) exchanging pleasantries with the Asagba of Asaba, Obi Chike Edozien, during his consultative visit to the monarch in Asaba, Delta State…yesterday

At Last, PFAs Scale Recapitalisation Hurdle, Raise Capital Base to N5bn

James Emejo in Abuja

The National Pension Commission (PenCom), yesterday said all Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) have complied with the commission's directive to increase their Minimum Regulatory Capital (Shareholders' Fund) from N1 billion to N5 billion as at April 27, 2022.

The commission thereby assured stakeholders particularly the Retirement Savings Accounts (RSA) holders that with the conclusion of the recapitalisation exercise, they should expect increased effectiveness, efficiency as well as improved service delivery from PFAs.

The announcement by PenCom appeared to have put paid to the consolidation exercise which began in the past year.

The apex pension regulatory agency had approved the recapitalisation exercise of the PFAs with a 12-month transition period from April 27, 2021 to 27 April 2022.

The exercise became expedient as the value of pension fund assets under management and custody had grown exponentially by 244 per cent, from N3 trillion in 2012, when the previous recapitalisation was carried out to N12.29 trillion as December 31, 2020.

PenCom, in a statement obtained by THISDAY, further explained that the sustained growth in assets implied greater fiduciary responsibilities that required more operational capacity by the pension operators.

It pointed out that the urgent need to ramp up PFAs capacity to manage the increasing number of registered contributors and value of pension fund assets under management had led to the recapitalisation exercise.

The commission noted that 10 PFAs had met the new regulatory capital requirement of N5 billion as at December 31, 2021, while the others intensified efforts to meet the deadline of April 27, 2022.

The jostle among the PFAs to meet the deadline had necessitated some to embrace mergers and acquisitions, which led to the reduction of the number of PFAs from 22 to 20 currently.

Don't Let ASUU Impasse Destabilise Nigeria, Sultan Cautions

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

The Sultan of Sokoto and the President-General Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, has appealed to the federal government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to proffer a lasting solution to the lingering crisis and not allow some unscrupulous individuals to mobilise students in the name of protests to destabilise the country.

He made the appeal yesterday in a goodwill message to the Nigerian Muslim Ummah on the occasion of the Eid Fitr celebration.

In a statement signed yesterday by the Director of Administration, NSCIA, Zubairu Haruna Usman-Ugwu, Sultan Abubakar also called on security agencies to gird their loins and tackle the dangerous security situation in the country.

The Sultan's plea for peace and the resolution of the ASUU impasse followed the threat by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to embark on a three-day nationwide warning strike at the expiration of the 21-day ultimatum it issued to the government to address the demands by ASUU.

He also advised all Muslims to pray fervently during the concluding part of the Ramadan, for peace, security and wellbeing of Nigeria and Nigerians.

In the Eid message, he also expressed grievous concern about inflation and rising prices of food items in the country. He appealed to the government to stem the tide of inflation while urging traders to desist from the habit of arbitrarily increasing the price of food items.

The Sultan appealed to politicians to consider politics as a service to the nation rather than see it as a do-or-die affair, adding Nigerians should be allowed free hands to choose their leaders on the basis of those who will lead them with justice, fairness and character in line with the usual prayer:

GTCO Food and Drink Festival Opens Today

The 5th edition of Food and Drink Festival powered by the Guaranty Trust Holding Company (GTCO) PLC aimed at promoting Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in the country will commence today

Tagged, "Authentic Nigerian food" the free-to-attend three-day festival will feature cooking masterclasses of cuisines chosen from all around the world and over 150 free retail stalls showcasing everything from the best of Nigeria's street food to bite-sized gourmet treats and fresh farm produce from the farmers' market.

Speaking about the event, the GTCO Chief Executive Officer Segun Agbaje, noted that, "Africa's history and rich cultural heritage is beautifully reflected in its cuisines. The primary objective of the GTCO Food and Drink Festival is to showcase our diversity as a people whilst delivering a sumptuous culinary experience to food enthusiasts across the continent.

As our contribution to the development of local SMEs, we want to see our retail customers who also own small businesses thrive by giving them more opportunities to connect with consumers from around the world."

"At GTCO Plc, we are committed to offering our customers and communities great experiences with every interaction and will continue to promote viable enterprises particularly in the food and fashion industries, given the massive capabilities and countless multiplier effects inherent in these critical industry segments", he added.

After a 2 year break orchestrated by COVID-19, the group is excited to continue the tradition of the annual food fair. Also, well-fitted play area is designed to add another layer of excitement for children and keep them meaningfully engaged.

Foreign Airlines Reject Nigerian Goods to European Destinations

Chinedu Eze

Operators at the cargo terminal of the Murtala Mohammed International Airport (MMIA), , have confirmed that currently some foreign airlines have refused to airlift cargo from Nigeria to European destinations, except London.

The airlines that refused to airlift Nigerian cargo include Turkish Airlines, Air France, Lufthansa and KLM.

Managing Director of Flights and Logistics Solutions Limited, Amos Akpan, told THISDAY he wanted to send goods, which were largely personal effects to Zurich, Switzerland through Turkish Airlines, but after the cargo was screened and certified and after the airline said it met its standard, an official of the airline told him that it would not be taken because currently goods from Nigeria are being rejected in European cities, except spare parts.

"I wanted to send personal effects to Zurich, Switzerland, but it was rejected by Turkish Airlines after it passed through safety screening and was certified. They said cities in Europe are not accepting goods from Nigeria. I will understand if they are rejecting fish and meat because concerned agencies from EU have to approve such goods. My relation returned to Nigeria from Zurich but she could not carry everything because of excess luggage payment, so she decided to cargo it. I have gone to three airlines, Turkish, Lufthansa and Air France but they refused. They directed me to take it to brokerage firm so that they would pack it with other goods and cargo it, but I refused," he said.

EFCC Arrests 5 Over Alleged Oil Theft in Rivers

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

The Port Harcourt Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has arrested five suspects for dealing in illegal petroleum products within Rivers State.

In a statement yesterday by Head, Media and Publicity at EFCC, Wilson Uwujaren, disclosed that the suspects were arrested on Monday, in an uncompleted, one-storey building along Eastern bypass, Port Harcourt.

Uwujaren disclosed that the suspects were apprehended while allegedly operating a private jetty, with two vessels christened, Fol Courage and Samriyahkingstown, anchored at the jetty.

The suspects are: Ubong Samson Archubong, Iminabo Williams, Ndah Philip Ntia, Egbocha Kennedy and Francis Innocent.

"Verified intelligence available to the EFCC showed that the suspects were illegally refining petroleum products from the premises where they were arrested and loading the same into trucks and small vehicles that patronise them as major customers. The jetty is allegedly owned by a traditional ruler.

"Other items recovered from the suspects include a Toyota car, 203 jerry cans of 25 litres capacity each, 10 drums of 250 litres capacity each, one sieve, 11 pumping machines and hose, four containers, two lines of building with many offices in the jetty, a storage tank of about 60,000 litres capacity, one rescue fiver boat and 10 Geepee tanks," Uwujare stated.

35% Affirmative: Accept Judgement as Call for More Inclusive Governance, Group Tells FG

Omolabake Fasogbon

A group, Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) has urged federal government not to receive the judgement on 35 per cent Affirmative Action for women as a defeat, but should rather take it as a call for action to carry along almost half of the country's population in the day to day activity of government.

The 35 per cent affirmative judgment was delivered by Justice Donatus Okorowo of the Federal High Court in Abuja recently and allows women to occupy 35 per cent of all political positions in the country.

Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF), Mufuliat Fijabi while speaking on the sideline of a capacity building programme organised on the platform of National Institute for Leadership and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (NILEVAWG) in Abuja, described the judgement as a victory for women born and unborn.

She explained that the journey towards the judgement started in April 2019, which caused NWTF to involve other eight women-based groups to join in the agitations in order to have a stronger voice and achieve result.

"Being an institution sets up with mandate to close gender gap in government, it was important that we take more strategic steps, and one of that was to seek for the interpretation of the meaning of non discrimination in the constitution on Section 42 and to also to look at why the government is not implementing the 35 per cent affirmative action in the 2006 National gender policy that Nigeria has adopted as a national policy."

RingTrue

08054699539 yemi.adebowale@thisdalive.com

Yemi Adebowale



Jonathan, Don't Disgrace Yourself

Nine days ago, I watched some so-called admirers of former President Goodluck Jonathan gather at his Abuja office, urging him to come out and contest the 2023 presidential election. The sponsored crowd carried placards with inscriptions such as, "Goodluck declare now, we are sorry; Goodluck don't abandon us, come back; Goodluck please come back; and Goodluck we love you."

Jonathan's admirers are right about the pathetic state of Nigeria. This country is indeed in a big mess, no thanks to seven years of President Muhammadu Buhari's mismanagement. A spokesman of the Jonathan fans, Mayor Samuel was apt when he said, "We were deceived and brainwashed by those who claimed they could do it in 2015. Now, we know better, under Jonathan the minimum wage could buy one or two bags of rice. What do we have today? We are begging President Jonathan to forgive us, we have realised our mistakes; we want him back to complete what he started."

Samuel noted that the "saboteurs" that came after Jonathan were empty, adding, "We are here to say sir, forgive us, come and lead us again. We are calling on you to come and take the mantle of leadership in 2023. Nigeria is in comatose. Please answer this call, the youth are here, the women are here, the children are here, pregnant women are here, please hear their cry. All we need is a leader that will not discriminate, a Nigerian that will work for the South-south, South-east, South-west, and the north. The Transformation agenda was working until the saboteurs came to deceive us, to brainwash us."

Yes, this country needs a president in 2023 that will reunite its people. Buhari has badly mismanaged Nigeria's diversity, which ought to be our strength; brothers are killing brothers. This country has never been this divided. Just as Bishop Kukah said, "the Buhari administration, sadly, has divided our people on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and region, in a way that we have never witnessed in our history. This carefully choreographed agenda has made Nigerians vulnerable and ignited the most divisive form of identity consciousness among our people."

Under Buhari, the economy is in chaos. Insecurity is unprecedented, with terrorists rampaging across our country. Scores of innocent Nigerians are killed daily. So, Jonathan's admirers are right to apologise to him over all the lies told about him ahead of the 2015 general election. Lies about this former president sponsoring Boko Haram so as not to hold elections in 2015 were the most painful. Despite the current huge crisis in Nigeria, Jonathan cannot be an option in 2023.



Jonathan

Before examining Jonathan's capacity to tackle Nigeria's current disarray, let's quickly look at speculations that he would contest under the ruling All Progressives Congress. How can a Jonathan who was President for five years under the PDP contemplate contesting for President under the APC? This is reprehensible. Many say there is no morality in Nigerian politics but not at the level Jonathan is now. He must not be seen running after or dining with the APC. For Jonathan to even think that the ruling party would give him its Presidential ticket is preposterous. A party that once described him as clueless and a drunk will now turn around to present him as its presidential candidate? This is impossible. How will the APC market him? For me, the APC simply wants to disgrace Jonathan further at its Presidential primary.

Now to the issue of the former president Jonathan coming back to tackle the huge problems created by Buhari. The complications of this country are now beyond a Goodluck Jonathan. Yes, to some extent, Jonathan did well as Nigeria's President for five years. But he was evidently a weak leader while his reign lasted. His leadership and management capacity is limited. I will never forget how the hopeless Rabiu Kwankwaso intimidated Jonathan to sack Festus Odimegwu as Chairman of the National Population Commission for selfish reasons.

All manner of people were intimidating Jonathan while his reign lasted. This former president displayed frightening weakness and left many things badly done or not done at all. It was his failings that produced calamity Buhari. If Jonathan had done the needful, nobody would have talked about Buhari ahead of the 2015 presidential election. Nobody would have mentioned this extremely clannish and incompetent Buhari. So, what is Jonathan coming back to do? With the chaos this country is now, Jonathan is clearly not the kind of President that can stimulate Nigeria. He is too feeble a man.

The former president's decision to come out and address the rented crowd at his office nine days back was disgraceful. His speech showed a man contemplating contesting in 2023 but afraid of the justifiable repercussions. I heard Jonathan saying he could not declare now because some political processes were still ongoing and that they should just watch out; that Nigerian youths want him to contest for President in 2023. So, youths are the ones pushing Jonathan? Is that what he wants us to believe? Let him tell that to the marines. Jonathan says he is consulting over 2023. Consulting with whom? Watch out for what? Is he not finding these statements embarrassing?

One of the impostors called the Citizens Network for Peace and Development, going about campaigning for Jonathan said, "The entire country, men, women, East, North, South and West are unanimous for Jonathan to contest the 2023 presidential election." Haba! Which country is this group talking about? This group is a good example of those deceiving Jonathan. Its statements and actions are all aimed at achieving a selfish objective.

Another deceptive pro-Jonathan group, Dawo Dawo Network (Network for the return of Jonathan), said drafting the former president to the 2023 presidential race "is a national sacrifice." National sacrifice? Which sacrifice? The weird group adds that Jonathan's commitment to nation building "is exemplified by non-criticism of sitting and former leaders." So, not censuring current and previous leaders means Jonathan is committed to building Nigeria? These guys are evidently jesters aiming for Jonathan's pocket.

Just as Ohanaeze Ndigbo recently said, people luring Jonathan to contest under the APC are his enemies. The organisation stated: "It is only in Nigeria and in third world like Africa that such an idea could be contemplated in the first place."

Pa Ayo Adebanjo adds that Jonathan mulling the idea of contesting the 2023 presidency is shameful.

For me, Jonathan should concentrate on his status and role as an African statesman and stop dreaming of returning as president in 2023. This former president should stop wasting time, energy and resources "consulting" with hawks on 2023. In the last seven years, Jonathan, as an African statesman, did a lot of conflict resolution jobs across the continent. This is where he belongs. He has attained an enviable level across the continent. So, he should do more in this regard. Jonathan should also do more for the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation and add local conflict resolution across Nigeria to his mission. He has no business with the race for 2023.

Ben Ayade is Simply a Clown

Governor Ben Ayade of Cross River State wants Nigerians to believe that the current state of insecurity in the country could have been worse if Buhari were not the President. He wants us to believe that Buhari "exudes a depth of knowledge and a depth of the intellect." Ayade, during his visit to the President at the Villa early this week, came out confused and started praising Buhari's "understanding of the international and global security challenges and what he has done to stem the continuous incursion of bandits and Boko Haram into Nigeria."

This country is experiencing an unprecedented insecurity and somebody gets up praising Buhari. Nigeria is bleeding and this governor is cheering the President. Ayade is clearly high on something. Only God knows what it is. This governor is one of those bootlickers around the President unwilling to tell him the truth about his ineptitude. Nigeria is suffering because of coldblooded men like Ayade; men who are always economical with the truth because of selfish interest. Ayade wants to contest for President. This is why he has been running his mouth like a broken tap. He cares less about the blood of innocent Nigerians spilled everyday because of Buhari's clumsiness. The blood of these innocent people will be on the head of Ayade and his likes. One thing is certain: They will all pay for the blood of innocent Nigerians spilled daily.



Ayade

Gov Ikpeazu is Still Maltreating Seniors, Workers

Okezie Ikpeazu is one governor that has inflicted the biggest pain on civil servants and pensioners in Abia State, in all its years as a state. His seven years as governor have brought blood and tears on public servants. Ikpeazu still has a year to go. Only God knows how these traumatised workers and seniors will survive this catastrophe called Ikpeazu.

Abia senior citizens were again on the street last Wednesday, marching under the aegis of Concerned Abia Pensioners, in what they said was the beginning of a two-day protest across the state over 38 months unpaid pension.

Coordinator of the pensioners, Chief Emeka Okezie, said: "We have been dehumanised and subjected to unimaginable suffering as our death toll ranges between 10 to 15 pensioners every month. We have no money to buy drugs, especially our diabetic and hypertensive pensioners. We have children to look after, especially those in the universities. We are only looking up to God and don't know where we are heading to".

Few days back, Abia State health workers were also on the streets, crying over the rate at which their colleagues "are dying out of frustration, suffering and hunger" following the non-payment of salaries for over 12 months by Ikpeazu.

An official of the state's Hospital Management Board declared: "Abia State Government has turned the board into a place of frustration, pain and death. We buried three of our members last week; three are in the mortuary and there is no money to bury them. One of us, a young lady, has recently developed a mental problem. She walks about on the street aimlessly."

The health workers also staged a protest at the front of their office, wielding placards with inscriptions such as, "Save our souls in HMB", "Our children are dying of hunger", "Pay HMB workers their 12 months' salary arrears" and "Our landlords are on our necks for house rent," among others.

Speaking during the protest, the state's chairman of Allied Action Committee, Echeta Chikezie, stated that the government paid basic salaries of 2019 just last year, pointing out that the workers accepted it because of the suffering they were going through.

The statement of the Abia State chairman, Medical Health Workers Union of Nigeria, HMB branch, Chidinma Nwokoma is instructive. She said: "Our heart is bleeding that the governor, whose mother is retired as a nurse, a health worker, can hate us this much. We are treated like second class citizen and our children are being thrown out of school."

Today, I challenge Ikpeazu to amend his ways and pay pensioners, health workers and other Abia civil servants he is exposing to shame. I am sure that this governor has never gone without his own pay for a single day. Besides, there are so many goodies attached to his office which he has never for one day reduced. So, why should Ikpeazu be living big while seniors and civil servants are wallowing in pain? Retirees are dying waiting for pension, yet, he is unperturbed. This man, Ikpeazu, is cruel. This is the right word to describe him.

NEWS



PARTNERING FOR SAFETY…

Director General, National Council for Arts and Culture, Otunba Segun Runsewe (right) presenting an art to the Road Safety Corps Marshal, Boboye Oyeyemi, at the FRSC headquarters in Abuja…recently

Osinbajo, Governor Bello in Minna Closed Door Meeting

Laleye Dipo in Minna

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and the Niger State Governor Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello yesterday held a closed door meeting in Minna, Niger State.

The meeting which started at about 3.45pm did not end until about 5.40pm a period of about 2hours.

Details of the meeting were not known but observers believe it could not be unconnected with the 2023 presidential election.

Non of the aides of either the vice president nor those of Governor Bello were allowed into one of the lounges in the presidential lodge where the meeting took place.

Osinbajo is one of the barrage of aspirants gunning for the All Progressives Congress APC presidential ticket and was said to have come into Minna on "private" visit.

At the end of the meeting the vice president and his host did not speak to newsmen.

Osinbajo was immediately driven in a Toyota Coaster bus to the Minna airport for his return journey.

One of the All Progressives Congress member in the state told THISDAY that the vice president would return to Niger state soon to address delegates during which he will also meet with the two former Nigerian leaders - General Ibrahim Babangida and Abdulsalami Abubakar - as well as parley with traditional rules.

APC Chieftain Disagrees with Falana over Jonathan's Eligibility to Run for President

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

A Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Bauchi gubernatorial aspirant, Sani Al'ameen has faulted the statement of Senior lawyer, Femi Falana, in which he said former President Goodluck Jonathan is ineligible to contest for the office of the President because he has been sworn into office twice.

Recall that Mr. Femi Falana, SAN, Wednesday, declared that former President Goodluck Jonathan cannot contest the 2023 presidential election by 137 (3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)

Falana had based his argument on section 137 (3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended).

In a press statement shared with journalists in Bauchi yesterday, Al'ameen stated that the last does not apply to Jonathan because it was enacted after he had been sworn in twice.

He explained that the first tenure of late President Umaru Yar'adua which he completed will not be counted as part of Jonathan's tenure because it was originally Yar 'adua's mandate.

"It is wrong to say that Jonathan is disqualified from contesting the 2023 presidential election just for the simple reason that if he wins the election he will spend an additional term of four years. Let me take you a bit back.

Police Arrest 38-year-old Man for Impregnating Daughter in Ondo

Fidelis David in Akure

The Ondo State Police Command have arrested a 38-year-old man, Sunday Udoh for Impregnating his 15-year-old daughter in Ile-Oluji / Oke-Igbo Local Government Area of the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, SP Funmilayo Odunlami, in a statement made available to journalists yesterday, explained that Udoh was arrested while attempting to procure abortion for his daughter at a healthcare centre in Ile-Oluji.

She said: "On 26th of April, 2022, policemen attached to Ile-Oluji Division received a complaint of an attempt to procure abortion by one Sunday Udoh 'm', Aged 38, at a health care centre in Ile-Oluji.

"During investigation, it was revealed that the suspect was attempting to procure abortion for her daughter (Name withheld) of about 15 years old whom he has been having sexual intercourse with.

"The case is currently being handled by the Gender Office of the State Criminal Investigation Department in Akure."

She added that the suspect will be charged to court upon completion of investigation.

This comes two weeks after the command arrested a 28-year-old printer, Tolulope Akinyemi, for unlawfully and indecently assaulting his 17-year-old sister (names withheld), at his backyard.

NCAC, FRSC Partner to Promote Culture of Safety on Roads

The National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) have cemented plans to kick-start a massive campaign of culture of safety on Nigerian roads for all road users.

This decision was the outcome of a meeting between the Director General, National Council for Arts and Culture, Otunba Segun Runsewe and Federal Road Safety Corps Marshal, Boboye Oyeyemi, at the Corps headquarters in Abuja.

Runsewe, who expressed appreciation to the Corps Marshal for the warm reception accorded him and his management team said he was overwhelmed with the state- of- the-art facilities at the Corps monitoring and control room as well as the FRSC radio station broadcasting from 107.1 FM when he was conducted round.

The NCAC boss commended the Corps Marshal for his visionary leadership which has culminated in the sustenance of the vision and mandate of the FRSC.

He however noted with dismay that major causes of mishaps on Nigerian roads stem from the fact that our cultural values as Nigerians have been eroded adding that there was urgent need for a reorientation for all road users.

PDP Screens 56 South-South Governorship Aspirants

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

The South-South Screening Committee of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) led by the Chairman and Governor of Bayelsa, Senator Douye Diri had concluded the screening of 56 governorship aspirants from four States in the zone.

The exercise which started on Thursday with expectation to screen 57 ended yesterday with the screening of 56 Guber aspirants from across Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom and Cross River states.

Speaking at the end of the screening exercise, held at the zonal office of the party in Port Harcourt, Chairman of the committee and Governor Diri described the exercise as tasking but transparent.

He noted that 57 aspirants were billed to be screened but only 56 showed up, adding that the exercise was more or less a family affair.

Diri expressed confidence that the party would present its best candidate in the general election, added that all aspirants have what it takes to fly the party flag.

He said: "The exercise was quite transparent and it is a family affair and men of integrity are in this committee.

Delta Speaker, Oborevwori's Guber Ambition Threatened

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

The 2023 gubernatorial ambition of the Speaker, Delta State House of Assembly, Hon Sheriff Oborevwori, has come under serious threat as petitions challenging his elegibility to contest the forthcoming primary election of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on account of alleged observed inconsisties in educational certificates affidavits submitted at different times to the electoral authorities.

THISDAY gathered that petitions from some members of the PDP in the state as well as from members of the rival All Progressives Congress (APC) began flying barely 24 hours after the different governorship aspirants from states of the South-South zone of Nigeria were screened by the PDP panel sitting in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.

Specifically, the petitioners pointed at alleged discrepancies in name of the aspirant as it appeared in his first school leaving certificate, his post-primary certificate as well as his Bachelor and Master certificates vis-á-vis the supportive affidavits from the court.

Inconsistencies were also allegedly observed in affidavits sworn to in his age declaration.

Oborevwori, who emerged as the Speaker following the impeachment of his kinsman, Hon Friday Igbuya, is widely believed to be the 'anointed candidate' of the incumbent, Dr Ifeani Okowa, despite the governor's repeated claim that God was yet to tell him who his successor in May 2023 would be.

2023: Lucky Igbokwe Guber Ambition Gets Endorsements

As the primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) draw near, a frontline governorship aspirant in Abia State, Mayo Lucky Igbokwe, has continued to receive blessings of stakeholders in the state.

Igbokwe's chances of grabbing the Abia PDP governorship ticket are looking up as the federal lawmaker representing Abia Central at the National Assembly, Senator Theodore Orji, the immediate past governor of Abia State, vowed to stop at nothing in ensuring that the forthcoming primaries of the ruling the PDP will be free and fair.

He made the vow when Igbokwe, fondly called Don Lulu by admirers, came to consult with him in his Umuahia country home.

The former governor promised not to renege in his responsibility as an elder statesman to ensure that level playing ground was provided for all the contestants at the PDP primaries.

Orji encouraged the governorship hopeful to make wider consultations in his bid to actualise his ambition, adding that nobody can stop him from becoming Governor in 2023 "if it is God's will".

Speaking earlier, Igbokwe said he visited the former governor to seek his fatherly blessing on his ambition as courtesy demanded.

Group to Honour Lagos Artisans, Tradesmen

In recognition of the contribution of the informal sector of the Lagos economy which accounted for 94 per cent of new jobs in the state, a group - StartUp & FinishRich Impact Concept will in June, 2022, honour artisans and tradesmen in the state.

The award ceremony scheduled for Agege Stadium which coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Lagos State Council of Tradesmen and Artisans (LASCOTA) is a special recognition being given to diverse categories of deserving artisans and tradesmen who have distinguished and carved a niche for themselves in their various areas of specialties, veterans who throughout the years have been able to create and distribute wealth and whose businesses have stood the test of time. Awards will also be given to various stakeholders who have contributed to the upliftment of this informal sector. The awards will serve as a form of appreciation for these individuals and organisations operating both in the public and private sectors.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **NWANJO DONALD**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ISIOMA DONALD BROWN.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **EMMANUEL KATE OJINMAH,** now wish to be known and addressed as **WAGBATSOMA KATE OJINMAH.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **OMOSEBI KAYODE OLUWAGBENGA,** now wish to be known and addressed as **OLANIYI-OMOSEBI KAYODE OLUWAGBENGA.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I formerly known and addressed as **MISS HELEN NKEMDILIM.** Now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS HELEN EDIMO BASSEY.** All former documents remain valid. Wesley Nursery and Primary School and the general public should please take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **OLAWONUOLA AKANKE OJOYE,** now wish to be known and addressed as **OLAWONUOLA AKANKE JOSEPH.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I formerly known and addressed as **MISS: OTOKE NAOMI ONYEMAOBIUWA** Now wishes to be known and addressed as: **MRS JOSHUA NAOMI ONYEMAOBIUWA.** All relevant documents remains the same general public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS ADEKUNLE OMOWUNMI VICTORIA,** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS AINA OMOWUNMI VICTORIA.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **OGUNTUNDE JOSEPH IDOWU,** now wish to be known and addressed as **DAVID JOSEPH IDOWU.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

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

CORRECTION OF NAME

FROM: **ALADI CLEMENTINA EJINKOYE**

TO: **ALADI CLEMENTINA EJINKONYE**

Ferdinand Ekechukwu **08035011394**
Email: **ferdi_adthisday@yahoo.com**

Genevieve's 'Sharon Stone' Makes Cameo in US Show

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Nollywood's all-time poster girl, Genevieve Nnaji is a force to be reckoned with. As such, it's certainly not out of place to say that the Nigerian star and film producer is Nollywood's greatest export. Across the course of her career—which spans over 20 years - Nnaji has played just about every role you can think of. And these roles continue to get accolades.

In one of her career defining roles as Sharon Stone, also the title of the movie which was released in 2002, the superstar actress plays the eponymous character, a manipulative young woman who is hell-bent on destroying people's hearts for the sheer joy of it. In a new development, a clip from the blockbuster 'Sharon Stone' was featured in the most recent episode six of season three of US show 'Atlanta', which started making the rounds on social media.

'Sharon Stone' will be the first time a Nollywood cameo is included in the US show created by Donald Glover with Brian Tyree Henry and Zazie Beets as supporting actors. The comedy series centers on college dropout and music manager Earnest "Earn" Marks (Glover) and rapper Paper Boi (Brian Tyree Henry) as they navigate a strange, seemingly otherworldly version of the Atlanta rap scene.

It also stars Lakeith Stanfield. As a part of the series 'Atlanta', the Nollywood film was playing in a Nigerian restaurant where Lakeith Stanfield's character is eating in the viral video. He then makes a remark on the film's title and mentions that it will be followed by a sequel. Emeka Enyiocha, Steph-Nora Okere, Brian Lawson, Kunle Coker, and Peter Bunor also starred in the successful film.

As a flirtatious woman, Nnaji is a conniving young beauty who thinks she is too pretty for one man. At the peak of her shenanigans, Sharon was engaged to three men at once: a young boy, Dallas; a military man, Tony; and a middle-aged man named Uche. The day came when she had to decide which one of her boyfriends she would spend her birthday with.

Tony was the lucky guy so Sharon picked a fight with Dallas in order to keep him at bay. But Dallas smelled a rat and when he later demanded to know her whereabouts it turned into a huge fight. Dallas was arrested and days later Sharon suffered remorse and hoped Tony could use his influence to help get him out of jail.

The situation came to a head when Tony wanted to hear Uche's side of the story and the two men came face to face to talk. Uche and Tony soon discovered that not only were they both engaged to Sharon but the imprisoned Dallas was her fiancé as well. They couldn't believe that the same woman duped them and they put their heads together to plot revenge.

Part two of the Adim Williams directed story opened up to Sharon's new life as a born-again Christian but her discovery of hypocrisy in the church led her back to her old ways. She then met Teddy (Jim Iyke) and finally life seemed to be on the right path. Teddy was young, cool, and streetwise and the two hit it off instantly.



Genevieve Nnaji

Jodie is in Agony

Musician Joy Eseoghene Odiete, popularly known as Jodie, is beset by the difficulties of raising a boy-child living with cerebral palsy. **Ferdinand Ekechukwu** reports

As songstress, Jodie, real name Joy Eseoghene Odiete, frantically seeks support for Nigerian parents with special needs children, notes and video clips of her on Instagram, gives her off as one who is emotionally strained, drained and depressed. Reading her posts and looking her image, one need not much to conclude that she has gone through harrowing experience in the process of taking on her predicament.

Above all, she seeks funds and plans to, at least, put up a home for children with special needs. Nigeria is home to an estimated 32 million people with disabilities, most of whom are children, according to a February 2022 report. Jodie, also a mother, is beset by the difficulties of raising a boy child with special needs.

Flashback to Jodie's life to limelight after she released her hit debut single, 'Kuchi Kuchi' in 2010. The song went as far as becoming an anthem in many Nigerian households in Africa and beyond. Many at the time did not even remember that some three years earlier in 2007, the singer had participated in the maiden West African Idols competition and was one of the favourite finalists among the top 10 alongside Nigerian musicians Timi Dakolo and Omawunmi.

Her streak of success suffered setback soon after that feat a couple of years later. She got married to David Nnaji, a Nollywood actor and producer in October 2015. The marriage went down after the birth of their son in April 2016. The child is now 6-year-old and lives with cerebral palsy. Jodie recently bares her mind about life, plight, challenges and the realities of raising a special needs child. "Chinua has never said 'Mummy' in his life..." Jodie shared in a separate post.

While she has done all sorts of jobs to provide for her child, the expensive child care takes it all. In a three parts post which she labeled "An Open Letter", Jodie wrote: "I sang a song, Kuchi Kuchi in 2010, which Kings and Queens have listened to and enjoyed", Jodie recalled. "I am using the soft spot that song may have created to make this appeal. In the past 6 years, I have hawked beaded jewelry in offices like Total, Noah's Ark, DDB etc. I have sold hair care products. I have begged. I have borrowed. Nigerians are kind…"

Continuing, she said "The truth is, I am a nobody, but I was inspired years ago to sing a song even when I didn't know myself - a song that still resonates till date. Who knows? Maybe the essence of Kuchi Kuchi was not for my popularity, but to respond to the silent cries of mothers who gave birth to special needs children. Maybe its essence was to speak for the blood of the special needs children that has been spilled in secret by helpless mothers who did not know what else to do."

Revealing that many have advised her to kill or abandon her son, Chinua, "because such children are sent to swallow up finances.

Judie adds: "My finances have been swallowed. My friends have abandoned me, because I am a beggar. My debts are new every morning. But I am a mother who would rather die first before her son does not eat. Maybe helping some Special Needs Children in Nigeria and seeing some mums having a fighting chance at life will help fill some void. I don't know, but this is my reality"

To some extent she chides the hospital where she had her son for his condition. And would have preferred a General Hospital if she knew how things would turn out. The singer said because of her son's disability, she "cannot keep a relationship" as her soul is "shattered". She disclosed that special needs children don't eat regular food and need special care and this drains finances of parents.

She added that her son's situation makes her fall ill "almost every 3 weeks due to stress". The singer then said that her and other special needs parents have suffered alone for too long because they have been ashamed of the stigmatisation. But she said this shame "has to end" so they can get help for their children. "We are now shameless. We are now helpless. We have gone mad... We need a permanent solution," she wrote. Jodie is not alone.

She then called on the government, non-governmental organisations and other authorities to provide a "permanent solution" for the care of special needs children so that parents will not have to go broke to care for their special needs kids.

She concluded: "My head is heavy. My eyes hurt, because I cry every night. Don't wait for singer of Kuchi Kuchi to die first before you do a memorial service while her child is left to suffer. Do not spend a dime when I'm dead. Do all you can about it now while I'm alive. I beg you Nigerians."



Jodie with her boy Chinua

SHOWBIZFLAIR

Genoveva Umeh

I'm a Natural Entertainer; I'm Inspired By People's Stories

Nollywood has birthed a fresh face in Genoveva Umeh, a young actress who gets her breakout role in "Blood Sisters", a new Netflix and EbonyLife Studios production. Genoveva shares her acting journey, background and experience on set of the movie in this chat with **Ferdinand Ekechukwu**

Getting started in Nollywood

I was studying Law in 2014 and I became interested in Nollywood, because I started watching films shot by Nigerians in Nigeria. I had worked closely with the UK media consultant, DJ Abass as an usher for Nollywood London premieres. During Q/A sessions, I'd ask the filmmakers about working in Nigeria. I had connected with a few filmmakers who then gave me background acting opportunities. I sent audition tapes for casting calls to Nigerian producers. I was even invited to an audition for Ebonylife's 'On The Real'. Unfortunately travelling to Nigeria for an audition in the middle of my studies wasn't an option for me at the time. I got my first lead role in a series shot in Enugu. That was when I decided I wanted to tell authentic African stories. I returned to Lagos, to pursue my acting career, right after my graduation in 2018. I didn't have a family home in Lagos, so it was the most daring thing I'd ever done, but it was worth risk!

Auditioning and Getting Casted

I enrolled into Ebonylife Creative Academy for some acting training in early 2021 as part of their first intake. Honestly, I'd lost a lot of confidence in myself and the 2020 pandemic meant I hadn't worked for months. I'd also lost a big acting opportunity in the same year too so I was looking for a safe space to reinvent myself &how I approach my career moving forward. In the three month course, our Head of Acting, Drikus Volschenk, made sure that we knew to bet on ourselves. All faculties collaborated on a few short films, Kenneth Gyang, HOD of the Directing faculty at the time, noticed my work and recommended me to the CEO of EbonyLife Media, Mo Abudu. I had to audition for the character 'Timeyin' in two days. After my audition, I received the offer letter for the character of Timeyin. It was dream come true because I grew up watching Nollywood films in my house in Enugu State, and as a young adult in university I started actively working to be a part of telling authentic African stories.

Experience Filming Blood Sisters

I had the time of my life working on the set of Blood Sisters. I remember sitting in our first table read and thinking how incredibly blessed I was to be working with acting legends and heavyweights that I'd either grown up watching and some that I had observed build their brand solely on the integrity of their craft. My Directors, Mr. Biyi Bandele and Kenneth Gyang were open to my opinions before we shot each scene; I enjoyed the relationship of trust and flexibility that came with filming Blood Sisters. I loved getting in makeup, SFX and costume to help embody my character's aura and personality. I looked forward to each day. I didn't want the shoot to end.

Hardest Decision Made to Pursue a Career in Nollywood

The hardest decision was being away from my family and friends for long periods of time. I miss my little brother (sorry - teen brother), he better not catch me calling him little), as well as my two god-daughters. Thankfully, I am able to catch up with them via video calls. However, it is still a major adjustment, to be physically away from them. My family is proud of me and they understand my career. I have also had the honour of developing some lasting friendships in Nigeria, so I never feel too alone.

Training and Previous Experiences

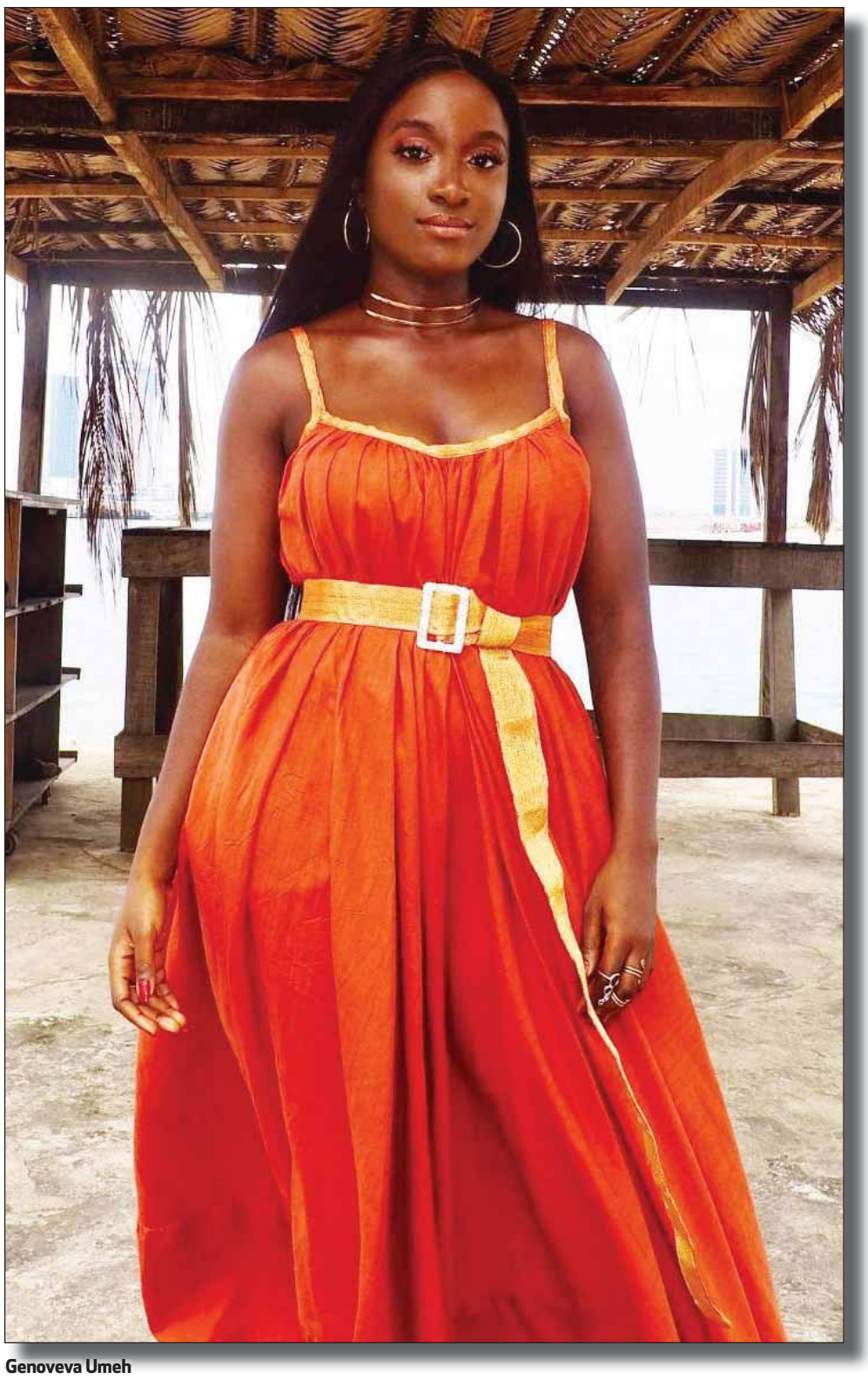
Drama was my favourite class in high school. At 17, I wanted to get more training and fortunately, I was accepted into Identity School of Acting in the UK. I trained there for a term and was able to pay for my upkeep, as a retailer at Primark. My parents are first generation immigrants, which means, formal education is a must, so I was skeptical about studying Drama as an undergrad. Although I loved acting, I thought of it as a hobby, and studied Law instead. I performed on stage in a lot of theatre plays, watched a lot of films and read articles on filmmaking.

The Umehs Support to My Acting Pursuits

My Parents are beautiful, Igbo people from Anambra State. My Dad is a Computer Engineer and my mum is a registered nurse. We migrated permanently to London, UK in 2006. I have a 13 year-old-brother. As a kid, my parents encouraged my creative personality from church contemporary dances, to winning dance competitions at children's parties. As an Adult, they trust me to work hard. They are my biggest fans and I feel protected by their prayers and countless face time conversations of encouragement. My friends think that I'm as free spirited as my parents, because my parents taught me to embrace being the best of African and Black British. My Igbo name is Kenechukwu, which means 'To thank God'. My Dad calls me 'Orginal K'. My Parents are my favourite people in the world and I want to reward them for the sacrifices they consistently make for us.

If Genoveva Wasn't an Actor

A TV Presenter; I'm a natural entertainer. I'm inspired by people's stories. I want to know how people, especially women, break glass ceilings against all odds. It keeps me motivated and in high spirits. I might still explore having my own show, one day.



Genoveva Umeh

Afro B is Back with Sensational Visual for Hit Song 'Bluffin'



Afro B

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Ross-Emmanuel Bayeto, better known as Afro B who released the audio single 'Bluffin', has dished out mesmerizing visuals to the intriguing sound. The new single gives vocal recognition to one of Nigeria's top and raving Afrobeats, Pop, and R&B singer, Kizz Daniel. This single 'Bluffin' serve as follow-up to his previous song tagged, 'Shisha' featuring Nigerian Niniola and South African singer, Busiswa released last year.

The eye-catching visuals, which depict a lifestyle theme that shows Afroswing artiste among friends in their exotic cars and racing at the TBS Race Course, is a toast to the good life and lasting friendships. Directed by two talented storytellers, Yuki, and Allen, Yuki describes the inspiration behind the video as "Afro B celebrating his success with his closest friends out in Dubai whilst capturing the greatest moments in the process.

"In these visuals, we get a teeny-weeny insight into Afro B's lifestyle and I really wanted to show that through each activity. The visual was intended to be as natural as possible, and it was all pretty much shot hand-held on the go, with some prior planning I had done in my head. Afro B also links up with one of Nigeria's biggest superstars for this song, Kizz Daniel and together, they deliver powerful performances and add their own touch to the visual and the song itself."

The second brilliant director, Allen also describes the arresting scenes: "The first time I got this tune, I felt it was so relatable and I loved the chilled, playful and happy vibe it gave off. That being said, my idea for the Lagos unit of Bluffin's video shoot sprung up from me re-imagining Kizz Daniel as a kid in a park — but in this case, now grown up and having fun in this high octane environment with his toys — A DRIFT PARK — accompanied by few of his homeboys celebrating life and friendships just like the message the song passes."

Afro B is a British DJ, singer and songwriter known for his hit song "Drogba (Joanna)", which peaked at number 23 on the US Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay chart and led to the creation of the "Drogba Challenge".

ARISE
BEYOND STREAMING

WWW.ARISEPLAY.COM @ARISEPLAY

VISIT THE WEBSITE TO DOWNLOAD THE APP, SUBSCRIBE AND START YOUR STREAMING EXPERIENCE TODAY.



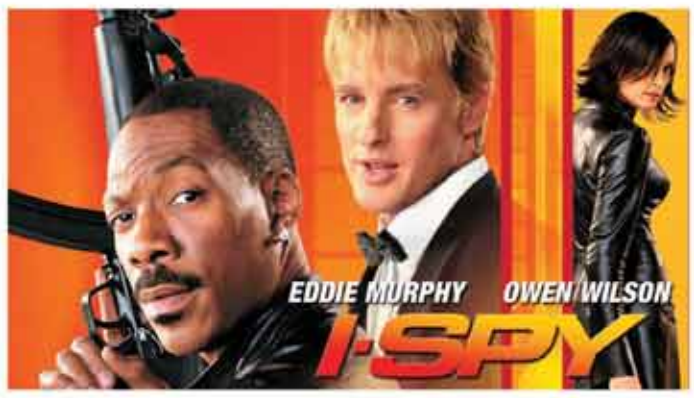
25 APRIL TO 1 MAY 2022: EXUBERANCE

This week's trending movies are all about energy, excitement, and cheer. There are animated superhero movies, action comedy films, and teen comedies, all filled with exuberantly joyous performances, great music, and engaging storylines and suspenseful scenes.



SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDERVERSE

It is the first animated film in the Spider-Man franchise, and the first non-Disney/Pixar film to win Best Animated Feature at the 91st Academy Awards. Miles Morales plays Spider-Man who joins other Spider-People from other parallel universes. The team stops Kingpin so Miles can harness his abilities and the other characters can jump back to their own dimensions before it's too late. Spider-Verse is the first movie about a biracial superhero.



I-SPY

"I-Spy" is an American buddy spy comedy film directed by Betty Thomas, starring Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson. The film is based on a television series of the same name that aired in the 1960s. One of the United States' top spies is called to action when the Switchblade is stolen. It's not what he expects to be paired up with World Class Boxing Champion Kelly Robinson (Eddie Murphy) on a top-secret spy mission. Using both skill and humour, they must foil Arnold Gundars's treacherous plan.



THE OTHER GUYS

Adam McKay's The Other Guys, stars Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg, is a parody of the buddy cop action comedy genre in which two desk-bound police officers deal with a seemingly small case that turns into a big deal. The Other Guys was named the "Best Comedy Film" for 2010 at the first annual Comedy Awards ceremony.



YOUNGERS (BBC)

Younger is a British teen urban music comedy-drama created by Benjamin Kuffuor and Levi David Addai, released in 2013. It is both hip and heartfelt. Luke Alkin explains that the series was inspired by mainstream urban music of the UK, citing Dizzee Rascal and Tini Tempah as models for the characters Jay and Yemi: "Those big artists were just like Jay and Yemi a few years ago, making music in their bedrooms and streaming it online".

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND JOIN A BOLD NEW WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT!!

For more information contact:
info@ariseplay.com

Happy Birthday

I, **Senator Gabriel Torwua Suswam,** our lovely son, **Terna**, the entire members of Suswam Tingir Dom Agya family, friends and the good people of Benue North-East Senatorial District, heartily felicitate with you, my darling wife,

Her Excellency, Arc. Deaconess Yemisi Dooshima Suswam Ph.D, FNA

on the occasion of your birthday anniversary.

You have been a dependable source of inspiration and an unshakable pillar of strength to me and the family. As always, I deeply appreciate your love and affection

May God continue to bless you with wisdom, divine protection, long life and prosperity to achieve more milestones now and always.

Congratulations my Lovely wife.





Signed
Senator Gabriel Torwua
and Terna Suswam

ARISE MOVIE BOX X INDIEVIEW lagos

Presenting

THE WINNERS FOR MARCH 2022

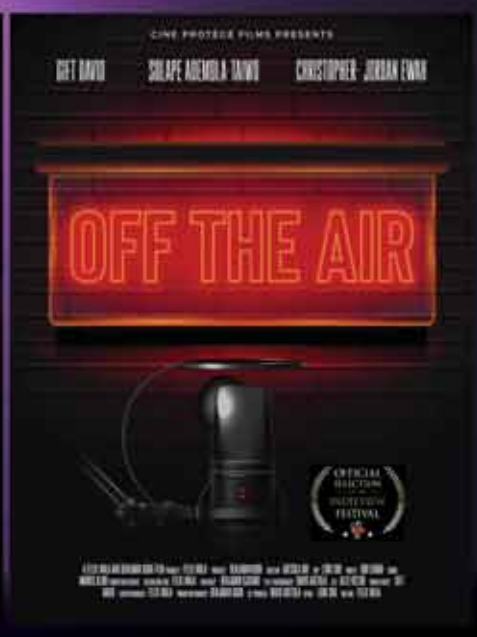
OFFICIAL SELECTION OF THE INDIEVIEW FESTIVAL



TEAR



OUNJE ALE



OFF THE AIR

Every month,
3 winning movies
of the INDIEVIEW festival
competition will feature on the
ARISEPlay streaming platform and
benefit from the full MOVIEBOX
package and more.

SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY TODAY

indieviewlagos@gmail.com

follow @indieviewlagos

SUPER SATURDAY



Temi Awogboro

I Am Proudly Nigerian with German and Scottish Heritage

Temi Marcella Awogboro is an Executive Director at Evercare Hospital Lekki, Lagos State, wholly owned by the Evercare Health Fund, a US$ 1 billion emerging markets healthcare fund managed by The Rise Fund, the impact investment platform of global alternative asset manager, TPG Capital. Prior to this, she was the West Africa deal lead of the Evercare Health Fund. Temi is a Co-Founder and Partner with Kairos Angels and the Magic Fund. She is a firm believer in the power of private capital to transform lives and is passionate about harnessing this power as a catalyst for profound, deep-rooted change globally. The Evercare Hospital ED holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business and a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Economics from Christ's College, University of Cambridge. Temi sits on the Africa Advisory Board of the Save the Children International, and on the Board of Directors and Investment Committee at the Equality Fund. She shares the story of her life with **Bayo Adeoye**

Temi Awogboro

Where did you spend your formative years? What was it like growing up there?

I am proudly Nigerian with German and Scottish heritage. I was born in Nigeria, raised in the UK and have lived and worked across four continents. My childhood was one of discovery, adventure, and exploration, growing up in the UK. While I never felt a stranger where I lived, I also never quite fully belonged. This experience forced me to forge a strong personal identity that was not wedded to culture, dogmas, traditions, and ideological concepts.

Can we say you were born with a silver spoon?

I was not born with a silver spoon – my parents were young parents pretty much building everything on their own. However what we lacked in material wealth was more than compensated for in terms of opportunities. We moved to the UK without my father who stayed to focus on building the family business in Nigeria. While my mother raised three kids and worked round the clock setting life up for us in a completely foreign country. I felt the pressure and guilt of the sacrifices my parents made to provide opportunities for us. This fuelled my desire to succeed as a child and to make them proud so their sacrifices were not in vain. This was key driving force for me at a very young age.

How did your background shape your life?

From a tender age, my parents and close family nicknamed me "Small but Mighty" because within my pint-sized package, came mighty aspirations. I recall childhood stories, from the baby that ate the notoriously spicy Suya, red in the face and crying with every mouthful yet insisting on being fed more, to the 5-year-old intent on riding her big sisters bicycle and ending up in an open gutter when my feet failed to make contact with the pedals, to the 9 year old who won numerous trophies at Shotokan karate sparring competitions, known to make boys cry as I graduated towards black belt rank. One thing was clear, I always refused to be restricted by the limits imposed by external expectations of me, with a burning desire to push beyond the limits perceived in my mind or externally imposed.

How and when did your career start? Tell us about some of the high and low points of this career?

I am an investment professional with over 15 years of experience in developed and growth markets, with a firm belief in the power of private capital to transform lives and a passion to unlock the power of capital as a catalyst for profound, sustainable change globally. To this end, I have committed over N500 million in private capital to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. Through my career, I have been uniquely positioned to operate at the intersection of healthcare, finance, technology and impact – referred to as an Impact investor/healthcare operator by day, and venture capitalist by night.

As the Executive Director with Evercare Hospital Lekki and previous West Africa Lead of one of the first and largest dedicated impact funds, I have been privileged to be part of the investment leadership responsible for scaling the fund from inception in 2015 to a global platform operating across six countries and highlighted as one of the top 50 leaders that will "come to define the world of tomorrow".

My Evercare journey started in 2015, based on my belief in healthcare as a fundamental right. On this journey, we ran into a number of unforeseen headwinds which nearly stalled the project, not least of which was trying to commence formal operations during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Against this backdrop, it was extremely humbling and rewarding to celebrate the key milestones and ground-breaking feats achieved within the first 12 months of operations at Evercare's 1 year anniversary on March 10, 2022. Some of these milestones include: successfully completing several complex clinical procedures in cardiology (five open heart surgeries, two permanent pacemaker insertions), spinal surgeries, first-of-its kind pediatric surgeries in the country and becoming the first facility in Africa to get Safecare Level 5 certification on the first accreditation exercise.

I have been equally driven by my belief in the central role of technology in creating a better world. Through my early-stage investment platforms, Kairos Angels and the Magic Fund, I am building and cultivating some of the best minds and disruptive teams that are emerging as today's regional champions and tomorrow's global challengers. This unique positioning has been fascinating and given invaluable opportunity to work at the forefront of paradigm shifts globally.

Tell us about your parents; who influenced you most between the two of them? What were the lessons you learnt from them while growing up?

My father was a doctor turned entrepreneur, and my mother was a Miss Nigeria beauty queen, technology systems engineer, and subsequently

SUPER SATURDAY

I Always Refused to Be Restricted By the Limits Imposed By External Expectations

The biggest mistake I ever made was not realising my self-worth. A number of early traumas stripped me of my internal self-confidence. As a result, I gave people more power of me than they deserved. I allowed myself to settle for less than I deserved feeling the need to constantly prove myself. It took effort and intentionality to learn to love myself enough to set boundaries

joined my father in building the family business. My father has always been one of the most patriotic Nigerians I have met. I recall growing up, he would take me on drives to various project sits, identifying hospitals, roads, schools, football stadia, his company had built out of his desire to see Nigeria restored to its greatness. My mother on the other hand has always been a 'silent rebel', subverting he traditional wife role to build a business straddling construction, technology, and procurement, typically male dominated fields. I was inspired greatly by the entrepreneurial spirit, work ethic, and tenacity of my parents and these influences are intricately woven into the individual and professional I am today.

What was the best gift you remember receiving as a child?

The best gift I received was my first iMac G3, from the iMac series of Macintosh personal computers developed by Apple under the tenure of Apple's interim CEO and cofounder Steve Jobs after his return to the financially troubled company.

How old where you when you got married? How did it happen?

I got married in my late 20s and had two children in quick succession. We performed our civil ceremony in the City of Westminster, United Kingdom, our traditional wedding in Lagos, and our white wedding in Cape Town, South Africa. Given our international roots, it was a beautiful opportunity to introduce many of our friends from around the world to the Continent.

What was the most difficult thing that ever happened to you in all your years and how did you overcome it?

As I reflect on my journey to date, I have faced a plethora of challenges: navigating my career at the epicentre of the global financial crisis, encountering significant resistance trying to break into the private equity industry, navigating the extremely lonely path rising the ranks in male-dominated industries, witnessing first-hand the destructive impact of toxic leadership and failed institutions and juggling the demands of being a present and invested mother to two toddlers, while managing my professional commitments.

I have remained optimistic and learned to thrive under the pressure of doing the 'impossible' fuelled by a deep sense of purpose, an unrelenting tenacity, and an unwavering belief in myself. Failure for me is an unavoidable part of living a limitless life.

What do you consider the biggest mistake you have ever made?

The biggest mistake I ever made was not realising my self-worth. A number of early traumas stripped me of my internal self-confidence. As a result, I gave people more power of me than they deserved. I allowed myself to settle for less than I deserved feeling the need to constantly prove myself. It took effort and intentionality to learn to love myself enough to set boundaries; to prioritise myself, safeguarding my time and energy. I had to learn to teach people how to treat me, by deciding what I would and won't accept. You may be the only person left who believes in you, but it's enough. It takes just one star to pierce a universe of darkness. You have nothing to prove you are enough.

What are some of your indelible high points in life?

Becoming a mother twice over has certainly been an indelible high point in my life. I love seeing the world through the eyes of my daughters, if we all could see the world through the eyes of a child, we would see the magic in everything. It really is the purest joy anyone can experience. I cherish the opportunity to introduce new ideas and experiences to them. It also forces me to embrace the more playful side of life and gives me an opportunity to spark my creative thinking. Becoming a mother sharpened my focus, renewed my hunger to be more, and do more because I have two little girls who I come home to everyday that look up to me as their hero and role model.

What is your biggest fear in life?

My biggest fear in life is never fully living my life's higher purpose. I believe I have been called to make a difference in the world. Each day I feel I get a step closer towards fulfilling that. There is no greater gift you can give or receive than to honour your calling. It's how you become most truly alive. I am constantly striving to use my experiences, talents and passions to better the lives of those around me.

Are there still things you desire?

I believe we were all put on this earth to achieve our greatest self, to live out our purpose and to do it courageously. I desire to live a life that is purpose-driven, passion filled and performance oriented, and continue on my journey not focused on the pursuit of perfection but led by the voices of those who christened me 'small but mighty'. They challenge me to create and compete; to build and nurture; to take risks and to leave my legacy.

What are some of the lessons life has taught you?

In 'The Man in the Arena' Theodore Roosevelt reminds us that in the end it is not the critic that counts but credit belongs to the man or woman in the arena, who strives to do the deeds, 'who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.' In brief, he or she who dares, wins.



Temi Awogboro

POLITY

Enugu 2023 and Ekweremadu's Shadowboxing

Ezenwa Okenwa

Austin Okolie's recent anthem, "Who is Afraid of Ekweremadu?" (ThisDay, 23rd April 2022) would stand out as one of the most atrocious obfuscations in his current career as a praise singer. Indeed, the essay may well have been titled the "Deification of My Master Ekweremadu", for that is what it truly is. In seasons like this, when reward is mostly determined by the degree to which people without roots are all too willing to demean themselves and muddy reality without qualms, Okolie's effusive language is not totally out of place.

An acolyte may actually choose to idolize his hero as the best news to humanity, but Okolie ought to have known that his efforts so far are not yielding the desired results. Evidently, he has failed to take notice of the prevailing mood among the Igbo and conscientious Nigerians. I do not know what news in Igboland that could be considered bigger at the moment than the prospect of an Igbo president in 2023. But whereas that is the prevailing debate among our reasonable brothers and neighbors, Okolie is irretrievably assailed by the manifestly outright rejection of his master's supine hankering after a gubernatorial office. For a man the recent publication of his achievements allegedly "literally broke the internet" and who has been "instrumental in the making of a good number of political office holders including governors" Ekweremadu's preoccupation at this time ordinarily ought to be at the national political canvas.

There is therefore really no need to imagine if anybody was afraid of an Ike Ekweremadu in the politics of our dear state. But in a curious twist of fate, Ekweremadu is seemingly afraid of his own shadows. He is simply haunted by the truth which he has serially desecrated in his vainglorious pursuit of power; haunted by his shadows that hover over him as a grim reminder of his utter disregard for integrity even in the most innocuous agreements. He is haunted by a career which has spanned several years without a modicum of principles, where everything is permissible in so far as it nourishes his avaricious appetite to remain in power at all cost. Where anything and everything can be sacrificed including his own testaments! This has been the defining trait of his political career. But as I have stated somewhere else, no matter how much he may seek to run away from his shadows, he bears a peculiar burden because there is no verdict more scathing than the words of a man standing in witness against himself!

A few months after the 2015 general elections, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), set up a committee to review the circumstances that led to the sobering defeat it suffered, and to recommend steps that would help the party to avert a repeat scenario in future elections. That post-election committee was chaired by Ekweremadu and their findings regarding the party's loss was unequivocal: the major reason was its non-adherence to the principle of zoning/rotation that has guided the party over the years! Speaking after the submission of his committee's report, Ekweremadu emphatically recommended that "the zoning principle, which has been the strength of the party, should be strictly adhered to as a matter of urgency AT ALL LEVELS!" This, the committee added, would mitigate injustice and feelings of marginalization in the PDP; (Vanguard, October 1, 2015)!

Today, Okolie and his co-travelers now denounce this noble pronouncement by their master and which he hailed as "the strength of the PDP", all in a quest to burnish the hubris of his narcissistic indulgence. Without a doubt, this whimsical approbation and reprobation has one sole aim: to rationalize Ekweremadu's attempt to scuttle the rotational governorship template in the state, and possibly deny Enugu East Senatorial Zone its rightful claims to the governor's seat which should naturally shift to the zone in line with the state's zoning arrangement.

According to Okolie, the "anti-Ekweremadu gang-up isn't driven by altruism or common good". But these accusations may well be levelled against his master too because his maddening ambition violates the rotational governorship understanding which has long fostered inclusion and sustained peaceful co-existence in Enugu State. What can be considered altruistic in a quest that has bred so much divisiveness and attempts to brazenly upend an existing political order?

Leadership is about legacy. A leader who apparently has little qualms about the political and cultural division that his ambition will foster should never be trusted. Integrity is the immutable currency that drives the wheel of every noble endeavor including politics. Unfortunately, Ekweremadu has scant regards for its ethos and his streak on this path of infamy is beginning to unsettle keen observers. For instance, it is an incontestable norm in every democracy that the party with the majority seats naturally produces the principal officers of the legislature. But this principle was unabashedly disregarded by Ekweremadu when he re-emerged as the deputy senate president by some political sleight of hand of the most egregious form in 2015, despite being a member of an opposition party. Suffice it to say, the no-love-lost relationship between the 8th National Assembly and the executive that virtually crippled governance in the 2015 - 2019 period had its roots in that egregious conduct engineered by Ekweremadu.

But in a pervert celebration of feats, that unconscionable act is regretably regularly cited by people like Okolie to burnish his credential as a democrat. As if the political shenanigans that fostered that ill-conceived contraption in 2015 wasn't atrocious enough, Ekweremadu tried again in 2019 without compunction! There is nothing edifying in an action that merely portrays a politician as a power-hungry individual who covets a political office solely for its sake. It was nothing but greed personified. His interest in the 2023 governorship election in Enugu State is no less coloured by the same narcissistic and self-serving instincts. It presents an unfortunate visage of a man who has had it all but who has scant regard for common good, and who suffers from a paralysis of conscience. No amount of sophistry can whitewash the self-seeking quest that his governorship ambition represents. To him, the social and political cost of his ambition doesn't matter. What matters, apparently, is the crown - even if it comes at the expense of his reputation.

Yet, it must be restated that Ekweremadu still remains one very best beneficiary of this hallowed principle of zoning. His emergence as deputy president of the senate in 2007 was no less a product of zoning, as the PDP had zoned the senate president's slot that year to the North-Central (won by Senator David Mark) and the deputy's slot to the South-East. Even when he later assumed office as the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, it is important to emphasize that the feat was not so much a question of competence as the Parliament also runs a system that rotates the seat among the 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States. So, why would someone who had benefited from a principle that promotes inclusion speak in such scurrilous fashion against it?

But it could be asked as well why the former deputy Senate president often seems incapable of acting judiciously towards systems that had benefited him, or indeed, individuals who had been his benefactors. A vivid example was the uncharitable payback he gave the former governor of old Anambra State, Chief Jim Nwobodo, a man who literally plucked him from the labyrinths of obscurity to the limelight in 1999. Basking in his status as the godfather of a new governor, Chief Nwobodo peremptorily foisted him on Gov. Chimaroke Nnamani as his Chief of Staff, ostensibly to be his insider eye in the new government. But no sooner had he been sworn in than he would turn the battle axe in the hands of Gov. Nnamani against his Chief Nwobodo in the epic godfather war that engulfed the state that season. Needless to recall the fate that Dr. Nnamani would on his own suffer under him since his exit from office as governor.

At Ekweremadu's personal machinations, he ensured that the ebeano leader was 'defeated' repeatedly by no less a person than the little-known Senator Gil Nnaji.

Or need we recall the fate of the Nwodo political family and the Ekweremadu perfidy? The betrayal that led to the ouster of Okwesilize Nwodo as the National Chairman of the PDP in 2010 dealt a telling blow on the reputation of the family and the ignominy of Nwodo's dismissal was too coldly served that the scar is still very much fresh. Neither need we dwell on the irreparable harm the Senator Ayogu Eze gubernatorial agenda suffered in 2015 as a consequence of a misplaced faith in his friendship. In effect, Ekweremadu has dealt indelible blows at almost every political figure you can imagine in the state! Thus, while the likes of Okolie would mindlessly invoke the name of God in a manner that suggests Ekweremadu's ambition were divinely-ordained they seemingly forget that God is not an author of confusion; that he abhors pride and often humbles those who exalt themselves!

Ekweremadu and his followers should realize that no festival is as perennial as the river Niger, and no masquerade is celebrated forever. Sagacity is being able to draw the necessary lines between venal brinkmanship and inevitable realities. In the political circle, the moment a certain masquerade begins to see himself as a god, some ethereal forces often emerge to unmask and reduce it lower than a human being. And the day a man begins to mock at himself, others will join. Besides, the Okolies of this world should be reminded that the outrage that has greeted Ekweremadu's vaulting ambition is by no means a wallow in self-pity. I believe they all know that the Nkanu people, nay Enugu East Senatorial Zone which turn he seeks to upend, are not known to ever beg for that which they have the power to earn!

Ezenwa Okenwa, a lawyer, lives in Lagos.

Obaship Tussle: Ruling House Rejects Out of Court Settlement's Claim

james Sowole

The Amororo Ruling House of Ipara Remo in Remo North Local Government area of Ogun State, has denied knowledge of any move for out of court settlement, in a suit concerning the nomination and selection of Oba Taiwo Taiwo, as Onipara of Ipara

The Sagamu High Court, had listed April 28, 2022, for hearing of the suit filed by the Amororo Ruling House, challenging the alleged imposition of Taiwo as the monarch of the town.

In the suit, the ruling house, represented by Mrs Adetimeyin Gbowowa, Prince Fatai Adeniji Sonola, Prince Muyiwa Adeyemi and Prince Haruna Adewale had dragged Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun; the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Afolabi Afuape, the Commissioner for Justice and Attorney General, and kingmakers at Ipara Remo to court alleging that Taiwo is not a member of the house but was imposed on the ancient town.

Other defendants in the suit, were the Secretary to Remo North Local Government; Olori Emo of Ipara Remo, Adekunle Ayoka; Oluwo of Ipara Remo, Oluwole Sorionola; the Acting Olotu Iwarefa of Ipara Remo, Adeyemi Opadipe; the Acting Apena of Ipara Remo, Chief Odubayo Ojeleye; Asipa Emo of Ipara-Remo, Owolabi Opadipe and Balogun of Ipara-Remo, Dr Yemi Ogunbiyi.

However, when the matter came up for hearing on Thursday, Counsel for the 11th defendant, Olatunji Ayanlaja SAN, told the court, that his client (the monarch) has informed him of moves being made for out of court settlement and has therefore suspended filing any court processes on the matter.

This announcement by the SAN, surprised counsel to the claimants, the Amororo Ruling House, Mr Rotimi Onafadeji, who countered the claim for out of court settlement,, by the defendant's counsel.

Onafadeji, pointedly, said that he was not aware of such move stating, specifically, that the matter was actually listed for hearing.

The counsel stated that his clients had not instructed him on such reconciliatory moves and there was nothing he could do without a word from them.

The counsel to the claimants said that he would therefore not mind for an adjournment in the face of the out of court settlement reportedly being made by the 11th defendant. Having listening to the counsels, Justice Nasiru Agbelu, adjourned the suit to June 8 for hearing.

The Amororo Family, had in the suit number HCS/90/2021 claimed that Oba Taiwo Taiwo is not a member of Amororo Ruling House and therefore not entitled to have participated in the nomination exercise of the Onipara of Ipara.

Representing the family, the Olori-Ebi Amororo Royal Family of Ipara Remo, Adetimeyin Gbowowa and four others maintained that the nomination process leading to the selection of Oba Taiwo for the vacant stool was null and void.

The royal family also noted that the selection process for the filling of the Onipara of Ipara Remo Chieftaincy conducted by the kingmakers is contrary to the native law and custom of Ipara-Remo.

The ruling house however prayed the court for order setting aside the nomination and selection of Oba Taiwo as Onipara of Ipara-Remo Oba elect.

The family further prayed the court for an order directing the state government to set in motion, another nomination and selection exercise towards the filing of the vacant stool of Onipara of Ipara Remo area of the state.

The ruling house also want the court to issue a perpetual Injunction restraining Oba Taiwo from parading and holding himself out as the Onipara of Ipara-Remo.

The prayers added, "an Order setting aside the interview of nominated candidates for the selection of the Onipara of Ipara-Remo, by the 10th Defendant not been saddled with the statutory role in the selection exercise of Onipara of Ipara Chieftaincy.

"An Order setting aside the purported nomination and selection of the 11th defendant as the Onipara of Ipara-Remo Oba elect.

"An Order directing the 1st 4th defendants to set in motion, another nomination and selection exercise towards the filing of the vacant stool of Onipara of Ipara Remo, Ogun State.

"An Order of Perpetual Injunction restraining the 11th Defendant not being a member of Amororo Ruling House of Onipara of Ipara-Remo Chieftaincy from participating in the nomination and selection of the Onipara of Ipara-Remo Chieftaincy.

"An Order of Perpetual Injunction restraining the 11th defendant from parading and or holding himself out as the Onipara of Ipara-Remo, Ogun State.

"An Order of Perpetual Injunction restraining the 1st to 9th defendant from recognizing the 11th Defendant as the Onipara of Ipara-Remo, Ogun State."

POLITY

A Deep Dive on David Edevbie

Allison Abanum

As ants scamper frantically towards crumbs of sugar laid bare, so does an enthusiastic journalist rush towards a ground-breaking story. Moreso, when such story embodies some of the numerous positive and glorious traits of humanity. Hear! hear! Although we live in a selfish world, there are people who have dedicated their lives to the service of humanity, transcending every race or tribal connections to leave indelible marks in the lives of many. Proving again and again that despite the apparent opposite, the human heart is capable of so much good.

"Do Davids of today still kill lions for their sheep?" a rather sarcastic question thrown at my friend Onoriode, who had earlier, with all conviction declared to me "Allison , I have seen our new Governor and his name is David," I still wonder what was more captivating, the boldness with which he made this declaration or the answer to my sarcasm? "Come and see", held by hand to see for myself, right there was my eureka moment. I knew I had stumbled on one of such ground-breaking and revealing stories.

As I promised in my last publication, I am excited to share our findings and experiences like the 12 spies marching into Cannan, albeit incognito. With high hopes of bringing back a good report. I and my two friends, Mr. Roland Ogbonnaya, Former Daily Deputy Editor of Thisday Newspaper and Currently Saturday Deputy Editor of Daily Independent Newspaper and Mr. Amos Oweifighe, News Editor at Radio Nigeria- Creek FM, embarked on an exciting and quite revealing investigative journey of the wondrous impacts of David Edevbie that was hardly spoken about. It is very rare to see a man that has traversed the corridors of leadership and politics for so long and is still being spoken about glowingly by the high and low of the society. Moving from Asaba to Abuja and a few other places gathering facts and experience of real life occurrences for over a month, left me more than convinced that my good friend Onoriode was spot on with his earlier declaration.

Landing in Asaba the stage was set and our minds prepared for the task ahead. So where do we start from? "As a past Commissioner of Finance, I am sure people in the Ministry would have a lot to say about this David and the lions he killed for his sheep" said Mr. Roland Ogbonaya. First point of call, Ministry of Finance. We met civil servants still in service whose names of course will not be mentioned (For Security Reasons) and who surprisingly despite speaking with strangers, spoke freely about David Edevbie and the impact he made while he was with them. I presume this is because good things cannot be hidden neither can testimonies be shut from the light by the feeble force of closed lips.

One worker went as far declaring that Mr David Edevbie was an unusual boss one that favors encouragement over and above criticism. He Described David Edevbie as a Man who has brought a lot of innovation to the Ministry with Modern Technology. The cherry on the cake for this part of our inquest was when we stumbled upon a couple of retired civil servants of the same Ministry present on some personal engagements. This was golden, we didn't waste time to engage Mr Ifeanyi Ebido who had offered long term service and retired honourably. He immediately cited a particular incident when he was talking casually albeit excitedly about his birthday with colleagues outside the complex, coincidentally the former Commissioner was coming in. Of course after respectful pleasantries was thrown his way, Ebido said he was amazed at how the boss himself weighed in to wish him a happy birthday and blessed him with "something that made me smile" in Mr Ebido's words exactly.

This warmth and generous quality of Edevbie was also echoed by workers there who knew him well. One woman declaring that "he always had words of encouragement for everyone and knew a very large percentage of the staff by name, so he related with us on more personal level and this motivated us to give our best and serve our fatherland wholeheartedly". At this point I could see the stunned look on my friend Amos Oweifighe's face. Clearly this was already exceeding his expectations as a Bayelsan.

Mr Ebido, the retired civil servant was there with a friend, a quite elderly man who we later found out was a doctor at the Federal Medical Center in Asaba. He could not help but weigh into our enquiry of his friend. Cutting in abruptly at some point, Doctor Idika said David Edevbie as far back as he could remember and till date has been paying medical bills of elderly people who are helpless in the hospital, "Even when he is not in Asaba, he will call and ask for cases of elderly helpless people and would not want his name to be mentioned." At this point even I had the stunned look on my face. "He gave the directive that we should not tell anyone that he paidthe bill but rather tell them to give Glory to God," the doctor added.

This revelation was like laying crushed crystals of sugar on the floor and it encouraged us to follow like ants not wanting to miss out on more of the sweetness that is to come. So off to FMC Asaba we went. There, we spoke to a couple of colleagues of our new doctor friend and they not only coroborated his story but one actually went as far as sharing a more personal story of how one of his patients that was well known to him on a personal level, had a severe case of cateracts and could not pay for the surgery.

He narrated how he stumbled upon the opportunity David



Edevbie

Edevbie offered at the time and was blown away when he found out that the said patient was shortlisted as one the numerous people that would have their bills taken care of by a "knight in shining armor" as he put it. More intriguing was the fact that neither he nor the said patient even met this knight and also that they were both not from Delta State. I could still notice in his voice that after all these years he was still in awe of how such a charitable spirit that eclipses tribal divides and cements its place in the ever glad hearts of many.

It was Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "we need leaders not in love with money but in love with justice, not in love with publicity but in love with humanity." After what we experienced in Asaba, Amos my friend spoke about Mr David Edevbie in terms of the last phrase of the mentioned statement: "Surely there is more to this person" Amos Oweifighe declared on one of our strategy meetings and therefore off to Abuja was the decision.

Edevbie had served as a Principal Secretary to former late President Umaru Yar'Adua and from our findings not only discharged his duty with utmost integrity but with glorious warmth and hospitality to all those who encountered him. One Farouk Danlami and Binta Galadima were some of the people we had used our journalist influence to speak to on our visit to the Presidential Villa.

Fortunately they both knew Edevbie and surprisingly well to some extent. They spoke in high regards of his deligence to work and how humble and warm a person he is. They equally spoke of David Edevbie's innovative and modern technology skills. Pressed further, Mrs Binta revealed how she knew quite personally people that had met him for assistance one way or the other and never went back disappointed.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

2023: Adebayo Takes Consultation to the North

Last week, Prince Adewole Adebayo of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, picked his N35 million nomination and expression of interest forms, the first and only, for now, within his party. Adebayo is a lawyer and businessman. He preferred his private and successful life until he realized that Nigeria, based on recent happenings, is gradually heading towards the precipice. He wants to help bring back the lost glory of the once 'Gant of Africa'. The purchase of forms, of course, underscores the seriousness and preparedness of the aspirants to contest the February 25, 2023 presidential election.

That, however, is actually the beginning of the marathon race culminating in the 2023 general elections.

The importance of the presidential election is not lost on Adebayo who, at the moment, is the youngest presidential aspirant. He clocked 50 four months ago. Knowing how big and vast the country is, and the importance of connecting with the grassroots, who ultimately are the deciders of his fate, Adebayo and his team (comprising Senator Muhammed Alkali, Deputy National Chairman, North East, former Minister of Sports, Mr. Solomon Dalung, Senator Ugochukwu Uba, Chief Peter Ame etc) for the past three months, have been crisscrossing the country, particularly the North where he has been meeting the people.

Being a blue blood himself, his first port of call was the palace of the Emir of Kano, His Royal Majesty, Aminu Ado Bayero, where he went to condole with him over his mother's death and used the opportunity to seek his blessing for his presidential aspiration which he gladly did. The emir, who, obviously, was glad seeing him, advised that he should not only go out to the people and present to them his manifestos, but more importantly, he should thoroughly implement the manifestos when he eventually makes it to the Villa. Adebayo expressed his happiness for the warm welcome accorded him and his delegation

For him, Kano is home for all and it is an example of what Nigeria can be. "The only thing I will promise is that there is nothing we will do in and out of power that will be an embarrassment to this palace", he stated.

In Niger State, he was warmly welcomed to the residence of former Head of State, General Abubakar Abdulsalami, where he told the erstwhile Nigerian leader that he came to seek his blessing, knowing that he had occupied the same office he is presently seeking.



Adebayo, explaining his ambition to Babangida

The presidential aspirant said: "I am an ordinary citizen from Ondo seeking the office of the President, an office that was created by the Constitution and signed personally by you. You know what to expect of the occupant of that office.

"I would, in the next one year, convince you, Your Excellency, and your peers and my colleagues, that I have all the requisite qualities to do well. Seeing and hearing you now, I am more prepared now to be President of Nigeria than I was when we came to this residence this morning".

Adebayo's presence at the residence of former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, wasn't different from Abdulsalami's.

Babangida was happy receiving him for many reasons: He is young, courageous, purposeful and has power of conviction. He, however, admonished the presidential aspirant that no matter the aspiration, the country must come first.

"Babangida is one of the promoters of one Nigeria. He advised that we should love the country more than we love ourselves", Adebayo said after the meeting.

"He said we should show patriotism by taking bold decisions for the benefit of all. He had the power 100% on his hand but let go of it. I have learnt from him that power is transient".

Adebayo is one of the few presidential aspirants who has no baggage. He has never been in government. He has no godfather even though he sees the late Aminu Kano as his political inspiration. In fact he wants to be Aminu Kano reincarnate.

"That is the kind of President I would be when we come to this position of authority", Adebayo said. "Any person who is old and knew Mallam Aminu Kano from the day we take office insha Allah will know Aminu Kano has come to power.

"Chapter Two of the Nigerian Constitution has everything Aminu Kano stood for. He would be our guide when we get into office".

Nigerian politics, just like Nigerians, is peculiar. Most elite would rather stay off it because it is not only brutish, it lacks any form of ideology. For a private and successful businessman like Adebayo, what exactly is appealing in Nigerian politics? He smiled before responding to the question: "Politics is the way by which society negotiates common affairs and comes to a common decision and appoints common agents, using common resources to solve common problems.

"Politics is not a profession for politicians. Politics is the public participation in the management of public affairs.

"Politics is when you live your life for the good of others, like the Mallam Aminu Kano did. Politics is where you build a legacy .

"You know in other countries, the best way to be a hero is to do good work.

"In Nigeria, unfortunately, the best and quickest way to be a hero is to die. We don't celebrate our heroes while alive. We only do when they are dead. The situation must change".

That kind of change, Adebayo said, must be engineered by youths, who, he noted, have the numerical strength to turn the tide, make it not only liveable but also enduring.

His words: "Young people have a greater challenge because they have the population. And so if they fail in 2023, we should not hear of any EndSARS again because the real time for EndSARS in Nigeria is 2023 .

"This is the time that young people must mobilize themselves.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

Grooming Centre Presents Photobook on 30 Tenacious Women

Olaoluwakitan Babatunde

Grooming Centre, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on enabling financial inclusion among market women and artisans, last Thursday presented a photobook on 30 Nigerian women titled: The Stories of Impact: Real Women, Real Lives, Real Growth.

The launch of the photobook, which highlights and celebrates the resilience, grit, and courage of 30 women and their life-changing journey with Grooming Centre, was held at the Grooming Centre Multi-purpose Hall in Ejigbo, Lagos.

Speaking at the event, Dr Akindele Akinsoye, the CEO of Platform Capital, co-sponsors of the event eulogised women for whom he said the future belonged.

"The work that Grooming Centre is doing is very important because by helping women build sustainable enterprises, tooling them, scaling them, skilling them, they are preparing them to build bigger businesses in the future, being that the micro segment is the conveyor belt of big corporations," he said.

The highlight of the event was a review of the book by Yale University Fellow and Founder of the School Politics, Policy, and Governance (SPPG), Dr. Oby Ezekwesili.

Ezekwesili joined virtually, was unable to attend physically as the day was her birthday and her family insisted that she spent it at Abuja.

She lauded the phenomenal work that the organisation was doing, describing it as incredible.

Praising the quality of production of the book, Ezekwesili did a methodical review of the book, telling each story with a passion and that brings to life the experiences of the women in the book, with one of the stories relating to her as a young woman when her father passed on.

Describing the book as one that tells the story of development done at micro level with real impact, she said it made the title – Stories of Impact: Real Women, Real Lives, Real Growth – proper.

"It is a book that should claim a stand on the shelf of development books," she said.

She pointed out some development issues that the book highlights including the fact that 60 percent of businesses by women do not have access to finance, a situation which hampers growth from the current case of two percent of growth annually.



L-R: Grooming Centre Member, Governing Council, Franklin Odoemenam; former Presidential Candidate, Kowa Party, Prof. Remi Sonaiya; Executive Director, Isoken Nwabunka; Chairman, Governing Council, Dr. Noel Ihebuzor and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Godwin Nwabunka at the launch of the photobook titled The stories of impact: Real Women, Real Lives, Real Growth at Grooming Centre, Ejigbo Lagos.

Ezekwesili called for measurement and evaluation of the input of women, calling on the relevant policy makers to get copies of the book promising to send them to t people who should read, with an interest to publicise the good works of Grooming Centre and the wonderful stories of success.

An interesting segment of the event was a fireside chat on sustainable efforts for social impact – The Grooming impact, where the Chief Executive Officer, Grooming Centre, Dr. Godwin Nwabunka and Member, Grooming Centre, Governing Council, Jonathan-Ichaver fielded questions bordering the genesis of Grooming Centre and other related issues.

Anchoring a pledge drive for internally displaced people IDPs in the country, a representative of Grooming Centre's partner, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative and former Sierra Leonian refugee, himself, Tibo Rogers, while calling for donations to the agency, recounted his own experience as a refugee in Ghana, and spoke about the difficult life of refugees.

Goodwill review messages were also done on the book by a personalities including former Presidential Candidate for Kowa Party, Professor Remi Sonaiya, who lauded the sterling efforts of Grooming Centre.

Former Vice Chancellor of the University of Uyo, Dr. Essien, introduced a lot of humour in his brief review of the book that sent the entire hall reeling with laughter, but all the while pointing out the fine points in the book, while inspiring the audience.

The presentation of the book was the semi climax of the event, done with the women whose stories were told right on the podium.

Grooming Centre is an NGO founded in 2006 to address the perennial challenge of access to credit at the base of the pyramid.

Since its inception, the Centre has provided 12 million credits and currently empowers 720,000 client members by providing financial and non-financial services through a network of 605 branches in 26 states and the Federal Capital Territory.



L-R: Chairman, St. John Mary Vianney Priest Home Project, Archdiocese of Lagos, Rev. Fr. Anthony Fadairo; Chairman of the occasion, Mr. Gregory Ehimare Enahoro; Lagos State Governor, Mr., Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Lagos, Most Rev. Dr. Alfred Adewale Matins; Mr. Anthony Idigbe SAN; Secretary to the Archbishop, Rev. Fr. Paul Ariole; Committee members, Mr. Yemi Aluko and Lanre Dasilva Ajayi at the Unveiling Ceremony and Inaugural dinner of St. John Mary Vianney Priest Home Project held in Lagos...yesterday SUNDAY ADIGUN



L-R: Members, Edo State Private Property Protection Law Implementation Committee, Mr. A Agbonlahor AIG rtd; General Friday Airende rtd, Mr. Nosa Edo-Osagie; Hon. Justice Alero Edodo- Eruaga rtd. Dr. Olufemi Ayewoh; Mr. J.O. Uhunamure; and Mr. Oshirekun Otokunrin after their inauguration by the state Governor, Godwin Obaseki in Edo State... recently.



L-R: Artist and Hero Lager Brand Ambassador, Owoh Chimaobi Chrismathner aka Zoro; Marketing Director, International Breweries Plc, Tolu Adedeji; member of P-Square and Hero Brand Ambassador, RudeBoy, and winner of 2021 Big Brother Naija, White Money, at the Hero Nwanne Connect Largest Gathering of Brothers held in Onitsha.

GLOBAL SOCCER

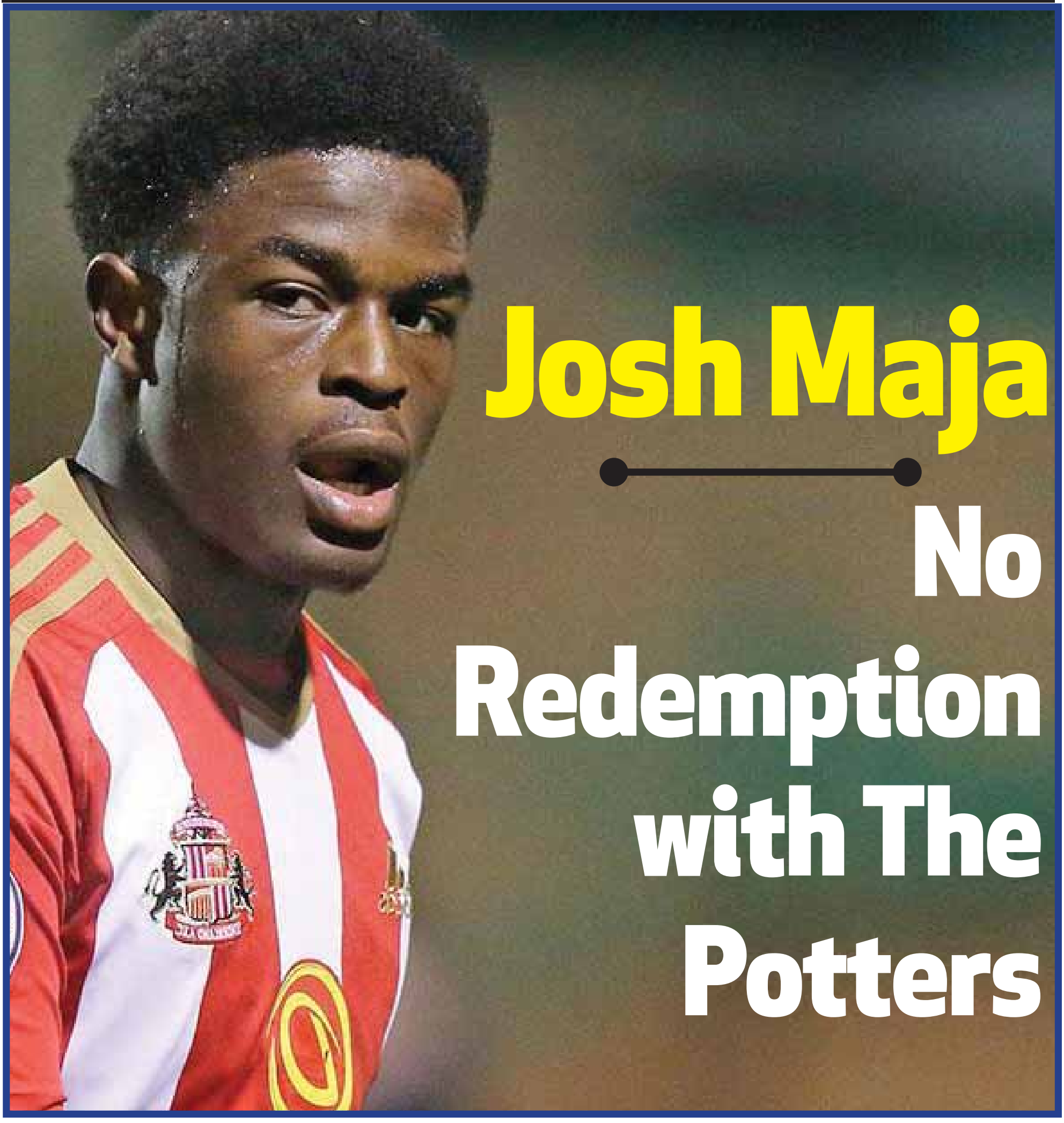


ACID TEST FOR QUADRUPLE QUEST

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

30.4.2022

PAGE. 29



Josh Maja

No Redemption with The Potters

GLOBAL SOCCER

Josh Maja
No Redemption with The Potters

With just 45 minutes of football across four appearances, Josh Maja's time during his return to Bordeaux after a loan spell at Fulham was everything but a success. The Nigerian moved to Stoke City in an attempt to redeem his career but it was not to be as he fails to impress, leaving him at the mercy of booing home fans and indeed out of reckoning in the national team



Josh Maja's time with Stoke City may be coming to an end

Josh Maja's departure from Wearside mid-way through Sunderland's first season in the third tier was a controversial episode with the player and his agent often portrayed as the villain.

But it hasn't worked out for the striker in France though there were some flashes of quality during the loan move to Fulham.

Having scored 11 goals in 48 games for Bordeaux after joining from Sunderland in January 2019, Maja spent the second half of last season on loan with Fulham, where he was unable to prevent them suffering relegation from the Premier League.

Maja then returned to France in the summer, but struggles for fitness and game time saw him feature on just four more occasions for Bordeaux, all of which were late appearances from the bench.

As a result, Maja secured a return to England in the final hours of the January transfer window, completing a move to Stoke on a loan deal until the end of the season but could not find respite.

Maja has been subject to jeering by Stoke City fans culminating in assistant manager, Dean Holden to say, it's "really important" the supporters "get behind the players" after the Nigerian was booed off the pitch last weekend.

The striker was substituted off the pitch in the 87th minute of the Potters' 1-0 win over Sheffield United at the bet365 Stadium last Saturday. The change was met with jeers as the player walked to the sideline to be replaced by Steven Fletcher.

Maja endured a frustrating afternoon against the Blades, having just one attempt on goal.

It's not the first time one of Michael O'Neill's players has been singled out for ridicule as he's been subbed off this season, but while Holden says he understands the frustration from some of the fanbase, he stresses that unity is key for the club to keep progressing.

"I think there's obviously a lot of frustration around for our supporters with the way the season has panned out from where we were going into the January transfer window and where we are now," the ex-defender said.

"I totally understand that, of course. I think the key thing for us is that we stay together as a group, as players, staff, as a club, with the supporters.

"This place can build some incredible atmospheres. Some pals I've got back in Manchester who have come down here over the years say it's the best place they've been for an atmosphere. Obviously, performances on the pitch can help that.

"Of course we'd ask our supporters to encourage our players as much as possible during the game. There are players who have been down a little bit on confidence. Results are usually the reason for that, but now that we're on the back of a couple of good wins we're looking forward

"With the supporters behind us, I'm sure there'll be a good crowd there, there always is supporting us in away games, it's really important they get behind the players, and they know that as well."

There is already a big question lingering about what might happen next to Maja. The 23-year-old is due to go back to France next month but where will he play next season? Reports suggest that Birmingham City might resurrect interest in the forward.

Maja had a good record at Sunderland but that was half-a-season in League One, he'd had a bit of a stop-start time in France and had missed the first half of the season with a back injury.

There was hope and excitement because Stoke desperately needed and need a forward who can lead the line and score regularly but that probably came with a world weary dose of realism.

He scored twice in his first three appearances although that probably gave a false impression of what he is about. It seemed like he might be that kind of forward who can have a quiet game but pop up with a goal.

Instead, his best work has been his link-up play. He's skilful and a good reader of the game outside the box. He works well with players like Romaine Sawyers and has been central to four goals in his last five appearances, three assists and assisting an assist.

He had only had one shot in the seven games prior to the win over QPR, though, let alone score himself.

There was a surreal moment when he pretty much stopped on a counter-attack and stood still as defenders raced past him into position. That didn't go down too well with fans but Stoke were winning in the closing stages and they've had a horrible habit of throwing games away this season – 30 points dropped from winning positions.

Stoke have got an option to turn the loan deal permanent so they've at least got first refusal. They could try to negotiate with Bordeaux considering he's not been prolific and he'll only have 12 months left on his contract. It doesn't seem like he's got any future in France.

The big question for Stoke's recruitment team as they weigh up his value is whether he can be the striker they can hang their hat on to lead a promotion charge. There probably isn't a big enough transfer war chest to go for him and another front-line signing.

Manager Michael O'Neill likes him and it'd be a good bet for Stoke to do a deal if the price was right. Maja has said right from the off that he hopes his stay would be long-term.

O'Neill has highlighted a problem with Stoke not being able to work possession quickly enough up the pitch when they have dominated the ball.

"You always need that option to get in behind and it's something we need to see more of from Josh Maja. There were times against Sheffield United when Maja would have scored goals if he'd read the situation better in the penalty area and taken a chance with his runs, timed his movement and broken free of his marker," he said.

Maja started his first-team career with Sunderland, where he managed to score 16 goals in 41 league appearances and his display attracted Bordeaux, whom he signed for in January 2019 and went ahead to score 12 goals in 52 appearances.

In August 2019, the then Nigeria manager Gernot Rohr said he wanted Maja to represent the Super Eagles and he finally made his international debut on September 10 in a 2-2 friendly against Ukraine, replacing Victor Osimhen in added time.

GLOBAL SOCCER

Liverpool Quadruple Quest Gets Newcastle Test

With the EFL League in the bag, already in the final of the FA Cup, trailing Manchester City by a single point in the Premier League and one leg already in the finals of the Champions League, Liverpool's Quadruple Quest is definitely on course. The Reds would however face an acid test against in-form Newcastle at St. James' Park in today's Premier League first game



Mo Salah was unstoppable at Anfield when Liverpool defeated Newcastle 3-1 in the first leg

Two of the Premier League's in-form sides kick off the next round of fixtures in today's lunchtime, as Newcastle United play host to Liverpool at St James' Park.

The Magpies put three unanswered goals past Norwich City last time out, while Jurgen Klopp's side defeated Villarreal 2-0 in the first leg of their Champions League semi-final.

A combination of effective January spending and the hard work of Eddie Howe and his coaching staff have transformed Newcastle from relegation contenders into top-half hopefuls for the final few weeks of the season, and optimism could not be higher among the Magpies fanbase at present.

Newcastle's brilliant Brazilians were in full flow at Carrow Road in a 3-0 triumph for Howe's side last weekend, as Joelinton bagged a brace before new boy Bruno Guimaraes kept up his hot goalscoring streak with a delightful chip early in the second half.

A four-game winning streak is just what the doctor ordered for Newcastle before a meeting with the quadruple-chasing Reds, and the Magpies have now risen to ninth in the rankings with four games left to play. Incredibly, a top-seven finish and spot in European competition is not mathematically impossible for the North East club either.

Newcastle's quartet of victories has also seen them concede just one goal in the process, although such resilience will be tested to the maximum against Liverpool, and Howe has also overseen a run of six consecutive Premier League victories at St James' Park.

Not since before Christmas have the Magpies suffered a top-flight defeat in front of the home crowd, but Liverpool have recent experience when it comes to defeating previously stern opposition ahead of a game that they reportedly asked the Premier League to reschedule amid the tight turnaround.

Despite humbling Juventus on their own turf and getting the better of Bayern Munich over two legs, gleaning a positive result at the Anfield fortress was a step too far for Unai Emery and Villarreal, as Liverpool huffed and puffed and eventually knocked down the yellow brick wall.

It took a slice of fortune for Jurgen Klopp's side to make the second-half breakthrough as Jordan Henderson's cross deflected off Pervis Estupinan into the back of the net, and Sadio Mane would poke home to hand Liverpool a healthy advantage before next week's second leg.

Emery has insisted that Liverpool will "suffer" in Spain next week - a stark warning for Klopp, whose frustrations surrounding the fixture schedule should not be hidden - but the hectic Easter period has seen the Reds pick up six wins from eight in April so far.

A 2-0 Merseyside derby success over Everton kept the gap at the top to Manchester City to just one point, meaning that Liverpool would temporarily rise to the summit with just a draw owing to their better goal difference before the reigning champions meet Leeds United a few hours later.

Klopp is faced with a selection dilemma in the final third every week, and Liverpool's eight games this month have seen them notch up at least two goals on each occasion, and no side has managed to hand the Reds their first away loss of 2022 in any competition yet.

Liverpool ran out 3-1 winners the last time Newcastle paid a visit to Anfield on December 16 - a result which stretched the Reds' unbeaten run against their upcoming hosts to 10 league games since going down 2-0 to the Magpies in the 2015-16 campaign, with familiar face Georginio Wijnaldum on the scoresheet at St James' Park that day.

Meanwhile, Manchester City will be looking to remain in the driving seat for the Premier League title when they travel to Elland Road to face Leeds United this evening.

The Citizens came out on top in a seven-goal thriller against Real Madrid in the Champions League semi-finals in midweek, while the Whites played out a goalless draw away at Crystal Palace on Monday.

When Jesse Marsch took the reins from Marcelo Bielsa at Elland Road in February, Leeds were positioned in the relegation zone and hopes of clambering their way to safety seemed slim. While demotion to the Championship still remains a possibility, fears of the drop have eased since Marsch's arrival. The American started out with back-to-back league defeats against Leicester City and Aston Villa, but he has since made his mark with the Whites, accumulating 11 points during a five-game unbeaten run.

Leeds remain 16th in the Premier League table and five points clear of the bottom three, though Everton in 18th place still have one game in hand.

Marsch has notably tightened up what once was a leaky defence, with Leeds conceding only four goals in their last five games and keeping successive clean sheets in their last two matches against Watford and Crystal Palace, just their fourth and fifth shutouts in 2021-22.

Considering that they shipped 21 goals in their previous six matches, Leeds have made vast improvements defensively, but their backline will now face the "ultimate test" according to Marsch, when they come up against league leaders Man City, who thumped the Whites 7-0 earlier this season.

With Leeds to face the Citizens, Arsenal and Chelsea in their next three league games, this challenging run could be a defining moment in their season and any points picked up will be invaluable in their bid to avoid the drop.

The Whites are unbeaten in their last three home meetings against City, including a 1-1 draw last season, and a surprise victory on today would see them move eight points clear of the relegation zone before Everton face Chelsea on Sunday.

"Football is a fantastic spectacle" – those were the words of Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola following their enthralling 4-3 victory at home against Real Madrid in the first leg of their Champions League semi-final on Tuesday.

Despite victory, City supporters came away from the Etihad Stadium slightly aggrieved that their side had not scored more against the Spanish giants, after carving out a plethora of chances throughout the 90 minutes. Nevertheless, City remain on course to reach their second successive Champions League final.

Guardiola and co will now put their European efforts to one side as they turn their attention back to the Premier League title race. At the time of writing, City currently sit one point clear of Liverpool in second, though the Reds could momentarily climb to the summit if they were to beat Newcastle United in today's lunchtime kickoff, before the Citizens aim to jump back to the top five hours later.

After three successive Premier League home games, City travel to Elland Road boasting the best away record in the top flight this term, as they have put together a 15-game unbeaten run since losing 1-0 to Tottenham Hotspur on the opening day of the season.

No team in Europe's top-five leagues have won more than Man City (25) so far this campaign, and another victory is required today against Leeds as they bid to win their fourth Premier League crown in five years.

Premiership Table

Man City	33	59	80
Liverpool	33	63	79
Chelsea	33	40	66
Arsenal	33	12	60
Tottenham	33	18	58
Man Utd	35	2	55
West Ham	34	8	52
Wolves	33	4	49
Newcastle	34	-15	43
Leicester	32	-4	42
Brighton	34	-11	41
Brentford	34	-8	40
Southampton	34	-16	40
Crystal Palace	33	2	38
Aston Villa	32	-4	37
Leeds	33	-30	34
Burnley	33	-16	31
Everton	32	-21	29
Watford	33	-36	22
Norwich	33	-47	21

Premier League

TODAY

Newcastle v Liverpool	12:30
Aston Villa v Norwich City	15:00
Southampton v Crystal Palace	15:00
Watford v Burnley	15:00
Wolves v Brighton	15:00
Leeds Utd v Man City	17:30

SUNDAY

Everton v Chelsea	14:00
Tottenham v Leicester	14:00
West Ham v Arsenal	16:30

MONDAY

Man Utd v Brentford	20:00

La Liga

TODAY

Alavés	v Villarreal	13:00
Madrid	v Espanyol	15:15
Valencia	v Levante	17:30
Bilbao	v Atlético	20:00

SUNDAY

Elche	v	Osasuna	13:00
Granada	v	Celta Vigo	15:15
Vallecano	v	Sociedad	17:30
Barcelona	v	Mallorca	20:00

MONDAY

Getafe	v	Real Betis	20:00

Hot Shot

PLAYERS	CLUB	GOALS
Mo Salah	Liverpool	22
Heung Son	Tottenham	17
Cristiano Ronaldo	Man Utd	17
Diogo Jota	Liverpool	15
Sadio Mané	Liverpool	14
Harry Kane	Tottenham	12
Ivan Toney	Brentford	12

GLOBAL SOCCER



Awoniyi



Supert Falcons celebrating

Union Berlin Targets Odey as Awoniyi's Replacement

German Bundesliga side, Union Berlin have identified Randers' Nigeria national teamer Stephen Odey as a possible replacement for Taiwo Awoniyi.

Having put himself in the shop window with eighteen goals in all competitions, Awoniyi has been tipped to move on to pastures new in the summer transfer window, with the English Premier League his preferred destination.

Another Nigeria international striker on the books of Union Berlin in Anthony Ujah has two months before the expiry of his contract and it is unlikely his contract will be renewed.

Union Berlin have already started scouring the market for Awoniyi's replacement and have placed Odey on their list of transfer targets.

And the former Mountain of Fire star will not come cheap with Randers looking at selling him for a fee of 4.5 million euros.

Odey has accumulated 29 appearances in all competitions since joining Randers last summer and in those games, he has tallied 13 goals and provided two assists.

The 24-year-old has a contract with the East Jutland club until June 30, 2024.

Injury Knocks Out Eagles Midfielder, Onyeka of Man Utd Confrontation

Super Eagles star, Frank Onyeka has been ruled out of Brentford's Premier League clash against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Monday.

The central midfielder has not been involved in any of the matches played by Brentford this month due to fitness issues.

Onyeka is still on the sidelines after suffering an ankle injury in the first half of the 2022 World Cup playoff against Ghana on March 29.

Based on the latest update provided by Brentford manager Thomas Frank, Onyeka will be out of action until at least after the game against Southampton, putting his availability for the upcoming friendlies against Mexico and Ecuador in doubt.

"Ethan Pinnock is not ready. We hope that Southampton could a possibility which is the same for Sergi Canos," Frank was quoted as saying by Brentford's.

"Frank Onyeka could be longer. Saman Ghoddos is out with a twisted ankle. "

Playing for a newly promoted side, Onyeka showed what he is capable of prior to his spell on the sidelines, making 20 appearances for a Brentford side who are safe from relegation.

Falcons to Play Banyana, Botswana, Burundi at

Nine-time winners Nigeria have been drawn to play South Africa's Banyana Banyana, Botswana and Burundi in Group C of the 12th Women Africa Cup of Nations taking place July 2 – 23 in Morocco.

Nigeria and South Africa faced off in the same group at the last edition of the competition in Ghana, with the Banyana winning by the odd goal. Both teams again met in the final, which ended scoreless after regulation and extra time. The Super Falcons eventually triumphed 4-3 on penalties to win their 9th title.

Host nation Morocco head Group A that also has Burkina Faso, Senegal and Uganda, while Cameroon head Group B where they tango with Zambia, Tunisia and Togo.

All the four semifinalists at the championship will represent Africa at the first –ever 32 –team FIFA Women's World Cup finals, to be hosted by New Zealand and Australia in the summer of next year.

Becker Sentenced to Two and a Half Years

Three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker has been jailed for two and a half years for hiding £2.5m worth of assets and loans to avoid paying his debts.

The former world number one, 54, was declared bankrupt on June 21 2017, owing creditors almost £50m, over an unpaid loan of more than £3m on his estate in Mallorca, Spain.

BBC commentator Becker transferred almost 427,000 euros (around £390,000) from his business account to others, including those of his ex-wife Barbara and estranged wife Sharlely "Lilly" Becker.

The father-of-four also failed to declare his share in a £1m property in his home town of Leimen, Germany, hid an 825,000 euro (almost £700,000) bank loan - worth £1.1m with interest - and concealed 75,000 shares in a tech firm, valued at £66,000.

Becker, who was handed a two-year suspended sentence for tax evasion and attempted tax evasion worth 1.7m euro (around £1.4m) in Germany in 2002, was found guilty of four offences under the Insolvency Act between June 21 and October 3, 2017 earlier this month.

Judge Deborah Taylor sentenced the six-time Grand Slam champion to two and a half years imprisonment, of which he will serve half, at Southwark Crown Court yesterday.

Referring to his previous conviction, the judge said: "You did not heed the warning you were given and the chance you were given by the suspended sentence and that is a significant aggravating factor."

Watford Preparing for Life after Dennis with Obafemi

Relegation-bound Watford is looking to swoop in for Nigeria-eligible striker Michael Obafemi from Swansea as they look to reshape for life in the Championship.

The former Southampton man has had a brilliant campaign with the Swans, and Watford are looking to recruit him as part of plans for Championship football.

The Hornets are 19th on the Premier League table and will likely drop to the Championship with five games left to play.

If they eventually go down, they could lose some of their top stars in the summer. Ismaila Sarr, Moussa Sissoko, and Emmanuel Dennis are some of the players on their way out of Vicarage Road.

Watford would look to replace their departures, and according to Hertslive, they are looking to snap up Obafemi from Swansea to replace Dennis.

Obafemi has been impressive for the Swans since he left Southampton last summer. The Nigeria-eligible striker has 11 goals and three assists in 30 appearances.

The Dublin-born forward has pace, and he could be an excellent bargain at €2million.

Obafemi was born in Dublin to Nigerian parents, and he has one cap for Ireland. However, he is eligible to play for Nigerian according to FIFA rules.

Lakowe Lakes to Host 2022 World Corporate Golf Challenge

Lakowe Lakes Golf and Country Estate in Lagos, has been selected as the host venue of the National Finals of this year's World Corporate Golf Challenge, the Chief Executive Officer of Falcon Golf Development Company, (FGDC), Remi Olukoya has informed.

Speaking in a chat with newsmen in Lagos during week, Olukoya, whose company; FGDC holds WCGC franchise in Nigeria said all necessary arrangements at making sure this year's edition of the event goes as planned has been put in place, noting that, the event billed for May 20th to 23rd will be a funfilled weekend for all participating golfers.

Justifying the choice of Lakowe Lakes as host of this year's event, Olukoya said the need to give golfers quality facility and a memorable golf experience informed the choice, noting that apart from the Course action, there would be other several side attractions. Lakowe Lakes Hospitality is offering several apartments from 1-4bedrooms to participants and friends at generous discounts for the period.

"We want to change the way golf is played in Nigeria by adding so much more". Apart from the the course actions, we will be offering other side attractions to keep golfers entertained throughout the competition, Olukoya explained, such as Art Exhibition, Fashion Show, Cultural display etc.

Henley & Partners, NCDMB, Banwo & Ighodalo, Pepsi, Geregu Power plc, OVH Energy, Guinness Diageo, Rwanda Airlines, First Exploration & Petroleum Development Company, Multistream Power Options Ltd, J. Linderberg are some of the events sponsors.

The world finals of this year's World Corporate Golf Challenge (WCGC) will be held in Tenerife, Spain, from October 17-21, 2022.

Players and guests from over 30 countries including Nigeria are eligible to participate and enjoy the hospitality that the Island of Tenerife has to offer.

WCGC is the largest corporate golf tournament in the world. Since its inception in 1993, more than one million golfers from over fifty countries have participated.

Ehiorobo Promises Golfers Good Time at Captain's Inaugural Tourney

Secretary of Benin Club Golf Section (BCGS), Hon. Osazuwa Ehiorobo has revealed that the Captain's Inaugural Golf Tournament today will bring in a new experience to golfers.

Ehiorobo, fondly called OZ disclosed that all necessary steps to ensure a befitting tournament has been put in place, promising that this year captain's inaugural would be a memorable event in the history of the club.

He admitted that golfers within and outside Nigeria were arriving for the tournament, noting that the calibre of golfers coming to honour the Captain, Edward Ikponmwosa Osayande will make the event a keenly contested Tournament.

"Golfers are coming from Ibori Golf and Country Club (IGCC), Asaba; UBTH Golf Club, Benin; Ikoyi Golf Club; Ikeja Golf Club; Abeokuta

Salah Wins Football Writers' Association Player of the Year

Liverpool forward, Mohamed Salah has been named the Football Writers' Association Men's Footballer of the Year for 2021/22.

Salah, 29, has contributed a hugely impressive 22 goals and 13 assists in just 31 Premier League games to help propel Jurgen Klopp's side to second in the table, just a point behind champions Man City with just five games left this season.

Salah who had previously won the award in 2018, was part of the Liverpool side that beat Chelsea to lift the Carabao Cup in February.

Meanwhile, Chelsea forward Sam Kerr was crowned the FWA Women's Footballer of the Year for 2021/22.

The Australia international has once again been the spearhead for Emma Hayes' side, with Fran Kirby and Pernille Harder in and out of the squad throughout the season with injuries.

Ex-Sports Editor, Okubanjo Seeks N20m for Kidney

A former sports editor Dipo Okubanjo, has made an appeal for help to raise N20 million for kidney transplant is currently battling for his life as he has been diagnosed with kidney disease that has left him in a dangerous health condition.

At the time he fell ill, he was a media officer with Covenant University, Ota. He had worked with many media houses, including The News/ TEMPO/ PM NEWS, The Moment and The Union.

Okubanjo, who is on weekly dialysis at the Gbagada General Hospital in Lagos, was diagnosed with renal failure last year, with the condition keeping him out of circulation since then.

According to him, the doctors said he needs N20 million for a kidney transplant, a cost he is unable to afford.

"I first thought I had malaria and I went to my local clinic, where I was attended to without any significant improvement. I was asked to do a CT scan and it was based on the result of the scan that I was referred to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) from where I was referred to the Gbagada General Hospital.

"It was at Gbagada that I was told that my kidney was failing.

"I was placed on three rounds of dialysis per week before it was reduced to two, with each costing N45,000.



Okunbajo lying on bed at Gbagada General Hospital

"I now do one per week due to paucity of funds. So far, we have spent over N5million, which have come from family, friends, my place of work and personal savings. Sourcing for funds has not been easy but God has been faithful. It is impossible to raise N20million needed for the transplant while still battling to pay for dialysis. This is why I'm reaching out to good Nigerians to help with whatever token they can afford," he stated.

Okubanjo's account, operated in his name, is domiciled at First Bank with account number 3066204016. He is also reachable on 08023531323.

Arnaut Danjuma
From Streets of Lagos to Champions League Fairytale

Born in Lagos to a Nigerian mother and a Dutch father who separated when Arnaut Danjuma was only four years old which made life almost unbearable. He however beat the odds to become one of the most sought players after a spectacular season



Arnaut Danjuma celebrates his goal against Bayern Munich

Things got so bad for Arnaut Danjuma when his parents went their separate ways when he was only four that at a time, he was homeless and had to be sleeping inside a car.

The winger however braved the odds and today, nearly half of Europe's biggest spenders are seemingly lining up to snap up one of the revelations of the season in the Spanish top-flight

If reports coming out of Spain is anything to go by, Villarreal forward Arnaut Danjuma could be on his way to one of Europe's most notable clubs.

Signed from Bournemouth for €17 million in August, Danjuma has had a sensational campaign for Villarreal in the Spanish La Liga and the UEFA Champions League.

The Dutch international, born in Lagos to a Nigerian mother, has scored 10 goals and assisted three others in 23 Primera Division games.

In the Champions League, the 25-year-old has six goals and one assist in 10 matches, including one of the goals that gave Villarreal an aggregate quarterfinal victory over Bundesliga giants Bayern Munich.

And according to Spanish publications, Fichajes, a few English and Italian clubs are interested in signing the former Club Brugge winger.

Manchester United, Liverpool, Everton, and West Ham have been linked with a possible move for Danjuma in the summer.

Jose Mourinho's AS Roma and Serie A champions Inter Milan have also been credited with an interest in the Lagos-born attacker.

In eight months, Danjuma has seen his market value more than double to €50 million and interested suitors may need to cough out close to that fee before Villarreal sanction his departure.

Danjuma could not really inspire Villarreal's attack in the Champions League semi-finals against Liverpool on Wednesday night as the Yellow submarine went down 2-0 but there is still a lot to play for in the return leg next Tuesday.

"The Championship was amazing for me," Danjuma tells i from Villarreal's training base. "A lot of people underestimate the division. It is a very good league to develop in, playing three games a week, against physically and technically tough opponents.

"It taught me a lot and sharpened everything I needed. It made me mature quickly. I was very privileged to play for Bournemouth where I had a very good season, and that prepared me for where I am today. I am doing the exact same thing as I was in the Championship last season, just on a higher platform."

Danjuma signed for Bournemouth in 2019 while they were still a Premier League club, but injuries restricted the Dutch international to just six league starts as Eddie Howe's side were relegated.

Undeterred, Danjuma stayed put and honed his craft on the south coast, scoring 17 goals from left wing in 2020-21, winning the club's Player of the Year award by unanimous decision. That persuaded Unai Emery that he would be the latest former Premier League star to become part of his revolution in Castellon.

Danjuma's rise from Championship winger to Villarreal's all-time top goal-scorer in the Champions League with six goals in less than a year is stuff of fairy tales. But it is no fluke.

"The Premier League was a frustrating time with injuries, but it taught me so much about what the top players need to do on and off the pitch," he continues. "I watch a lot of clips. I speak a lot with the manager, I've got my own personal trainer, my own personal nutritionist, my own individual striker coach, who I work with on a daily basis after training, watching hours of clips. I stay after training with the Villarreal striker coach Antonio Rodriguez. All in my own time.

"There are lots of quality players who have never succeeded in their career. And on the contrary, there are a lot of players who have no quality at all, but play week in, week out at the highest level and have lifted a Champions League or World Cup. You have to have it all.

"I know I've got the quality and I've got the capability to be the very best, but it doesn't mean I am or will be the best automatically, so I work hard off the pitch too.

"Everything is by design, it is not by chance I am in the semi-finals of the Champions League."

GLOBAL SOCCER

ASSISTANT EDITOR
KUNLE ADEWALE

THISDAY ON SATURDAY
EDITOR
YEMI ADEBOWALE
DEPUTY EDITOR
AHAMIFULA OGBU

THISDAY NEWSPAPERS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/CHAIRMAN
NDUKA OBAIGBENA

MANAGING DIRECTOR
ENIOLA BELLO

DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR
ISRAEL IWEGBU

SIGMA PENSIONS RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT FUND I
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,851,377	2,985,596
Investment securities:		
- Investments at fair value (FVPL)	3,130,232	5,089,681
- Investments at amortised cost	9,910,444	2,858,224
Other assets	1,936	836
Total assets	**16,892,989**	**10,837,315**
Liabilities		
Other liabilities	28,305	19,962
Total liabilities	**28,305**	**19,962**
Net assets available for benefits	**16,863,934**	**10,817,353**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Inflows from dealing with members		
Employer contributions	1,677,465	882,322
Employee contributions	1,364,481	887,813
Transfers from other plans	1,769,330	3,695,353
	4,811,276	5,270,488
Outflows from dealing with members		
Transfers to other plans	(1,497,118)	(433,229)
Benefits paid	(67,135)	(66,133)
	(1,564,421)	(499,362)
Net additions from dealings with members	**3,247,319**	**3,770,894**
Net returns on investments:		
Investment income		
- Dividend income	197,900	88,483
- Investments at fair value (FVPL)	8,896	253,332
- Investments at amortised cost	1,062,056	317,384
Change in value of investments	100,184	696,387
(Loss)/gains on disposal of investments	(276,192)	409,184
Impairment charge on financial assets	(127)	(272)
Asset management fees	(279,981)	(181,032)
	814,442	1,211,256
Administrative expenses	(15,156)	(5,783)
	(15,156)	(5,783)
Increase in net assets for the year	4,046,601	5,376,419
Net assets available for benefits at the beginning of the year	10,817,353	5,440,934
Net assets available for benefits at the end of the year	**14,863,954**	**10,817,353**
Fund price	1.4911	1.4115
Returns on investment	5.64%	22.77%
Three year rolling average	14.24%	14.78%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2020/008/00000022495

Additionally Certified by:

Abhijeit Adek
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/001/00000024993

Nnenna D. Uduanu
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2013/ICAN/00000001826

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund I

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for benefits as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund I ("the Fund") for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

ICAN 1146227

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund I for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

SIGMA PENSIONS RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT FUND II
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	67,635,345	35,961,838
Investment securities:		
- Investments at fair value (FVPL)	33,002,201	46,253,601
- Investments at amortised cost	148,140,760	110,434,170
Restricted balances and other assets	9,709,155	4,800,646
Total assets	**258,487,372**	**197,450,765**
Liabilities		
Benefits payable	3,513,392	1,748,653
Deposit for accounting units	2,284,597	3,053,389
Other liabilities	433,399	300,971
Total liabilities	**6,211,388**	**5,083,453**
Net assets available for benefits	**222,356,384**	**192,367,302**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Inflows from dealing with members		
Employer contributions	12,931,126	10,177,286
Employee contributions	9,178,803	9,078,491
Transfers from other plans	5,581,220	1,003,822
	27,709,149	20,259,209
Outflows from dealing with members		
Transfers to other plans	(15,931,939)	(33,886,764)
Benefit paid	(828,163)	(1,003,315)
	(16,459,102)	(34,069,049)
Net additions/(withdrawals) from dealings with members	**11,253,046**	**(14,004,840)**
Net returns on investments:		
Investment income		
- Dividend income	2,466,132	1,456,153
- Interest income at fair value (FVPL)	449,804	2,837,392
- Interest income at amortised cost	19,149,585	14,893,136
Fair value gain on investments	3,347,402	8,090,406
(Loss)/gains on disposal of investments	(2,862,429)	5,332,733
Impairment charge on financial assets	(238)	(2,481)
Asset management fees	(3,408,107)	(3,237,831)
	18,925,338	28,925,848
Administrative expenses	(190,323)	(45,081)
	(190,323)	(45,081)
Increase in net assets for the year	**29,989,082**	**14,781,707**
Net assets available for benefits at the beginning of the year	192,367,302	177,603,595
Net assets available for benefits at the end of the year	**222,356,384**	**192,367,302**
Fund price	8.4468	6.9825
Returns on investment	9.48%	14.85%
Three year rolling average	12.38%	10.98%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2020/008/00000022495

Additionally Certified by:

Abhijeit Adek
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/001/00000024993

Nnenna D. Uduanu
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2013/ICAN/00000001826

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund II

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for benefits as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund II ("the Fund") for the year ended 31 December 2021

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

ICAN 1146322

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund II for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

Sigma Pensions

SIGMA PENSIONS RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT FUND III
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	34,345,971	33,725,290
Investment securities:		
- Investments at fair value (FVPL)	13,561,979	12,278,606
- Investments at amortised cost	144,735,453	134,723,032
Other assets	21,951	23,912
Total assets	**192,665,034**	**180,750,810**
Liabilities		
Other liabilities	287,723	249,576
Total liabilities	**287,723**	**249,576**
Net assets available for benefits	**192,577,311**	**180,501,234**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Inflows from dealing with members		
Employer contributions	8,853,506	8,067,244
Employee contributions	3,793,557	4,388,927
Transfers from other plans	4,500,538	17,327,872
	17,147,601	29,784,043
Outflows from dealing with members		
Transfers to other RSA plans	(18,148,387)	(25,736,859)
Benefit paid	(1,569,013)	(1,824,003)
	(19,717,400)	(27,560,862)
Net additions/(withdrawals) from dealings with members	**(2,569,800)**	**2,223,179**
Net returns on investments:		
Investment income		
- Dividend income	795,642	582,892
- Investments at fair value	370,121	2,410,460
- Investments at amortised cost	12,417,779	13,724,926
Change in value of investment	183,340	2,780,254
(Loss)/gain on disposal of investment	(853,249)	1,158,846
Impairment charge on financial assets	(10,084)	(7,148)
Asset management fees	(2,584,477)	(2,340,845)
	10,318,371	18,299,384
Administrative expenses	(167,693)	(155,928)
	167,693	(155,928)
Increase in net assets for the year	12,696,877	20,895,219
Net assets available for benefits at the beginning of the year	180,481,234	159,576,015
Net assets available for benefits at the end of the year	**192,577,311**	**180,481,234**
Fund price	1.4218	1.3057
Returns on investment	8.89%	13.93%
Three year rolling average	12.45%	11.26%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the Directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2013/ICAN/00000033835

Additionally Certified by:

Shehijala Edeh
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/003/00000034933

Ememke D. Ubuanu
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2013/ICAN/00000001828

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund III

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for benefits as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund III ("the Fund") for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

1146310

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund III for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

Sigma Pensions

SIGMA PENSIONS RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT FUND IV
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	11,455,877	13,796,143
Investments:		
Investment securities at amortised cost	65,635,587	58,851,668
Investment securities at fair value (FVPL)	3,597,718	3,881,341
Restricted balances and other assets	2,872	3,351
Total assets	**80,692,053**	**76,532,957**
Liabilities		
Benefits payable	3,939	976
Unallocated contributions	2,939	1,815
Other liabilities	55,698	38,981
Total liabilities	**62,576**	**41,770**
Net assets available for benefits	**80,573,518**	**76,391,827**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Inflows from dealing with members		
Contributions	5,863,199	5,955,980
Transfer from other plan	12,675,491	11,920,858
	18,538,690	17,176,838
Outflows from dealing with members		
Benefit paid	(20,164,285)	(17,837,373)
Transfer to other plans	(3,153,588)	(1,780,000)
	(29,717,873)	(19,617,373)
Net withdrawals from dealings with members	**(1,579,033)**	**(881,035)**
Net returns on investments:		
Investment income		
- Dividend income	136,414	84,265
- Investments at fair value	98,316	223,661
- Investments at amortised cost	6,998,705	6,919,239
Change in value of investment	84,598	977,529
(Loss) on disposal of investment	(62,953)	(93,181)
Asset management fees	(823,935)	(815,961)
Impairment charge on financial assets	(1,153)	(1,031)
	6,179,237	6,887,790
Other expenses	(17,695)	(11,182)
	(17,695)	(11,182)
Increase in net assets for the year	**4,182,689**	**4,429,543**
Net assets available for benefits at the beginning of the year	76,391,827	71,962,284
Net assets available for benefits at the end of the year	**80,573,516**	**76,391,827**
Fund price	4.2154	3.8252
Returns on investment	10.17%	9.76%
Three year rolling average	10.32%	10.46%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the Directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2013/ICAN/00000033835

Additionally Certified by:

Shehijala Edeh
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/003/00000034933

Ememke D. Ubuanu
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2013/ICAN/00000001828

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund IV

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for benefits as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund IV ("the Fund") for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

1146313

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Fund IV for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

SIGMA PENSIONS TRANSITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FUND
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,652,696	1,799,176
Total assets	**1,652,696**	**1,799,176**
Other liabilities	465	2,074
Total liabilities	**465**	**2,074**
Net assets available for transfer	**1,652,231**	**1,797,102**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000	31-Dec-20 N'000
Inflows from dealing with members		
Employer contributions	177,388	274,645
Employee contributions	152,893	199,930
Total contributions	330,281	474,475
Outflows from dealing with members		
Transfer to other plans	(603,752)	(90,433)
	(603,752)	(90,433)
Net additions from dealings with members	(273,391)	384,040
Net returns on investments:		
Investment income at amortised cost	130,133	54,300
Other expenses	(1,613)	(1,690)
(Decrease)/increase in net assets for the year	(144,871)	436,651
Net assets available for transfer at the beginning of the year	1,797,102	1,360,451
Net assets available for transfer at the end of the year	**1,652,231**	**1,797,102**
Fund price	2.6845	2.4648
Returns on investment	8.10%	2.65%
Three year rolling average	8.37%	10.09%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2020/008/00000022455

Additionally Certified by:

Kimbi-Jaja Udeh
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/021/00000024593

Nnenna D. Ubaoru
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2015/ICAN/00000011826

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Transitional Contributions Fund

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for transfer as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for transfer for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Transitional Contributions Fund ("the Fund") for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Transitional Contributions Fund for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

SIGMA PENSIONS RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT ACTIVE FUND VI
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000
Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	3,014,371
Investment securities:	
- Investments at fair value (FVTPL)	597,902
- Investments at amortised cost	3,122,458
Total assets	**6,954,731**
Liabilities	
Other liabilities	11,545
Total liabilities	**11,545**
Net assets available for benefits	**6,943,186**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 N'000
Inflows from dealing with members	
Employer contributions	191,288
Employee contributions	8,588
Transfers from other plans	6,775,178
	6,987,054
Outflows from dealing with members	
Transfers to other plans	(172,541)
Benefits paid	(65,364)
	(237,905)
Net additions from dealings with members	**6,669,101**
Net returns on investments:	
Investment income	
- Dividend income	3,471
- Investments at amortised cost	268,686
Change in value of investments	33,359
Impairment charge of financial assets	(295)
Asset management fees	(32,481)
	272,830
Administrative expenses	(1,813)
	(1,813)
Increase in net assets for the period	6,940,118
Net assets available for benefits at the beginning of the period	-
Net assets available for benefits at the end of the period	**6,940,118**
Fund price	1.2663
Returns on investment	5.32%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2020/008/00000022455

Additionally Certified by:

Kimbi-Jaja Udeh
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/021/00000024593

Nnenna D. Ubaoru
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2015/ICAN/00000011826

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Active Fund VI

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for benefits as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the period then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Active Fund VI ("the Fund") for the period ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Active Fund VI for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

SIGMA PENSIONS RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT RETIREE FUND VI
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 ₦'000
Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	757,985
Investment securities:	
- Investments at fair value (FVPL)	17,638
- Investments at amortised cost	403,621
Total assets	**1,179,244**
Liabilities	
Benefits payable	16,592
Other liabilities	1,419
Total liabilities	**18,012**
Net assets available for benefits	**1,161,232**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

	31-Dec-21 ₦'000
Inflows from dealing with members	
Employer contributions	9,168
Employee contributions	9,918
Transfer from other plans	1,951,119
	1,954,362
Outflows from dealing with members	
Transfers to other plans	16,731
Benefits paid	(169,301)
	(176,032)
Net additions from dealings with members	**1,132,330**
Net returns on investments:	
Investment income	254
- Dividend income	32,569
- Investments at amortised cost	9,958
Change in value of investments	(24)
Impairment charge of financial assets	37,707
Asset management fees	31,941
Administrative expenses	(2237)
	(2237)
Increase in net assets for the period	**1,163,252**
Net assets available for benefits at the beginning of the period	-
Net assets available for benefits at the end of the period	**1,163,252**
Fund price	1.0404
Returns on investment	4.04%

The financial statements were approved for issue by the directors of the Pension Fund Administrator on 15 March 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2020/ICSA/CO0000022435

Additionally Certified by:

Kehinde Edet
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/CIT/CO0000024553

Ebenezie D. Ubaeze
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2015/IODN/0100000014226

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Active Fund VI

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of net assets available for benefits as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the period then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Active Fund IV ("the Fund") for the period ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Fund. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

ICAN 1146319

28 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Retirement Savings Account Retiree Fund VI for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Fund. The Fund's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Fund administrator.

SIGMA PENSIONS LIMITED
RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	31-Dec-21 ₦'000	31-Dec-20 ₦'000
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,732,396	1,651,037
Investment securities	-	417,938
Loans and other receivables	857,758	740,359
Investment securities (restricted balances)	1,113,037	292,812
Restricted balances and other assets	1,802,470	2,098,762
Property, plant and equipment	504,334	566,120
Right-of-use asset	417,046	497,510
Intangible assets	352,159	356,104
Deferred tax assets	44,495	3,082
Total assets	**7,944,329**	**6,623,727**
Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	363,459	470,233
Income tax liabilities	853,930	718,608
Other liabilities	1,125,016	1,096,485
Total liabilities	**2,345,405**	**2,285,326**
EQUITY		
Share capital	984,539	984,539
Share premium	77,511	77,511
Statutory reserve	1,728,172	1,528,774
Retained earnings	2,707,702	1,747,625
Total equity	**5,498,924**	**4,338,401**
Total equity and liabilities	**7,844,329**	**6,623,727**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	31-Dec-21 ₦'000	31-Dec-20 ₦'000
Fee income	5,381,161	4,819,061
Investment and other income	382,638	335,879
	5,763,799	**5,154,940**
Business development, marketing and advertising ex	(408,378)	(235,613)
Personnel expense	(1,466,778)	(1,402,148)
Other operating expenses	(944,522)	(737,829)
(Impairment)/write back on financial assets	(2,120)	932
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	(466,643)	(566,280)
Finance costs	(59,201)	(63,140)
	2,415,957	**2,310,941**
Income tax expense	(812,401)	(735,858)
Profit for the year	**1,603,566**	**1,575,083**
Total comprehensive income	**1,603,566**	**1,575,083**

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board of directors on 15 March 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

Mark Collier
Chairman
FRC/2020/ICSA/CO0000022435

Additionally Certified by:

Kehinde Edet
Chief Financial Officer
FRC/2021/CIT/CO0000024553

Ebenezie D. Ubaeze
Managing Director/ CEO
FRC/2015/IODN/0100000014226

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF SIGMA PENSIONS LIMITED

Report on the summary financial statements

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 31 December 2021 and the summary statement of comprehensive income for the year then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of Sigma Pensions Limited ("the Company") for the year ended 31 December 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards, the Companies and Allied Matters Act, the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Company. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon. The summary financial statements and the audited financial statements do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial statements.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 25 March 2022.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Pension Reform Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent , in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), 'Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements'.

Report on other legal requirements

In accordance with our full audit report, we confirm that we did not report any exceptions under the sixth schedule of the Companies and Allied Matters Act.

Tolu Adeleke

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants Lagos, Nigeria

Engagement Partner: Tolulope Adeleke
FRC/2014/ICAN/00000008319

ICAN 1146230

21 April 2022

The summary financial statements disclosed were derived from the full financial statements of Sigma Pensions Limited ("the Company") for the year ended 31 December 2021 and cannot be expected to provide a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of the Company. The Company's auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 from which these summary financial statements were derived. The full financial statements from which these summary financial statements were derived can be obtained from the Secretary of the Company.

AUTO WORLD

Bennett Oghifo
07052343083 Email:bennett.oghifo@thisdaylive.com



Interior of Mercedes-AMG C 43 4MATIC

New Mercedes-AMG C 43 4MATIC Built with more Power, Efficiency

With technology derived directly from Formula 1, the latest generation of the Mercedes-AMG C 43 4MATIC sets new standards for innovative drive solutions both as a Saloon (combined fuel consumption 9.1-8.7 l/100 km, combined CO2 emissions 206-196 g/km) and as an Estate (combined fuel consumption 9.2-8.8 l/100km, combined CO2 emissions 209-199 g/km). Following its premiere in the Mercedes-AMG SL 43, the AMG 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine, the world's first series-production unit to feature an electric exhaust gas turbocharger, is now also being used in the C-Class.

A statement by the automaker said the new form of turbocharging guarantees particularly spontaneous response across the entire rev range and thus offers an even more dynamic driving experience. The turbocharger is operated via the 48-volt electrical system, which also feeds the belt-driven starter-generator (RSG). In the Mercedes-AMG C 43 4MATIC the unit produces 300 kW (408 hp) and, in certain driving situations, is able to call upon a brief additional boost of 10 kW (14 hp) from the RSG. The standard rear-axle steering, the AMG Performance 4MATIC permanent all-wheel drive with rear-biased torque distribution, the AMG SPEEDSHIFT MCT 9G transmission with wet start-off clutch and the AMG RIDE CONTROL suspension with Adaptive Damping System also contribute to the dynamic driving experience. In keeping with this, brand-specific features in the equipment and appointments as well as in the exterior and interior design emphasise the performance-oriented character of the new Mercedes-AMG C 43 4MATIC.

"The C-Class has always been an absolute success story for Mercedes-AMG. With the innovative technology of the electric exhaust gas turbocharger, we are once again significantly increasing the attractiveness of this latest generation. The new turbocharging system and the 48-volt on-board electrical system not only contribute to the outstanding driving dynamics of the C 43 4MATIC, but also improve its efficiency. In this way, we are demonstrating the tremendous potential that lies in electrified combustion engines. The standard all-wheel drive, the active rear-axle steering and the quick-shifting transmission all serve to enhance the Driving Performance that is the hallmark of AMG", says Philipp Schiemer, Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-AMG GmbH.

At the heart of the new Mercedes-AMG C 43 4MATIC is the AMG 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine, which combines innovative technologies and high performance with exemplary efficiency. At the same time, it remains true to a tradition typical of the brand: not only was it developed entirely at the company's site in Affalterbach, but it is also manufactured there in accordance with the principle of "One Man, One Engine". In this process, Mercedes-AMG combines the craftsmanship of its highly qualified employees with the latest production methods of Industry 4.0 and a high degree of digitalisation.

Porsche Presents New 911 Sport Classic

The new 911 Sport Classic is the second of four collector's items that Porsche has presented from its Heritage Design strategy.

According to the automaker, a total of 1,250 examples of the limited-edition model by Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur will revive the style of the 1960s and early 1970s. Like its immediate predecessor, the 997-based 911 Sport Classic presented in 2009, the appearance of this model is inspired by the original 911 (1964 – 1973) and the 1972 911 Carrera RS 2.7.1

"The Heritage Design models represent the most emotionally driven concepts of the Porsche product strategy," said Alexander Fabig, Vice President Individualization and Classic. "This unique approach sees the Style Porsche design department working with Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur to reinterpret iconic 911 models and equipment from the 1950s through to the 1980s and to revive design features from those decades." Porsche is launching four limited-edition models over an extended period. The first of these was presented in 2020: the 911 Targa 4S Heritage Design Edition with design elements from the 1950s and 1960s.

Porsche Design has also created a high-quality chronograph exclusively available to drivers who purchase the collector's edition vehicle. The watch seamlessly picks up on numerous details from the new 911 Sport Classic design. As part of the Heritage Design Classic package, selected interior elements of the new 911 Sport Classic will also be available for most current 911 models.



The new Porsche 911 Sport Classic

The wide body – otherwise reserved for the 911 Turbo models – a fixed rear spoiler in the style of the legendary 'ducktail' Carrera RS 2.7 and the double-bubble roof underscore the distinctiveness of the new 911 Sport Classic.

As with the first 997-generation 911 Sport Classic launched in 2009, the designers were inspired by the Fashion Grey paintwork of the early Porsche 356 when choosing the exclusive paint finish for the new limited-edition model. "The new 911 Sport Classic is the first vehicle to feature Sport Grey Metallic paintwork," says Michael Mauer, Vice President Style Porsche. "Grey is never boring, quite often a statement and always cool." As an alternative to the exclusive Sport Grey Metallic finish, the new 911 Sport Classic is also available in solid Black, Agate Grey Metallic, Gentian Blue Metallic or Paint to Sample.3 Twin stripes painted on the bonnet, roof and rear spoiler in light Sports Grey emphasise the car's sporty design.

TIPS OF THE WEEK

Top Tips for Caring for Your Car's Bodywork

The most prominent element of your car is its bodywork. If you're the type of person who takes pride in their car and wants to keep it looking its best, you'll know that regular maintenance is key to keeping car bodywork in good condition for years to come.

What's more, taking care of your car means you'll save money in the long run – it's less likely to be sent to the repair shop, and it will keep more of its value when the time comes to sell it. In this article, we're revealing our top tips when it comes to caring for your car's bodywork.

Choose the right conditions for cleaning

Many people don't realise that there are good and bad times to clean your car, but in fact it's essential to make sure you don't do it in conditions that are too hot. So, wait for your car to cool down rather than cleaning it straight after a long journey, and resist the temptation to get out and do it on a hot summer's day. Heat can reduce the effectiveness of the chemicals in your cleaning products, potentially leaving streaks – at worst you risk damaging your car's bodywork and, at best, you won't really be cleaning it at all.

How to wash your car properly

Regularly washing your car is one of the easiest things you can do to keep it looking great and mitigate the need for touch ups – many car-lovers will clean their vehicle once a week. Washing by hand is worth the effort as it is gentler on your car, as long as you use mild cleaning products and a brush, sponge or cloth that's clean and soft.

If you prefer to go to the car wash, just make sure that you use one that's clean and well-maintained, and if they use brushes, check that they are in good condition.

How waxing can improve your car's exterior

Waxing your car once or twice a year will help keep it in top condition. Wax keeps your car's body nice and shiny and gives it a coat that will help protect the paint from the elements. Waxing will also help cover minor scratches and dents that would otherwise open your car up to rust damage, which could prove costly to correct in the future. The process is an easy one which should only take about half an hour, and you'll appreciate the results! While you're at it, you could apply some tyre shine to your wheels to get the rubber looking brand new once more.

Don't let your paint corrode

As well as being unsightly and ruining the overall appearance of your car, bird droppings and other animal faeces are corrosive and can significantly impair your paintwork. Honeydew, the faeces of aphids, is equally as damaging, burning itself into paint if subject to direct sunlight. The longer you leave such excretions on your car, the more likely they are to do irreparable damage, so make sure you wash your car as soon as possible on noticing them.

Rust-proof your car

If you live either near the sea, in an area of high humidity, or your car is exposed to salt and grit on the roads in winter, it will be susceptible to rust. The dangerous thing about rust is that it can gradually build up, even in the smallest of nooks and crannies, without becoming noticeable until it is too late to do anything about it. This can damage your car's bodywork or, in more serious cases, your engine – which is usually very difficult and expensive to repair. A simple application of a rust-proof agent on your car and its underchassis will protect your car and save you money down the road.

Touch up small dents and chips

The paint on your car's bodywork not only serves to make it look more appealing, but also to protect it from rust, so whenever a chip in the paint occurs your car becomes vulnerable to corrosion. Painting over any small dents, scratches and chips in your vehicle's paintwork will help to protect it from the detrimental effects of rust.

The best option is to go to a garage and have a professional paint over the damage in order to achieve a seamless finish. However, for those looking to save money, you could buy some paint that is the closest possible colour match to your car, then sand down and paint over the damage yourself.

(Source: Munster Tyres)

AUTO WORLD

Toyota to Upgrade RAV4 With new Safety, Technology

Toyota has said it would upgrade its popular RAV4 in the second half of this year with a raft of enhancements to its multimedia, technology and safety systems.

Headlining the upgrades will be the introduction of the latest generation multimedia system across the range that incorporates USB-C connection and the addition of Toyota Connected Services.

Improving safety features has also been a priority, with all models featuring an upgraded Toyota Safety Sense suite of driver assistance technologies, including Intersection Pre-Collision Safety and Emergency Steering Assist.

Toyota Australia Vice President Sales, Marketing and Franchise Operations Sean Hanley said the upgrades to the RAV4 range would further boost the appeal of what is already one of the most popular models in the Toyota lineup.

"Toyota is always keen to provide the latest safety, connectivity and multimedia technologies that customers want and as soon as they are available for our market, we make them available for our customers," Hanley said.

"This latest round of upgrades for the RAV4 will make what is already the most popular medium SUV even more appealing.

"Toyota will continue to keep our customers updated on upgrades and future models and we encourage our customers to speak with their preferred Toyota Dealer about these upgrades," he said.

Various upgraded features will be applied to certain models and grades within the 2WD and AWD RAV4 range and pricing adjustments will be confirmed closer to their introduction.



Upgraded RAV4

Ford Begins Production of Electric F-150 Lightning Trucks



The all-new, electric Ford F-150 Lightning pickup

Ford Motor Company has launched the all-new, electric F-150 Lightning pickup – a milestone moment in America's shift to electric vehicles.

According to the automaker, the F-150 Lightning trucks are now being built for customers across America. F-150 Lightning is the fastest-accelerating F-150 yet and the only full-size electric pickup available now with a starting price less than $40,000.

Built at the ultra-modern Rouge Electric Vehicle Center within Ford's historic Rouge Complex, F-150 Lightning is the only electric vehicle that is Built Ford Tough. Ford F-Series has been America's best-selling truck for 45 years in a row[1] and is second only to the iPhone in revenue among all American consumer products, according to a 2020 study.

"Today we celebrate the Model T moment for the 21st Century at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center," said Ford Executive Chair Bill Ford. "The Rouge is where Ford perfected the moving assembly line, making it a fitting backdrop as we make history again. The stunning anticipation for F-150 Lightning is a credit to the work of our Ford engineers and designers, and the UAW team members who are building these trucks with pride."

Ford has unprecedented demand for F-150 Lightning with 200,000 reservations and is expanding the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center to ramp up production to a planned annual run rate of 150,000 in 2023. The company has invested a total of $950 million and created 750 jobs at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center. Ford's investment in Michigan for F-150 Lightning alone now totals more than $1 billion, with 1,700 recently created jobs spread among five Ford plants in the state, including Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center, where Lightning electric motors and electric transaxles are assembled, and Rawsonville Components Plant, where Lightning batteries are assembled.

"America's real transition to electric vehicles starts now," said Ford President and CEO Jim Farley. "F-150 Lightning is just the beginning of our ambitions for growth and leadership in digital, electric vehicles. We continue to expand our EV manufacturing footprint across the U.S., including the start of site preparation at BlueOval City, which will enable us to meet the ever-increasing customer demand for our exciting EV line-up."

Ford is on track to deliver more than 2 million electric vehicles annually by 2026, equal to about one-third of the company's global volume, on the way to 50% by 2030.

Before The Rains Begin



SAFE DRIVING

with
Jonas Agwu
amnipr, mcipr, mprsa, arpa
Assistant Corps Marshal
Zonal Commanding Officer
Federal Road Safety Corps.

On Tuesday, 15 February 2022, I had the honour to represent the Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Dr Boboye Oyeyemi at the Public Presentation of the 2022 Seasonal Climate Predictions held at the serene Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Centre, Kado, Abuja in the Federal Capital Territory. It was my first and I owe all the gratitude to my boss for directing me to attend. The theme was; Strengthening Climate Actions Through Timely and Impact-Based Climate Prediction for Economic Recovery. In attendance were top functionaries, from government to private sector, as well as the academia.

I left the venue enriched through speeches, as well as publications shared by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMET). What I saw was an Agency that has transformed its service delivery away from the foolish jokes of some people some years back. During my University days, the joke was that whenever the daily weather predictions on Nigerian Television Authority informs you that it won't rain, you had better take along your umbrella, raincoat and rain boots, as well as a sweater to protect yourself. I was therefore excited that my first official contact with the Agency exposed me and other guests to the revolutionary impact of the current leadership at the Agency.

Let me today share with you some of these materials as they affect safe driving, especially during the rainy season.

Permit me to refer you to the 2022 Seasonal Climate Prediction where the Agency captured predictions for the current year. According to the Agency's predictions, the 2022 rainfall season is likely to be normal in terms of rainfall amount and length. Storms, it warned, are expected to be strong during the season because of the predicted higher-than normal temperatures in most parts of the country.

These predictions according to the Agency have implications for road users as strong storms can pull down trees, communication masts, electric power cables and poles, and other structures. These could obstruct roads and disrupt traffic. Chances of road washouts, slippery roads, delayed travel time, cars skidding off the road are likely during the season. Reduced visibility during the harmattan and stormy weather should be anticipated. The predicted warmer temperatures will also mean hotter roads and increased chances of tyre burst.

It further notes that rainfall dates are predicted to start from the coastal states of Bayelsa, Cross River and Akwa Ibom in late February and around July in the northern states such as Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara. However, Ekiti, Ondo, Edo and Kaduna states are anticipated to experience earlier than normal onset when compared to the long term averages. Furthermore, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano Jigawa, parts of Kebbi, Niger, Kwara, Oyo Ogun, Cross River, Bayelsa and Rivers states are likely to experience delayed onset of rainfall.

For the doubting Thomas, the Agency warns that the predicted rainfall amount over the country is expected to be near the long term average rainfall ranging from 400mm to 800mm in the northern states such as Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, and parts of Borno. The central states, such as Nasarrawa,Taraba, Kogi, Benue as well as Ekiti, Osun and Oyo in the Southwest, and the FCT are likely to have 1200mm to 1600mm. Parts of Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Cross River states are predicted to have annual rainfall amounts of 3000mm and above.

NiMET went on to reel out advisory to road users, FRSC, transport operators, as well as anticipated collaborative activities to drum home road hazards due to bad weather. Government should ensure that highways roads and bridges are repaired and where necessary reinforced before the onset of the rainy season. Lastly, road users should strictly comply with speed limits and other highway traffic regulations, especially during heavy rainfall. The advisory had tips for aviation, water resources management, disaster risk management, and health, agriculture, as well as food security among others.

I do not know if you understand all the turenchi of long term average and all. All I can deduce is that there will be rainfall and depending on where you reside, it might be heavy and portends certain avoidable dangers as enumerated in the advisory which I listed earlier. Following this, I believe like a proactive Boys Scout there is need for us to put some necessary things in place to avoid becoming another casualty.

The first focus is to ensure that you achieve total compliance with the provisions of the National Road Traffic Regulations with respect to the sections that dwell on self-regulations. With the avalanche of learners who daily flout road safety rules, the Regulations provide that you drive only with a learner's permit. It forbids you to carry any passenger except a licensed driver or certified instructor licensed to drive the category of vehicle and this licensed driver or instructor must sit at the passenger's seat.

EXPRESSION

Police: Plural Verb Always



MEDIAGAFFES

EBERE WABARA
ewabara@yahoo.com, 08055001948

HAPPY month-end: "Legislators, oil chiefs parley on industry enhancing issues" Imagine the classical excellence a hyphen between 'industry' and 'enhancing' would have conferred on the headline.

"I said these are (were) beggars and I told my wife I better (I had better) get money ready for them."

"…the grassroots population of our people will remain the lifewire of the UBE scheme." Adult literacy: livewire.

"The remains of the Ovie, sources in the town revealed, was (were) later tied…."

"And just last Friday, it was reported that the police has (had) arrested the APC governorship candidate…."

"The meetings were about some developments alright…." 'Alright' (informal) is unacceptable for 'all right' in formal settings. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, New 10th Edition, some people insist that 'alright' should not be used in formal writing.

"My suggestion, therefore, is that our National Assembly members should tow (toe) the line of reason."

"…especially those public officers who remain suspect with regards (regard) to their qualifications and credibility to hold public offices" Alternatively, as regards their qualifications….

"The nation has (had) in the past pardoned and forgiven it's (sic) past leaders and citizens who committed one offence or the other (or another)."

"Such citizens had since been integrated back (reintegrated) into the system."

"A recent summit in Kaduna on education in the northern states provided the appropriate forum to revisit, once again…." 'Revisit' cannot co-function with 'again.'

"Gone are (were) the days when government can (could) go it alone."

"Infact (In fact) every loving parents…." Parentage: either every loving parent or all loving parents

"In the agricultural sector, the two countries can learn a lot from one another (each other)."

"…who was arraigned on a 34-count charge bothering (bordering) on the diversion of…."

"We assure Your Excellency that this confidence reposed on (in) our former Senate Leader is well placed and will manifest without probation."

"CSR: NLNG invests N200m on (in) 10 Nigerian postgraduate scholars"

For the first time since 2013 when this column birthed, we continue this edition with an advertisement: "Salt Spring Resort has been redefined and renovated to provide excellent service." A refreshing experience of paradise; provide an excellent service or provide excellent services

"We are poise (poised) to deliver uncompromise (uncompromised) quality product that will ultimately satisfied (satisfy) our esteemed customers. Come lets (let's) give you…." What do we do with the sub-literacy of advertisement copies?

"Anger, protests, as deceased's friends point fingers at lawmaker" Get it right: point the finger at lawmaker

THE NATION ON SUNDAY of April 17 endangered the English language on two occasions: "In most cases, the necessary environment does not exist for meaningful importation (impartation) of knowledge."

"Matters are not helped by students who are now distracted by things that have no bearing to (on) their studies."

"Gov. Aminu Tambuwal, appears set to take the bull by the horn (horns) by declaring his interest in the 2023 presidency…."

"Students of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, are to cough-out (no hyphen and, of course, two words) a total of N5 million for repairs of damages (damage) they perpetrated during a demonstration in July last year." 'Damage' admits an inflection only in reparative matters.

"Now, It is the turn of the teachers, in the race for the coveted seat of vice-chancellorship, and boy, are the learned dons falling over themselves (one another) to out do (one word) each other (one another)?" When two fellows are concerned, we use 'each other', but if it is more than two, it becomes 'one another',

"Secret cult in the campuses" Always on campuses

"Kano Pillars in trouble…yet to sign-on players" 'Sign on', a phrasal verb, does not require hyphenation.

"Thus, cargo that have been certified okay here…." I certify that 'cargo' is singular.

"Inconsistent government policies is globally disturbing…." Concord is one of the simplest things in grammar. Anybody who lacks this rudimentary knowledge has no business contributing to the most authoritative newspaper (name withheld!) in Nigeria. You must develop your communicative skills first.

"Banks impose a lot difficult conditions on exporters and even charged (sic) some 'hidden' fees before the disbursement of these loans are (is) done…

"CPC to clampdown on illegal microfinance banks" Phrasal verb: clamp down (two words).

"An acknowledged scholar, a distinguished statesman and a team leader per excellence" Get it right: leader par excellence.

"New trends in electioneering campaigns" Politics Today: just electioneering or political campaigns. 'Electioneering campaign' is sheer verbiage! 'Electioneering' encompasses campaign and other related electoral issues.

"Some countries have taken tobacco manufacturers to court for the damages their products cause." The will to die: damage, again, is uncountable, except in reparative applications for indemnity.

"…what happened was that somebody filed a writ of summon." This way (singular): a writ of summons; plural: summonses.

"It is the Federal Board that is always guilty of that, because it is them who take riff-raffs as welfare officers." 'Riff-raff', just like 'stuff', is uncountable.

"Modern technology has reduced the world into (to) a hamlet where the inhabitants are their brothers' keepers." This way: brother's keeper (fixed idiom), irrespective of the number of people involved.

"The coincidence in the timing of all those sleazy gossips in soft-sell magazines and the beginning of his fashion parade…." 'Gossip', in this context, is uncountable.

"More overaged players for youth soccer" Get it right: overage players.

"Residents of some of the troubled spots in Libya in disarray" Witness to lexical mayhem: trouble spots.

"…rummaging all the bags and ransacking every nook and corner." Stock expression: nook and cranny.

"The police requires (require) a redeemer who can uplift the Force from the battering it (they) suffered during the long years of militarization."

"I inquired from those that appear to know and they said that the president is (was) roaming the country in the name of campaigns."

"There is (are) no electricity, no security, no water, no roads, no health facilities in Nigeria."

"Foreign companies will be falling over themselves (one another) to come and invest here if we get the 2023 elections right."

"...given the lame-duck posture of the opposition parties, the PDP simply held sway from the onset (outset)."

"Reactions on (to) the Pope's visit, however successful, were mixed in Egypt, a country inhabited by a predominantly Muslim population."

"Prior to the Pope's visit, Egyptian Catholics have (had) opted out of the…."

"The first part was published last week Friday." Monday politics: either last Friday or Friday, last week.

"Vigilante (Vigilance) groups, committed to…."

The President Nigeria Needs



COUNTERPOINT

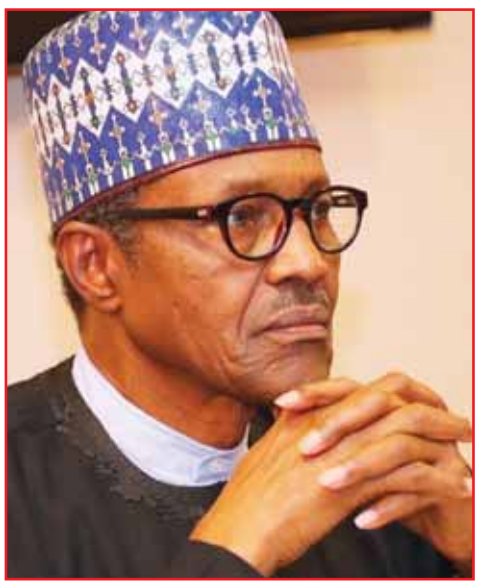
FEMI AKINTUNDE-JOHNSON
fajalive1@gmail.com
08182223348 - (SMS Only)

The prevalent words of wisdom designed to help people who are disposed to expecting much more than life can and should provide is that: there is no angel in Nigeria..no one should expect angels in Nigerian politics. Some even go as far as insisting that if some celestial beings choose, by an unexpected grace of providential amnesty, to come into the Nigerian power grid, and take a grip of the control towers, they would - sooner than later - be co-opted, conscripted and conditioned into shedding their pristine garbs to join the 'roforofo' scramble for levers of more power - flaunting and wielding their posts and perks with dexterity that wouldl astound the Almighty. Such is the dark and dim view not a few Nigerians have of their country, and her controllers.

Yet, we must not all throw in the towel and turn our backs on our country, and the minions raping her. We must find courage and gumption somewhere deep down in the bowels of our humanity, and demand for the emergence of the best and tolerable amongst us, to start the process of redemption and re-calibration. We must stop laughing at and lampooning new faces and fringe dwellers who have the courage to seek public offices - on the lame excuse that they are merely looking for their own seats at the table so as to steal and siphon the proverbial national cake.

My people wisely say: if you don't get used to buying 'lies', you may miss the opportunity of buying the 'truth.' It presupposes that we must not give up on giving unknown qualities the space and opportunity to show what they can do. Perhaps…. After all, by self-promoted delusion or uncritical surrender of our suffrage, we have elected, acquiesced or serenaded 14 individuals whose regimes or tenures have laid the foundation and background of our current dilemma and disenchantment, since independence in 1960. Let us remind ourselves, for the umpteenth time, how far back the rain and hails have been beating us - a past bedecked with grand larceny, brutish demonstration of power and sundry acts of prebendalism, incompetence and political blindness.

In the beginning was the great Zik, who essentially talked us into a disproportionate independence without requisite unanimity of purpose and interest. Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe, alongside his compatriots, simply wanted the foreigners out of our hair, even when it



Buhari

was glaring the distortions and enmity planted by the colonisers were evident, and unwavering. We became a republic, nonetheless - the governor of our own fates. Yet, the fissures widened.

Less than six years after the independence, it was the providential benefactor of Nigeria's first, but largely unsuccessful coup, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, the most senior Nigerian military officer, who promulgated Decree No. 34 in May, 1966, after rescuing Nigeria from trudging into further political and ethnic mayhem. The diktat, infamously called "unification decree", cancelled all vestiges of the "federal system" practised in Nigeria from her independence. Admittedly, Aguiyi-Ironsi meant well, he was hoping the decree would be pivotal in stemming "tribal loyalties and activities which promote tribal consciousness and sectional interests and which must give way to the urgent task of national reconstruction." [Unfortunately, the task is still crying for closure...in 2022!]

The reconstruction Aguiyi-Ironsi envisaged, after the enforced interregnum, would have dovetailed into returning power to democratically elected persons, but that was harshly aborted six months into his rule when he was assassinated in July, 1966. A young Lieutenant Colonel, Yakubu Gowon took over the unitary power after some mindless and vengeful putsch spearheaded by few Northern army officers. Gowon, barely in his thirties, took Nigeria into a terrifying civil war, and subsequently concretised and deepened the pegs and throttles of the unitary system of government. He created more states that were no more than vassals of the federal government, and eventually reneged on his promise to return to civilian democracy. Though he served longest in power (almost nine years), his tenure was strewn with uncharitable incidents and sundry issues that were less than sterling.

When the burly and brusque Major General, Murtala Ramat Muhammed (36) emerged via a bloodless coup in July, 1975, Nigerians heaved a sigh of wary relief. He blustered through our indolent space and pernicious ways of life. His activism and populist tendencies rankled a few, and he was gunned down in a blistering, spectacularly unsuccessful coup on February 13, 1976. The shortness and velocity of his reign endeared him to Nigerians for decades - a quality none before or after him had attained.

His reluctant deputy, Olusegun Obasanjo took over with a tear-filled promise to continue in Mohammed's footsteps. By the time Obasanjo handed over to a political stalwart, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, on 1 October, 1979, he had 'conjured' a federal constitution (1979) which was more or less self-reinforcing in the dynamics of unitary practices (the root cause of the widely disparaged 1999 constitution which OBJ fortuitously inherited); and then the heartwarming capacity to eventually hand over to a civilian regime for the start of our second experience as a republic - warts and all. [His second coming as the 12th ruler (but as a civilian) was a little improvement in the estimation of keen observers. Yet, many expected much more than he delivered in the two terms he served as Nigerian president between 1999 and 2007.]

The second attempt, in 1979, at civilian democracy was catastrophic in its inability to provide bottom-line dividends for ordinary Nigerians, and it was therefore heartily received the news of its abrupt upturn in a 1983 military coup d'état which produced Major General Muhammadu Buhari. The seventh Nigerian ruler was more associated with draconian decrees and terror-laden rhetoric, whereas his predecessor was accused of lethargy and unbridled slothfulness. [Incidentally, Buhari returned as a civilian president, and a little more contrite, in 2015 - he is still serving his second term as we write, battling to leave a more worthwhile legacy].

However, it was no surprise that the Buhari regime fell like an abandoned shanty in August, 1985 when Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, the erstwhile chief of army staff, and a major general seized power in a bloodless coup. When he was eventually forced to retire from both the military and governance on August 26, 1993, IBB was majorly remembered for the notoriety of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election - and the toil, torment and tragedy that ensued for many years subsequently.

There was a Chief Ernest Shonekan - a two-and-a-half-month footnote in 1993 - only as a doorway for the grand and inglorious entry of Nigeria's most bitterly defined ruler, Lt. General Sani Abacha. He ruled with fangs, bullets, goggles and magnetic fingers between 1993 and 1998. By the time he exited this space, in controversial mystery, hardly did any one mourn his absence - in deference to his acts, ways and wiles.

And there was the self-effacing interjector, Lt. General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who in less than one year, tidied up the tragically flawed transition rigmarole of IBB, and the obnoxious toxic discharges of Abacha, to conduct elections and hand over power to a new civilian administration. Without needless fuss, he chaperoned the fourth republic we still enjoy today.

However, the fourth republic is not renowned for men of great reckoning in actions and imaginations - Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan passed the portals of power, and while their supporters may carry placards of plaudits and pageantry regarding some achievements or mementos, ultimately, posterity may be less charitable.

(To Continue)

FEATURES

NYSC Member Terungwa Killed, Faith Still with Terrorists

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Stephanie Se-ember Terungwa, a female National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) member who was missing on April 14, has been found dead. Stephanie's body was discovered on Wednesday April 27, still garbed in her NYSC uniform, almost two weeks after she disappeared in the Lokogoma area of Abuja, with some of her vital parts removed by the killers.

A statement by the NYSC revealed that "Stephanie's corpse was found with her face damaged beyond recognition". Slain Stephanie was declared missing after she left home to participate in Community Development Service (CDs). She never made it back home. Luckily, her one-year-old son with whom she was said to be with when she was abducted was found safe, according Richard Iorliam, who claimed to be her uncle.

Confirming the sad incident, NYSC Director, Press and Public Relations, Eddy Megwa in the statement posted on his official Facebook page, disclosed Stephanie Se-ember Terungwa's body was identified through the help of security agencies. A part of the release read: "The corpse was found wearing the NYSC kakhi trouser with the face defaced beyond recognition.

"On account of this, Management reported the discovery to relevant security agencies to help identify the body. It was later confirmed that the remains was that of a missing Corps Member, Stephanie Se-Ember Terungwa, with State Code Number FC/21B/5807."

Stephanie hailed from Benue state. She studied Microbiology and was deployed to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The NYSC management however noted that investigations are currently ongoing to unravel the identity of those behind the murder of the Benue indigene. Prior to the discovery of her corpse, her family had declared the fair complexioned lady missing, in a notice earlier shared in the social media.

Stephanie happens to be the latest of the NYSC members who have suffered ill-fate, and have perpetually remained endangered species.

Stephanie's death has raised concern over the condition and whereabouts of Faith Onoriode, another NYSC member who has been kidnapped over a month now. In the case of the latter who hails from Delta state, she was to resume for the batch A NYSC camp in Jigawa state when she was kidnapped. She is still in the den of her abductors who had demanded a ransom of N40 million. Nobody knows her fate. Nobody knows what she must have been subjected to.



Terungwa



Faith

A graduate of Biology/Microbiology at the Delta state Polytechnic, Otefe, Oghara, her kidnap around the axis of Regania Community on the Abuja-Kaduna Road since March 21 has left not a few worried. And as such has remained a nightmare to her mother who had appealed to the NYSC and the federal government to help secure her release. A widow, the mother, Mrs. Roseline Onoriode in a report lamented the kidnap, saying they had reported the incident to the authorities of the NYSC Abuja and also NYSC Jigawa state.

"The mother said the kidnappers demanded payment of N40 million ransom when they contacted the family", adding that "She is a call member batch A, that was posted to NYSC Jigawa orientation camp. She boarded a vehicle from Sala's Global Motor's Effunrun Warri to Kano, from Kano to Jigawa NYSC orientation camp. She was kidnapped along Abuja Kaduna Road at Regania community some few kilometers to Kaduna state, on the 21st March, 2022."

"The incident was reported at the NYSC headquarters Abuja and also NYSC Jigawa and even reported at the state command police headquarter at Kaduna but nothing has been done for her release. The family tried to negotiate with the kidnappers, the ransom they are calling is N40 million for her release."

"She has been with them for over one month two days with the kidnappers. NYSC has not even done anything to release my daughter, not even a call from them. Please NYSC and federal government I am soliciting for your assistance for her release. I am the mother of the kidnapped girl am begging the federal government to help me for the release of my daughter."

"I am a poor widow please help me. Please I am begging with the name of God for my daughter release and Nigerian please help me". The mother said the family last spoke to the daughter last week Monday, adding that she was begging to be released. "She said she had an injury on her leg. Government should please help my daughter. I am crying to all that can help", she said.

Megwa told THISDAY last Saturday that the NYSC management was working very hard with security agents to ensure freedom for Faith.

Ex-Sports Editor Seeks N20m for Kidney

A former sports editor Dipo Okubanjo, has made an appeal for help to raise N20 million for kidney transplant is currently battling for his life as he has been diagnosed with kidney disease that has left him in a dangerous health condition.

At the time he fell ill, he was a media officer with Covenant University, Ota. He had worked with many media houses, including The News/TEMPO/ PM NEWS, The Moment and The Union.

Okubanjo, who is on weekly dialysis at the Gbagada General Hospital in Lagos, was diagnosed with renal failure last year, with the condition keeping him out of circulation since then.

According to him, the doctors said he needs N20 million for a kidney transplant, a cost he is unable to afford.

"I first thought I had malaria and I went to my local clinic, where I was attended to without any significant improvement. I was asked to do a CT scan and it was based on the result of the scan that I was referred to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) from where I was referred to the Gbagada General Hospital.

"It was at Gbagada that I was told that my kidney was failing. I was placed on three rounds of dialysis per week before it was reduced to two, with each costing N45,000.

"I now do one per week due to paucity of funds. So far, we have spent over N5 million, which have come from family, friends, my place of work and personal savings.

Sourcing for funds has not been easy but God has been faithful. It is impossible to raise N20 million needed for the transplant while still battling to pay for dialysis. This is why I'm reaching out to good Nigerians to help with whatever token they can afford," he stated.

Okubanjo's account, operated in his name, is domiciled at First Bank with account number 3066204016. He is also reachable on 08023531323.



Dipo Okubanjo



THISDAY

Saturday, April 30, 2022 Price: N250

MISSILE

Falana on Failed Anti-corruption War

"The pardon extended to the two former governors is an infinitesimal aspect of the abandonment of the anti-corruption crusade. Some have stolen billions of naira whose cases have been dropped or withdrawn from the courts by Malami, who simply filed nolle prosequi motions" *–Human rights lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN) punching holes in the Buhari government's war against corruption.*

THISDAY 27 years OF ROBUST JOURNALISM SINCE 1995

OKEY IKECHUKWU
EDIFYING ELUCIDATIONS
okey.ikechukwu@thisdaylive.com

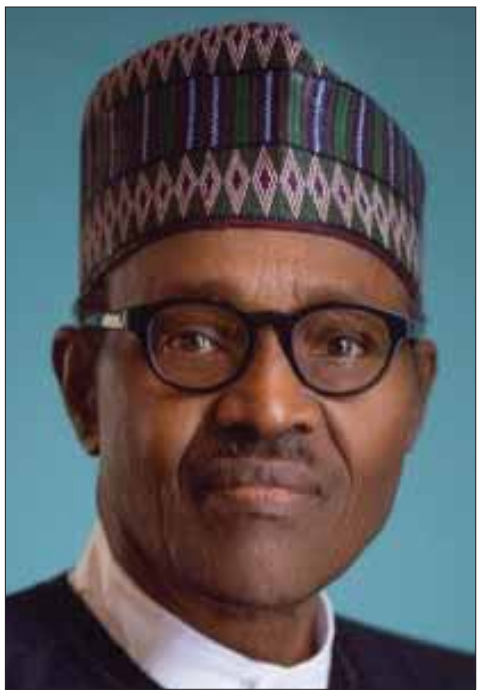


Until the Shearer is Done

Fashion, especially in the area of barbing and hair dressing, can make an admirable miracle out of a misshapen skull. It can make a cranial facility that would ordinarily put a lousy-looking calabash that thinks it is ugly to shame. But that is while it lasts. That is why fashion will always be dated. It will always have its duration, with acolytes and worshippers who will also eventually fall into oblivion. Most of its twaddle will fall into disrepute before the inevitable oblivion of its admirers. That is the way of fads. So, the most adventurous fashion engineering, in the name of politics today seems poised to unravel. Not many of the players seem embarrassed by the current state of the nation, wherein Federal and State budgets are read year in year out, but with nothing on the table. There is triumphant contestation for continued political dominance, and methinks that a shearer is at work here. He is not yet done.

A Shearer is like a barber. He is a skilled worker, though perhaps less dexterous than our young barbers of today, who can carve practically anything on people's heads. The shearer's capacity for unravelling the, sometimes scrawny, creature wielding a massive plume of "grown covering", or hair, is an old and valued profession. His work revolves around removing (shearing), or crutching, the wool off a sheep, or hair off some other animal. The object animal he uses his shears on may have rashes. It may have a sore, or even untidy little bumps under the nice-looking clumps of wool, or other hair. But no one sees, or notices, the real situation of the animal, for as long as the plume of impressive hair is on. Thus, it goes about looking quite impressive, if not outrightly pretty. It is all thanks to the anonymity conferred by the covering. With that, it struts about with an identity that may be called to question, once the truth about its underlying skin condition is known. As soon as the shearer lays hands on it, takes it to the appropriate corner and puts his shears to work, the unravelling is summarily begun and concluded.

Any animal that is then found to have some hidden defects beneath the lovely covering of fine hair, or wool, stands exposed and diminished. That is why merchants with sheep of questionable "inner" conditions do not like the shearing job to be done in public. The commercial and culinary value of defective animals cannot be redeemed after the shearer is done. Yes, any artificially projected value then speedily goes up in smoke. Picture a situation where the shearer's skills leads to the discovery of some irremediable deformity, endemic skin blemish or some underlying condition that was hitherto concealed by the mass of well-kept hair. It is because these defects undermine the sheep's ability to yield high quality meat



Buhari

or wool in future that it is simply "cast aside". So, every shearing, or barbing, season for woolen sheep keepers is also the season of cheap sheep and cheap sheep meat.

So, look around you, all over Nigeria, today. A great unmasking is afoot. The shearer is at work. The conversation is about tickets for contesting for one elective office or the other. That is all. That is what dominates the conversation of the political, religious and economic elite. No one is taking inventory of the growing misfortunes of the people in whose name all sorts of people are prancing around in the public domain by the dozens. Not for them the worries plaquing the masses, no. Even as the life of the people is made unbearable by the combined assaults of insecurity, hunger, rising inflation and rising taxes, the leaders are busy with their own conception of moving the people and the nation forward. Even as our universities are shut, no one is saying anything about the future of our youths. Instead, these youths are being further inundated by wrong role models; even as they are thus made more amenable to reprehensible political engagements under the active supervision of the very people who should be worrying about them.

All the talk about preferred candidates, consensus candidates, the integrity of zoning, etc., is going on at high frequency, and with very high voltage everywhere. Most members of the political, religious and economic elite do not seem to be concerned with, or about, the more critical existential concerns of daily survival drowning the people. They all seem to be caught up with dishonest politicking, cheerful spending, huge budget deficits, compulsive borrowing and irresponsible leadership.

That is why it is only those in the thick of all the scramble, in addition to their hangers on and other beneficiaries of the current fallouts, are still ecstatic in every sense of the word. They are all moving around accompanied by massive security paraphernalia in a fundamentally insecure environment. This contrived security infrastructure, dated as it is, creates the illusion of safety amidst bandits, terrorists and bombs. But that easily goes up as the bubble it is, once the shooters turn the guns in their direction. Thus, everyone is actually still mostly unsafe, despite pockets of delusional pretensions to the contrary. In any case, is anyone looking at the brigade of former governors, former legislators, former so many things of yesteryears and the shadows they are become today?

You cannot speak of safety and security when those wielding state power dare not visit their homes, or their Constituencies, without literally invoking NATO Protocols. The question today is whether we should now say that some members of the political elite, including State Governors, are indigenes of Abuja, State Guest Houses and hotels. How many of them can still be said to be on the job they were either elected, or appointed, to do? Yet, they are taking themselves quite seriously, and talking about how they should continue in power and turn Nigeria to El Dorado.

But the trends we are seeing everywhere today are not new. It's just that they are at their worst today. Progressively, and for decades now, Nigerians have been watching, and in some ways abetting, the public projection of "False gods of political salvation". At first it was poor governance that gave people cause for worry. Then, outright misgovernment came into vogue. Confiscation of the state, as a hereditary fiefdom for which temporary Lords of the Manor must appoint preferring successors, came on. Now it is almost the out complete absence of any form of government. And no so many of those behind it all seem sufficiently bothered, or embarrassed, to show propriety in many things. Some are already in a deep dark hole. But, instead of trying to find their way out, they are still digging furiously!

Is this bad news? Maybe it is. But I take a different view. It seems to me that a slow and painful climb to a new day will not begin here, until after a winnowing process and the complete unmasking of the various forms of subterfuge masquerading as leadership and statesmanship are stopped in their tracks. We must, in the process, answer the following questions: {1} How many of our erstwhile elder statesman of the last fifty years have been either true elders, or true statesmen? And {2} Is there any real proof of lessons learnt?

It seems to me that a barber is at work here. Yes, the shearer is quietly, unrelentingly and mercilessly shaving off the headful of hair that has been concealing the true driving spirit behind our nationhood of today. Just as a misshapen skull someone has been concealing by all manner of subterfuge contrived in a hair dressing salon gets called out when confronted with a "balding clipper", so are Nigeria's political hair styles and false beauty coming undone. It all brings to mind, using the logic of the German ontologist and existentialist, Martin Heideggar, what I call the "progressive un-concealment of the profanity and sham wisdom that has been cloaked in solemnity."

But since the Relentless Barber, called, Providence, has settled in here and has been at work, since the mid 60s, we just have to get on with what he is doling out. The opportunities to learn, change and make real progress have been either presumptuously ignored in the past or missed; due to leadership myopia. So, here we are, with the two dominant parties threatening to save the rest of us, and probably the world, by occupying Aso Rock in 2023. They both lack internal democracy. They both are heavily populated by people with some observed aversion for competence in leadership. And, for good measure, the two parties seem to be affiliated to bedlam, in terms of cohesion and ideological focus.

The simple matter of national security, as well as the integrity of the territorial integrity of the Nigerian State, only attracts perfunctory, hollow, repetitive and wearing press releases. Across all party lines, no state government is without taint here. And, lest we forget, the elite came out to celebrate the 70th birthday of a man whose offspring is not so young; and who himself was sworn in as a governor over 20 years ago.

Cheerful, congratulatory messages, robust celebratory oratorios, contrived endorsements by many who were perceived as possessed of some personal dignity and inner decency were rife. But it must all be seen as part of the Relentless Unmasking; the chilling un-concealment of the hitherto familiar, but actually unknown. Welcome to the midday of the frightening insights. Insights about presumed heroes, role models and moral exemplars. The reality of the real!

The barber is at work. More shocks are heading this way, especially given the reflexes f those who consider it their duty to choose leaders us. We are now like recalcitrant students. That is, students who can only learn the hard way. But since the barber is still busy, the true shape of the misshapen skull called Nigeria keeps emerging in bold relief. It will continue, until Barber is Done. Enough said.

Printed and Published in Lagos by **THISDAY Newspapers Limited. Lagos:** 35 Creek Road, Apapa, Lagos. **Abuja:** Plot 1, Sector Centre B, Jabi Business District, Solomon Lar Way, Jabi North East, Abuja .
All Correspondence to POBox 54749, Ikoyi, Lagos. **EMAIL:** editor@thisdaylive.com, info@thisdaylive.com. **TELEPHONE Lagos:** 0802 2924721-2, 08022924485. **Abuja:** Tel: 08155555292, 08155555929
24/7 ADVERTISING HOT LINES: 0811 181 3085 0811 181 3086, 0811 181 3087, 0811 181 3088, 0811 181 3089, 0811 181 3090. **ENQUIRIES & BOOKING:** adsbooking@thisdaylive.com