

Deborah: Tambuwal Lifts Curfew, Bans all Forms of Processions

● *Narrates how DSS tried to save victim, assures Nigerians justice will be served*

Bennett Oghifo in Lagos and **Omon-Julius Onabu** in Asaba

The Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal yesterday approved the immediate lifting of the curfew imposed on the state last week to curtail the

spread of violence that followed the killing of Deborah Yakubu, a student of Shehu Shagari College of Education by some fanatical Muslim schoolboys who accused her of blaspheming Prophet Mohammed. The governor also banned all forms of processions in the state

until further notice. On the same day, the governor, a PDP presidential aspirant, who was on a campaign visit to Asaba, Delta State, gave a detailed account of how the DSS tried to save Deborah, but were over-powered by the mob, assuring Nigerians that justice will

be served. Deborah was killed and her remains were set on fire by the extremists, two of whom have been arrested and arraigned by the Sokoto State Police Command. Tambuwal's announcement lifting the curfew is contained in

a statement released yesterday by the state's Commissioner for Information, Isah Galadanci. The statement reads: "Acting on enabling powers under section 176 (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 1, 2, and 4 of the Public Order Act, and

section 15 of Sokoto State Peace Preservation Law, the Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, has, after due consultations, lifted the curfew imposed on Sokoto metropolis with immediate effect

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THIS DAY

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Leaders: Foisting Northern Presidential Candidates, Grave Tragedy

● *No signal there'll be free, fair elections in 2023, PDP alerts EU*

Deji Elumoye, Chuks Okocha and **Odora Orizu** in Abuja

The Southern and Middle Belt Leaders' Forum (SMBLF) has condemned in strong terms the

decision by the two main political parties, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to jettison "the time-honored principle of rotation," ahead of

their presidential primaries, "which has traditionally served as the glue holding Nigeria together." On the same day, the National Chairman of the PDP, Dr. Iyochia Ayu yesterday told a visiting

delegation of the European Union (EU) that his party was not getting very encouraging signals that there would be free and fair elections in the country next year. The SMBLF in a communiqué,

issued yesterday at the end of its meeting in Abuja, signed by its Chairman, Chief Edwin Clark; Leader of Afenifere, Chief Ayo Adebajo; President-General, Middle Belt Forum, Dr. Pogu

Bitrus; President-General, Ohaneze Ndigbo Worldwide, Prof George Obiozor; and National Chairman, Pan-Niger Delta Forum, Senator

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Statutory Delegates Lament Loss of Largesse, Elected Delegates Now to Pick Presidential Candidates

● *2,322 electors for APC, 810 for PDP* ● *Power returns to governors*
● *New electoral amendment now out of time*

APC'S 2,322 DELEGATES					
Abia	51	Enugu	51	Nasarawa	39
Adamawa	63	Gombe	33	Niger	72
Anambra	63	Imo	81	Ogun	57
Akwia Ibom	93	Jigawa	81	Ondo	54
Bauchi	60	Kaduna	69	Osun	90
Bayelsa	27	Kano	132	Oyo	99
Benue	66	FCT	18	Plateau	51
Borno	81	Katsina	102	Rivers	69
Cross River	54	Kebbi	66	Sokoto	69
Delta	75	Kogi	60	Taraba	48
Ebonyi	39	Kwara	48	Yobe	51
Edo	57	Lagos	60	Zamfara	42
Ekiti	48				

Charles Ajunwa, Ahamefula Ogbu, **Kunle Adewale** and **Bennett Oghifo**

With clear signs that President Muhammadu Buhari has no plan whatsoever to sign the amendment to Section 84(8) of Electoral Act 2022 sent to him by the National Assembly last week, the statutory delegates pushed out by the Act have turned out to be the biggest losers in the intense political game.

Section 84(8) recognizes only democratically elected delegates, stating, "A political party that adopts the system of indirect primaries for the choice of its candidate shall clearly outline in its constitution and rules the procedure for the democratic election of delegates to vote at the convention, congress or meeting."

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CONDOLENCE VISIT TO UAE...

L-R: President Muhammadu Buhari and His Highness, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the new President of the United Arab Emirates, UAE/ruler of Abu Dhabi, during Buhari's condolence visit to Sheikh Mohamed at Mushrif Palace, Abu Dhabi, over the passing of the former UAE President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan...yesterday

NRC Shelves Resumption of Abuja-Kaduna Train Services... Page 8



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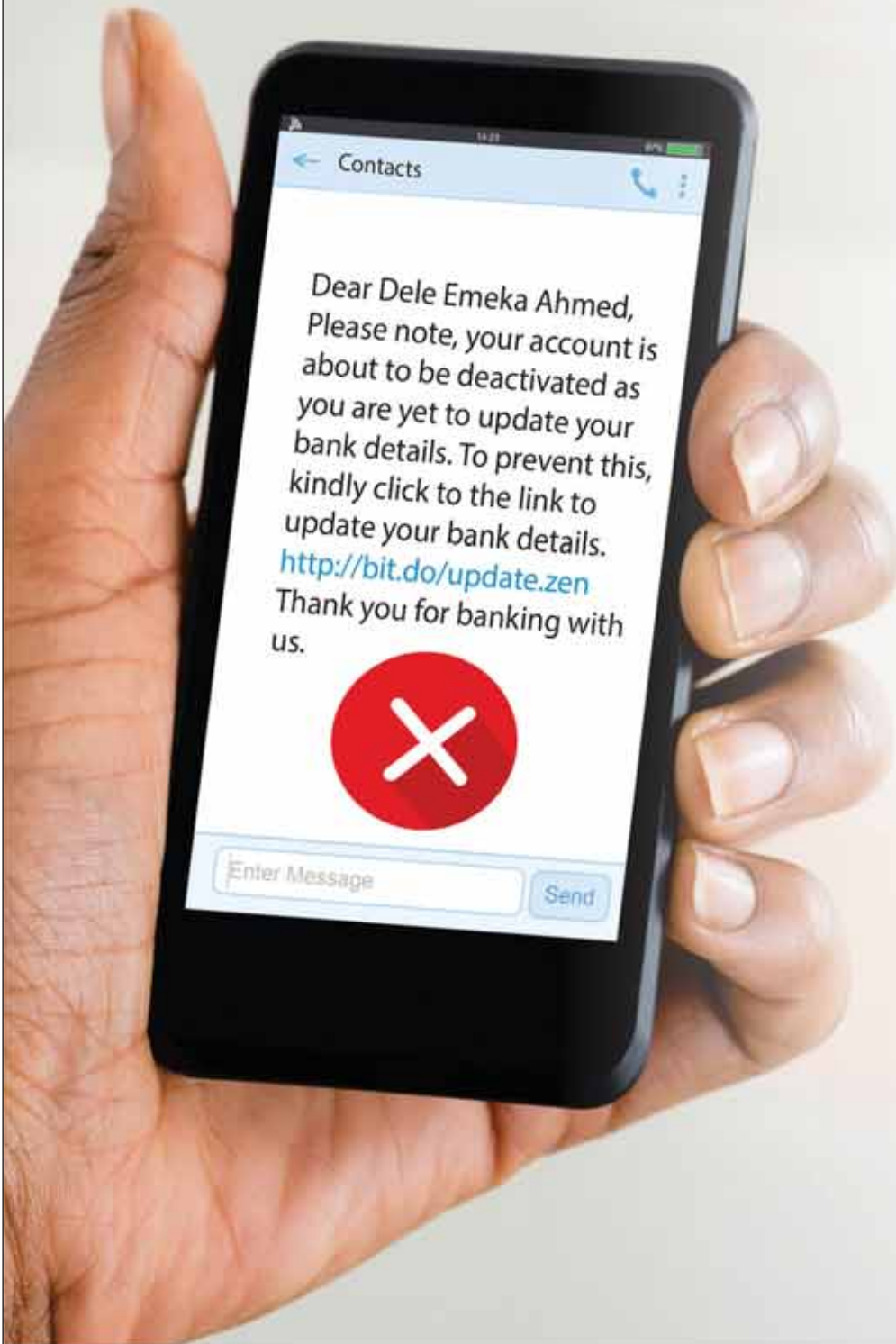
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In Abu Dhabi, Buhari Prays for Late UAE President, Sheikh Khalifa

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday joined other faithful to observe Jummah prayers in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), during which they prayed for the repose of the soul of the late UAE President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The President, according to a release issued by his spokesman, Mallam Garba Shehu, attended the Friday prayers at Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed Mosque, The First Mosque in Abu Dhabi.

Buhari was accompanied by members of the Nigerian delegation, who are on condolence/congratulatory visit to

the Middle East country, following the death of Sheikh Khalifa and the subsequent election of his successor, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

In a sermon titled: “Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the loss of the Nation”, read at all the Friday Mosques across the country, the Chief Imam of the mosque, Sheikh Ali Alhamoudi, expressed gratitude to God for the life and legacies of the late President.

He described the late President as a forerunner in charitable works and humanitarian initiatives, saying, through his efforts numerous mosques and hospitals were built, schools and

universities founded, while cities and institutions were also established.

Sheikh Ali Alhamoudi said: “Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed (may Allah have mercy on him) was always close to the people with his excellent morals and character. He was well-known among them for his praiseworthy qualities in this regard, and our prophet said ‘the dearest and the closest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be those who are the best in character.’”

The Imam said Sheikh Khalifa promoted the principles of justice in the UAE, so that all within the country could live within it in

peace and equality, regardless of their religions and nationalities.

On the new leadership, the cleric said Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was chosen

by the Emirates and its rulers, its Sheikhs and its people, bearing the great trust of the nation and the great responsibility to lead the UAE towards global leadership.

Prayers were also offered for the success of the new President, the Vice-President, the Crown Prince and his brothers, and the Rulers of the Emirates.

DEBORAH: TAMBUWAL LIFTS CURFEW, BANS ALL FORMS OF PROCESSIONS

“The Governor has urged the general public to be law-abiding and remain peaceful at all times, stressing the need for peaceful co-existence amongst the people in the state. He reiterated the need for peace as the necessary foundation for any meaningful development.”

‘Deborah: Justice Will be Served’

While speaking in Asaba, Delta State yesterday, Tambuwal assured Nigerians that justice will be served in the killing of Deborah.

Speaking with newsmen shortly after his meeting with PDP delegates in the Unity Hall, Government House Asaba, Tambuwal described the incident as unfortunate because “Sokoto is a peaceful place where people live peacefully irrespective of ethnic or religious differences.”

The governor said nobody has right to take laws into their hands, while also debunking the rumour that no attempt was made by security officials to save Deborah from the mob attack.

He said that personnel of the Department of State Security (DSS) got to the scene early and had rescued the victim to a safe place before the mob overpowered the

DSS officials.

Tambuwal said, "The security agencies, particularly the DSS, were able to get to the school in time and they were actually able to get our sister, Deborah rescued from the hands of the mob initially. As they were mobilising forces from the military barrack and the police command, the mob was growing.

"As we speak, one of the DSS personnel that really attempted to save her is in hospital receiving treatment because he had a broken head and another one had a broken hand.

"So, they were actually overpowered. It is not as if she was left alone; there was rescue attempt by the DSS and they were where she was locked for safety but the mob overpowered them.

"It was not that the security agencies didn't respond; maybe, they didn't respond adequately, but there was a response."

"Sokoto is one state where the state government, which I preside over, pays the school fees and give school materials to every student of Nigeria that is schooling in our public schools without discrimination.

"So, we don't discriminate against our brothers who are from other parts of the country

and we live peacefully.

"Normalcy has returned to Sokoto and the matter is in court and it is being tried. I can assure you that by the special grace of God, there will be justice in that matter."

Tambuwal: Buhari's Exclusion of South-East in Govt Fuelling Insecurity

Earlier yesterday, the Sokoto State Governor was in Imo State as part of his campaign for the presidential ticket of the PDP.

While addressing the Imo State chapter of the PDP on his presidential aspiration, Tambuwal said the insecurity in the South-east was a result of the exclusion of the people of the zone from the Muhammadu Buhari-led federal government.

The governor said his presidency, if elected, would quench insecurity in the zone by incorporating a large number of people from the zone into his administration.

According to him, the people of the zone feel cheated that Buhari left them out in the scheme of things in his regime.

He said, “Buhari has shortchanged the South-East. I

was the one who advised Saraki to choose Ike Enweremadu to become his deputy in 2015. There is a complete case of exclusion of the people of South East. The head of the ten most important parastatals are not from South-East, including the CBN governor.

“None of the service chiefs is from the South-east. The president, the vice president, the Senate president, the deputy senate president, the speaker of the House of Representatives and his deputy are not from the South-east. Under my watch that can't happen. Every part of this country will be carried along.

“South-east and Imo State in particular can't be excluded. The PDP will win back Imo when I become president. Igbo people are industrial. You will find a partner in me. We are working together with our brothers in Sokoto. We have restored normalcy now in Sokoto State. I will be a president for all Nigerians.”

A former Governor of Imo State, Emeka Ihedioha, said that Tambuwal was the right person to lead the country after Buhari.

Ihedioha said that Tambuwal had the capacity to fix the country and foster religious harmony between Christians and Muslims.

STATUTORY DELEGATES LAMENT LOSS OF LARGESSE, ELECTED DELEGATES NOW TO PICK PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

determine Presidential flagbearers of the party.

Likewise, only the five delegates elected from each ward for the state congresses will vote to elect governors, senators, House of Representatives and states' House of Assembly members for the APC.

For PDP, it will be the three delegates elected from each ward.

So, statutory delegates, including elected councillors, local government chairmen and their deputies, party chairmen in local government areas, state and federal lawmakers (current and former), governors and their deputies, President and Vice- President, National Working Committee members, state party chairmen and secretaries, are no longer voters at the primaries.

The largesse they had been enjoying from all the aspirants at various levels seeking their votes – presidential, governorship, Senate, House of Representatives and states' House of Assembly - has come to an end.

Many are struggling to face the reality and hoping that the President will still sign the amendment by next Monday.

But analysts countered this, saying, “With the seven-day INEC rule

for parties to submit their list of delegates before primary elections, new election amendment is now out of time, even if it gets presidential endorsement.”

A source told THISDAY last night that the APC had already submitted its list of elected delegates to INEC, while the PDP had partially complied, to beat the seven-day deadline.

The PDP has scheduled its presidential primary for May 28 and 29, while the APC will elect its presidential candidate on May 28 and 29.

As things stand, the APC will elect its presidential flagbearer with 2322 democratically elected delegates, based on three National delegates per local government area.

The PDP will elect its presidential flagbearer with 810 delegates based on one National delegate per local government area and one each per state to cover the physically challenged.

Power to determine those that will emerge as candidates for various elective positions has now returned to the state governors; already, they determined those on the list of elected delegates sent to INEC.

So, the state governors are back

PDP'S 810 DELEGATES					
Abia	17	Enugu	17	Nasarawa	13
Adamawa	22	Gombe	11	Niger	24
Anambra	21	Imo	27	Ogun	19
Akwa Ibom	31	Jigawa	27	Ondo	18
Bauchi	20	Kaduna	23	Osun	30
Bayelsa	22	Kano	44	Oyo	33
Benue	9	FCT	6	Plateau	17
Borno	27	Katsina	34	Rivers	23
Cross River	18	Kebbi	22	Sokoto	22
Delta	25	Kogi	20	Taraba	16
Ebonyi	13	Kwara	16	Yobe	15
Edo	19	Lagos	20	Zamfara	14
Ekiti	16				

LEADERS: FOISTING NORTHERN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, GRAVE TRAGEDY

Emmanuel Essien, warned that the reported permutations by the two parties to foist Northern presidential candidates on the nation would be a grave misadventure, with grim consequences on national concord and harmony.

It reiterated its stance on the principle of zoning and power rotation between the North and the South, as the basis on which the Nigerian Federation has, since Independence, been premised, stressing that they are fundamental to the future existence of the country.

SMBLF therefore called on all delegates of all political parties to reject Presidential aspirants, or candidates, from the North, and only vote for those from the South in the party primaries.

The Forum also called on all politicians and professionals from the South not to accept, on any account, the position of Vice President, as that would amount to a shameful committal of present and future generations of Southern Nigeria to senseless political vassalage.

The leaders, while commending a number of northern governors such as Malam Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State, Aminu Bello Masari of Katsina State, Babagana Umara Zulum of Borno State, and Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State, who have demonstrated great patriotism by their public support for the rotation of the presidency to the South, urged other northern leaders, who believe in the oneness of Nigeria, to support this cause, because therein lies the unity and progress of Nigeria.

On the worsening state of insecurity and rampaging violence across the country, the Forum warned that Nigeria was

plummeting into a state of total disorder and lawlessness, with attacks on innocent people resulting in kidnapping, loss of lives and destruction of properties happening in different parts of the country almost daily.

The Forum condemned in unmistakable terms, the killing of Miss Deborah Samuel Yakubu, a student of the College of Education, Sokoto, by her Muslim schoolmates and the wide spread violence that engulfed the state, following the arrest of two of her killers.

According to the leaders: "Sadly, the federal government and its security agencies are not doing enough to arrest the situation, whereby people can no longer travel safely either by road, rail or even by air to Kaduna State in particular. It is not only frightening but unimaginable that despite the heavy presence of military commands and installations in the State there could be such security challenges."

The SMBLF cited the bombing of the Kaduna-Abuja bound train over 60 days ago, as well as the brazen attack on motorists on the Abuja-Kaduna Road about two days ago, saying, “on both occasions, innocent lives were lost while several people were wounded with many abducted. Undesirably, most of those who were kidnapped are still in the terrorists’ captivity after 60 days.”

It said it classified these killings as pervasive acts of aggression on the indigenous people, “being perpetrated by elements of Islamic extremism and terrorists, as cultural genocide and ethnic cleansing.”

The SMBLF continued: “The Meeting cautions that these bellicosities and deliberate programme to exterminate the

indigenous populations of the Middle Belt are, by implication, acts of aggression against the rest of Nigeria, and would not be tolerated any further. The Meeting resolved to resist, through all legitimate means, the barefaced attempts by religious fundamentalists to impose on the rest of us, a Nigeria of “one country, different laws.”

No Signal There'll Be Free, Fair Elections in 2023, PDP Alerts EU

Ayu yesterday told a visiting delegation of the European Union (EU) that his party was not getting very encouraging signals that there would be free and fair elections in the country next year.

Ayu, who spoke when the EU delegation, led by Samuela Isopi, visited the party as part of its mission on the Nigerian 2023 general election, said “insecurity is at its peak in Nigeria and extending beyond the rural areas and even coming to the urban centers.”

The PDP Chairman drew the attention of the EU and other members of the international community to the fact that Nigerians want free and fair elections in the country, adding, “The signals that we’re getting are not very encouraging.”

Ayu told the EU delegation: “As a political party, we want to appreciate the European Union for their various contributions to Nigeria, whether economically or politically. There are also important cultural exchanges that are vital to our country; we want to appreciate the European Union for that.

“I would say that I also want to appreciate the interest in the growth of democracy in Nigeria, for the last 24 years that this

political party came on board and helped to stabilise democracy in Nigeria, the European Union has actually been a very worthy partner.

“They’ve always given support, they’ve shown interest, and we hope this will continue, because we don't want to return to the dark days of dictatorship. We hope that the European Union, as our friends in the international community, will continue to support genuine democratic processes and institutions, because no country lives as an isolated entity in the world. And therefore we think that the European Union and other friends of Nigeria have an important role to play.”

On the ongoing registration of voters, he told the EU team that the PDP was not getting a favourable technical report because the regulatory body (INEC) lacked the technical capacity to register more voters in the ongoing registrations exercise.

According to Ayu, "It is not just the mobilisation by the political parties, but it is also the technical capacity of INEC to go out there and register Nigerians because in a population of almost 200 million People, we expect that 40% of the population should be captured on the electoral register and that is not the case.

"I think what we have today is less than 5% and it's not good enough.

"And, therefore, we want to call on INEC and all our friends that can help in that direction to make sure more people are captured on the electoral register."

Ayu told the European Union delegation that by the end of this month, Nigerians would be in position to know the next

president of the country, boasting that the PDP would produce the next president.

He said, "We know that in the next eight days, we will know the next president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, because once the delegates in our political party, cast their vote, and the pronouncement is made on who is the candidate of the PDP, we will not be calling him candidate of the PDP, we will be calling him the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

So, he said the All Progressive Congress (APC) should be willing to accept defeat when the time comes.

Ayu said: “We worry about post elections as a political party. We have demonstrated that democracy is best when you transit smoothly from one electoral cycle to the other. And therefore, we want everybody to appreciate what we did when we lost elections in 2015. We didn't use agencies of the state to stay in power.

"We conceded defeat and when we win, we expect those who are currently in government to concede defeat because they are going to lose the next election. And they shouldn't hang in there and create an atmosphere of instability in the country. So with the current escalation of violence in the country, we hope, and we pray, that it is not deliberate to extend the tenure of this administration which has failed the country. We hope that when they lose, they also will willingly concede defeat, and hand over power to the Nigerian people.

"As a political party, we're having our convention in the next eight days. And in the tradition of this party, we want our convention

to be very transparent; we will provide a fair and open view to everybody i.e. our 15 presidential aspirants."

Ayu also lamented the rising debt of Nigeria, saying when the PDP was in power, Nigeria was a debt-free country.

He said. "Today, we are the country with the highest debt to GDP in the world, it is in trillions. It is our hope that this will not continue because it has a direct impact on the Nigerian people.

"The lack of employment opportunities, lack of attention to even education, lack of attention to industrialisation, these have worsened the condition of our people, particularly the youth. Therefore, these are areas, as a party, we're interested in addressing when we come back to power because we believe that Nigerians will vote for the PDP in the next election."

Earlier, the leader of the delegation, Isopi, said the EU had been supporting Nigeria in strengthening its democratic governance through the support of all the stakeholders from INEC to the other actors and players of the process of the society, the media, and the political parties.

She further stated. "We have also at the request of the Nigerian authorities always deployed electoral observation, to entrench the process of democracy.

"This is part of our regular consultations with all the stakeholders, actors and partners, particularly in view of the next elections and I would like to reaffirm our support to Nigeria's democracy and we continue to work together with all the institutions and stakeholders involved."

NEWS

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Plateau Governor, APC Delegates, Others, Unanimously Adopt Rotimi Amaechi for President

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Plateau State Governor, Mr. Simon Lalong and delegates of the All Progressives Con-

gress (APC) in the state have unanimously adopted former Minister of Transportation, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi as their choice in the forthcoming Presidential

primary of the party.

In a parley yesterday with Amaechi at the Government House, Jos, the delegates led by the governor said that the decision to adopt the former minister was in the best interest of the people of the state and Nigerians, adding that all former Speakers and members of State Houses of Assembly had agreed to support and vote enmass Amaechi.

Lalong said Amaechi has all the qualities of a good leader, and would save the country from its insecurity problems as well as bring development to all parts of the country, adding that "Plateau State has benefited a lot from Amaechi and it's payback time."

He said, "I was very happy when I saw behind you our past security chiefs, some of the best

security chiefs we have had. I see chain of security experts following you, because the challenge we have in Nigeria today is insecurity and I know that if you become President, with these people, there will be no insecurity in Nigeria."

"I now know and have confirmed that I was right when I followed you to make the declaration. When you declared for President, I want to tell you some of the things that you didn't say and why Plateau people should vote for you."

"In 2014, we were in PDP, we were chased out. When APC came, we were running round, we wanted to join the APC, many people said they would not admit Plateau people into APC, you were the one that

told us to go and join APC, and we came back to Plateau and joined the APC. You gave us the support to do registration. When we registered and we were going into the elections, I went to many people that are now presidential aspirants; they told us that the APC on the Plateau won't go anywhere."

"You assisted each of the Northern states to do registration for the APC and we updated our registration. When we came back to Plateau to contest the general election, nobody supported us, but you did. You invested in Plateau people and out of nowhere, we won the election. Not only myself, we have many members in the House of Assembly, we have members in the National Assembly. Something that nobody gave to us, you

gave to us."

He said that Amaechi was Plateau's eye at the Federal Executive Council even though he is not from the state. He added that most of the approvals the President gave to Plateau was because Amaechi was there to push for it.

"Amaechi was our minister, not minding that he is from Rivers State. Seven of the first set of people he took to China were Plateau boys, and very soon they are coming back as experts in Engineering. We can go on and on."

Lalong said, "Sir, you invested in Plateau State; that is why you are going to reap from Plateau State. That is why I say today that because of what you did for us, I will not support any other candidate."

Tinubu to Kano Delegates: You will Never Regret Supporting Me

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The National Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on Thursday night stormed Kano to seek the support of delegates and other stakeholders ahead of the presidential primary of APC.

Tinubu's visit came days after two presidential aspirants Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and former Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, visited the state to also woo the delegates.

While canvassing for votes of the delegates, the former Lagos State governor urged them not to make a mistake of voting anybody other than him.

"I hereby appeal to you to support my presidential ambition by voting for me to clinch the party's ticket at the forthcoming primary election."

"Today is the day I have come to ask for your support to be president of Nigeria. You can put me there with your votes."

"I believe in myself, I'm smart, intelligent and courageous, don't make mistakes, choose wisely, choose me, I beg you and you will never regret supporting me."

Tinubu met with APC leaders and delegates at Coronation Hall, Government House, Kano, and promised to tackle insecurity, revamp the economy, provide good roads to enable farmers to bring their produce to markets across the country.

He further said that to develop and make the agricultural sector more lucrative, the country needs the formation of a commodity exchange mechanism.

"Commodity exchange is to guarantee to the farmers that there is a market for all the produce that is coming," he said.

Also in his remarks, Governor Abdullahi Ganduje, said it was pay-back for Tinubu who worked greatly for the growth and development of the APC.

Ganduje said that Nigerians were yearning for a candidate who really understands the challenges of the nation and who is experienced enough to reposition the country.

Tinubu had earlier visited elder statesman, Alhaji Aminu Dantata who celebrated his 91st birthday and his (Tinubu's) long time friend, Alhaji Yusuf Ali.



FURTHER CONSULTATIONS...

L-R: PDP's presidential aspirant, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki with the former Governor of Jigawa State, Alhaji Sule Lamido, during Saraki's visit to Jigawa ahead of the PDP Presidential Primaries...yesterday.

Soyinka, Bayero, Jibunoh to Honour Attahiru

Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, the Emir of Bichi, Kano Emirate, His Royal Highness, Alhaji Nasir Ado Bayero and leading Environmentalist, Dr. Newton Jibunoh, are some of the prominent citizens expected at the one-year memorial of Nigeria's immediate past Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru.

General Attahiru died in a plane crash in Kaduna, alongside 10 other military officers and men, on May 21, 2021.

Soyinka will deliver a short tribute with the title: 'To All, who give their All for All'.

A statement issued in Abuja by Programme Coordinator of the General Ibrahim Attahiru Foundation (GIAF), Dr. Titus Omgungu, said other dignitaries at the event, where the Foundation will be formally launched, include top serving and retired military officers, captains of industry, members of the diplomatic corps, political leaders, members of the academia and associates of the late General.

Apart from the launch of GIAF, there will be the premiere of 'Ibrahim Attahiru, a Soldier's Soldier,' a documentary on life and times of the late Army

Chief, produced and directed by Adeola Osunkojo.

The Foundation will also present Attahiru's posthumous biography, 'The man, the soldier, the patriot, biography of Lt. Gen. Ibrahim,' written by Niran Adedokun, at the event. It is published by Cable Books, an arm of Cable Newspapers Limited.

Omgungu explained that the documentary and biography were in celebration of the exemplary life of the late military officer and an opportunity to introduce the ideals that guided his life to Nigerians, "especially when the country needs the virtues of patriotism, selflessness and fellow feeling."

GIAF intends to advance strategic leadership on the African continent with core values centred on the public good, integrity and accountability.

Priority areas for the Foundation, superintended by a Governing Board of Trustees, include Strategic Leadership; Peacebuilding, Human, Environmental, and Social Development; Mental Health and Psycho-social support; Research and Defence Advocacy.

Farah Dagogo Back in Custody, Court Adjourns Till May 25

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

The absence of the judge in court yesterday stalled hearing on the matter between the Rivers State Government and a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship aspirant in the state, Hon. Farah Dagogo.

THISDAY observed at the court that the defendant, who is a lawmaker representing Degema/

Bonny Federal Constituency at the National Assembly, was brought to court by prison warders in a wheelchair as early as 8a.m. and taken back to the correctional centre when court could not sit on the matter.

It was learned that the court under trial Justice Chinwedu Nworgu was supposed to hear and rule on bail application before it on the matter.

The defendant's counsel who

informed journalists in the court premises on the position of the matter, said since the court could not hold, the Clerk told them that the case has been adjourned till Wednesday, May 25, 2022.

Dagogo was arrested in the governorship screening hall at the PDP South South Zonal office in Port Harcourt, by some security operatives by the directive of the state governor, Nyesom Wike, alleging that he hired cultists to

disrupt activities of the state party. Wike in a statement by his Special Assistant on Media, Kelvin Ebiro on April 27, 2022, declared Hon. Dagogo wanted for allegedly hiring cultists to attack the PDP secretariat in Port Harcourt.

On May 9, a Chief Magistrate Court sitting in Port Harcourt, presided by Amadi Nna, entertained the matter and adjourned till May 23 this year to continue hearing.

20-year Life Span Solar Energy System Enters Nigeria

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

Infrastructural challenges facing rural communities in the country may have become a thing of the past, as a solar energy system with a 20-year-life span arrives in the country.

According to the Managing Director, E-Cube, Ilan Lugassy, the solar energy is to provide an alternative solution to an

expensive billion naira electricity grid projects which might not be feasible in the next two decades as the case may be.

The solar energy named E-Cube is an Israeli concept which provides young Nigerians opportunities to learn and come up with smart ideas which can be transformed into actual products.

Lugassy said the E-Cube can be mounted in three days

and it is mobile, adding that the E-Cube is in Nigeria to help provide electricity to communities which will in turn boost access to good health, drinking water, e-learning, community centre and agricultural productivity, among others.

He said the concept supports the participation of community people in improving their economic, social and environmental

lives, cooperating with the other communities, social innovations and development of smart money strategies.

According to Lugassy, "The concept we are discussing is E-Cube smart village, but actually what we are trying to emphasise is the main challenge in Nigeria and all the emerging countries as the population of 1.2 billion have no access to electricity."



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NEWS

Protests Rock Abuja over Suspension of Inauguration of FCT Area Council Chairmen

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

Aggrieved supporters of some of the elected Federal Capital Territory Area Council chairmen yesterday protested in many parts of Abuja against the suspension of the swearing-in ceremony of new area council chairmen earlier scheduled for yesterday.

The protest was sequel to the decision of the FCT Minister, Mohammed Musa Bello to comply with a court judgment on the recently signed Electoral Act of 2022, which stipulated that the tenure of office of the chairmen of the Area Councils in FCT would now be four years instead of three years.

The protesters, bearing various placards, barricaded the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) office in Area 10 asking AMAC chairman, Abdulahi Adamu Candido, who benefited from the extended tenure to step down.

They later stormed the FCTA Secretariat at Area 11 and tried to

force their way to the minister's office, but met stiff resistance from the security personnel who cordoned off the premises.

The protest at the FCTA Secretariat for several hours grounded activities at the secretariat as workers and visitors could not enter or exit the premises.

The FCT Minister had on Thursday suspended the inauguration of the six Area Council chairmen after the expiration of the tenure of the existing chairmen on Wednesday.

In a statement to rationalise the action, the minister said that the existing chairmen who were

elected under the 2010 Electoral Act and whose tenure was meant to expire or end on May 19, 2022 now have another one year to continue, based on the new law.

He said the administration was very conscious of the need to abide by the rule of law, even though it was dissatisfied with the judgment of the court.

Religious Riot: Babcock VC Calls for Dialogue, Peaceful Coexistence among Nigerians

Funmi Ogundare

Vice Chancellor of Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Prof. Ademola Tayo, yesterday, called for understanding and dialogue among Nigerians saying that this will go a long way in ensuring peaceful coexistence.

Prof. Tayo who spoke at the inauguration of the Adventist African-traditionalist Relation Centre (AARC), held at the institution, on the backdrop of the recent mayhem in Sokoto State, expressed concern about the misunderstanding among Nigerians leading to destruction of lives and property.

According to him, "I believe that when we forge dialogue, there will be mutual understanding and when we understand each other better, we will be able to live together in a peaceful coexistence. By joining hands, together we build lasting relationships that make the world a better place, and gives us a sense of appreciation."

The VC said he believes that living together to share information and knowledge about our values and beliefs, promotes understanding about who we are, and a common ground to appreciate God our creator.



MORE CONSULTATION...

L-R: All Progressives Congress's presidential aspirant, Bola Tinubu greeting industrialist Alhaji Aminu Dantata in Kano before meeting the party's delegates to the national convention/presidential nomination... Thursday.

Buhari Appoints Adeniran Statistician

General of the Federation

Ahamefula Ogbu

President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday approved the appointment of Semiu Adeyemi Adeniran as the Statistician General of the federation and chief executive officer of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The appointment follows the death of Simon Harry who was in that position but died on April 13, 2022 of an undisclosed illness.

Adeniran's appointment was contained in a statement by the Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Mr. Clem Agba through his

Special Assistant on Media, Mr. Sufyan Ojeifo.

According to the statement, Mr. Adeniran is a reputable professional statistician specialising in Demography and Social Statistics and has over 30 years of statistical hands-on experience garnered from various local and international institutions.

"Semiu Adeniran is a professional statistician of repute with a bias for Demography and Social Statistics. He has over three decades of statistical hands-on experience garnered from various local and international institutions," the statement reads.

Suspected Stowaway Crushed at Lagos Airport Runway

Chinedu Eze

There is strong suspicion that the mangled body found on the international runway of the Murtala Muhammed Airport Lagos, was that of a stowaway that fell off the wheel-well of an aircraft that was taxiing to take off.

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), which confirmed the incident in a terse statement, signed by its spokesperson, Mrs. Faithful Hope-Ivaze said, "The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria wishes to inform the general public of an incident in which an unidentified human remains were found on Runway 18R/36L on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

"A motorised cleaner, who was cleared to carry out a derruberisation and sweeping of the runway discovered the

remains at about 0106hours, and escalated the situation to relevant departments.

"As a result, between 0110 (1:10a.m.) and 0343 (3:45a.m.) hours, the runway was temporarily closed to allow for immediate evacuation of the remains. Flight operations resumed at 0343 hours."

Other informed sources that gave details about the dead body, said that the Aviation Security (AVSEC), the Nigerian Police, the Department of State Service (DSS) and the Nigerian Air Force jointly took the body for further investigation and were working on the suspicion that the body was that of a stowaway.

THISDAY learnt that the body might have dropped from the aircraft in the night of Wednesday and was being crushed by many aircraft that landed and took off that night.

The Alapomu of Apomu, Oba Kayode Adenekan Afolabi, has officially inaugurated the new Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Outpost Command in Apomu.

The event took place on May 18 in Apomu, headquarters of Isokan Local Government Area of Osun State.

Oba Afolabi who was very excited with the groundbreaking achievement in the kingdom, said Apomu Township has felt the presence of the

Corps in the few weeks of their operations as the ever busy and congested market was declogged by discouraging traders from displaying their goods on the roadside thereby causing human gridlock.

In his speech the Sector Commander, PJ Okpe, appreciated the Corps Marshal for his approval to create the outpost command.

He also thanked Alapomu for his esteemed relentless support ensuring fruition of

the command, adding that he had taken the safety campaign to monarchs in different towns within Osun State and Apomu was one of the chosen ones to have an outpost approved.

The Sector Commander promised that intensive and aggressive public enlightenment activities of the Corps would be disseminated in local languages to enable the community to understand their work.

He urged officers and men

posted to the Outpost Command to work closely with other security agencies and the citizens and shun bribery and corruption.

The ceremony was graced by dignitaries from all walks of life. They include Majority Leader Osun State House of Assembly, Hon. Moroof Olanrewaju, Commissioner for Youth and Sport Osun State, Hon. Yemi Lawal, Chairman Isokan Local Government Area, Hon. Akinremi Moroof, among others.

Employment Scam: ICPC Secures 7-Year Jail Term for Civil Servant

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has secured a seven-year jail term for a public officer in the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Mr. Amdii Monday Gideon, for his involvement in an employment scam.

In the case filed against him by ICPC at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court 17 in Gwagwalada, the convict was accused of demanding

the sum of N250,000 and receiving the sum of N162,500 from an applicant with the promise to procure a job for him at the Federal Civil Service Commission.

A statement by ICPC said the victim had reported the matter to ICPC after the convict failed to procure the said job and refused to refund his money.

During the trial, counsel to ICPC, Michael Adesola, had in a five-count charge told the court of how the action of the convict negates Sections 8 and 10 of the Corrupt Practices

and Other Related Offences Act 2000 and Section 1 (3) of the Advanced Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act 2006.

The charge reads in part: "That You Amdii Monday Gideon (M) on or about the month of June 2015 at Abuja Federal Capital Territory while being a Public Officer at Registry Unit of the Permanent Secretary (Special Duties) office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation corruptly asked for the sum of N162,500.00 from (name

withheld) to secure a job for him and you thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 8(1)(a) and punishable under section 8(1)(ii) of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offence Act 2000."

The prosecution was able to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt which formed the premise upon which the court found Mr. Monday guilty of the charges against him.

He was therefore convicted and was sentenced to seven years imprisonment without an option of fine.

NRC Shelves Resumption of Abuja-Kaduna Train Services

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) yesterday announced a shift in the resumption date for Abuja-Kaduna Train Services which was slated for May 23, 2022..

NRC, apologised for the delays in the resumption of the service, stating that a new date would be announced soonest.

The agency in a statement by its Deputy Director, Public

Relations, Mr. Yakub Mahmood, said "Sequel to our earlier Press Release No. 10 dated 16th May 2022 on the above caption, the general public is kindly invited to note the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) is announcing a shift in the resumption date for Abuja Kaduna train services (AKTS)."

The statement further hinted that the NRC will continue to cooperate and collaborate with the federal government in its

uncompromising mandate of protecting the territorial integrity and the internal security of Nigeria for safeguarding the lives and property of its citizens especially as it concerns the rail sub-sector.

"In same vein, we once again identify with the relatives of those in captivity on the account of the recent attack on AKTS to be rest assured that the federal government is alive to its

responsibility for the safe rescue of all persons being held hostage.

"We therefore appeal, particularly to the relatives of persons held hostage to be patient and cooperate with the corporation and the security agencies as the federal Government is exploring all possible ways and means to ensure the safe release of their loved ones from captivity, soonest.

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COMMENTARY

NIGERIA’S MIND-BOGGLING MATHS

Whoever emerges as the next President should be pitied, writes **Fredrick Nwabufo**

Expectations are high. Rightly so. 2023 has been roundly described as a make-or-mar year for Nigeria. Citizens seek change. Things have to change. The current socio-economic tailspin must be arrested. But we have to be pragmatic with our expectations. Good things do not come easy. No single individual can magic Nigeria into an El dorado in four years. Nigeria’s problems, which are functionally in situ, are age-long. But one “Alexander the Great” can actuate the process to cutting the systemic Gordian knots.

According to legend, Gordius, king of Gordium, tied an intricate knot and prophesied that whoever untied it would become the ruler of Asia. It was cut through with a sword by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. Alexander went on to conquer most of Asia. So, the term “Gordian knot”, which means difficulty, snag, setback, problem or obstacle, came from the artful tapestry of the king of Gordium.

What are Nigeria’s Gordian knots? Pervasive insecurity, omnipotent corruption, nepotism, prostrate economy, acutely divided citizenry, decrepit health infrastructure, wobbly education, ubiquitous poverty, unchecked killings, indiscipline, persistent workers’ strikes, capricious and avaricious petrol subsidy regime, and general societal malaise.

Nigeria’s next president will be coming at a time the country is agonisingly sundered along ethnic and religious contours; at a time of seething anger and great uncertainty; when the economy is in shreds; corruption at the apogee; at such a perilous a time when Nigerians cannot commute from one part of the country to another for fear of being killed and kidnapped; at such a vulnerable time when a dollar is N600 at the parallel market, and when over 13 million children are out of school. Nigeria’s next president will be coming at a time of anomie.

In the column, ‘Why are ethnicity, zoning dominant issues of 2023 elections’, I said while we fixate on primordial concerns, we lose sight of the most important matters. We dispense too much energy on trivialities, and leaving little to interrogate those who have come forward to represent us. Even if ethnicity, region and religion are to be criteria for selecting Nigeria’s next president for the sake of “justice, equity and fairness” as propounded by those calling for an orbiting in the geography of power, this should not take precedence over the principal issues of leadership.

The task ahead is humongous and Nigeria desperately needs the right people in government to get the right fixes.

A critical concern today is insecurity. How would the next president tackle the hydra of insurgency, banditry, terrorism



NIGERIA'S NEXT PRESIDENT WILL BE COMING AT A TIME THE COUNTRY IS AGONISINGLY SUNDERED ALONG ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS CONTOURS; AT A TIME OF SEETHING ANGER AND GREAT UNCERTAINTY; WHEN THE ECONOMY IS IN SHREDS; CORRUPTION AT THE APOGEE; AT SUCH A PERILOUS A TIME WHEN NIGERIANS CANNOT COMMUTE FROM ONE PART OF THE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER

and kidnapping? What measures will the next president take to address the galloping debts, oil revenue shrinkage and freewheeling inflation? How will the next president provide elixir for our health sector and get our wobbly education kicking again?

What are the plans to take the edge off youth unemployment? What will be the policy on petrol subsidy, considering that N4 trillion will be spent on this Venus flytrap in 2022? What is the plan to oxygenate Nigeria’s power sector and make it less of an embarrassment? How will ASUU demands be addressed for good? How will sectional agitations and omnipresent corruption be tackled?

These are some of the issues that the next president will have to contend with. The task ahead is immense. If we are serious about getting out of the doldrums, then we must make this election about real issues – with gravitas.

Who will begin the process of cutting Nigeria’s many Gordian knots? As a matter of fact, people with the capacity for governance are not in short supply here. But if we are seeking some flawless individuals or celestial beings to turn Nigeria around, we will only be chasing a will-o-the-wisp. Again, we have to be realistic and measure our expectations.

No single government can fix all of Nigeria’s problems. What we need is successive corrective leadership. One government addresses some critical challenges, and the next comes to build on the successes of the other. Governance should be a progressive continuum.

If 2023 is really a make-or-mar year for Nigeria, then we must begin to make every bit of the process to electing a new leadership count. We must prioritise the real issues and interrogate those who have come forward for elective office. It is facile to assume that because delegates, who are often bribed, will nominate the candidates for elections, the choice of the uninitiated population is already compromised. It is not a fait accompli. Delegates do not exist in isolation. They are everyday Nigerians encumbered by the same quotidian problems.

I believe the zeitgeist; the mood of the time, (among other factors), will govern the nomination of presidential candidates by the parties.

And if I am reading the mood of the country correctly, Nigerians are tired.

My sympathies in advance to anyone who takes up the job of leading Nigeria under this reign of babel.

Nwabufo is a writer and journalist.

RE: OSINBAJO, ADEYEYE AND HIS DISHONEST THESIS

Olusola Adeyeye argues that Ajibola Basiru’s response to his piece is unfortunate

This is a rejoinder to Senator Ajibola Basiru’s piece titled “Osinbajo: Senator Adeyeye and his dishonest thesis,” published in The Guardian on May 14, 2022. Basiru is my successor in the Red Chamber as the Senator representing Osun Central. So, he is my Senator, but he’s in a bit of a pickle at the moment. His cry for help has come in the form of his tendentious attack against me in the media.

Before I deal with the substantive issues in his piece, let me deal with the attitude he exhibited. Somehow, the attitude is tied to the substantive issues, but I want to deal with aspects of it that have to do with presentation and character.

It should be a given that when you are the spokesperson of the Senate, which Bashiru in his piece, lavishly reminded us that he is, being the mouthpiece of a presidential aspirant in the public space would be a walk in the park for you, Sadly, Bashiru falls short of this miniscule expectation.

The first rule of public engagement is to respect your interlocutors and understand the issue. You just don’t jump into an ongoing public discussion with an idea in your head without understanding or, at least, acknowledging the context of an ongoing debate. The title and the first paragraph of my piece clearly says it is a rejoinder to Reno Omokri’s piece published in his column (‘THE ALTERNATIVE’) on the backpage of THISDAY newspaper of Tuesday, 3rd May, 2022. The least one would expect from anyone publicly joining the discussion is to acknowledge this. But Basiru dove headlong into it to grab my throat because he wasn’t happy I didn’t have mushy things to say about his preferred aspirant. I apologize on behalf of Basiru to Reno Omokri, the young man who did a brilliant job in the piece I responded to, even though my rejoinder disagreed with his view. A man who does not respect intellect has

none. Now, about character, when a man chooses the public space to declare you “dishonest” over something you had said in the public space, you owe it to yourself and to posterity to either reject or accept that tag. You can reject it by responding or you can accept it by admitting that indeed you are dishonest, or you can just keep mute. In the last case, any reasonable person would take your silence as consent.

I do not accept the popular wisdom that you should ignore people who mischievously lie against you or misrepresent what you’ve said in the public space. No, you should respond. If they are in the gutter and they think you won’t come in there to roll with them, because you are Mary Poppins, or a shrinking violet, oh, please, disappoint them. Jump in, feed them with the slime they’re used to and leave them there to marinate in their natural abode. It befits them. That’s me.

Okay, why this attitude and why over the issue in question? Senator Basiru and I are at this moment on two different sides of the political divide within our party, the All Progressives Congress (APC). Ordinarily, as my successor in the Senate, I should have no reason to engage with him in an adversarial manner in public space. However, where it concerns Nigeria and our patriotism, where it concerns nothing personal, there are no sacred spaces to speak the truth.

Senator Basiru accuses me of dishonesty. That is heavy. He should not be allowed to emblazon a supposed response to me in national newspapers with a tag of dishonesty without proving it to Nigerians. Perhaps he should look up the meaning of dishonest and then come back and point out to me where I was dishonest in my piece. Of course, I say this because nothing, absolutely nothing in his piece suggests that I am dishonest. Everything

he said in response to me only indicates that we have a difference of opinion. You don’t differ with someone else’s opinion and then tag him dishonest, except, of course, if he is and you can prove it or as an adult, you’re still grappling with that basic elementary school English Language curriculum called “Words and Meaning.” Whatever the case, I will give Senator Basiru the opportunity to prove it, while I respond to the substantive issues he attempted to discuss in his piece in supposed response to me.

But, before I delve into that, let me say something about my politics and what I am about at the moment without fear of contradiction. Apart from being a scientist and an academic, I have been a Local Government Chairman, a member of the House of Representatives and a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In all these emanations, I have carried myself with dignity and a strong sense of purpose with full respect to Nigerians who I humbly served and still serve. My biggest asset throughout the decades of being active in academia and politics and now is my integrity. To the ironic embarrassment of some around me, I carry it like an egg. That is why there is no one in Nigeria or anywhere in the world I cannot tell my mind. Of course, I should add that I have been that way right from my days as a young secondary school lad through my political and party activism with the Action Group (AG) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and throughout the time of the highly political military of the seventies, eighties and nineties.

Now, as a strong supporter of Vice President Yemi Osinbajo in this forthcoming election, I made a conscious choice to follow my idealism. I know the way of politicians, but even though I’m one, I do not stain myself in pursuit of power for myself or on behalf of another person, no matter

who they are. Osinbajo did not give me money and cannot give me money. He has given me what I want and it is exactly what I want for my children and for all Nigerians. Let me elaborate.

I read Chidi Amuta’s column in the Sunday THISDAY, 15th May, 2022. He had an article there titled “Overcrowding the Presidential Doorway.” Like most informed commentators, he is scandalized by the number of unserious people clogging the space in supposed contest for the presidency on the platforms of the political parties. He took the liberty to mention that only “seven from the multitude of presidential aspirants have any business aspiring to lead anything beyond a local government or town union” and he went further to describe them.

Here is how he put it: “In the minor parties, my friend Kingsley Moghalu stands out for knowledge about Nigeria and informed options on how to rescue the nation from the present prison house of tragic misgovernance. From the PDP queue, I can see Pius Anyim, Peter Obi and Atiku Abubakar. Each comes with options outside the box and undeniable experience in getting good things done.

“In the APC, there is Bola Tinubu who set Lagos on the path to a modern mega city status and introduced a tradition of enlightened governance. Rotimi Amaechi stands tall in the APC pack as one man with an unusual courage and boldness to fix frightening problems. He has fixed things we can see and feel in his Rivers state and all around Nigeria. There is Yemi Osinbajo, exemplary Vice President, an unusual combination of morality, ideas and practical solutions. I hardly know about the rest of the crowded choir.”

Professor Adeyeye was a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a supporter of the Vice President

INSIGHT



Is the ban enforceable?

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.

Africa’s Pandemic of Poverty

When at the tail-end of 2019, the novel Corona virus waltzed out of Wuhan, China and proceeded on taking the world on an excruciating journey for all of 2020, peoples and systems around the world scrambled to adjust to the new reality that had left very little room for preparation or lethargy. Vaccines have since been rolled out and measures to curb the virus have turned out to be largely successful. However, the virus’s rollercoaster continues and it was long ago that the world came to a realization that the reality of a new virus was here and that the prudent measures would be those measures taken to contain it.

South Africa, the African country most hit by virus going by the sheer number of infections and deaths, recently entered a fifth wave of Covid-19 while North Korea has recently been hit by a surge of infections and deaths from the virus which all go to show that the virus is still very much present in the world today.

As the corona virus surged across the world showing the full extent of its destructively disruptive armoury, an uncomfortable realization dawned on the world. The realization did not only have everything to do with the number of infections and deaths that would result from the virus, the highly infectious nature of the virus was forcing measures that were bound to hit some of the world’s most vulnerable people below the belt.

In Nigeria for example, it was not long before the authorities imposed a crippling nationwide lockdown in March 2020 which meant that businesses and many other economic activities were ground to a halt with only the most essential of services spared.

The measures imposed to enforce social distancing also ensured that people could not just live and work as they used to. Businesses and jobs all suffered violent upheavals as many people scrambled just to survive the heavy toll the pandemic had imposed on them. The pandemic did not just bring a loss of lives, it also saw the loss of numerous livelihoods.

One of Africa’s grandest contradictions is that in spite of its staggering natural and human resources, it is still home to some of the world’s

poorest people. Factors which have contributed to this grim situation include corruption, conflict and climate change. Africa was already a continent of many struggling people before the pandemic came. The pandemic has since further complicated Africa’s gripping battle against poverty.

Reports recently emerged that the global pandemic has pushed more than 55 million Africans into extreme poverty reversing in the process two decades of hard work in poverty reduction on the continent. This revelation came courtesy of the Economic Report on Africa for 2021 which blamed the growing poverty on job losses, reduced income and the inability of households to manage risks.

The 150-page report launched in Dakar, Senegal, by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa said the corona virus negatively impacted the continent’s economy.

Kene Obiezu, keneobiezu@gmail.com

Insecurity: The Bane of Northern Nigeria

For the umpteenth time, Nigerians continue to wail and lament the overwhelming gale of insecurity in the country. On a daily basis, we are beset with the miasmas of heinous activities such as: killing and maiming of scores, kidnapping, banditry, insurgency, cattle rustling, communal and farmer’s clashes, amongst others. These cascading crises plaguing and ravaging our nation only compound myriad of problems that confront our daily existence and constantly enervate us to our very soul. Thus, the term ‘security’ has no foothold in our socio-politicized space.

While this baleful reality remains our lot, we should be bothered that the Northern part has become an epicenter for these perturbing absurdities. To be candid, the situation is deteriorating by the day as schools and hospitals are now turned into hideouts for criminals, farmlands into training grounds for criminals, houses into graveyards, with people going to bed with one eye open in fear of being killed or kidnapped. Indeed, these existential threats simply thrust the Northern region into chaotic and cluttered conditions which

fuel the flames of crime, criminality and religious intolerance.

The sad fact about this ugly reality is that the President and the Northern governors seem unmoved and unconcerned about the dwindling and failing state of security in the North. The facts are clear as it takes government officials days before an official statement is released, or they simply keep mum about the unwarranted killings and kidnappings as nothing substantive is done and the marauders walk away freely to other communities unleashing violence and mayhem on the poor masses. Therefore, in hindsight, we can say that the incompetence of the government and her negligence to address these issues suggest that there is a cynical propaganda that undergirds these killings, for there is certainly more to these issues than meets the eyes.

While our hearts continue to bleed profusely from the harms caused by traumatizing insecurity challenges our government needs to be reminded that they have an obligation to fulfill to every Nigerian, it is constitutional; they are to safeguard the lives and properties of the citizenry. Thus, they must understand that our brothers and sisters, who get killed, abducted, displaced, and injured, as a result of these monumental insecurity challenges in the North are Nigerians, and as such should not be reduced to pawns used for their political agenda. The daredevils who persistently enjoy a field day in many parts of the country, more especially in the North, should be brought to face the law for their evils.

If the government fails to heed this call, then our many challenges cannot also be resolved. This is because any country that remains beleaguered cannot experience growth and progress. At this point, we do not need a prognosticator to tell us the effects of insecurity on the North and in other parts of Nigeria. Something must and should be done especially as we inch towards the 2023 general election. Fear grips the hearts of many who wish to change the sad narratives that inundate the cover pages of our national dailies.

Tobechukwu Johnpaul Nwabuisi, mel-chi5801@gmail.com

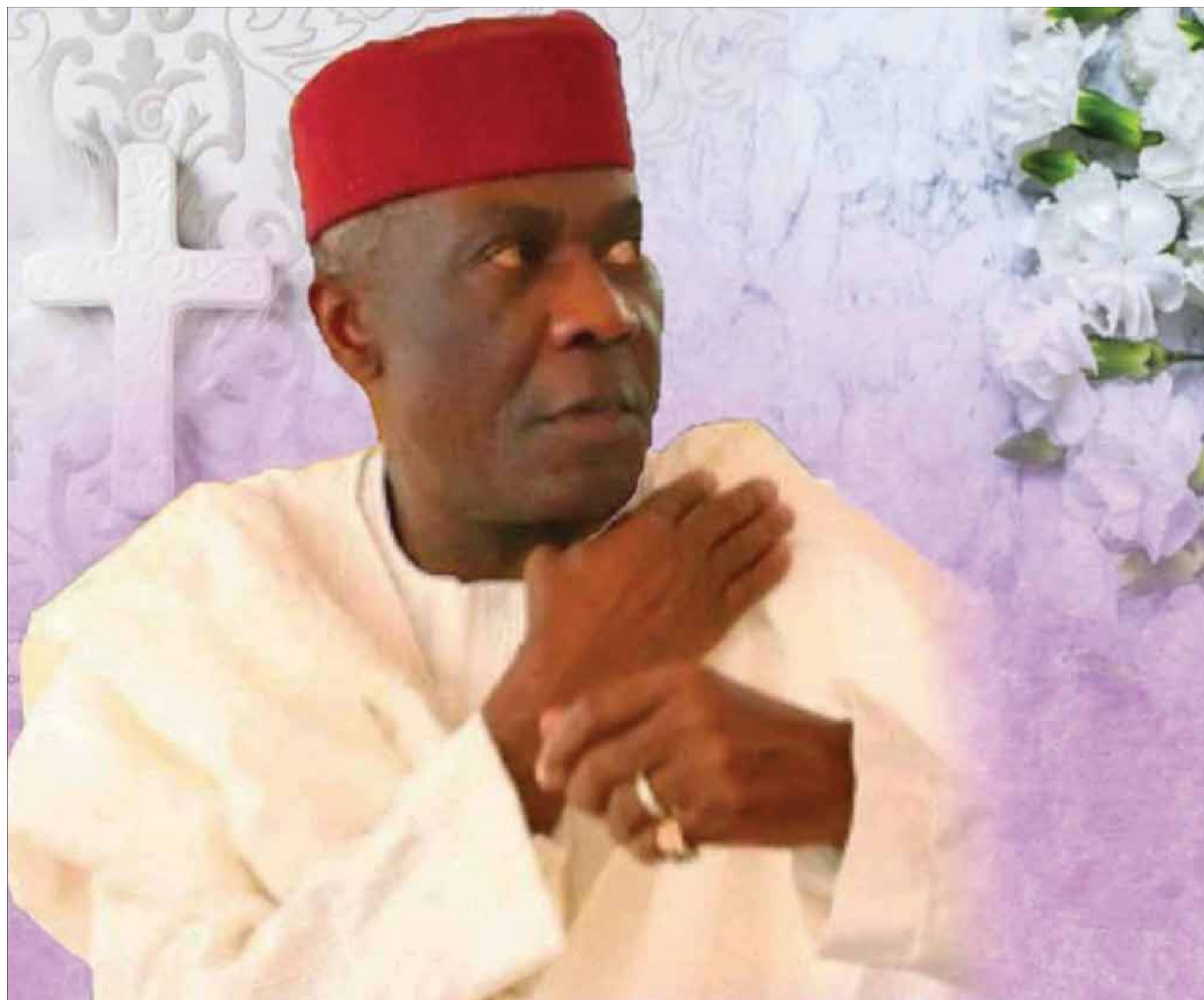
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PASSAGE OF OUR DEAR INLAW

Senator Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe.

With heavy hearts, but total submission to the will of God Almighty, the Osula Royal Family of Benin Kingdom, announce the passing to eternal glory of our great inlaw, Senator Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe.

His eventful sojourn on earth can best be described as a life well lived on account of his positive impact on the lives of many who crossed his path and invaluable contributions towards the growth of the Nigerian-nation.

He was a highly cerebral personality whose charm and charity to all knew no bounds. Though, we mourn, his memory shall remain ever green in our hearts as a responsible family man and worthy inlaw that he was.

May his gentle soul rest on peacefully in God's bosom.

Signed:
Osula Royal Family of Benin Kingdom.

Deborah: Failure of Leadership Emboldens Extremists

Ten days after the murder of Deborah Yakubu, who was a student of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, by some fanatical Muslim school mates for alleged blasphemy, not even one of the bastards that murdered her has been arrested. The charges filed against the two suspects - Bilyaminu Aliyu and Aminu Hukunci - arraigned last Monday over the murder were “criminal conspiracy and inciting public disturbance.” So, those arraigned are not the killers; they were involved in criminal conspiracy and incitement, not murder. That’s what security agents are telling us. Where then are the killers?

The sad news today is that not a single one of the killers in the viral video which captured the moment Deborah Samuel was killed has been arrested by the compromised police in Sokoto State. Scores of extremists were seen in the video participating in the murder of Deborah. The police simply declared them wanted this week and sat back. It took the police in Sokoto State six days to even do this. Why did the police not go after the killers immediately the crime was committed? What have they been doing in the last 10 days to arrest the killers? The murderers are easily identifiable as seen in viral videos cheerfully celebrating their crime. So sad that 10 days after, the police have failed to track them down.

The main duty of the State is protection of lives. The Nigerian State has failed Deborah. The Nigeria State persistently fails its people because of crooked and compromised leadership. This is the tragedy of the country called Nigeria. The brutal murder of Deborah will not be the last. Terrorists and religious fanatics in Nigeria are emboldened because they are hardly made to pay for their atrocities. So, they confidently continue with their carnages. That was why the terrorists that killed Deborah matched on the streets of Sokoto the following day, burning churches, maiming and killing innocent people.

No doubt, the leadership of this country has failed abysmally. That was why it took compromised President Muhammadu Buhari 24 hours to react to the killing of Deborah. I thought our President would direct the IG of police to relocate to Sokoto State to smoke out all those responsible of the odious crime against humanity and arraign them. It did not happen.

Our President simply ordered “a thorough, impartial probe of the incident.” What is there to probe again? The religious extremists who killed Deborah openly took the law into their hands. They recorded the murder and provided video evidence. Which investigation is Buhari talking about? Buhari, for obvious reasons, did not give firm instruction to security agents to take drastic actions against killers of Deborah.



Buhari

Religious fanatics are emboldened by this. The murder of Deborah is criminality! Simple! The responsibility of the government is to immediately ensure that those who committed the dreadful crime are identified, detained and quickly prosecuted.

Buhari and Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State have failed to send a strong signal to religious fanatics that Nigeria remains a heterogeneous, secular state. They have failed to come down very hard on carnage by extremists. They did not even deem it appropriate to visit the traumatised parents of Deborah. The political ambition of Tambuwal pushed aside the importance of the life of a citizen entrusted in his care but was murdered in cold blood.

The Sokoto State Police Command has also shown evidence of bias by arraigning the two suspects at a Magistrate court for lesser crimes instead of murder. Deborah’s case is evidently for the High court and the file ought to have been referred to the Sokoto State Director of Public Prosecution.

A compromised leadership makes it difficult for security agents to arrest terrorists and religious extremists. Looking back, it is painful that those behind most of the gory attacks by religious fanatics in Nigeria are yet to be arrested. I will never forget how in 2004, extremist Muslim students at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi State, pronounced a fatwa on a Christian student, Sunday Achi, and strangled him to death. Till date, not a single one of the killers has been apprehended.

There was also the case of Oluwatoyin Oluwasesin, who was lynched by her cheating students in Gombe in 2007,

after falsely accusing her of desecrating the Koran while she was invigilating an examination. Murdered Oluwasesin only threw out a bag brought into the examination hall by a schoolboy and the student lied that the bag contained Koran. What about the case of Grace Ushang, a National Youth Service Corps member, who was raped and killed in 2009 in Borno State for the alleged offence of wearing the approved NYSC khaki trousers? Years after these crimes and many others by Islamic extremists, all the killers are yet to be arrested. What a country!

Killing in the name of blasphemy is punishable by death as affirmed by the Supreme Court in 2007. Those defending the murder of Deborah need to be reminded about this. A ruling in a case of blasphemy delivered by the Supreme Court in October 2007, upheld the death by hanging verdict of Musa Yaro, Abubakar Dan Shalla and others (all Muslims) for the murder of one Alhaji Abdullahi Umaru of Randali village in Kebbi State, for allegedly blaspheming against Prophet Mohammed (SAW). The current Chief Justice of Nigeria, Ibrahim Tanko and the first female CJN Aloma Mariam Mukhtar (both Northern Muslims) were among the justices of the Supreme Court who delivered a unanimous judgment on that killing which happened in 1999.

The convicts had earlier been found guilty at the High Court and Appeal Court levels. In his ruling, Justice Tanko stated: “Islam is not a primitive religion that allows its adherents to take the law into their own hands and to commit jungle justice. The accused persons are merely a bunch of bloodthirsty militants or religious fundamentalists who were all out to satisfy their vindictive zeal against the deceased.”

So, the killers of Deborah desecrated her fundamental rights guaranteed in Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution – right to life, right to fair hearing, right to freedom of thought, religion and conscience. They must be brought to justice. This is the only way to halt the endless cycle of killing in the name of religion in Nigeria.

Another factor responsible for the growing attacks by religious extremists in Nigeria is the support for a particular religion by states. It is so painful that 12 states in the core North have Islamic law in place contrary to the explicit provision of Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution. This emboldens Islamic fanatics. It is pertinent to remind governors of these states that the Nigerian Constitution states that “the government of the federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion.” They are violating the Nigerian Constitution, the rights of others and promoting extremism.

To those blood-thirsty Islamic extremists still roaming unhindered across our country, I will leave them with the words of my

very good friend, Alhaji Yushau Shuaib, a journalist and Public Relation consultant, who said: “The life stories of the peace-loving Prophet Muhammed (SAW) were those of a great man, who was mocked, insulted, defamed, cursed, and physically attacked for his faith in Islam – all of which he responded to with patience, forbearance, mercy, and forgiveness of those who had offended him.

“There are many authentic Hadiths buttressing his peaceful nature, which should teach Muslims the importance of tolerance, kindness and a sense of brotherliness. The Qur’an, the Hadiths and Shariah law generally do not endorse or justify gross acts of vigilante violence, jungle justice and extra-judicial killings. In many verses of the Holy Quran, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Muslims are enjoined by the Almighty Allah to be patient and to increase their acts of tolerance and worship.”

This is the real teaching of Prophet Muhammed (Pbuh). Under Islamic law, there is no offence that should be punished without trial. The Nigerian State must come down very hard on Islamic extremists desecrating our land. There must be consequences for jungle justice. Those managing this country must rise above religious sentiments. There must be zero-tolerance for lawlessness. The leadership must be firm and fair to all, regardless of religion. This is the only way forward for Nigeria.

Still on Calamity Wike and Rivers’ Workers



Wike

It’s good seeing the national leaders of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) joining the war against calamity governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, who has spent almost seven years traumatising civil servants and retirees. Wike, who is vying to be President in 2023 on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party, goes around spending the state’s money like a drunken sailor, while salaries and pensions are withheld. He has refused to pay the terminal benefits of retirees for the past seven years. This is the height of man’s inhumanity to man.

The NLC rightly wrote Wike on May 5, complaining about his inhumane disposition to the plight of public workers and pensioners. It protested non-promotion of eligible civil servants; non-payment of arrears of salaries; non-payment of pension arrears, gratuities and death benefits; non-implementation of pension incremental rates and non-implementation of annual salary increment.

“Workers in the state now go about in black mourning robes and the children of retirees now protest naked in public. Those are all ominous signs,” declared the NLC.

NLC’s letter gives a clear picture of this down called Wike, who is aspiring to be the president of Nigeria. In decent societies, he would not be holding any public office. Anybody talking about a Wike Presidency is talking about fascism emerging in Nigeria. May the case never arise.

Terrorists Declare ‘No Farming’ in Maradun

Fulani militias are still enjoying a free rein in the North-west, thanks to the Buhari government. There is hardly any crime they won’t get away with. Now, they have decreed that there must no longer be farming in Faru village, Maradun Local Government Area of Zamfara State. Eight days back, Faru farmers that refused to heed this pronouncement were dealt a solid blow. No fewer than seven of them were killed in their farmlands.

The militias have been terrorising the village since the beginning of this year’s rainy-season farming. They have vowed that no farming activities would take place within the area. An indigene of the area, Garba Abdullahi, lamented: “The bandits



Matawalle

have been going round the farmlands to ensure compliance with their directives. We are planning to flee the village due to

the growing insecurity because from all indications, the bandits will not allow us to farm this year. My elder brother, Sani Akwala was among those mercilessly killed by these heartless bandits.”

Unfortunately, security agents have failed to respond to distress calls of Faru farmers. The situation here is hopeless. Governor Mohamed Bello Matawalle has been a big disappointment in Zamfara State. He is deliberately looking the other way while Fulani militias continue killing and maiming across the state. At one point, Matawalle, elected to protect everybody, was empowering Fulani militias with his amnesty programme. This is the failure of leadership I often talk about. What a tragedy!

PERSPECTIVE

Corporate Takeovers: Contextualising the Savannah Move on Akinyanmi's Lekoil

Temitope Ajayi

Business is war! That is the thrust of what people learn in business school, and from the preponderance of available literature on business and strategy. Business owners, boardroom tacticians, and corporateraiders pursue business interests just like battle-tested generals at the war front, whomust deploy all the arsenal at their disposal to win. The stories of hostile business takeovers around the world are too numerous to list.

There are a number of very famous case studies on hostile takeovers, including those involving Kraft Foods Inc. and Cadbury Plc, InBev and Anheuser-Busch, as well as the Sanofi-Aventis and Genzyme Corporation cases. Collectively, they have somewhat become the locus classicus.

In the case involving the French drugmaker, Sanofi-Aventis launched an \$18.5 billion hostile takeover offer for Genzyme in a bitter feud to take control of the US biotech firm. Genzyme produced drugs for the treatment of rare genetic disorders and Sanofi saw the company as a means to expand into aniche industry and broaden its product offering.

Just as in other climes, a hostile takeover of a business is not new to Nigeria. Access Bank made a move on Union Bank around 2009 by mopping up the shares of Union Bank through proxies, to gain enough foothold to make a bid to take over the bank. Things went so bad that Union Bank issued a cryptic press statement accusing a bank of sponsoring thugs to disrupt its Annual General Meeting.

While Access Bank did not succeed at taking over Union Bank at that time, it succeeded with the acquisition of the defunct Intercontinental Bank; an act considered a forceful takeover that was supervised by the Central Bank. The Directors and shareholders of Intercontinental Bank are still in court challenging the propriety of the deal.

The most recent takeover bid that generated bitter media ruckus was the one involving Alta Semper Capital LLP and HealthPlus, a retail pharmaceutical company. In 2018, Alta Semper announced a partnership with HealthPlus that would require the venture capitalists to invest \$18 million dollars in the leading Nigerian retail pharmacy chain. HealthPlus, under the terms of the agreement, was to use the money to expand its retail footprint across the country to enhance its competitive advantage. About two years into the relationship, Mrs. Olubukunola Adewunmi George, Founder and Chief Executive of HealthPlus cried out, alleging that Alta Semper was plotting to force her out of her company for a complete takeover.

A takeover, as defined by the Investment and Securities Act (ISA), 2007, is "the acquisition by one company of sufficient shares in another company to give the acquiring company control over that other company". Conceptually, a takeover is a change in the control structure of one company (the target) by another company (the acquirer, or bidder) that assumes control of the target. Of course, a takeover may be friendly or hostile.

It is friendly when the process is voluntary and there are no objections from the shareholders, board, and management of the company being taken over. The consummation of the marriage becomes seamless without dissenting interest leading to litigation. Whereas, a hostile takeover happens when the shareholders, board, and management of a target company reject the offer or bid from a prospecting company or an investor that seeks to expand shareholding via the acquisition of more shares.

To determine whether a bid is friendly or hostile, it is important to contextualize why a business or an investor within an existing business seeks to take over another company. Some of the reasons or motivations for a firm to decide to undertake a takeover could be part of a wider business strategy for growth, the need to increase market size and leadership, to benefit from economies of scale, secure a bigger route to market, and acquire intangible assets such as brand equity, patents and trademarks. It could also be a means to spread risk through business diversification.

An unfolding case of hostile move on a company that is currently generating disturbing lot of media attention is the one between Lekoil Nigeria Limited and its offshore subsidiary, Lekoil Cayman Limited. The raging storm is the attempt at a backdoor



Lekan Akinyanmi

Analysts believe the impasse between Lekoil Nigeria and Lekoil Cayman has become more complicated only due to the involvement of third-party adventurers. The acquisition of shares on the cheap and the subsequent surreptitious attempt by Metallon to take over Lekoil Nigeria assets, set in motion the twists and turns in the tale that has been over the past several months

hostile takeover of the Nigerian business. It is now a matter of litigation; involving Lekoil Limited Cayman Island and Savannah Energy Investments Limited (defendants) and Lekoil Nigeria Limited, the plaintiff.

Going by information in the media, at the heart of the current dispute between Lekoil Nigeria and its offshore subsidiary is \$110 million, which the offshore arm supposedly facilitated for business operations in Nigeria.

The Trouble with Lekoil Nigeria and its offshore partner

Lekoil Nigeria Limited, founded by Mr. Lekan Akinyanmi, floated Lekoil Cayman for ease of offshore fundraising to finance its oil and gas assets in Nigeria. Lekoil Cayman consequently, owns 40% equity in the Nigerian business.

Sometime in 2020, Lekoil shares took a hit arising from a number of issues, including Covid-19 and the global slump in international oil prices. That opened a window of opportunity for a number of investors to buy some Lekoil shares on the cheap.

Having amassed an appreciable number of

shares enough to have control of the Lekoil Cayman board, the buyers, Metallon Corporation made the first move to take total possession of the company and its assets by calling an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) where it fired its Founder/CEO, Lekan Akinyanmi, on alleged corporate breaches. That of course did not go down well with Lekan, who then resigned from the board and retained his position as CEO of Lekoil Nigeria. His resignation sparked a spate of resignations by other Lekoil board members. Bear in mind that both Lekoil Nigeria and Lekoil Cayman had maintained a parallel board until that point.

While all of this was going on, Lekoil Nigeria discontinued funding the Lekoil Cayman board, effectively making the board unable to operate. Following this development, Metallon Corporation proceeded to sell its shares in Lekoil Cayman to unidentified entities, while retaining some of its nominees on the board of the company. More complications.

The dirty boardroom politics that began with the

edging out of Lekan Akinyanmi from Lekoil Cayman in a bid to create access for the offshore affiliate company to forcefully gain control of the business in Nigeria, has soured the business relationship leading to a court case where Lekoil Nigeria Limited is now the plaintiff against the defendants, Lekoil Limited (Cayman Island) and Savannah Energy Investments Limited.

The plaintiff sought an ex-parte injunction following the announcement on February 28, 2022, by the 1st defendant (Lekoil Cayman) that it had entered into an agreement with Savannah Energy Investments Limited (2nd defendant), a subsidiary of Savannah Energy Plc. Before the court injunction, Lekoil Cayman and Savannah Energy Investments scheduled an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to hold on Thursday, April 7, 2022. That EGM was held in defiance of the Nigerian court's injunction.

As the plaintiff, Lekoil Nigeria accused Lekoil Cayman and Savannah Energy of disregarding Nigerian law and disrespecting a court of competent jurisdiction because of the inordinate ambition to take over oil and gas assets of the Nigerian company that are held in trust for the people of Nigeria. "Rather than respect the rule of law, both companies had acted in defiance to the Nigerian court injunction by going ahead with the EGM as scheduled," the plaintiff lamented.

It is worth stating that indigenous operators and international oil companies operating in Nigeria are Joint Venture partners with the NNPC Limited, the custodian of all oil and gas assets. It is the responsibility of NNPC to ensure the people of Nigeria derive maximum value from oil exploration to fund development that will improve the standard of living of Nigerians.

It is therefore incumbent on the government of Nigeria through NNPC, to exercise fiduciary responsibility and necessary duty of care that guarantee and protect the national interest in the subsisting standoff between Lekoil Nigeria Limited and its foreign affiliate. Worthy of note is the position of the Minister of State for Petroleum, Timipre Sylva. In a January 2021 letter, the Minister was clear that a takeover of the local entity by a foreign subsidiary cannot happen without following the rules and regulations that govern such transactions under the laws of Nigeria.

In this case, the consent of the Minister of Petroleum must be sought and approval granted before any transfer of oil and gas assets from one company to the other. The Minister's letter states: "We are of the view that such significant change of shareholding can only be carried out in close adherence with the guidelines and procedures for obtaining consent to the assignment of interest in oil and gas assets dated August 11, 2014, issued pursuant to the powers of the Minister of Petroleum Resources under the Petroleum Act. Articles 3 and 4 of the Guidelines of Ministerial Consent set out the key elements of assignment of ownership and control of interests in oil and gas assets and the requirements for securing ministerial consent."

Postscript

Some analysts believe that the impasse between Lekoil Nigeria and Lekoil Cayman has become more complicated only due to the involvement of third-party adventurers. The acquisition of shares on the cheap and the subsequent surreptitious attempt by Metallon to take over Lekoil Nigeria assets, set in motion the twists and turns in the tale that has been over the past several months.

One must ask this question; did Metallon read the Lekoil shareholder agreement before it set about its takeover maneuverings? Was Savannah Energy made aware of that agreement and did it pay adequate attention to it before getting entangled in this messy affair with Lekoil Cayman?

The Lekoil shareholder agreement was apparently overlooked by Metallon and so has Savannah Energy in this apparent takeover bid. That agreement effectively prevents any entity from taking possession of Lekoil Nigeria assets, without due process. And it does seem that the assets are the ultimate target of those seeking a backdoor control of Lekoil.

So, why is Savannah Energy boldly proceeding on this course? Is there something that Savannah Energy knows that nobody else does?

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SHOWBIZFLAIR

Bovi Ugboma

I Try to Challenge, Reinvent Myself

Ace comedian, and actor, Bovi Ugboma – simply known as Bovi - is in a class of his, such that while speaking with him, you may not easily tell between his real self and his comic part which oftentimes rubs off on his persona. Not your run-of-the-mill entertainer, Bovi who started as an actor, tells **Ferdinand Ekechukwu** during a recent premiere of “The Perfect Arrangement”, a movie where he plays one of the lead characters that Bovi the actor is simply playing a role and as Bovi the comedian, he is telling his story in a comical way

You played Chidi in “The Perfect Arrangement”. Who is Chidi?
Chidi is a character (laughter). You know Chidi is like a businessman who has a political ambition, in love with girl. You know the typical rom-com type of story; boy meets girl, boy loves girl, then there is hiccup along the way you know. I think it's already out there so I can say. But, basically it's an ugly love triangle of two brothers in love with one girl and one girl in love with two brothers.

How did you pull off this particular character?
It was easy; I have always been an actor, right? So, maybe you knew me when I was doing comedy. But that's not my history. I started off acting.

Have you ever been found in a love triangle?
If I was maybe I don't know (laughs).
Maybe in school....
No, no, not at all. I mean I have three brothers, then my sister is the last, right? I don't remember liking any of my brothers' girlfriends or any of my girlfriends liking my brothers. I had girlfriends who admired my brothers. If anything went on behind me, maybe we would know when I die (laughs).

Bovi the actor, Bovi the comedian are there any similarity, any difference?
Well, the actor is playing a role; the actor is assuming another personality. The comedian is telling his story in a comical way. So, yes, there's a huge difference in the sense that when I'm acting I am not being me 100%. So, yes there's a difference.

Can Bovi be taking seriously for once?
Do you take me seriously?
I'm trying to because it looks like we are already talking to the comedian Bovi
So there goes your answer

Looking at the recent trend of skit makers in the country, they are beginning to have this acceptance generally. Do you think this would affect the standup comedy business?
Why should it affect it? It's two different practices. We should learn to be more collaborative instead of competitive. Anytime I get that question I really get worried. Because what they do is online; there's a market for it. What we do is offline; there's a market for it. There are guys who do skit that can do stage. There are guys who do stage that can do skit, e.g. me. So, how is it a threat? You have Banga Soup, you have Egwusi Soup, is anyone a threat to the other? 'Eat dis one if e tire you, you eat dis one. If dis one tire you, you eat

the other one'. Do you get what I'm saying? That's a whole brand new genre. So, we should encourage these guys and the girls. The fact that they can squeeze money out of it, the fact that it's a booming business is a plus to the entertainment industry.

So what distinguishes Bovi and the others in the entertainment industry?
I don't know; I just do me. And I try to make sure I challenge me, reinvent me, evolve me so people don't get bored, you know? Because if you don't reinvent yourself people will 'okay this is what to expect'.

What's the business in comedy?
Well, there's business in anything that is sellable. As far as comedy is sellable, then there's money to be made. So, kudos to all the comedians and entertainer generally that have made a fortune or are making a fortune or making a living; a decent living from being funny, from dishing out comedy. It's lucrative. Anything in Nigeria that people pay money for is a billion naira business. That's it for comedy.

A lot of Nigerian youth look up to you and they see you as role model, what's your advice for them towards the forthcoming elections?
They should vote for their candidates of choice by what their manifesto presents. Rather than the gift they may tend to want to get. They should vote for whom they think can do the job irrespective of tribe, irrespective of region, religion, creed....

So you are not a supporter of the southeast agitation?
So you see for me, I think it is better to say 'who are the candidates? Okay let's hear you out; let's hear your manifesto. What's your take? How are you going to take the country forward?' That's most important than any other thing if you ask me.

So you don't have a candidate?
No, I want to hear their manifesto. Many of them are my friends. So I want to hear them speak first.

What is Bovi working on at the moment?
My show; I will be doing a special soon, sooner than later and a movie later in the year.

What's the show name?
Bovi Naghty by Nature... I already did it in Canada and Warri. So, the Lagos edition is coming soon.



Bovi Ugboma

Davido Stands Strong in New Single, Set For Tour



Davido

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

In 2019, when Kanye West along with his church choir sampled Davido's 2017 hit record 'If', a track that catapulted the Afrobeats/afropop singer to the international limelight, Davido hinted at a possible collaboration with the music group in the coming future. Two years after, Davido has enlisted the choir known as The Samples for an inspirational R&B/Soul title coated with gospel aura. The song is titled, "Stand Strong".
Davido noted that the song is different because it's special to him. This first single off his next album, talks about the other part of his world where every day is a battle. On this track produced by Pheelz.
The Samples Choir is a vocal group that can sing in many different styles, from classical to hip-hop, with Jason White as the choir director. Prior to the release of the song a couple of days back, the singer shared a short clip of the song session on

Instagram showing The Samples Choir with the caption: "This one is special to me. It's different. The conception has been different."
"The mindset has been different. The making has been different. I know you love it when I make you dance, but now I want to make you feel. This one's for everyone out there holding it up. I know what I've experienced the past 10 years, and a lot of you have been through it all with me. But...have you really? For the first time, I want to bring you into the other part of my world."
"The part where every day is a battle but I have no option but to stand strong. I present to you, the first single off my next album."
The award-winning artiste recently joined Concord Music Publishing through a new creative partnership with Koch Okoye and Saheed Okunnu's Immensum Music. This new joint venture expands Concord's roster into

artistes and songwriters from West Africa and abroad.
The DMW honcho had also announced his North American tour tagged 'We Rise By Lifting Others', set to kick off by June 16. The Afrobeats/Afro-pop sensation took to his verified social media handles and shared a picture of the tour schedule. In a tweet, OBO anticipated his North American fans and assured them of an enthusiastic show.
Davido revealed: "I miss my fans in North America so much I had to put together a short run just to come see you all," Hinting at a new album, which might bear same title as the tour, Davido also stated he might preview some of its tracks during the shows, saying... "Going to be plenty of surprises, and I might preview a few songs off my new album. Tickets on sale everywhere this Friday."
"We Rise By Lifting Others" tour will see David Adeleke performing in Brooklyn, Toronto, Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles from the 16th to the 25th of June 2022.

SHOWBIZFLAIR

Celebrating African Creative Talents in Film, Television

This year’s African Magic Viewers Choice Awards was not different with its tradition of keeping to time as it registered first-timers amidst major winners on the biggest and most glamorous film and television event in Africa. **Ferdinand Ekechukwu** reports

Returning after the pandemic year, The 2022 AMVCA celebrated African creative talents in the film, digital and TV platforms and showcased beautiful, emotional, and remarkable moments spiced by Hollywood personalities. The much anticipated eighth edition was such a spectacle and memorable with winners announced on the biggest and most glamorous night on Nigerian entertainment.

A culmination of eight days event, timing was of essence as it is with the AMVCA tradition in association with MultiChoice and sponsored by Amstel Malta. The beautiful night at the Eko Hotels venue, Lagos, last Saturday had barely kicked-off with Yemi Alade taken to the glittering stage for a riveting opening performance which roused the audience.

With the perennial host, IK Osakioduwa alongside South Africa’s Bonang Matheba spot on, the excitement was palpable. Some other favorite showpiece of the night was Mavin star, Rema linking up with legendary singer Lagbaja to deliver another banger! Soonest, the audience got on their feet to dance to Lagbaja’s evergreen ‘Konko Below’.

A cross-generational performance of some sort, their session was so pulsating that one had expected, and thought Yemi Alade joining the duo would have made it explosive! There were also D’banji closing performance of the award show and the Idol 2021 winner, Kingdom and the other finalists rendering a medley of songs. Also worthy of mention was their beautiful rendition of Beyonce’s ‘I was Here’ in honor of the departed stars.

This edition witnessed a new category for Best Online Social Content Creator and the return of the Best Africa Magic Original Drama Series and Best Africa Magic Original Comedy Series, bringing the total number of categories to 33. Some of the other categories include



AMVCA Winner, Taiwo Ajayi-Lycett displays her Industry Merit award

Best Movie in Southern, East and West Africa, Best Director and Best Cinematographer.

It retained some of its traditions such as paying tributes to creative talents who passed away in the past two years like Ifeanyi Dike, Obama DMW, Gift Ameh, and Chico Ejiro among others.

For the second time in a row, Play Network Studios won the most awards of the 2022 AMVCA with the reboot of the 90’s blockbuster movie ‘Rattlesnake – The Ahanna Story’. The Ramsey Nouah directorial took home four awards including the top three categories in the Best Director, Best Actor and Best Actress. Best Actor (Drama) win was a first for overly excited Stan Nze and an emotionally dramatic Best Actress (Drama) Osas Ighodaro who also won

the best dressed female.

It was the second time for Ramsey Nouah winning the Best Director having won in 2020 with ‘Living In Bondage’ remake. The other was in the Best Cinematographer TV Series won by Muhammed Atta. Play Network Studio also won Best Lighting Design (Movie/Designer) by Matthew Yussuf with the movie ‘Nneka The Pretty Serpent’ making a total of five.

The Best Overall Movie sponsored by Amstel Malta went to Izu Ojukwu and Okey Ogunjiofor’s film ‘Amina’ which had the highest number of nominations a total of 13. In the TV series, film producer and actress Funke Akindele retained her position as winner of the Best Actress in Comedy TV Series or Movie for her role in ‘Omo Ghetto: The Saga’.

As it registered major winners so it was amidst first timers in this edition. For actor

and skit maker, Samuel Perry aka Broda Shaggi, it was a first, winning Best Actor in a comedy movie for his role in the movie ‘Dwindle’. Likewise a first for actress Omowunmi Dada, winning Best Supporting Actress in a Drama. Same for Best Online Social Content Creator won by skit maker, Chukuwemeka Ejekwu - Oga Sabinus.

In the special recognition, the trailblazer award, an award for outstanding achievement by young and upcoming act went to Teniola Alade. While the Industry Merit award for this edition went to Taiwo Ajai-Lycett. The legendary thespian received a standing ovation as she danced to the stage. She recalled that her greatest joy was coming back home and having the industry embrace her.

She also acknowledged filmmaker Rogers Ofime for bringing her back home from UK to work in the industry. The producer, Ofime, also had multiple wins in the categories; Best Television Series for The Mystic River, Best Indigenous Language Movie (Hausa) for Voiceless and Best Africa Magic Original Comedy Series for The Johnsons.

The Best MultiChoice Talent Factory also returned this year with Daisy Masembe taking the award for ‘Engaito’. The regional awards saw Bolanle Austen-Peters’ ‘Collision Course’ win Best Movie West Africa, while The Girl in the Yellow Jumper and Hairareb won in the Best Movie East Africa and Best Movie Southern Africa respectively.

AMVCA: Pepsi Naija Rewards Winners of Best Soundtrack Award

Pascal Aka and Raquel were last Saturday rewarded with a cash prize of N1 million by soft drinks giants, Pepsi Naija, for winning the Best Soundtrack Award at the 8th Africa Magic Viewers Choice Awards (AMVCA).

The duo beat six other nominees to clinch the Best Soundtrack award for their soundtrack to the movie, Gold Coast Lounge. The award is one of the non-public voting categories of the AMVCA.

The cash reward by Pepsi Naija is the latest in line with the bottling company’s efforts to celebrate not just public-facing talents in the music industry, but also those who work in the background such as soundtrack artists in the movie industry.

General Manager, Marketing (Beverages), Seven-Up Bottling Company, Segun Ogunleye, congratulated the winners and applauded the efforts of other nominees. He also reiterated the brand’s dedication to recognizing and encouraging talented individuals in the Nigerian entertainment industry.

“Rewarding the winner of the Best Soundtrack category is just one of the many ways we invest and support talents in the entertainment industry. We congratulate Pascal and Raquel on winning such a distinguished award and look forward to seeing more amazing content and more wins” he said.

Pepsi Naija’s tactical sponsorship of the AMVCA reflects its passion for creating memorable and unforgettable experiences. Its active participation in the eight-day event lineup saw the birth of the Pepsi Confam campaign, which delivered Confam Gbedu to guests at the awards ceremony with a performance by Lagbaja and Rema, Confam Vibes by its DJ ambassadors at the after-party, and Confam Pepsi Naija-inspired fashion collections, showcased at the AMVCA Runway Show, amongst others.

Pascal Aka is an Ivorian film and music video director, actor, and producer. He wrote and produced ‘Gold Coast Lounge’ in 2020 in which he featured, alongside Raquel and other notable actors, including Alphonse Menyo, Adjetey Anang, Zynnell Zuh.

He is known for his work on ‘Jamie and Eddie: Soul of Strife’, produced in 2007.

US Ambassador Celebrates Cultural Ties with Nigeria

15th Headies holds in America

Funke Olaode

The United States government is committed to strengthening its burgeoning cultural ties with Nigeria through music, arts, film, cultural heritage, and professional and educational exchanges.

Its Ambassador to Nigeria, Mary Beth Leonard stated this when the embassy hosted a reception last week in honour the 15th Annual Headies Music Awards, which will be held for the first time in Atlanta later this year.

Ambassador Leonard explained that the choice of Atlanta to host the Headies symbolizes the growing relationship between the music industries in the United States and Nigeria and the growing popularity of Nigerian music in the United States.

“This year’s Headies awards will highlight the growing US-Nigeria ties and the vast potential of Nigerian musicians as cultural exporters to the African continent and beyond,” Ambassador Leonard said.

Ambassador Leonard noted that cultural exchange advances US -Nigeria strategic partnership by forging lasting ties between American and Nigerian artists and shining a spotlight on the vibrant creative community in Nigeria and the United States.

“The U.S. government has long recognized the role of music in diplomacy, with its emphasis on free expression, improvisation, and democratic and collaborative teamwork. Sharing music is one of the best ways to find common ground with people on an exchange



L-R: D’banji, Amb Leonard and Mrs. Nike Davies-Ekundaye on stage at the reception

program. The appeal of music is truly universal,” Ambassador Leonard added.

In his welcoming remarks, Acting U.S. Consul General, Brandon Hudspeth noted that cultural and artistic exchanges are just one way the United States partners with the people and government of Nigeria.

“We continue to explore innovative ways to foster valuable people-to-people connections between our two countries.

The US Mission is honored to partner with the Headies. This year’s Headies Awards will highlight the Nigerian music industry’s creativity and growing global reach,” Hudspeth said.

Executive Producer of the Headies

Music Awards, Ayo Animashaun, noted that it’s the first year the Headies will be held outside of Nigeria. He described Atlanta as home to many prominent hip-hop and R&B artistes and their record labels.

“The Headies recognizes outstanding achievements in the Nigerian music industry. Our goal is to continue to support the development of talent and nurture innovation in the music industry,” Animashaun added.

The Public Affairs Sections of the U.S. Mission in Abuja and Lagos support programmes that connect American creatives with their Nigerian counterparts. Through these people-to-people connections, the US Mission hopes to foster a deeper relationship between the people of Nigeria and the United States.

SHOWBIZFLAIR

Zee World Launches ‘Dance Naija Dance’

Dike Onwuamaeze

Drawing from its roaring success in India to its inevitable greatness in Singapore and across 52 countries in Africa in 2021, the Zee Entertainment is set to launch the Zee World’s “Dance Naija Dance” in Nigeria.

Zee Entertainment promised that the show would keep its viewers glued to their seats and screens with a dance show like no other, which is Zee World’s reality dance competition aimed at revealing the best dance crew in Nigeria.

The reality show is expected to run for 10 weeks and would provide a grand cash prize of N5 million and prize hampers for the winning teams.

With the reality competition set to start airing in August, production has begun for the top 16 finalists selected from more than 350 entries across Nigeria. “Dance Naija Dance” will air in 52 countries in Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands.

Speaking last week on the launch of the dance reality show, the ZEE Africa CEO for Sub-Saharan Africa and Indian Ocean Islands, Mr. Somnath Malakar, said: “Knowing full well how Zee World is important to the family entertainment needs in Nigeria, we have



Host, Hero Daniels; Choreographer, Sashin Kandhai; Chief Executive Officer, ZEE Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa and Indian Ocean Islands), Somnath Malakar; Co-Host, Pelumi Buari; Judges, Uraysha Ramrachia and Kunle Remi, during a press conference to announce the launch of ZEE World’s Dance Naija Dance in Lagos last week

taken steps to ensure that we would always deliver. There is a deep love for Zee World among Nigerians and Zee World has become part of our lifestyles. Introducing this show is one of our ways to thank Nigerians for all the love they have shown to us over the years. Nigeri-

ans are notable for their incredible dancing talents.

“We know that the economy is harsh and everyone is feeling it. Entertainment is one of the ways to lessen worries, provide an escape and make people happy. Zee World being an enabler of family happiness saw it fit

to create something unique and electrifying.”

Similarly, one of the “Dance Naija Dance” Judges, Mr. Kunle Remi, said: “I am proud to be part of this show to mentor young talents, helping them tell stories with their bodies and ensuring that whatever is finally presented on stage is of high quality. These two cultures are known for using dance for storytelling. The highlight for me will be to see how the contestants will use their dance steps to tell entertaining stories that tickle both the judges and viewers at home.”

Zee World, which has evolved into a brand of global celebration bringing Africa and India together, said that the “Dance Naija Dance” would offer a fusion of Nigerian-Indian dance moves that unite both cultures through music, vibrancy, colour, and diversity.

“Dance Naija Dance” would be anchored by a blend of Nollywood and Bollywood personalities and dancers. These include the Hosts - Hero Daniels and Pelumi Buari, Choreographers/Mentors - Sashin Kandhai and Kenneth Agabata; while Remi and Uraysha Ramrachia will be the judges.

Zee World has been a trailblazer in redefining entertainment across Africa over the years. It was the first to have Indian series and movies dubbed in English, showcasing the first Afro-Indian Telenovela Mehek in 2018 and the first Pan-African inter-country fusion dance challenge, Dance Africa Dance in 2021.

The Perfect Arrangement: A Theme of Love, Family, Friendship

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

How does one get to be in a love triangle with two blood brothers without expecting complications? Not only does she not know who to choose, but she also doesn’t know how to tell people that she is involved with two brothers and still has feelings for both. So now she is at a loss at what to do, and this begs the question: Was it really a perfect arrangement, and is it going to end as one?

The answer you would get is ‘The Perfect Arrangement’, a rom-com which opened in cinemas last week. Written by Oluwapelumi Bifarin and directed by Chinaza Onuzo,

the movie explores themes of love, family, friendship, fashion, politics, and willpower. It follows the story of Tade Kaleijaiye, a scion of a respected political family (played by Sharon Ooja) who finds herself in a complicated love relationship with two brothers Chidi, her ex (played by Bovi Ugboma).

Cheta (played by Pere Egbi) is Tade’s best friend, and although they have feelings for each other, they never explored them. Somehow, Tade fell in love with Chidi. They had a beautiful relationship until Chidi came home one day, saying he couldn’t marry Tade because of his political ambition.

They broke up, and Tade focused on her fashion design business, this time

beginning to explore her feelings for Cheta. Chidi’s political ambition gets threatened after being filmed in a compromising position that threatens his gubernatorial ambition.

On the other hand, all seemed to be smooth with Tade until she discovered her family was going broke, and there was only one way she could salvage the messy situation - what appeared to be a perfect arrangement. So she decided to get into an arranged marriage with Chidi, who she no longer loved, just so his scandal didn’t get in the way of winning the election, and that way, her family could be wealthy again. A win/win situation for everyone, right? But things turned out to be not so perfect after all.

Aside from the three lead characters, The

Perfect Arrangement features an ensemble cast - Adunni Ade, Funsho Adeolu, Debo Adebayo (Mr. Macaroni), Dorcas Shola Fapson (Ms DSF), Rotimi Salami, Mimi Chaka, Wofai Fada, and Ummi Baba Ahmed - who all play prominent roles.

Just as much as they represented with their glam looks at the recent premiere of the Inkblot Production and FilmOne Entertainment romantic comedy where Nollywood A-lists and corporate Nigeria dazzled.

The Perfect Arrangement, which is currently showing in cinemas nationwide, is a feel-good romantic comedy that will make you laugh, think, and ask some real-life questions.

TellAfrica International Art and Craft Festival Holds 3rd Edition

Tosin Clegg

The 3rd edition of TellAfrica International Art and Craft Festival is set to hold this June in Dublin, Ireland. The festival was birthed in 2018 and was aimed at enhancing the status of the prestigious African cultural facts and values in the international world. Due to COVID-19 concerns the subsequent editions couldn’t but things get better managed and handled the organizers deem it fit to put the event together once again.

Gbemisola Bisi-Taiwo, CEO of TellAfrica and convener of TellAfrica International Art and Craft Festival, Dublin is an ardent lover of African Arts, Culture and Tradition and has established her organization to bridge the existing gap between Africans and those in the diaspora.

The festivals started as a way to polish the African norms and values better to the public and ensure we are seen for who we are and not what’s perceived. Speaking more on this, she said, “We tell the African stories the way it should be told in a beautiful way as we are beautiful people. There is a dirt in the information said about Africans as people in the western world as they have the idea that Africa is poverty stricken and all sorts. They don’t know AFRICA is not a country but a continent. We tell the story of our culture, tradition, food and our socio cultural heritage.”

The event is scheduled to come up between the 23rd to 29th of June 2022 at Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin. The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojajall and the Ga Matse, King Taike Teiko Tsurull of



Bisi-Taiwo

Accra, Ghana are the prominent African personalities expected to grace the event which promises to a showcase of African culture, beauty and expressions.

Femi Adebayo’s new movie, Agheshinkole is expected to be screened at the festival alongside other activities set to give the guests an experience which showcases Africa and the black race for its true self.

Sammietrill is Ready with ‘Flag’

Tosin Clegg

One of Nigeria’s budding star who doubles as a member of the new wave of Nigerian R&B acts, Sammietrill is set to graciously invite his fans and music lovers into his world of beautiful sounds and heart-felt lyrics on his new body of work he titles, Flag. Recently signed to Herculean Spot Global, he is looking to stake a claim to the big leagues and on this new project.

He showcases natural talent, musical excellence and a skill level of a defined style. On this project he said, “Flag is one to look out for as it is packed with songs that replenish both tired souls and put rave on the party-ready souls.”

Sammietrill believes that within a music culture, people should not only catch the beats without some reverence to the depth. He’s out to change the conversation with this upcoming project and give music lovers and enthusiasts what would interest them the most. With a new milestone achieved getting

his recent recording deal, the budding star is looking forward to what the future holds as he continues to record songs that not only please the ears but also the souls.



Sammietrill



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MEET THE BLACKS

A parody of the 2013 film The Purge, this is a comedy spoof film. Carl Black (Mike Epps) and his family are leaving Chicago for good after stealing money from a famous criminal drug king. They move to Beverly Hills but could not have picked a worse time to move. They arrive during the annual purge, when all crime is legal for twelve hours.

MEET THE BLACKS



MEETING EVIL

This mystery thriller is based on the 1992 book Meeting Evil by Thomas Berger. Samuel L. Jackson and Luke Wilson star in the movie. It's John's birthday, his house goes into foreclosure, and his marriage crumbles. Unexpectedly, a stranger knocks on the door and an offer to help with a broken down car turns into a life changing ride. John discovers Richie (Samuel L. Jackson) is a psychopath on a killing spree.



THE MARSH

Children's author Claire Holloway (Gabrielle Anwar) decides to rent the Rose Marsh farmhouse in Marshville, Westmoreland. When she arrives, she finds that it is the same place that appears in her dreams. Claire discovers that the house is haunted by a young girl (Niamh Wilson) and a threatening teenage boy and this coincides with a series of supernatural killings in town. Now Claire and psychic investigator Geoffrey Hunt (Forest Whitaker) must figure out the truth.



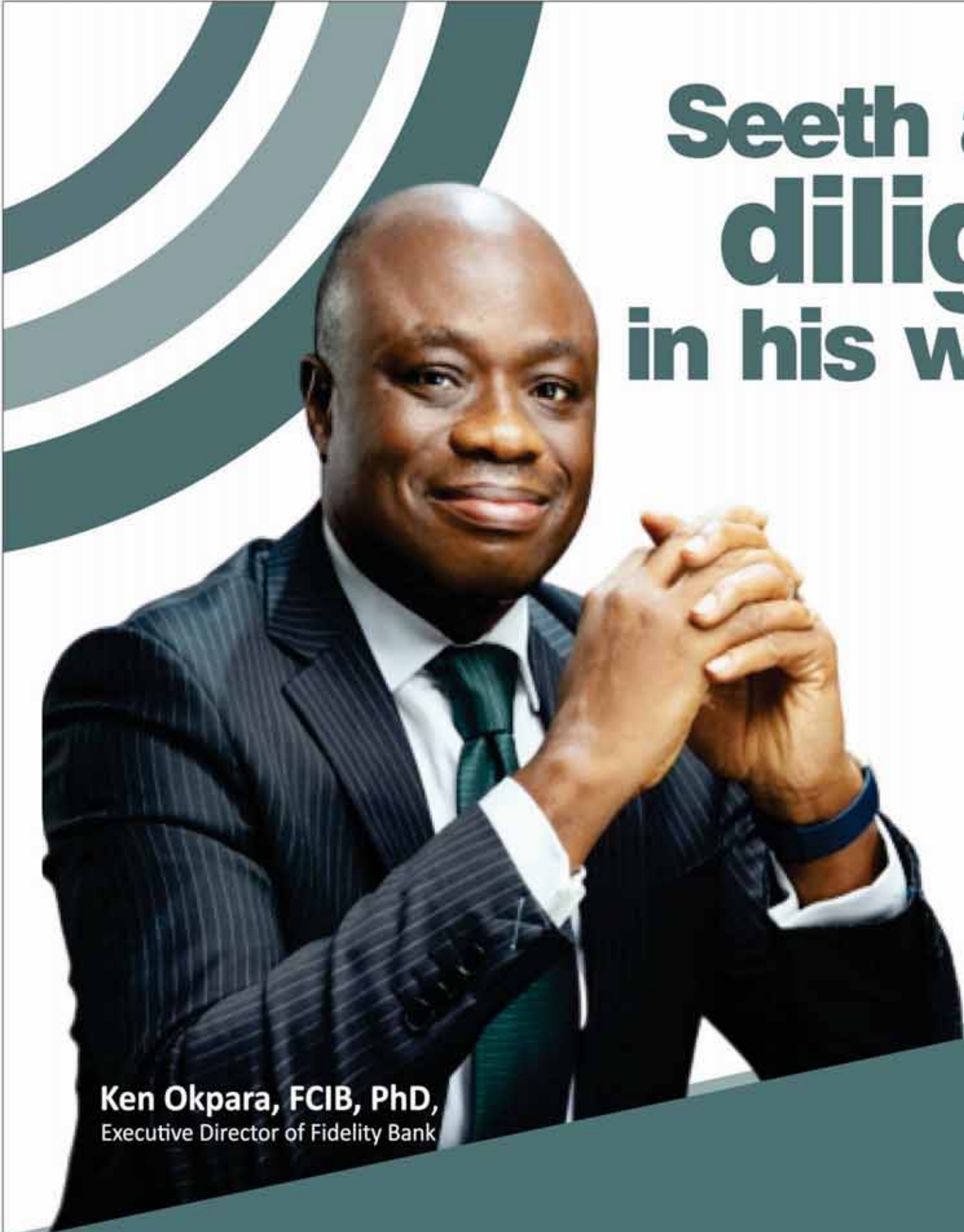
I STILL KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER

The film is loosely based on the 1973 novel by Lois Duncan of the same name. Four friends are stalked by a hook-wielding killer one year after covering up a car accident in which they killed a man. Despite mixed reviews from critics, the film was commercially successful, grossing \$125 million worldwide on a budget of \$17 million, and remained number one at the U.S. box office for three consecutive weeks. The film was also nominated for and won several awards.

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NIGERIAN ARMY

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES FOR NIGERIAN ARMY DIRECT SHORT SERVICE COMMISSION COURSE 26/2022 COMPUTER BASED PRE-SELECTION EXAMINATION ON 28 MAY 2022

The Nigerian Army wishes to inform the general public that the Computer Based Pre-Selection Examination for Direct Short Service Commission Course 26/2022 will hold on Saturday 28 May 2022 in 24 centres across the nation.

Candidates are advised to check their registered emails, phone numbers and visit: recruitment.army.mil.ng for names of shortlisted candidates from 8pm on 21 May 2022.

The state centres selected by candidates have been grouped into zonal examination centres. The shortlisted candidates have also been assigned examination centres and are to report to the centres by 7 am on 28 May 2022.

All shortlisted candidates have been allotted Examination and Seat Numbers. Details of examination and seat numbers are indicated on the portal.

Candidates will not be allowed to write the Examination in any centre other than that allotted to the candidate on the portal.

- All candidates are to bring the following:
- Photocopy of their Application Photo Cards.
 - Means of Identification - National ID Card, International passport or driver's license.
 - 3 copies of current passport photographs.

Signed
Military Secretary (Army)

Disclaimer Notice: Candidates are to note that any list gotten outside the website is not valid.

POLITY

Deconstructing the Next Gov of Akwa Ibom

Michael Effiong

We are just five months into the year but the fever of the 2023 elections is already enveloping and gripping every part of our polity. There is no doubt that there are mixed feelings among our citizenry regarding the performance of our federal and state governments but one thing is sure, like spilt milk, it will be impossible to get our past back but we have the chance to determine the look, feel and shape of our future by our action or inaction in the next couple of months.

Just like in some other states, 2023 will be a defining moment in Akwa Ibom State because once again, there will be a transfer of power after an 8-year reign of an incumbent. Expect drama, hire wire politicking and more. As expected, a few gladiators have indicated interest in occupying the Hilltop mansion but what exactly should Akwa Ibom people be looking for in the man who will occupy such a high office?

Before I am crucified by gender activists, I have used the word “man” here because as at the time of writing this, no woman has thrown her hat into the ring.

Being one of Nigeria’s oil-rich states, Akwa Ibom State is well positioned for greatness, but a lot of creative thinking and sacrifice is required to take it from where it is presently to where it should be.

The present Udom Emmanuel government has laid a strong foundation in infrastructure and investments, some of which may take years to bear fruits that is reason the people need a steady hand to steer the ship at this time.

It is my considered opinion that the next governor of Akwa Ibom should not be a dyed-in-the-wool politician. The state should not be left in the hands of the ex-this, ex-that class, those whose only claim to fame is holding public office for donkey years with little or nothing to show for it

This is not the time to compensate anyone, it is not time to think of men who only discuss today, but a time to choose a visionary leader, the kind of leader that loves his people and is passionate about their welfare.

The kind of leader we can trace his trajectory, not those with questionable wealth who throw handouts left, right and centre.

The next governor of the Land of Promise must act as a corporate titan/CEO, someone with the ability to manage men and resources.

He should be someone who has shown the capacity, character and competence to run a successful business. Someone who understands the dynamics of profit and loss, someone who has built an enterprise from zero to its zenith.

Someone with a track record of performance, like it is said, you cannot give what you don’t have or as they say on the streets “if e didn’t dey, e didn’t dey”.

Why is it necessary for the next Governor to be private-sector driven? Everyone knows that the greatest problem in the world today is paucity of funds available to nations



Emmanuel

and by extension states. A state governor who only knows how to spend and does not know how to create wealth is not a good fit in today’s world that has been hit by recession. Apart from funds, anyone who has run a business before will know what it is to be innovative and would have developed the penchant for adapting to new realities. Again, anyone who has ran a business will know the pains and needs of SMEs-who are the major drivers of any economy. What the state need is the kind of leader highlighted by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President & Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, one who is able to crystalize his vision, define its objectives, navigate its development and supervise its implementation He should have clearly defined ideas for agriculture, tourism and hospitality, rural development, health care and education. He should have a plan for the elderly and women. The best man for the job should be one who envisions an Akwa Ibom beyond oil. He should be the man who has been outlining his ideas, and not the one who has been grandstanding on the soap box.

I am not a fan of abandoned projects. It is therefore good that there should be some form of continuity in vision. After all, it is a common saying that government is a continuum Nothing exemplifies the truism of continuity than the birth of Ibom Air. Governor Udom Emmanuel did not build the Victor Attah International Airport. What he did was to improve on it and then expand the use of that facility by creating an airline. Each time I board the airline, I cannot help but commend governor Emmanuel and the team that dreamt and executed this project. Apart from its excellent corporate culture and efficiency, this is one government investment that is a job-creating machine. The other day, I was having an argument with a friend who said the airline was a misadventure. I knew immediately that this was sour grapes and I took time to highlight what such an enterprise means for the state. Apart from creating easy access for investors and tourists, today, it flies to six destinations. Now check this out. At all its destinations, it will have ticketing officers, people at the check-in counters, ground staff from cargo handlers, cleaners to engineers, it will have a full compliment of crew for shifts, it will serve refreshments which means that producers of bottled water, beverages and bites will have an outlet for their products. Imagine this kind of multiplier effect from just one business. That certainly is no misplaced priority? Another area that Mr. Emmanuel should receive kudos is his decision to have a data base for all farmers. I am told that at the touch of a button, you can find out specific details and number of maize, poultry, cassava farmers etc in the state. That is not all, he midwived the Akwa Ibom Geographical Information System (AkwaGIS), which will enable the state manage her land in an organized and digitalized manner. We all know that data is king, without the right data, proper planning becomes like groping in the dark. In deed, these two projects show the forward-thinking nature of the present governor and it is therefore necessary for someone who shares this kind of vision to continue in 2023. Furthermore, His Eminence, Dr. Sunday Mbang, an Akwa Ibom indigene, had once said that the next governor of Akwa Ibom should not be a cultist or someone who is associated with violence, I totally agree with him In addition, the next governor must dare to thread where others dread. He should be the kind of man who is not afraid to have his hands dirty. He should be dogged, tenacious, courageous and resilient yet humble and amiable. He should be open-minded and be able to to bring the best and the brightest stars together for the common good of the state. I therefore, call on the people of Akwa Ibom to take this points to heart as they head to the polls. – Effiong, a journalist writes from Lagos

Enugu Guber: Support Swells for Mbah as Congress Nears

Gideon Nwadi

Just few days to the Enugu State Governorship election primary election of the PDP, the support for frontline aspirant, Peter Mbah has continued to increase, this time even across party lines.

The PDP will hold its governorship primaries across 36 states on May 25, 2023 in the updated timetable released during the week.

In the last 72 hours, most influential leaders in state who arguably are known to always have a strong say in past voting patterns within the parties and in the elections proper, appear to have queued up behind the one-time Commissioner for Finance in the state and who currently runs one of the best managed businesses in Nigeria, Pinnacle Oil and Gas Limited.

Some former governors of the state, former senators, influential religious and as such non-partisan leaders are known to have quietly restated their support for Mbah with one of them quoted as saying that “Mbah is in the best position to take Enugu to where the people want it to be beginning from 2023”.

This is coming as the statutory and ad-hoc delegates from the Senatorial districts of the state continue to assure Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi that they are solidly behind him and will only vote according to his direction, in the selection of PDP candidates for the 2023 general elections in the state. The PDP had recently conducted ward congress across the 260 electoral wards of Enugu, a development party members and elders have continued to commend the Governor.

Going into the primaries slated for May 23, Mbah has the ‘best choice ‘written all over him. It is strongly believed other aspirants in the Enugu Governorship race, know and share one fact quietly in their hearts: that Peter Mbah is authentic – very authentic leader in his aspiration to govern the state. Mbah sets out to become the most genuine leader to transit from a very successful Boardroom leader to a political leader, and is set to replicate his private sector feats in the service of his Enugu people. As a candidate, the markets favour Peter Mbah. With no baggages of any sort, the ticket appears to be Mbah’s to lose. Chief Michael Udeh, a veteran politician believes that “It’s almost impossible to think that others in the race with him will not try to hit him with some real and imagined dirt. But Mbah, our son is the best we are putting forward for 2023”. As a successful leader, Mbah who packs executive degrees and programmes from leading business schools across the world-from Harvard Business School, IESE Business School, Barcelona, Lagos Business School, Said Business School and Stanford Business School among others, Mbah has it all. As a very successful businessman, Mbah provided humanity platforms for actualization through numerous businesses which cut across oil and Gas, Properties and hospitality further laying foundations for posterity. As Governor of Enugu state, Ugwuanyi believes that the power sharing arrangement, which has made elections less rancorous and divisive in Enugu State should be sustained. Interestingly, Enugu East has a number of prominent leaders and former governors, including Chief Jim Nwobodo,



Mbah

who governed the greater old Anambra State and Senator Chimaroke Nnamani, who began the relay in the present dispensation in 1999. From Former President of Senate, Dr. Ken Nnamani, who moved from PDP to APC shortly after the 2015 general elections, is also from Enugu East and has joined in the chorus of voices insisting that Ugwuanyi’s successor should be elected from Enugu East, which has been out of the governorship seat for the past 16 years.

Hope Rises for Osun with Corporate Political Gladiator

John Ajayi

The re-declaration of successful entrepreneur and Mutual Benefits boss, Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi as a gubernatorial candidate for the 2022 governorship election in Osun State brought with it a glimmer of hope.

Ogunbiyi, who was formerly the leading gubernatorial candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) had initially withdrawn from the race in February. In March, he was formally declared the gubernatorial candidate of the Accord Political Party.

Expressing his dogged determination for gunning for the governorship of Osun State regardless of how he had been treated "unfairly and unjustly," Ogunbiyi explained that he had been inspired by his inner convictions and the clarion call of all who means well for the state.

He said: "I am stepping forward, again, for this cause: to see Osun State fulfill its manifest destiny; become a beacon and a pride of the people; and of this nation, with the echoes of its unprecedentedly accelerated development ricocheting across Africa and the globe; and into coming generations. Let us all unequivocally say no to money mongers."

In the past, politicians carried out their palm-greasing discreetly, however today, they shout it with pride on rooftops that their main goal of getting power is to dollarize the political system.

A case in point is a statement made at the political rally by the governorship aspirant of PDP in Osun State, Senator Ademola Adeleke. In a video that is currently making the rounds on social media, Adeleke had pledged to release not only Naira, but Dollars, Pounds, and Euros to the people of Osun.

He said: "My fellow Osun residents, you are the one to decide. It is not by force, not by gimmicks, if it is money, I have brought money and not only Naira but dollars, pounds and Euro. This time around, it is fire for fire for the Osun governorship election."

In essence, the governorship aspirant was telling the prospective electorates that they should not consider his leadership quality but rather the heaviness of his pocket. It became evident to all and sundry that the governance of the



Ogunbiyi

state required new thinking.

"Osun State needs someone who has ideas and innovation to improve the wellbeing of the people and the internally generated revenue of the state," said Elder Segun Akinwusi, former head of service, Osun State.

"Ogunbiyi is someone I know that can make a difference in Osun, and I see him as someone who Osun State should run after. He is not coming to make money like the others, he is a philanthropist. He is coming to make a name and make a difference in the life of people," the HOS added.

A high profile dignitary who pleaded anonymity said: "Ogunbiyi will use his training and exposure to bring the public sector and the private sector together in a less bureaucratic manner to make Osun state develop and make the people fare better. If you look at rural urban migration in the state the guy has the exposure, experience and expertise to stop it, through agro allied revolution which he is already doing."

Osun State, a land blessed with enormous agricultural and mineral resources, had slowly moved from being recognized for its historical significance to a state where political aides and appointees carry out dastardly acts from one part of the state to another.

It should be recalled that in February, media reports graphically showed how gunmen attacked the campaign office of Rauf Aregbesola, minister of interior and former governor of Osun. In March, the Osun State Government alleged that some persons have stockpiled materials bearing insignia of the All Progressives Congress (APC), its government and that of its governorship candidate, Adegboyega Oyetola, to be distributed to political thugs and hoodlums to foment trouble during the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial primary election scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

The ongoing disruptions have revealed a pressing need for the people of Osun to take cognizance of serious-minded aspirants and politicians like Ogunbiyi who has been tested and trusted in the corporate world.

Mutual Benefits Assurance, a conglomerate consisting of nine companies spanning insurance, real estate, oil and gas, manufacturing, agriculture, and finance, was launched by Ogunbiyi in 1995.

Ogunbiyi, a thoroughbred son of Osun, is a man of highly impactful achievements, a businessman and philanthropist whose game changing vision, illustrious and dogged determination for wealth creation and added values are evident pan-Africa.

Determined and undeterred, Ogunbiyi presented Idera De, a seven point assured transformational agenda for the state of Osun.

The priorities proposed by the business titan include: Integrated Agricultural and Rural Development; Development of Universal Health Care Systems; Excellence in Education, Sports, Science and Technology; Rapid Industrial Growth; Accelerated Economic Development Including Youth and Women Empowerment; Development of Human Capital & Zero Tolerance for

Corruption; and Environment, Tourism, Urbanization and Sustainable Development.

Akogun: My Plans for Share/Oke-Ode

Comrade Abdulrasheed Akogun is an aspirant on the platform of Social Democratic Party (SDP) for Share/Oke-Ode constituency of the Kwara State House of Assembly. He spoke with select journalists including **HAMMED SHITTU** about his aspiration, the SDP chances among other issues

You served as the State Director of Media and Publicity of the Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq Gubernatorial Campaign Organization, why have you deserted the APC for the SDP?

I am firstly a citizen of Nigeria and indigene of Kwara State before being a member of any political party or groupings, therefore my utmost and absolute loyalty is to the country, state and definitely humanity as a whole. While I served as the Campaign spokesperson of now incumbent governor, we traversed the length and breadth of the state making pledges to the electorates. It was on the basis of such pledges that the party was overwhelmingly voted into power.

Sadly, the Governor, immediately after being sworn-in publicly disassociated himself from the party's manifesto. That was in all ramifications, unacceptable to my conscience as the campaign mouthpiece. I can't imagine why a government who campaigned criticizing the annihilation of the local government councils and pocketing of same by the Saraki dynasty, only to assume office, dissolved constitutionally elected Council executives and in their stead illegally appointed Transition Implementation Committee (TIC), a flagrant disregard of the nation's constitution. In the same vein, our campaign was hinged on fighting corruption and abuse of office, sardonically, the O To Ge (enough is enough) government have not only sustained corruption and abuse of office, it has added prebendalism, murdered due process among others. In alliance with my conscience, I stood against all these and more, I registered my displeasure with the flagrant abuse of the trust, reposed in us internally. However, when all internal mechanism of critiquing the government were stifled and those with dissenting voices criminalized and ostracized, I was left with no choice than to start disagreeing with the government policies, actions and inactions publicly. It'll be morally wrong to start canonizing the government for doing the same things we condemned the deposed Saraki dynasty of, that'll be hypocrisy and inconsistency.

With all these, the governor and his men weren't happy, so they illegally engineered de-registration of those within the party not on his 'Caesar is always right voyage'. Therefore, we didn't leave the APC, rather we were chased out of the party illegally through the active connivance, indulgence and endorsement of the party's governors across the country and the Buni led National Working Committee. It's ironic, that they ended up sending away the majority within the rainbow coalition that came together to champion the Ologe revolution that berthed the government.

Some people said that the reason behind the defection of your members to SDP from APC in the state was due largely to sharing and the spoils of office, what is your take on this?

In fairness to Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, if anybody fought him because of sharing spoils of office, then my case is different. He on his own, without being under any obligation to, offered me two juicy appointments which I humbly and respectfully turned down, due to personal reasons. So if anybody is fighting him because of lack of patronage which I doubt, I don't fall into that category in whatever form.

My grouse with the Governor and his government is purely on governance and the deliverables to the electorates, vis-a-vis our campaign promises, which the governor disowned from his first day in office. I can't imagine myself being a part of a government that has raped the third tier of government ceaselessly for the last three years, a government that has consistently disregard enabling laws some of which it amended, yet still disregarded; a government that holds due process in contempt especially when it involves award of contract. A government that conducts its activities in secrecy, the transparency of the supposed O To Ge (enough is enough). I can tell you without fears of contradictions that majority of those that left the APC for SDP disagreed with the governance and not the person of the governor.

You recently declared to represent Share/Oke-Ode State Constituency at the Kwara State House of Assembly, what prompted that declaration?

For some of us whose primary and major reason for joining partisan politics was for the entrenchment of good governance through being part of a constitutional ballot revolutionary change of guard, I thus went back to my job of being an investigative reporter. Three years down the line, nothing much has changed in the mode and manner of how government affairs and issues of good governance are handled in the State. Therefore, I came to the sad realization that even if we elect one of the celestial cum angelic beings to govern Kwara and leave the functions of law making, appropriation, oversight among others to people without commensurate intellectual know-how, then, we'll have only achieve nothing other than a mere change of guard without attitudinal change.

Therefore, the State needs to populate the House of Assembly with citizens with the requisite intellectual know-how, competence, integrity and compassion towards



Akogun

driving all arms of government in ensuring that the interest of the electorates reigns supreme at all times. That is one of the major reasons I have decided to throw-in my hat into the rings. I want to bring onboard my almost 15 years of active practice of investigative journalism which has seen me consistently championing good governance, exposing corruption and sharp practices, questioning malfeasance and abuse of office in any form. My priorities as a parliamentarian would be to, relying on my experience of watching and exposing those in government and corridors of power, therefore those experiences will be brought to bear, in sponsoring the amendment of existing laws or enactment of new laws that'll tackle corruption, abuse of office, malfeasance and other anti-masses tendencies prevalent in government, these laws and many more will help refocus the government towards prioritizing the interest of the electorates.

Imagine if the government had signed the Freedom of Information Act into law, we'll have succeeded in berthing an institutionalized fight against corruption in Kwara State, as the citizenry would have been given the unfettered access to information about government and its activities. Sadly, the governor in connivance with the State House of Assemblies, have for the last 3 years intentionally ensured the law didn't see the light of the day. One would have expected that a government that came aboard a popular uprising against the depose dynasty, will prioritize opening its books, sadly the reverse is the case. God's willing, FOI bill will be one of my major legislative priorities if elected.

SMEDAN Advises Young Nigerians on Entrepreneurship

Bennett Oghifo

Young Nigerians aspiring to be entrepreneurs have been advised not to wait until there is a huge amount of money but instead take the bold step of starting small while having their eyes on the big stage.

The Acting DG of SMEDAN, Mr. Wale Fasanya handed down this advice while presenting a lecture on Funding Models for SMEs in Nigeria during the occasion of the 70th birthday of Mr. Duro Kuteyi, the Managing Director of Spectra Industries Limited.

Fasanya while admitting that funding is one of the most critical challenges of SMEs however reiterated the commitment of SMEDAN to genuine SMEs who have exceptional business ideas that have the potential to strive.

“In SMEDAN, we will continue to push for the development of viable and sustainable funding models for MSME. This can only happen with strong partnership and alliance between government, Donors and private sector”, Mr. Fasanya hinted.

He however noted that a good entrepreneurs should not wait for external funding before pursuing their entrepreneurial initiatives stressing that the likes of Mr. Duro Kuteyi, the Managing Director of Spectra Industries who started by just putting a pot on a burner to fry plantain chip has ended up having a world class factory producing globally competitive brands that are today commanding both local and international patronage.

He described Mr. Kuteyi as a great dogged entrepreneur who has been consequential in the entrepreneurial landscape of Nigeria stressing that his contribution in terms of knowledge on Food processing and manufacturing as well as Food security in Nigeria has been commendable.

In his Speech, Mr Duro Kuteyi who is marking his 70th birthday and 30th anniversary of his company, Spectra Industries Limited called on the Federal government to come up with a realistic and sustainable policy that will help SMEs to overcome financing challenges as no nation develops without paying adequate attention to SMEs.

He decried the harsh business environment of Nigeria where SME operators are virtually left unprotected by government, exposed to unfair competition from multinationals, frustrated by harsh financing terms by banks as well as multiple layers of tax and other sundry charges by various levels of governments.

Kuteyi unfolded the plan of his company to embark on training other SMEs in food processing to broaden local Food processing and manufacturing in Nigeria as this will help address the problem of post- harvest losses and make seasonal crops available all the year round.

He therefore called on various levels of government to partner with his company to use Food processing in resolving one of the major problems of Nigeria, which is unemployment as well as resolve the issue of food security.

“In actual fact, insecurity and banditry has reached the level we are now because there are many idle hands who if gainfully engaged will not be interested in touting or banditry. As the Good book says, “The Devil finds work for the Idle hands or, “The idle mind is the Devil’s workshop” Kuteyi summited.

Kuteyi, who started modestly with the frying of plantain chips today has variety of products such as Suco Cocoa Powder, Spectra (Pure Natural) Cocoa, Hyfiba, Fast O Meal, and Sobake, some of which are being exported.



L-R: Author of the book and MD, Spectra Industries, Duro Kuteyi, his wife, Remi : and the Chief Launcher of the book, John Alamu, MD, Johnvent Industries Ltd

UPDC Plc Breaks Ground on Pinnock Prime Estate

The only listed property development company in Nigeria, UPDC Plc last week broke ground on Pinnock Prime Estate in Lekki by performing the Sod Turning ceremony of the estate.

The event flagged off the commencement of construction work at the Company’s latest site and service scheme which is located beside the beautiful Pinnock Beach Estate.

While welcoming guests at the well-attended event, the Development Director of the company, Bidemi Fadayomi described Pinnock Prime Estate as the creation of a high end residential estate in the heart of Ajiran.

Fadayomi said, “As developers, we have a track record of developing exceptional residential schemes throughout Nigeria, from Metro City in Abuja to Pinnock Beach Estate right next door to us here and we are proud to introduce to the market, the latest addition to our legacy, the Pinnock Prime Estate.

“Our vision is to establish a new bench mark for luxury lifestyle estate which provides a secure environment, a haven for home makers whilst also generating the highest economic return to investors. We will deliver over a hectare of land for future development, supported by infrastructure services such as power as well as

recreational services such as a park and play areas.”

In his own speech, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Company, Mr. Odunayo Ojo said the estate represented a premium lifestyle and world-class luxury residential development, envisioned to become a highly sought-after estate of choice within the area, creating a new benchmark for sub-urban living.

He said, “It is designed for subscribers who want to settle down and plant roots for their families as well as investors looking to take advantage of prime land in the heart of Lagos State and get the best returns on their investment.

“The development is an exclusive 18 plot scheme located on a 1.47-hectare space. This consists of 13 plots (9 Low-Density Plots and 5 High-Density Plots) and will incorporate a range of facilities required to create a luxury lifestyle for the residents. These include a secure gate access with security features, visitors’ parking, tree-lined road network with jogging/cycling pathways, water and sewage treatment plants, power supply with underground cabling, and a fully staffed facilities management office. Other facilities include a park and picnic area for the estate residents and a children’s play area.”

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com



L-R: Frontline PDP Presidential Aspirant and former Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim and PDP chieftain and former Governor of Jigawa State, Alhaji Sule Lamido, when Anyim met with Jigawa PDP delegates in Dutse, Jigawa... yesterday



L-R: Mrs. Gosh Cecilia ; Mrs. Olope Adenike; Mrs. Omolade Shodimu; Olori Adejoke Ogundipe; Mrs. Yetunde Ogunsanya and Mrs. Romoke Afolabi, during the Conferment of chieftaincy title on Adejoke Ogundipe as the Ekeji Erelu Ode of Orile-Imo, Obafemi Owode Local Government, Ogun State.. recently



L-R: Ag. Divisional CEO, ipNX Infrastructure, Uche Nnakenyi; FTTH Engineer, CCG, Allen Cranfill; Group Executive Director, HR and Corporate Services, ipNX Nigeria Limited, Folashade Efiong-Bassey; Director of Programs, CCG, Vishal Currie; Group Executive Director, Commercials, ipNX Nigeria Limited, Bimpe Olaleye; and Vice President of Engineering, CCG, Derrel Duplech, during a networking event held in Victoria Island, Lagos.... recently



L-R: Outgoing Pioneer Chairman, Seplat Energy Plc, Dr. ABC Orjiako; CEO, Nigerian Exchange Ltd, Temi Popoola; Independent Non-Executive Chairman , Seplat Energy, Basil Omiyi; and CEO, Seplat Energy, Roger Brown, during Seplat Energy’s introduction of its new Chair at the Closing Gong Ceremony in celebration of the company’s Pioneer and New Chairman at the Exchange’s floor in Lagos..... recently

EXPRESSION

Bat, Not Bath, Eyelid

W RONG: life support machine; truth and reason: life-support machine

THISDAY of May 17 takes over today with this misap-
prehension: "According to him, it was most painful to be informed that his brother was going to die in an hour (hour's) time..."
"...the basic problem affecting democ-
racy and unity in (on) the continent."
Finally from the front-page misprints:
"Though, (otiose comma) President
Muhammadu Buhari yesterday declared
that an unconditional release of..."
"To get started, log into (log in/on to)
your Firsmonie App..."
"Happy 55 birthday (55th Birthday)
Governor Buni"
"...the Lord on whose bossom (bosom)
we are sure you are."
"...you are an indelible memory in our
hearts and forever unforgettable for your
sterling marks in inculcating values and
education to (in) oncoming (upcoming)
generations."
"Happy 64th Birthday: the epitome
of a selfless leader (epitome of selfless
leadership)"
"The love you have shown your people
and the sacrifices made for Nigeria proves
(prove) you a selfless nationalist."
"Governors biting more than they can
chew" A rewrite: Governors biting off more
than they can chew
A subscriber to this column sent a
message to me last weekend on the
correctness of "wake" and "wake-keep".
There are no such words as "wake-keeping"
and "wake-keep". The right expression is
"wake." Virtually all funeral announcements
in this part of the world disseminate this
blunder in blissful flamboyance. And for

clarity or emphasis: Christian wake.
"He is frank to the point of recklessness
and does not bath (bat) an eyelid about
sensibilities."
"Successful candidates in the exam are
placed into (in) universities depending on
their performances and choices."
"The picture one is likely to get is that of
lawmakers yet to come to grip (grips) with
the seriousness of what their duties entail."
"Both palatable and heart-rending news
are (is) most often broken there." "News' is
uncountable.
"...his skin must have toughen (you mean
toughened?) such that nothing can stir his
emotion as to make him cry."
"They were, in their primes (prime), sent
on a journey from which nobody returns."
"Its police, too, began investigations
culminating into (in) arrest of some
suspects."
"Since last week Tuesday..." Either last
Tuesday or Tuesday, last week—"Last week
Tuesday" indicates lexical ignorance.
"...our politicians should realise (realize,
preferably) that if they can hold the country
into (to) ransom for their jumbo pay, then
footballers should not be blamed if they do
same (the same)."
"In Nigeria, it was designed by the
military dictators as bait to divert the
attention of the people from the enormity
of their loots." No questions: 'loot' is non-
count.
"...it was seen as a child of necessity
aimed at restoring the primary education
sub- sector which was in crisis then back to
a sound foundation." Scrap 'back' to avoid
being charged with word abuse. 'Restora-
tion' has taken care of the verbiage.
"All that we have in the present Nigerian
society is an hostile (a hostile) environment
for the youths and children." Either youths
or the youth

"Having succeeded in intimidating their
opponents at primaries, the electorate
became a work-over..." A time to learn:
walk-over.
"A nearby police station in Benin has
(had) rebuffed the request for a police
report on the ground of jurisdiction." Simply
put: on grounds of jurisdiction.
"Anyone who monitored the mobilization
of women in the last fifteen years in
Nigeria could imagine positive results
that could have been achieved if the First
Ladies have (had) been sincere."
"We do not have to wait for this spo-
radic attacks by foreign armed bandits to
metamorphose into a full blown (a hyphen,
please) security threat." Why the discord
(this attacks)? And, of course, banditry
without arms: vide a standard dictionary.
"Because of an improved revenue base,
the governor said that the government is
(was) in a good position..."
"What stops us from returning to the
heydays (heyday) of the school...?"
"This does not mean that a lady should
not be congratulated for (on/upon) a safe
delivery."
"...many of the specie (species) had
run amuck simply on the suspicion that
another woman is (was) nipping at the
apple."
"Industry players blamed the high cost of
borrowing from the money market to (on) a
number of factors."
"It is high time we make (made) such
people pay..."
"...especially with regards to human
development" This way: as regards or with
regard to.
"...as the North would be placed on an
even keel or competing favourably with
their kiths and kin in the South." Fixed
expression: kith and kin
"Tears of instability of power has (have)



MEDIA GAFFES

EBERE WABARA

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caused many Nigerians to turn their
attention to alternative sources of power
supply."
"The most cheering news item in recent
times is the marching order given to the
NPF..." Stock phrase: marching orders.
"The police strenght is inadequate to
cope with the security of a large population
of 150 million Nigerians." Spell-check:
strength. Similarly: straight.
"News from reliable sources tend
(tends) to portray a government tendency
itching (do you mean inching?) towards
sustenance..."
"Ex-head of states, who have cracked
and liquidated the nation's coffers are to
be paid or are receiving N350,000 every
month." Building a new nation: Ex-heads of
state who had (not have)....
"Vocational equipments, basic
infrastructures and qualified personnels
must be given priority in our scheme of
things." Uncountable words: equipment and
personnel.
"The news of the death of...via a ghastly
motor accident recently came as a rude
shock to us." Advert condolence: fatal
(not ghastly) motor accident. Beyond the
correction, since the man died, there was
no need for the inclusion of the mode of
mishap. Simply a motor accident: got the
point?
"But suffice it to say that those rooting
to unseat a recalcitrant lawmaker should be
abreast with (of) the legal bottleneck rather
than arm-twisting."
"It is very easy for a moneybag
(sic) who (that) has..." 'Moneybags'
(plural unchanged) (especially informal
and derogatory) is a rich person. (Source:
OXFORD Advanced Learner's DICTIONARY)
'Moneybag' is a bag for containing money.

Encounters with a Strange Prophet

W e have had a relentless itch
to do this for weeks...a
lingering desire to share
our remote encounters
with this interesting man,
after about two years of
close monitoring as much
as one is able to keep pace with his frenetic
activities. Of course, we recognize that religion
is a strictly private engagement, and its practice,
devout or peripheral, is a matter of personal
disposition.

I met Prophet Abel Taiwo Ojo online, through
my wife, during the initial lockdown that came
in the wake of the first wave of the Wuhan gift
to the world, COVID-19. That was around June,
2020.

His ministrations was conducted mostly in
Yoruba, a language I love to hear, but a work-in-
progress to speak as deeply and fluently. This man
ignited my interest with his familiarity with the
scriptures; his virtually inexhaustible anecdotes of
personal calamities and vicissitudes; his humor-
ous interjections with some of his lieutenants,
and a general sense of passion for things of
God - especially the copious hours devoted to
prayers, fasting, songs and hymns, daily!

A careful and regular listener (or online
"follower") would have been fully aware of Ojo's
life story: from the village boy adept at farming,
hunting and surviving the harsh realities of rustic
lifestyles, to the vagaries of itinerant evangelism,
and sundry testimonials of abject poverty. All the
narratives are delivered in impeccable Yoruba
which his translators struggle to transmit as
quickly and as accurately as possible into English,
for the sake of non-Yoruba 'congregants'. Even
his most efficient translator (Lanre) sometimes
trips over a few of Ojo's heavily metaphoric or
onomatopoeic Yoruba words and symbolisms,
tinged with the iconic Ibadan dialect, though he
insists he is of the Ogbomosho stock.

Another unique aspect of Ojo is his almost
inhuman energy - a remarkable capacity for a
man who looks anywhere from 45 to 55 years
old. When we came in contact with his "Prophet
Taiwo Ojo Live" on Facebook, he was straddling
around 2,000 and 3,000 viewers - and I was

often amused when he requested repeatedly: "Ṣe
share Ẹ nṣaba m'atala..." (share it - the FB video
link - 13 times), or some higher numbers. Quick
confession: I refused to do so. After all, I was
just "sounding him out"...why would I share what
I hardly knew? Nowadays, his "online members"
are tipping over 10,000 people on Facebook,
with daily comments in excess of 50,000. Similar
impressive numbers are attained on the YouTube
channel.

But his services, between two hours and
four, or more, were often electric. And rapid!
God bless data providers and sellers! This man
is on the pulpit everyday, twice a day! And thrice
on Wednesday/Thursday and Friday/Saturday
for four-hour vigils. Each programme (which he
claimed he was divinely instructed to start
online long before the lockdown) is headlined
by a specific title: Every morning, except on
Sunday (which is a six-hour binge), is "Isoji Ori
Afṣṣṣ" (Online Revival) which runs live from
his Ibadan location with few attendants, and
on social media, between 7.30 am and 9 am.
Similarly, every evening, between 7 pm and 8
pm is for "Asotṣṣṣ Woli" (Prophetic Declaration).

The vigils are conducted in a fairly large
auditorium of his church called CAC Covenant
of Mercy ("CAC Majṣṣmu Anu"), off Iwo Road, in
Adelubi area of Ibadan, Oyo State; and sometimes
at the huge expanse of their campground, dubbed
Mercy Camp, in Osengere, along Ife-Ibadan
expressway. The vigils ("Oru Itusiṣṣ" - Night of
Deliverance) run from 12.30 midnight to about
4 am. And because Ojo is a poor timekeeper, his
programmes run beyond allotted times, with
the connivance of his live audience who often
egg him on. Virtually, all the prayer meetings
run late. Apparently, no one cares, and there is
hardly a dull moment, when Ojo is in his element.

During the scourge of global panic in curtailing
the ravages of COVID-19, it must be astonishing
to advocates of safe distancing and face masks,
when huge numbers of congregants were always
mingling and milling at every service. Sunday
morning is a different world entirely: from
7am to 1pm is a walk in the park. He's like an
incredible man-machine - without a flagging
speed, nor have I noticed a hoarse voice. The

truly astonishing part for me is the unfailing
morning service after each vigil. About three
hours after the vigils of Thursday and Saturday,
the voice and velocity crank up the volume for
"Isoji Ori Afṣṣṣ" at exactly 7.30am!

Another of his peculiarities is his numerous
and uncommon frank and unique prayer points.
You sense that this man has been so brutally
beaten by life's bitter 'koboko' for decades such
that nothing now matters to him except seeking
after holiness; being immersed in fasting and
prayers (he mentions fastings not as a matter
if days, but in weeks and months, and trips to
sundry 'mountains' that sound far-fetched to
the uninitiated); and surrendering himself to
be used by God as He pleases. Ojo churns out
prayer points, laced with vivid testimonials,
complimentary anecdotes and corroboratory
passages from the Bible, then wraps them with
an "if-you-like-stand-and-pray-or-if-you-want-you-
can-sit-and-waste-your-life" admonition, as he
rumbles through an hour or more of relentless
and frantic prayer tussles.

Many of his online parishioners come from
all over the world - and this is for real - to a
quarterly three-day revival (broadly themed
"72 Hours") at the Osengere Mercy camp
which, I believe, can contain more than 10,000
people. The attendees speak of different acts
of miracles: physiological healings, extraordinary
turnarounds, spiritual upliftment, overcoming
demonic attacks, reversals of misfortunes,
etc. The next one is due June 10-12, 2022.
Interestingly, Ojo is always quick to disclaim
personal knowledge of the miracles, as he
insists that he merely follows, and responds,
to the "voice of God" that he hears...the same
who has led him to take countless actions and
acts of self-denial.

Many top gospel artistes, and guest ministers
have graced the platform of the Covenant of
Mercy: Bola Are, JA Adelakun (Ayewa), Elijah
'Olorunosobṣṣ' Akintunde, Bunmi 'Omije-Ojumi'
Akinnanu, Dare Melody, etc. Incidentally, it was
on his stage that Tope Alabi made the "Oniduro
Mi' gaffe...and he wasted no time correcting
her error, even before it went viral.

Any open-minded observer would be enter-



COUNTERPOINT

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tained by Ojo's delivery and performance - he
bounces off borderline limericks and jokes on
some of his pastor acolytes, like Laide, the man
with the facial marks; Yinka, the good-looking
pastor whose command of English is abysmal;
Wale (official pastor) is his usual whipping horse
to illustrate grass-to-grace anecdotes; and Taiwo,
his pot-bellied deputy and namesake, who tries
to keep a straight face as much as possible.
There are a couple of elderly pastors that Ojo
apparently defers to, and are thus a little immune
from his jocular darts - Baba Adebowale and
Baba Adeleke. Even some members of the choir
and few regular congregants are now fairly
well-known to Ojo's admirers because of his
occasional jabs at them: Sister Bridget, Bola
'Dudu', Bola 'Pupa', Saida, Iya Michael, Alhaji...
their interactions, often one-sided, make the
extensive prayer sessions less draining.

In spite of his humour and flourish in
ministration, Ojo is also a highly disciplined and
fair-minded person. Admirably, he doesn't cavort
for dues, tithes and offerings as is common
in some of today's churches. "I don't need
your money, it's your salvation I'm after" - he
regularly warns in his best English pose. He
walks the talk often - publicly lambasting any
of his lieutenants who show favouritism in
giving privilege to anyone to jump the queue
for the long and draining counseling sessions
he sometimes conducts after services. No one
is too big to escape the queue, and he often
berates highly-placed individuals who storm
off, offended that they are not accorded "due
protocols" in recognition of their statuses. Well,
if he is even-handed to his family members, as
he claims, to the consternation of his aides, how
much more important strangers?

Wahoh - that is a man I would wish to meet
one day - to, among other things, ask: are you
really that real?

GLOBAL SOCCER



**WHO WINS THE
TITLE?**

A **THIS DAY** WEEKLY PULL-OUT

21.5.2022

PAGE. 29

Asisat Oshoala

African Queen of the Turf



GLOBAL SOCCER

Asisat Oshoala

African Queen of the Turf

Since abandoning her education in pursuit of a football career, Nigerian international, Asisat Oshoala has never looked back- it's been one success story after another. This season her game had be blighted by injury, reducing her game time to just 12 starts in 19 appearances. Not deterred, the Super Falcons striker not only helped Barcelona to win the league for the second time in a row but went on to win the Spanish Primera Iberdrola Golden Boot, making her the first African to achieve the feat. Beyond that the 27-year-old is focusing attention to add the UEFA Champions League medal to her haul



Oshoala celebrating winning the league title with Barcelona teammates

Super Falcons striker, Asisat Oshoala on Sunday won the Spanish Primera Iberdrola golden boot following an impressive goalscoring season with champions Barcelona Femeni to become the first African woman to achieve the feat after scoring 20 goals in just 12 starts of all 19 league appearances.

The 27-year-old, who opened her season account with a brace in a 5-0 win over Real Betis on September 11, grabbed her 20th goal of the season in a 5-1 win against Sevilla on May 5.

The 20th goal of the season saw the Super Falcons star level with Brazil's Geyse of Madrid CFF, who failed to go further.

Despite being introduced as a 63rd minute substitute, the Nigerian could not add to her goal tally on final day's 2-1 win against Atletico Madrid, but she still nicked her long-sought accolade, having played fewer matches (19) than Geyse (27).

The Nigerian captain was the highest goal scorer at the 2014 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup and was named the best player at the tournament. She was also named best player and second top goalscorer with the Super Falcons team who won the 2014 African Women's Championship.

Meanwhile, World football governing body, FIFA has hailed Super Falcons and

Barcelona Femeni striker for winning the Pichichi with the Catalan club despite suffering a two-month injury spell.

Oshoala was confirmed the joint top scorer of the Spanish Women's football league on Sunday as her 20 goals proved enough for the award.

"20 goals and a perfect club season. Asisat Oshoala has always been unstoppable!" FIFA wrote on their official Women's World Cup page.

Oshoala has had a superb season, winning the league's top scorer, and achieving a spotless league record.

Speaking on the award, Oshoala said: "It's obviously been a team effort to get here, and I can only thank my team-mates and everyone at the club for this achievement."

"We've been working hard all season and cannot stop now because we have another big one ahead of us." Barcelona scored 159 goals in 30 games as they didn't drop a single point. They conceded just 11 goals to establish their exceptional dominance.

Barcelona Femeni will face Lyon in the final of the Champions League today as they hope to successfully defend the title they won last year.

Should Barcelona emerge champions, Oshoala would win the Champions

League for the second time and become the first African to win it twice, a season after becoming the first African to win the award.

Oshoala, 27, is Africa's most decorated female footballer and becomes the first woman from the continent to claim Spain's golden boot.

After their historic league campaign which saw them pick up maximum points with 30 wins in 30 matches, Oshoala is targeting another milestone with Jonatan Giraldez's team.

"The focus of everyone has shifted from a league title celebration to preparing for a massive game in Turin," she added.

After that big night in Italy, Barcelona will then shift attention to El Clasico against Real Madrid in the Copa de la Reina semi-final on May 25, as they continue their quest for an historic quadruple.

Oshoala has now scored 81 goals in 104 appearances for Barca, and has signed a deal to remain with the Spanish giants until the end of the 2023-24 campaign.

She joined the Spanish outfit from Chinese champions Dalian Quanjian in January 2019, initially on loan, before agreeing a permanent switch five months

later.

The former FC Robo and Rivers Angels star had moved to the Far East in February 2017 from English side Arsenal, with whom she won the Women's FA Cup at Wembley in 2016.

She finished as the Chinese Women's Super League top scorer in 2017 with 12 goals to help her club to the title same year. Oshoala, who began her European career at Liverpool, won her third Women's Africa Cup of Nations with the Super Falcons in Ghana in 2018, scoring three goals as Nigeria lifted the title for a ninth time.

Oshoala won the Confederation of African Football's Women's Player of the Year fourth time in 2020- equalling the record set by compatriot Perpetua Nkwocha.

The maiden BBC Women's Footballer of the Year winner helped Nigeria reach the last 16 at the 2019 Women's World Cup in France and will be hoping to lead her country to qualification for the 2023 World Cup and a record-extending 10th Nations Cup title in Morocco in July.

Nigeria have been paired with South Africa, who the Super Falcons beat on penalties to lift the trophy four years ago, in the group stage of the tournament.

GLOBAL SOCCER

Can Villa Prove ‘Banana Peel’ to Man City’s Title Dream?

With just one point separating Manchester City from Liverpool and a game to go, Pep Guardiola would be hoping for victory against an Aston Villa side managed by a Reds’ legend, Steven Gerrard to ensure a fourth Premier League victory in five years tomorrow Sunday



Manchester City’s Bernardo Silva waltzes through Aston Villa midfielders

Manchester City will aim to wrap up the Premier League title when Aston Villa pay a visit to the Etihad Stadium for Sunday’s final-day showdown. The Citizens currently hold a one-point lead over Liverpool at the top of the table, while the Lions still have the slightest hope of finishing in the top half. A few Man City fans may have prematurely got the bottles of champagne out when Nathan Redmond gave Southampton the lead against Liverpool, but the Reds turned the tide around to ensure that the race for glory would go right down to the final day. Pep Guardiola’s side would only need a point this weekend had they secured victory over West Ham United, but a disjointed side went 2-0 behind to Jarrod Bowen’s brace before Jack Grealish and a Vladimir Goufal own goal rescued a point for the league leaders. Regardless of what happens during Liverpool’s meeting with Wolverhampton Wanderers at Anfield, victory for Man City would see them lift the Premier League trophy for the sixth time in 11 seasons, and a draw would also suffice if Jurgen Klopp’s side slip up. Guardiola will certainly not set his side up to draw, though, especially with City now finding the back of the net at least twice in their last eight Premier League matches, and their unbeaten run in the top flight now stands at 11 games. The Citizens have also eased to three consecutive home wins over Brighton & Hove Albion, Watford and Newcastle United in the past few weeks - scoring 13 goals and conceding just one - and Guardiola’s 100 per cent record of five

wins from five on the final day is also on the line here. Steven Gerrard never won a Premier League title at Liverpool, but the Villa boss could now win the title for Liverpool, who are relying on their legendary midfielder to silence the Etihad crowd with his fatigued crop on the final day. The Lions could not replicate their 3-1 Turf Moor win over Burnley from earlier this month as they played out a 1-1 draw with Mike Jackson’s side on Thursday, and it was the visitors who went ahead through Ashley Barnes’s spot kick before Emiliano Buendia got on the scoresheet himself. Villa could have been heading for a defeat had it not been for a magnificent block from Tyrone Mings from Wout Weghorst’s close-range effort, while a string of saves from Nick Pope also served to leave the Lions 14th in the table and three points adrift of 10th-placed Brighton & Hove Albion. Failing to keep a clean sheet in four successive matches does not bode well for Villa - who have lost each of their last 11 league games on Man City’s turf - before a trip to the Etihad, while a paltry tally of two wins from their last 10 games in the Premier League can certainly be described as ending the season with a whimper. Gerrard has all the motivation he needs to try to get a result this weekend, but not since January 2000 have Villa won a Premier League match away from home to the league leaders - doing so at Leeds United and continuing their recent spate of goal-laden home performances would be a fitting way for City to clinch the domestic crown. Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp however said ex-Reds captain will take Sunday’s game against Manchester City “100 per

cent serious”. Gerrard can help his former club win the Premier League title if his side can beat or draw at City and Liverpool beat Wolves. “I can only understand these sorts of situations by thinking of myself in the role,” said Klopp. “If I would play a game and could help former clubs- Borussia, Dortmund or Mainz, it would mean for me an extra motivation. That’s how it is. “But I’m not playing and Stevie doesn’t play. That’s a shame - much more of a shame that Stevie isn’t playing than I’m not playing. “We’re all human beings. Stevie will take it 100 per cent serious without me calling him or whatever. I don’t have to, probably, the rest of the club did it already but I haven’t. Gerrard played 710 games and scored 186 goals for Liverpool during a 17-year career at Anfield, winning eight major trophies, including the Champions League in 2005. However, he did not win the Premier League as a player but did come close when he was part of a Liverpool side who were three games from winning the title in 2014, only for his infamous slip to help Chelsea to victory at Anfield as City ended up finishing top instead. “In terms of Liverpool, I totally understand and respect the external noise and questions that have been coming my way for some time,” said Gerrard. “They are involved in a title race and I spent a lot of time there. It is disappointing when people mention integrity with me and Aston Villa and any of my players. “We will go out at the weekend and give it everything we have got to get points for Aston Villa. If that inevitably helps Liverpool, fantastic. But my priority is to

Premiership Table

Man City	37	72	90
Liverpool	37	66	89
Chelsea	37	42	71
Tottenham	37	24	68
Arsenal	37	9	66
Man Utd	37	1	58
West Ham	37	11	56
Wolves	37	-3	51
Leicester	37	0	49
Brighton	37	-4	48
Brentford	37	-7	46
Newcastle	37	-19	46
Crystal Palace	37	3	45
Aston Villa	37	-1	45
Southampton	37	-21	40
Everton	37	-19	39
Burnley	37	-18	35
Leeds	37	-38	35
Watford	37	-42	23
Norwich	37	-56	22

Premier League

TODAY

Arsenal	v Everton	16:00
Brentford	v Leeds Utd	16:00
Brighton	v West Ham	16:00
Burnley	v Newcastle	16:00
Chelsea	v Watford	16:00
Crystal Palace	v Man Utd	16:00
Leicester	v Southampton	16:00
Liverpool	v Wolves	16:00
Man City	v Aston Villa	16:00
Norwich	v Tottenham	16:00

LaLiga

TODAY

Alavés	v Cádiz	17:30
Barcelona	v Villarreal	17:30
Elche	v Getafe	17:30
Granada	v Espanyol	17:30
Osasuna	v Mallorca	17:30
Vallecano	v Levante	17:30
Madrid	v Real Betis	17:30
Sociedad	v Atlético	17:30
Sevilla	v Bilbao	17:30
Valencia	v Celta Vigo	17:30

Hot Shot

PLAYERS	CLUB	GOALS
Mo Salah	Liverpool	22
Heung Son	Tottenham	21
Cristiano Ronaldo	Man Utd	18
Harry Kane	Tottenham	16
De Bruyne	Man City	15
Diogo Jota	Liverpool	15
Sadio Mané	Liverpool	15
Raheem Sterling	Man City	15

get points for Aston Villa.” Liverpool have won this season’s Carabao Cup and FA Cup and have reached the Champions League final, which they will play against Real Madrid on May 28. However, any hopes of achieving the quadruple will be over if City secure the Premier League title on Sunday. Regardless of the result in the remaining two competitions, there will be a victory parade for the team in Liverpool on May 29. “There are so many reasons to celebrate,” added Klopp. “We don’t know how many reasons but we already have enough. “We didn’t have a parade two years ago when we were champions - it’s not for that reason but that’s another reason. “I’m really happy that we can deliver what I promised at that time when I said

GLOBAL SOCCER



Nigeria U17 team, Flamingos in a training session

India 2022: Ajakaiye Shoots Flamingos above Ethiopia in Addis Ababa

Prolific striker, Opeyemi Ajakaiye took her goals tally to six in the ongoing FIFA U17 Women's World Cup African qualifying series when she scored the only goal as Nigeria edged out hosts, Ethiopia in Addis Ababa yesterday afternoon.

In the final round, first leg duel staged at the Abebe Bekila Stadium, both sides had failed to make hay from a number of opportunities in the first half-hour, but the lithe forward struck in the 36th minute after she was put through by diminutive midfielder Taiwo Afolabi.

The goal meant Ajakaiye had scored in each of the Flamingos' five matches of the qualifying series so far, including a brace against the Democratic Republic of Congo in a 5-0 spanking in Benin City.

Omowunmi Bello, who scored three of the goals in Nigeria's 6-0 aggregate thumping of Egypt in the earlier round, came close to increasing her own tally in the campaign, only to see her 35-yard shot rock the upright in the 50th minute.

Kumneger Kebede, Emush Daniel and Bethelme Germa all had chances to equalise for the homers in the second period but met with an unyielding Nigeria rearguard and an inspired goalkeeper Faith Omilana who had an excellent game.

Both teams will clash again at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja on Saturday, 4th June with the winner on aggregate qualifying as one of Africa's three representatives at this year's FIFA U17 Women's World Cup finals in India.

GOTV BOXING NIGHT 25

Organisers Give Reason for Ibadan Venue

Flykite Productions, organisers of GOTV Boxing Night, have given reasons for the choice of Ibadan as venue for the 25th edition of the event, which hold on June 4, at the Old Gymnasium of the Obafemi Awolowo Stadium.

In a statement issued in Lagos, the sports promotions company explained that the choice of the Oyo State capital was a product of consultations with various boxing stakeholders and arose from the desire to make other parts of the country have a taste of the event.

The statement quoted Jenkins Alumona, Managing Director, Flykite Productions, as saying that though Ibadan had hosted the event twice in the past, boxing stakeholders recommended it because of the city's long association with boxing and the popularity the sport enjoys.

"Ibadan was where the sponsors launched GOTV service in 2011 and was the host city of the first boxing world title bout in August 1963 when Nigeria's Dick Tiger defeated America's Gene Fullmer to retain the middleweight belt at the Liberty Stadium in front of over 35,000 fans.

"The city was also the base of the late boxing legend, Dele Jonathan, former Commonwealth lightweight champion; and the late Chief Francis Aiyegbeni, a doyen of boxing promotions.

"The city's love for boxing is immense," he said.

Alumona added that there were plans to take the event to other cities if suitable venues were found.

Lagos State Backs Insight Sports Swimming Clinic

A private initiative to improve the standard of swimming in the country by Insight Sports Limited has been embraced by the Lagos State government.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Insight Sports Limited, Idowu Otukoya, the plan is aimed at producing medal winning swimmers for Nigeria and the target is the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

To actualise this, Otukoya, a former Lagos State athlete who represented the state at the National Sports Festival some years back said his organisation was planning to organise a week-long train-the-trainers' clinic to hold between July 11-15, 2022 at the Children's International School, Lekki.

Otukoya said, "Insight Sports Limited is out to transform the way sports is viewed and managed by government and individuals at various levels in Nigeria. Our passion cuts across all sports but the emphasis on swimming is based on the disproportionate platforms for talent management and maximisation."

In view of this, the company intends to change the narrative by beginning with the training of swimming coaches, who will in turn, go back to their various zones and raise future champions in swimming.

A director of the American Swimming Coaches Association, Chad Onken will conduct the clinic.

Chairman of the Lagos State Sports Commission Sola Aiyepoku welcomed the initiative and pledged the readiness of his commission to support Insight Sports Limited, saying that Lagos State government was ready to welcome good initiatives and ready to create platforms for opportunities in sports.

"In the past, sports people were left alone to do things on their own. From the experience I have had, young people with good ideas would not have to pass through such things again," he said.



Eunisell Boot

Mbaoma (left) and Abdulazeez

Eunisell Boot: Mbaoma, Abdulazeez Intensify Goal Race as Five Players Hit Double Digits

With 10 more games before the season ends, five top players in the Nigeria Professional Football league (NPFL) have hit double digits with goals, as Victor Mbaoma of Enyimba and Gombe United star Yusuf Abdulazeez mount pressure on leading scorer, Ishaq Kayode.

The NPFL Goal king will at the end of season receive the Eunisell Boot award which carries a cash prize of N200,000 premium per goal.

With 28 games gone, NPFL's rave of the moment, Ishaq has netted 14 goals. Interestingly, Mbaoma who had just six goals a few matches ago now chases closely with 12 goals. Abdulazeez who had also scored only six goals as at match day 21 now boast of 11 to his credit, with both trailing the Rivers United striker closely.

In a media chat on Wednesday, an excited Mbaoma said, "I believe I can win the Eunisell Boot. My priority is to concentrate on scoring goals to help my team and I hope at the end it counts for me to win the Eunisell Boot."

He however added that he was not under any pressure whatsoever. "I only want to do my best and be better than I was yesterday. I want to score as many goals as possible because that's what complete my joy and basically help my team," the 25-year-old former Remo Star and Akwa United striker insisted.

Mbaoma, who has been Enyimba's top scorer for two seasons has been the shining light in the eight-time champion's squad with a total of 47 NPFL goals since he started his professional career with Remo Stars.

For Gombe United winger, Yusuf Abdulazeez, fans should expect more goals as he hopes to through that push his team to the top of the log.

"Of course, any striker will want to win the Eunisell Boot. Thank God I am still in the race for it so I will try and work harder if I can win it. I am not on any pressure presently I am just enjoying the games as they come," the 20-year-old stated.

Rivers United forward Chijoke Akuneto has also netted 11 goals, with a double against MFM and a hat-trick against Akwa United, the first in the current season.

Meanwhile, Remo Star's Andy Okpe has also hit the double-digit bar with 10 goals while Ossy Martins of Enugu Rangers chases the pack with nine goals with a few others on the seven and eight goals bars.

Eunisell Limited, sponsors of the Eunisell Boot award said the company was thrilled at the healthy competition and enthusiasm the award has ignited among Nigeria's top-flight league players.

D'Tigress Call on FG to Reverse Basketball Ban

D'Tigress have called on the federal government to reverse its decision to withdraw Nigeria from international basketball competitions for two years.

Last week, Sunday Dare, minister of sports and youth development, announced the ban, adding that it was part of efforts by the government to revamp the sport from the grassroots.

The development came amid the ongoing power tussle within the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF).

Reacting to the FG's resolution on basketball via a Twitter thread yesterday, D'Tigress said they "do not agree with this ban."

The team also said it would take "away all our future competitions, accomplishments and goals to elevate, inspire, and make Nigeria proud!"

The African champions added that they have worked hard to be "Afrobasket Champions" and will "passionately love to represent in this upcoming FIBA Women's World Cup competition."

NWFL Super 6 Trophy Arrives from UK

The highly coveted Nigeria Women Football League trophy, being competed for by the six best teams in women's football in the land, arrived Nigeria from the United Kingdom yesterday, two days before the championship is expected to come to an end.

The trophy, going the way of the team with the highest points at the end of the NWFL Super six Championship, arrived aboard a Virgin Atlantic flight from the UK and was received on arrival at the International Airport Lagos by the Chairperson, NWFL governing board, Mrs Aisha Falode.

The NFF executive member later flew into Benin-City with the trophy same day.

The NWFL Super six championship, sponsored by Tulcan Energy Resources is being hosted by the Edo State Government, with all matches being played at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium and University of Benin sports complex, both in Benin-city.

Kemen Becomes Pioneer Technogym Master Trainer for Nigeria

Technogym, the premier world leader in the design of fitness and wellness equipment recently certified fitness trainer and brand ambassador of Technogym Nigeria; Ekemini Ekerette, AKA 'Kemen' as the first international master trainer in Nigeria. The training took place in May 2022 in Cesena, Italy.

The guest speaker at the event, Shea Pierre; a professional trainer who has trained over 20,000 epic athletes worldwide. The training also presented the best of Technogym's global education team together to share industry leading level of knowledge with the world of fitness, health, and wellness. The training had a total of 17 educators and 17 workshops.

Over 200 trainers attended from all over the globe and they delved into product knowledge, best in class fitness principles and wellness techniques. The event also embraced the foundations of wellness, encompassing movement, nutrition and mental fortitude. Participants were also being exposed to the exciting environment of the technogym village, diverse people, culture and food.

Speaking on the training, BPL CEO, Michael Owolabi said "as an organisation, we believe in providing superior solutions and ensuring best in class training for our people. We constantly embrace opportunities that enables our partners to be outstanding in their craft and update their skills."



Bright Osayi-Samuel

England Return on the Horizon

After a scintillating performance in the Turkish Super League with Fenerbahce—a side Bright Osayi-Samuel joined from Queen Park Rangers last year, a return to England is on the horizon as three Premier League sides are scrambling for his signature

West Ham United are ready to battle it out with Southampton and Brentford in the race to sign Fenerbahce full-back Bright Osayi-Samuel. A recent report from Football Insider has offered an update on the future of Bright Osayi-Samuel. The 24-year-old Fenerbahce full-back has become a sought-after prospect in the market following his exceptional performances in the Turkish Super League. West Ham are interested in securing his services, but they are facing stiff competition from other English clubs. Brentford and Southampton are the other Premier League clubs keeping close tabs on Osayi-Samuel. The explosive Nigerian full-back does have a long-term contract at Fenerbahce, but it appears a return to England could be on the horizon after blazing performances in Turkey. Osayi-Samuel began his youth career at Blackpool academy before he joined QPR in 2017. He was even a regular for QPR for quite some time, making 115 competitive appearances for the Championship outfit before joining Fenerbahce at the start of last year, in search of a bigger club. His move to Turkey has turned out to be a major success, with the Nigerian becoming a revelation at Fenerbahce. Although Osayi-Samuel had initially started his career as an attacking wing-back, he has transformed himself into a traditional right-back and has been involved in nine goals in 61 competitive appearances. Osayi-Samuel's consistent performances in the Turkish Superlig have yet to help him earn a call-up to the Nigerian national team.

But it might just earn the 24-year-old a move to the Premier League in the summer, with West Ham United among the clubs interested in securing his services. While the Hammers have no less than three options at right-back, it appears David Moyes is not convinced with the performances of any one of the individuals, prompting the West Ham boss to enter the market for a fresh face, especially with Ryan Fredericks seeing his contract expire at the end of the season. At the end of last season, Fenerbahce president Ali Koc was giving an impromptu press conference outside the club's stadium, he said of the Nigerian: "Osayi-Samuel: zoom zoom zoom." There were a few raised eyebrows when Osayi-Samuel signed for the Turkish giants from QPR in January 2021. Promising young players from Europe's second tier weren't exactly their usual transfer MO, and the other big signing that month was more in keeping with the big splashes that Fenerbahce tend to make. But Osayi-Samuel is a key man in a team enjoying a late-season revival after a tricky start. Football can be a strange place sometimes. Those who remember Osayi-Samuel from his time in England might not be massively surprised he is thriving in Turkey. He was one of the most in-demand names in the Championship in the 2021 winter transfer window, having excelled on the wing for QPR after moving there from Blackpool. The 24-year-old had plenty of options among the Championship's more upwardly mobile clubs and in the Premier League. However, he chose Fenerbahce after being

persuaded by the club's then-sporting director, Emre Belozoglu. "Emre explained why he wanted me," Osayi-Samuel tells The Athletic. "He told me how big the club is and what a great platform it would be for me. It's one of the biggest clubs in the world, a lot of people watch the games, and it's a big platform for someone to come over here and showcase their skills." It's interesting that Fenerbahce was actively sold to Osayi-Samuel as a stepping stone. This reflects the new reality of the big Turkish teams, whose financial mess — at one point in 2021, Fenerbahce, Galatasaray, Besiktas and Trabzonspor were collectively around €1.7 billion in debt — means they no longer have the money to sign big-name foreigners. Ozil was very much the exception, and will probably be the last such signing for a very long time. Instead, the big clubs now aspire to be versions of Benfica or Lille or even Ajax: find undervalued young talent, give them a platform, sell them on for a profit. Osayi-Samuel is a perfect example. And in his particular case, the plan is working. He has excelled this season, and the interest from big clubs in England hasn't gone away. Premier League sides remain keen, and The Athletic understands that although the plan is for him to stay in Turkey this year, a move is certainly possible if the right offer arrives in the summer. If that doesn't happen, it would be a surprise if he was still there at the end of next season. His excellent form might not be a shock to anyone who watched him in England but it might be more of a surprise to learn he has

turned himself into one of the Super Lig's leading right-backs. A winger by trade, Osayi-Samuel broadly played in his natural position last season, but when Vitor Pereira arrived last summer, the Portuguese manager switched formation to a rough 3-4-3 and needed a right wing-back. "That's not usually my position," Osayi-Samuel says. "I've been an out-and-out winger. He wanted me to come back as a full-back when we didn't have the ball. He started teaching me the basics of defending, and from there I started playing as a wing-back."

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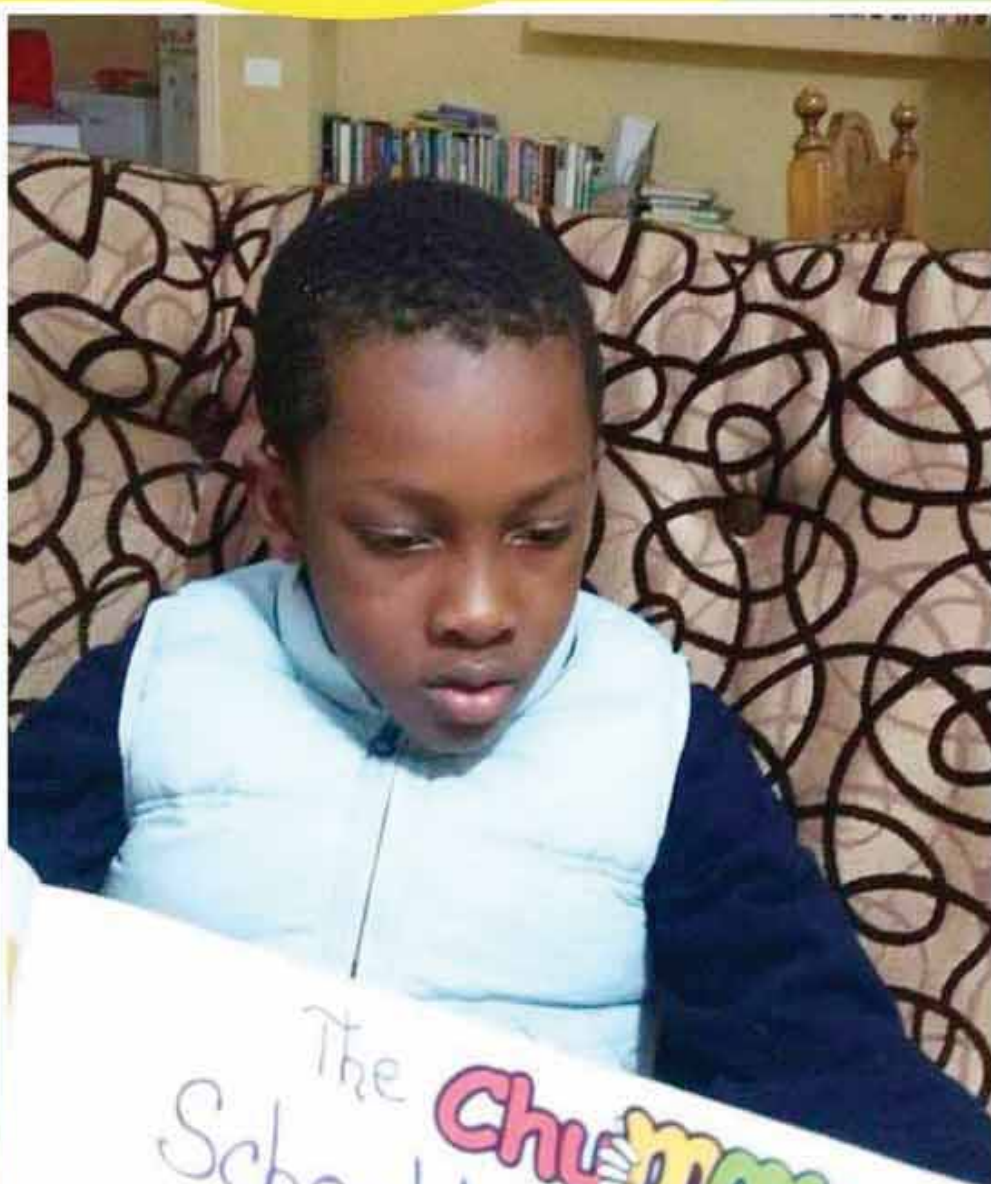
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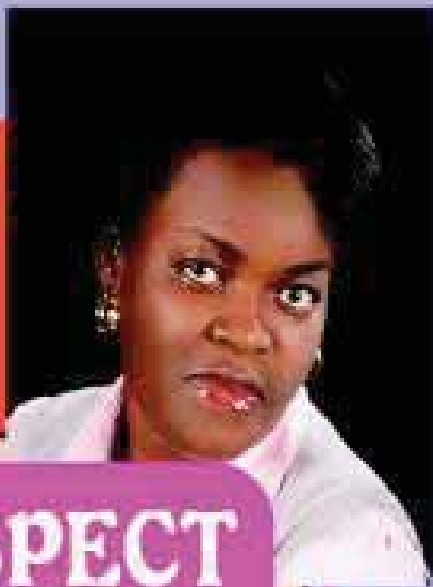
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2023 Toyota Sienna

Toyota Marks 25th Anniversary of Sienna with Special Limited Edition

The 2023 Toyota Sienna marks the model's first quarter-century of success and celebrates with a limited-availability 25th Anniversary Edition. Based on the sport-infused XSE grade, the special model gains additional luxury cabin features from the Limited grade and adds exclusive exterior and interior trim. Toyota will build just 2,525 of these models for the U.S., making this a "gotta have it" minivan, according to a statement by the automaker.

Toyota has sold more than 2.2 million Sienna models since its debut in 1997. The fourth-generation Sienna debuted for the 2021 model year, offering hybrid power exclusively and giving customers the benefit of Toyota's 20+ years of global hybrid leadership and well documented quality, durability and reliability. The 2023 Sienna lays down impressive numbers. Its Toyota Hybrid System II delivers 245 total system horsepower

and earns the vehicle a manufacturer-estimated 36 combined MPG fuel economy (front-wheel drive). The Hybrid-exclusive strategy has been a winner for Sienna, which was the top-selling minivan in America for 2021, capturing 35% of the segment. The new-generation Sienna offers the choice in front-wheel drive or Electronic On-Demand All-Wheel Drive, which employs a separate rear electric motor rather than a heavy AWD transfer case and space-robbing driveshaft to the rear wheels. As a result, manufacturer-estimated combined fuel economy is 35 MPG, nearly matching the 36 combined MPG for front wheel drive.

Happy Silver Anniversary

The ultra-sporty XSE model on which the 25th Anniversary Edition amps up the sporty factor with available dark 20-in. split-5-spoke wheels, bolder looking front and rear bumpers, black-painted caps and a sport-tuned suspension that are unique to the XSE. The Sienna 25th Anniversary Edition is available in front-wheel drive or all-wheel drive

and includes the XSE Plus Package, which equips the Sienna 25th Anniversary Edition with roof rails, Premium Audio with JBL speakers and navigation, wireless charging and a 1500-watt converter.

Appropriately for the occasion, the Sienna 25th Anniversary Edition is available in Celestial Silver, with Wind Chill Pearl as a second color choice. Special black badging and exterior trim, including mirrors caps and shark fin antenna, accents the two available exterior colors.

From there, this celebration model adds a slew of features from the Limited grade, including the exterior mirrors with memory, auto-dimming, puddle lights, power-fold and reverse-tilt down function. Inside, the Limited also donates black leather-trimmed seating with silver-colored stitching, including heated and ventilated front seats with memory. The Limited's memory steering column and second-row seats with ottomans enhance onboard comfort, and illuminated door sills greet front occupants.

All-new BMW M4 CSL Blends Racing Passion, Innovative Technology

As part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, BMW M GmbH is presenting a special-edition car based on its successful high-performance models in the premium midsize segment. The new BMW M4 CSL blends old-school racing passion with innovative technology to create an inimitable performance experience, the auto company said in a statement.

With its next-level power and intelligent lightweight design, two-seater configuration, model-specific chassis upgrades and equipment features selected specially for the job at hand, the new BMW M4 CSL has track driving as its raison d'être. The genes the M4 CSL shares with its competition-spec sibling, the BMW M4 GT3, are also reflected in its performance attributes. In test runs on the Nürburgring's Nordschleife circuit, the BMW M4 CSL posted the fastest lap times ever for a series-produced BMW car. On the version of the track traditionally used for comparison purposes – which is 20.600 kilometres / 12.8 miles in length and doesn't include the straight at section T13 – it stopped the clock at 7 min. 15.677 sec. Its official and notarised lap time for the 20.832-kilometres / 12.943-mile circuit (the complete lap) was 7 min. 20.207 sec. Acceleration figures of 3.7 seconds from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) and 10.7 seconds for the sprint from 0 to 200 km/h (124 mph) are similarly impressive. "Competition, Sport, Lightweight": a recipe with a rich tradition. The stripped-back racing character

of the BMW M4 CSL is underpinned by a time-honoured concept that harnesses cutting-edge development expertise and the latest technology to create an enthralling end result. "CSL" stands for "Competition, Sport, Lightweight", referencing the critical role of weight-minimised design in achieving success in motor sport. The BMW 3.0 CSL developed by BMW Motorsport GmbH according to this same principle won the European Touring Car Championship at the first attempt in 1973. And the M4 CSL

is also following in the tyre tracks of successful special-edition models from earlier generations of the BMW M3/M4, most notably the legendary BMW M3 CSL from 2003 and the BMW M4 GTS unveiled in 2016.

For BMW M GmbH, the world premiere of the new BMW M4 CSL at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este (20 – 22 May 2022) will be one of the highlights of its 50th anniversary year. Production of the special-edition model will begin – in a limited run of exactly 1,000 examples – at BMW Group Plant Dingolfing in July 2022.



All-new BMW M4 CSL

TIPS OF THE WEEK

What to Do When Your Car is Flooded

What To Do In Case Your Car Is Caught In A Flood?

The first thing you SHOULD HAVE DONE was to turn around and find another route. However, you now have a car that is stuck in the water and is going nowhere. Here's what you need to do:

Do Not Try Turning The Car On – This cannot be stressed any stronger. Water can damage every single component inside a car including the engine and transmission. If you try to turn the engine on and more water enters, the problem only worsens. When water damages the engine and the pistons don't compress or move like they normally should, it is called "hydrolock" and it is extremely common in flooded cars. If your car is hydrolocked, you can expect the cost of repairs to be extremely high and in severe cases, the car could completely be destroyed.

Get As Much Of The Water Out – When water remains stagnant for long periods of time, it is capable of doing extensive damage to anything it comes in contact with. The wiring and mechanical components are the first things that can get damaged so you will have to work fast. If you find puddles of water in your car, you will have to get rid of them as soon as possible. If you have a wet/dry vacuum cleaner, you can remove the puddles quickly or you can use towels to soak up the water and remove it from the cabin. If you are using a vacuum cleaner, make sure it is not a regular one as you could get electrocuted in the process.

Keep The Car Ventilated – Simply removing the water from your car doesn't solve your problems. Your need to immediately start drying the areas that were flooded. If there is enough sunlight near where your car is parked, simply roll down the windows, open all the doors, and let the heat from the sun work its magic. If there is not sufficient sunlight, you can park your car in an open space and use electric or battery-operated fans to dry out the damp areas. A fan will also help remove any foul odours and keep mould and mildew away. If your car was not severely flooded but the cabin remained wet, you can use the heaters in your car to dry the interiors quickly – just make sure that the engine was not damaged.

3. Ventilate the car:

Once you have successfully removed the water build-up from the cabin and other places in the car, you will have to work just as fast to dry the affected areas. If there is enough sunlight near where your car is parked, simply roll down the windows, open all the doors, and let the heat from the sun work its magic. If there is not sufficient sunlight, you can park your car in an open space and use an electric table or standing fan to dry out the damp areas. A fan will also help remove any foul odours and keep mould and mildew away. If your car was not severely flooded but the cabin remained wet, you can use the heaters in your car to dry the interiors quickly – just make sure that the engine was not damaged.

Step-by-Step Guide on What to do if Your Car is Flooded

Since the monsoons are already upon us, here are some steps to help you get through the process of resuscitating your flood-damaged car:

Step 1: Avoid starting the car when it is flooded as the collected water could cause more and irreversible damage to the engine and other components.

Step 2: Once the car is out of the water and on dry land, you should first check out the extent of the damage and assess what needs to be done. You can check if the water level was high enough to enter the car or stopped below the doors. In most cases, insurance companies consider water damage to the level of the dashboard as a totaled car and will not look for repair work to be done on it.

Step 3: If your car insurance policy covers theft and fire, it would also cover flood damage which is a good sign. However, you will have to be extremely thorough when going through the policy as companies could specify what they are willing to repair and what they choose not to. It is best to go over your policy with your agent as the policy can cover everything from floor mats to entire engine changes.

Step 4: When the weather brightens up or if you can find a spot where you and the vehicle are sheltered from the rain, you need to start working on drying the car out quickly.

(Source: CARS 24)

AUTO WORLD

Mercedes AMG.EA Offers Architecture for Future all-electric Models

Spectacular proportions defined by a long wheelbase and emphasised by short overhangs, powerful shoulders, large wheels, a distinctive rear spoiler and star-shaped headlamp signature – the Vision AMG makes an emotional statement from every perspective. This extraordinary show car from Mercedes-AMG offers a glimpse of the all-electric future of AMG Driving Performance. Beneath the breath-taking exterior design of the four-door coupé is the equally extraordinarily dedicated AMG.EA platform, which is currently under development in Affalterbach for all-electric performance models.

“AMG is reinventing itself. As was once the case with our founding fathers, there has been an amazing feeling of new beginnings here in Affalterbach for quite some time now. The course has been well and truly set for an electrified future, and we’ve set the bar high. That’s because our customers expect something very special from all-electric cars. We have already well and truly proven our expertise in this regard with the SLS AMG Electric Drive, our own E PERFORMANCE hybrid technology and the first Mercedes-EQ derivatives. With this study, we are now offering a first glimpse of how we are transferring the AMG DNA into the all-electric future, starting in 2025. Gorden and his team are pointing the way from a visual perspective with this extraordinary design. At AMG, we have always stood for that extra shot of emotion, driving fun, handling, ingenious aerodynamic features and other innovative solutions. And that’s what we continue to stand for with our first BEV developed entirely in Affalterbach. We’re developing everything from scratch, from the dedicated AMG.EA platform to



Extraordinarily dedicated architecture of future Mercedes-AMG.EA

the revolutionary drivetrain technology with which we will take performance electric mobility to a whole new level,” says Philipp Schiemer, CEO of Mercedes-AMG GmbH.

“The Vision AMG shows in spectacular style what electrification could look like at Mercedes-AMG, while staying true to the brand aesthetic. The study’s extreme proportions create fascination and passion for performance – that’s what AMG is all about. The Vision AMG is an impressive embodiment of the brand’s dual polarity – the interplay of beauty and the extraordinary. At the same time, elements from the future, such as the light signatures with the illuminated high-tech grille,

underscore the progressive evolution of our design language of Sensual Purity,” says Gorden Wagener, Chief Design Officer of Mercedes-Benz Group AG. “With its contrasting modern surfacing and radical proportions, this car showcases the next design step, building on the VISION EQXX and moving further towards performance luxury. The seamless flow of beautifully formed surfaces and the monolithic sculpture complete the powerful aesthetic of the Vision AMG. The result is an electric supercar, a style icon that stimulates desire – and that’s exactly what sets a luxury sports car apart.”

Monolithic sculpture and radical proportions

The concept car is characterised by flowing,

beautifully formed surfaces. Joints and shut lines are reduced to a minimum, and the rear and side windows are painted in the same Alubeam silver as the car itself. The result is an overall look that reinforces the impression of a monolithic sculpture.

The sporty proportions are particularly evident from the side, and are defined by the technical layout – long wheelbase, sharply raked A-pillar positioned far forward, short front overhang and slightly longer, aerodynamically optimised rear overhang. It clearly expresses the design language of Sensual Purity with distinctive sports car cues such as the widely flared wheel arches and broad, muscular shoulders at the rear.

The graceful greenhouse is integrated into the flowing overall form and blends seamlessly into the low-lying silhouette. The roof tapers as its line drops elegantly towards the rear, flowing directly into the rear spoiler. The overall effect is a visually fascinating and aerodynamically advantageous teardrop form, not unlike that of the VISION EQXX.

The sensual surfacing and the powerfully defined sculpture are representative of the hallmark Mercedes design language. Similarly, the brand’s aspiration to the extraordinary is realised through the radical proportions and sharply chiselled shark nose. The Vision AMG is thus an impressive example of the dual polarity of the brand’s design approach embracing “Beauty & the Extraordinary”.

The sharply angled tear-off edge at the rear incorporates an active spoiler, elongating the side view while at the same time improving the aerodynamics. It is framed by a precisely cut band of light that accommodates a variety of different light installations, providing an effective contrast with the large black AMG logo on the rear of the car.

16TH Lagos Motor Fair, Autoparts Expo Africa Set to Thrill

Arrangements for the hosting of the 16h edition of the flagship auto- fair in West Africa ‘The Lagos Motor Fair & Autoparts Expo Africa, continue, Visitors, Exhibitors, and the general public that would be at the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, venue of the event have been assured of bumper days of serious business and fun.

Announcing this, the Chairman of the Organising Committee for the show, Mr. Ifeanyichukwu Agwu, at a press briefing held to give Stakeholders up to date information on the event scheduled to hold from May 30-June 4, 2022, “the fair will be a landmark and a benchmark in auto show business in the entire West African sub-region;” promising that “all including children are billed to have a rewarding experience.”

The Chairman of the Organising Committee who is also The Managing Director of BKG Exhibitions Limited, the main organisers of the show further revealed that

almost all the major vehicle manufacturers and dealers in Nigeria are participating at the fair. Notable Banks and Insurance Companies; major Oil Companies; manufacturers and dealers in auto-spare parts and accessories have indicated interest and are seriously preparing to participate in the event.

“Each of the days that the fair will last is loaded with activities and events that will make this edition remarkably different and we intend to improve and add on this in subsequent editions,” Agwu, revealed further.

On parade shall be unique ranges of automobile products from notable companies from Asia Africa, Europe, and America. These include products from the stables of Ford, Innoson, Yutong, Toyota, GAC, JAC, Renault, KIA OMAA, and many more. These products range from personal choice exotic cars, SUVs, CUVs, Jeeps, light and heavy duty haulage Trucks, and Buses of various capacities for corporate and mass transit businesses.



Lagos Motor Fair

Strategically we are playing host to reputable players in auto spare parts and lubricants in this edition. This is as a result of our guided intention to enhance the development of cottage industries in the spare parts sub-sector of the automotive business sector of the economy with the attendant multiplier effects on the economy of the nation. It is

also spurred by the need to ginger activities in the sub-sector to complement the setting up of Auto clusters as espoused by the automotive policy in the country. Our target is to attract many reputable Original Equipment Manufacturers of Spare Parts from across the globe to participate in this edition as well as in subsequent ones.

ARE SUV FWD SAFER ?

Before my deployment to Lagos State in 2009 as Sector Commander, I was a lover of saloon cars. However, my love fizzled out as soon as I assumed duty in the State. Without being told, I noticed that the love for Sport Utility Vehicles was the vogue. My enquiries revealed why almost everyone who can afford one, strived to get one. I am sure you are eager to know why SUV became the car to own but I will allow you to do your personal research which interestingly will reveal that the choice was either based on its suitability because of the state of some roads or its protection in the event of a crash, as well as enhanced image profile.

Although I have since given up my love for SUV temporarily until my economy improves, I have chosen this week to again share with you this lovely piece I surfed on SUV and how truly safe they are, focusing on Australia. The belief is that an SUV provides better protection, especially in the face of a possible road traffic crash. Please enjoy this reading by David Logan of the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

“Whatever’s driving the popularity of SUVs like the Toyota Kluger, crash tests and accident data show people are mistaken if they think they increase safety on the road. I’ve always wondered: are SUVs and 4WDs safer than other cars?

The Sydney suburbs around me are clogged with huge 4WD cars which have never seen a dirt road. I think people buy them because they think they



SAFE DRIVING with Jonas Agwu amnpr,mcipr,mprsa,arpa Assistant Corps Marshal Zonal Commanding Officer Federal Road Safety Corps.

are safer. Are they?

The popularity of SUVs, 4WDs and commercial utilities is showing no signs of abating in Australia. In the first six months of 2018, passenger vehicles made up just one-third of new vehicle sales (down from 50% five years ago) and SUVs 43% (up from 29% in 2013). Six of the top ten models sold in this period were SUVs and commercial utilities. Clearly, increasing numbers of people are choosing these vehicles for reasons including image and versatility, but how is this trend affecting road safety?

Our analysis of data from safety tests and crash records suggests the move to SUVs is problematic for road safety in the case of large and small SUVs, as well as commercial utilities. This is mainly because these vehicles put other road users at a higher risk of severe injury. How do we measure safety? To answer the question, “Are SUVs and 4WDs safer than other cars?”, we need to decide first how to measure

safety. One option is to consult test results from the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP), a global alliance that subjects new vehicles to standardised laboratory tests.

These tests mostly cover the performance of the car in a crash, including adult and child occupant protection and pedestrian protection. Instrumented crash test dummies are used to measure crash forces and then estimate the likely injuries to human occupants. “Safety assist” tests have been introduced recently to evaluate how well the car can avoid a crash, but we’ll focus on crash protection here.

The problem with NCAP and similar test programs is that these can include only a very small range of tests compared to those occurring in the real world on many different roads and speeds. And real-world crashes happen to real people of all shapes, sizes and ages, impossible to represent fully with a few different crash test dummies.

The MUARC-developed Used Car Safety Rating (UCSR) program aims to overcome this issue by developing ratings based on real-world crashes throughout Australia and New Zealand. The latest dataset contains information on over 7.5 million drivers involved in crashes between 1987 and 2015 for vehicles manufactured in the 33 years up to 2015.

Where individual vehicle models have been involved in sufficient crashes for meaningful results, these are rated on: “crashworthiness” – the vehicle’s ability to protect occupants from being killed or seri-

ously injured (resulting in hospital admissions) in a crash. The second is on “aggressivity” – the risk of death or serious injury caused to other drivers and unprotected road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists colliding with the rated vehicle.

Comparison vehicles-For this study we chose two vehicles in each of the large, medium and small segments: one SUV and one passenger car. In the small vehicle class, we chose the Hyundai i30 hatchback and the Mitsubishi ASX, both top-three sellers in their under \$40,000 segments. The ever-popular Toyota Camry was chosen to match up against the Mazda CX-5 SUV in the medium (under \$60,000) class.

In the large segment, the Toyota Kluger was the most popular SUV under \$70,000 for June 2018 and second overall for the year. We compared it with the Holden Commodore, the best seller in the rapidly shrinking large car segment. The latest Commodore is too new to feature in the UCSR ratings, so we substituted the discontinued VF model. Given that the Toyota Hilux is the most popular light vehicle overall in Australia, selling nearly 20% more units than its nearest competitor, we also included it in the large segment comparison.

Results – occupant safety, according to the Australian NCAP (ANCAP) program, all seven vehicles offer their occupants excellent protection, being awarded five-star ratings. For pedestrian protection, both small vehicles, the Hyundai i30 and Mitsubishi ASX, were rated “acceptable” by ANCAP.

As Our Inspirational Leader
Chief (Senator)
FRANCIS ARTHUR NZERIBE
Exits



Nothing in recent times shook me, as much as
the news of the death of my Leader and Benefactor,
Chief (Senator)
FRANCIS ARTHUR NZERIBE.
Ogbuagu, by November 2022, you would have been 84 years old.

We were already planning big, ahead of your birthday,
without knowing the will of God.

Daddy, your birth and reign were among the main reasons
I am fulfilled today. How do I thank you for all the
love you showed me and my family?

We worked closely with you over the years and you remained
a source of inspiration to us. Your leadership qualities were
sterling and your love for humanity immeasurable.

You were a special blessing to our family, Orlu zone, Imo State,
the Igbo race, Nigeria and Africa at large.

Ogbuagu, you were visionary, fair-minded, courageous and a
source of happiness to everyone that came close to you.

Your exit has created a void impossible to fill in our hearts.
The Igbo race is already lamenting your exit, even as you
are yet to be laid to rest. Mourning and lamentation
have indeed rent the air all over our land:

**'Onye a kpala nwa agu aka n'odu; ma o di ndu, ma o nwuru anwu!'*
Ogbuagu, ihe ukwu mere! Your people are chorusing the same song:
**"If Arthur were around....."*

Who can be unto us like Oshiji? Who shall stand for us again?
Who will speak for us? Who will fight for us? Who will teach us?
We deeply mourn your demise.

As it has pleased the Almighty God to call you unto Himself,
we assure you that we shall not let you down: we shall do what it takes
to attempt to fill those outsized shoes you have bequeathed to us..

You left a family behind. We assure you of our commitment and support
to them. Your political dynasty will remain in tact and shall wax stronger.

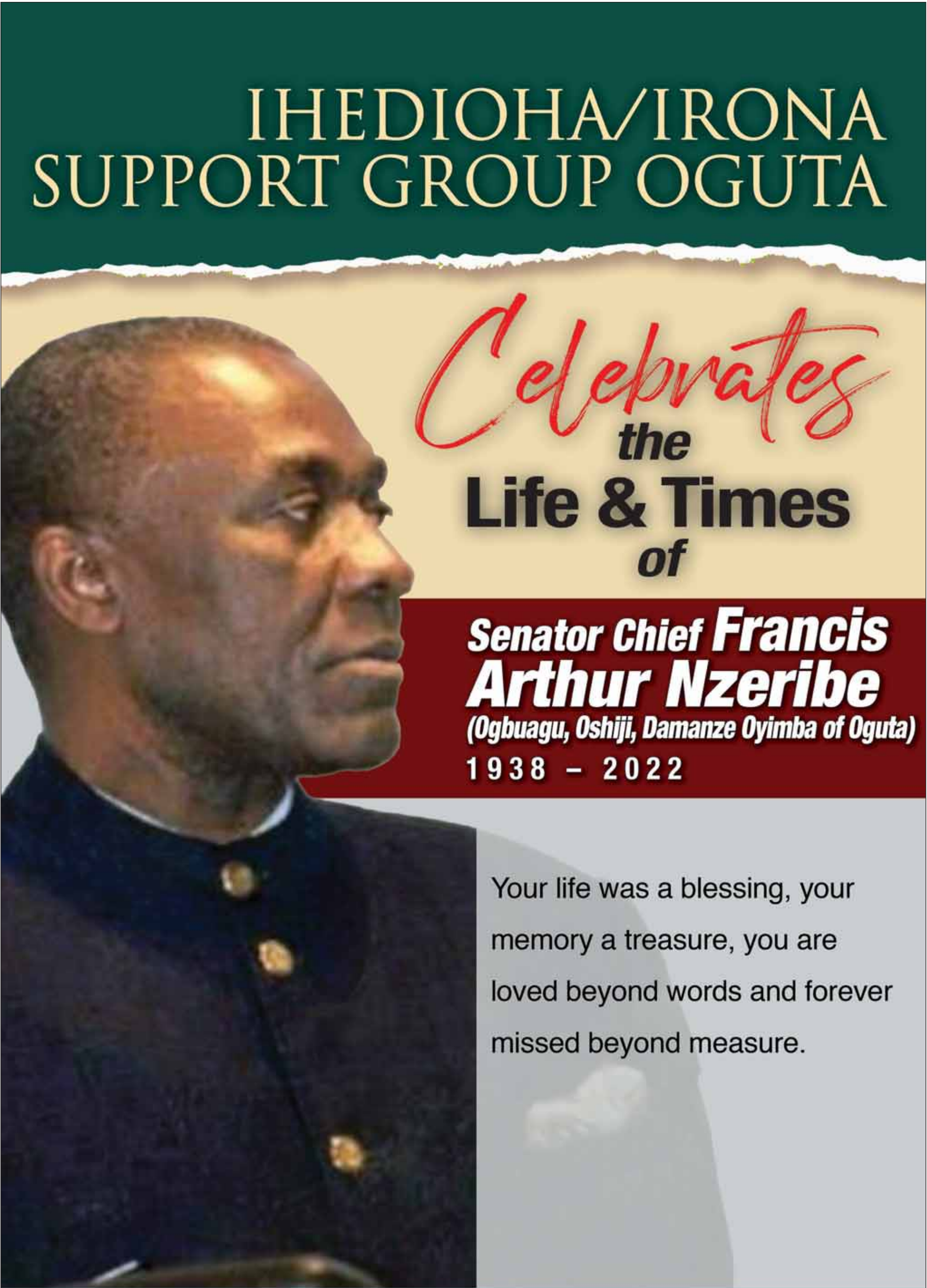
A great man; our Strong Pillar and father-figure has departed,
but we thank God for the life he lived.

***Ogbuagu!
Oshiji!
Damanze!
Oyimba!***

We love you, but God knows the best.

Laa n'údo, Odogwu! Obata Obie! The Federal Chief!

His Excellency
HON. (ENGR.) GERALD IRONA
FORMER DEPUTY GOVERNOR, IMO STATE



IHEDIOHA/IRONA SUPPORT GROUP OGUTA

Celebrates
**the
Life & Times
of**

**Senator Chief Francis
Arthur Nzeribe**
(Ogbuagu, Oshiji, Damanze Oyimba of Oguta)
1938 – 2022

Your life was a blessing, your
memory a treasure, you are
loved beyond words and forever
missed beyond measure.

A
tribute to the
political maverick.

SENATOR (CHIEF)
FRANCIS ARTHUR
NZERIBE

(Ogbuagu, Oshiji, Damanze, Oyimba Oguta)

An astute businessman who put Nigeria on the world map with his enterprise and delivered landmark projects across Nigeria, created jobs and built institutions.

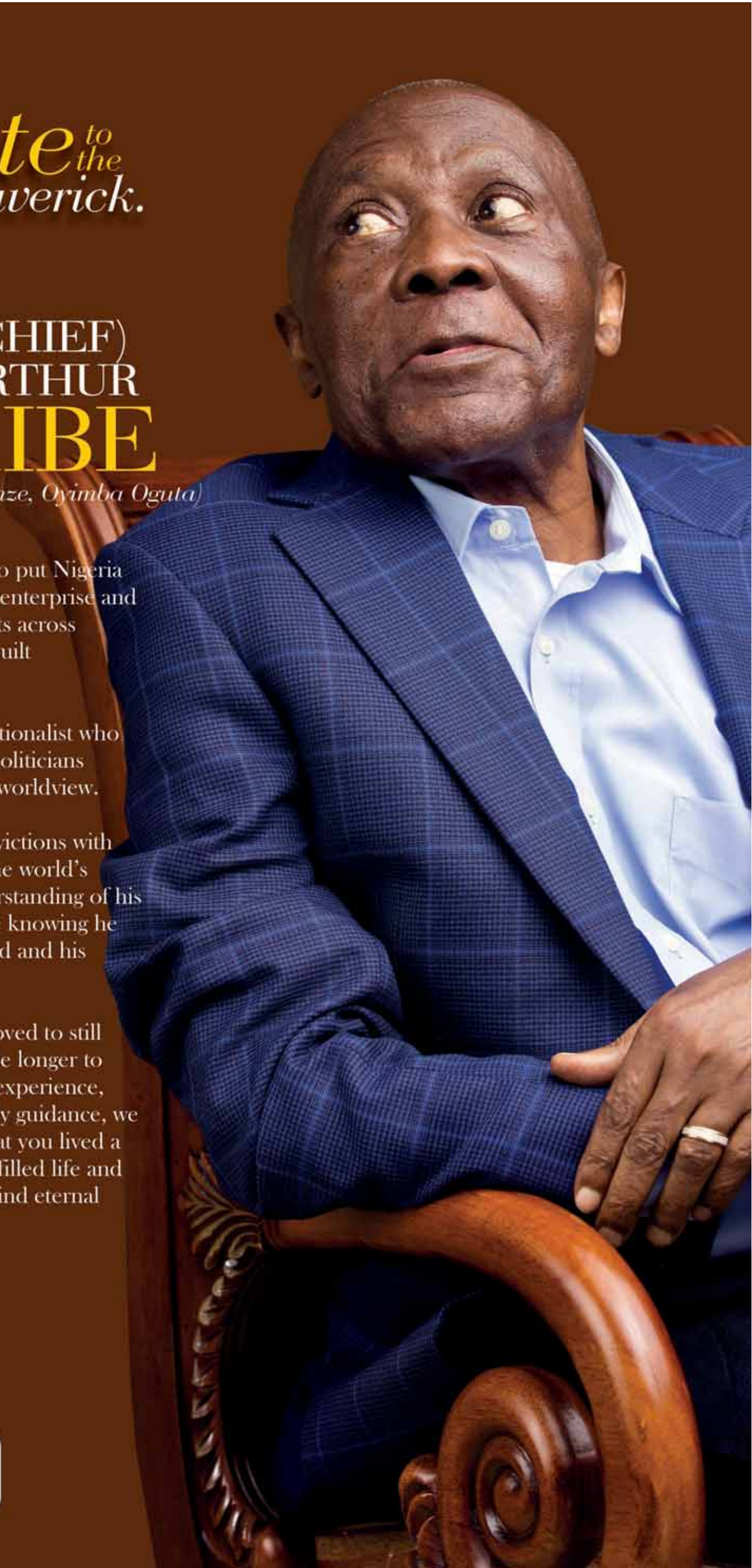
A political colossus and nationalist who nurtured and gave young politicians direction and nationalistic worldview.

Ogbuagu lived out his convictions with pride; not bothered with the world’s understanding or misunderstanding of his intentions. He lived his life knowing he was only answerable to God and his conscience.

Although we would have loved to still have you around for a while longer to learn from your wealth of experience, enjoy your love and fatherly guidance, we are consoled by the fact that you lived a long, very eventful, and fulfilled life and we pray that in death you find eternal peace.

Adieu my father in-law.

Signed by:
Dr Chimaobi Desmond Anyaso
Chairman of Caades Group
Son In-law



LEAGUE OF OGUTA PROFESSIONALS (LOOP)

IT- 123768

TRIBUTE TO A WORTHY SON

DISTINGUISHED SENATOR
CHIEF FRANCIS ARTHUR NZERIBE
OGBUAGU, OSHIJI, DAMANZE OYIMBA
(1938-2022)

On behalf of the good people of Oguta Ameshi, Imo State, the **League Of Oguta Professionals (LOOP)** commiserates with the **Nzeribe Royal Family** on the painful loss of their beloved son and one of our most illustrious compatriots, Distinguished Senator Francis Arthur **Nzeribe; Ogbuagu, Oshiji, Damanze Oyimba**.

Whilst we rue this monumental loss to our community, we take solace in the fact that Damanze Oyimba lived his life to the fullest and made overwhelming impact on the lives of those he encountered in all spheres of human endeavor. His influence went global from the tender age of 22 years and for over 6 decades of frenetic activity, he excelled and dominated each field in the pursuit of interests in Commerce, Sports, Journalism, Politics, International Relations, Information Technology, Culture, Religion, Real Estate, Health Delivery, Education, Philanthropy, leaving deep footprints in the proverbial sands of time.

Amongst the key milestones of his extensive legacy are the following;

1. He developed substantial human capital through the award of thousands of scholarships, donations to academic institutions and universal free medical scheme for all in Oguta community and environs.
2. He methodically built a formidable political dynasty, with the result that a good number of the successful politicians out of the old Eastern region were groomed and sponsored under his tutelage and continue to gravitate around Mkpu Udo (Haven of Peace) which remains a political "Jerusalem" of sorts.

3. He led the charge that facilitated the inclusion of Imo and Abia States as members of NDDC.
4. He created the coalition of politicians from the old eastern region, Cross River, Abia, Rivers, IMO, and Anambra (CARIA) states movement and championed the push for the creation of Urashi State.
5. He anchored the process for implementing the Asika accord for rotation of Ezeigwe between the 2 ruling Villages thereby entrenching a lasting peace in the community.
6. He engineered a sociocultural change in environmental sanitation by building modern sanitary facilities for the 27 villages of Oguta.
7. He has provided significant support to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church including the construction and furnishing of the Bishop's house and joined efforts for the upgrade of Oguta parish to a diocese.
8. He provided early ICT exposure for many Oguta indigenes by employing them in Haven Computers, his pioneering Computer company established in the 70s.
9. He was always ready to step out with uncommon courage to fight for significant Igbo interest in Nigeria politics without fear or favor.

Adieu, Most distinguished Senator
Adieu, Ekwueme
Adieu, Ogbuagu, Oshiji, Damanze Oyimba of Oguta.

May his soul and the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of the Lord rest in peace.

Signed:
For and on behalf of the **LEAGUE OF OGUTA PROFESSIONALS (LOOP)**

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1). Dr. Ernest Nwapa (FNSE) | (8). Onyebuchi Ossai (KSM) | (16). Mrs Nonye Nnani | (24). Barr. Kennedy Paul Enesha |
| Ogbuagu, Oshiji, Damanze Ugodinaobi | (9). Ogbuefi Laura Ndupu | (17). Mr. Uche Aniche | (25). Prof. Nkolika Priscilla Uzoma |
| (2). Ogbuagu Oliver Agbasoga | (10). Mr. Obinna Ofili | (18). Engr. Max Uneanya | (26). Mrs. Nancy Nwapa-Oji |
| (3). Ogbuagu Chike Udom | (11). Mr Emma Ohanyere | (19). Mr. Ernest Ossai | (27). Mrs. Genevieve Nwapa-Ejiogu |
| (4). Engr. Ivan Uneanya | (12). Sir Chuma Udom | (20). Mr. Abobi Nwobi | (28). Dr. Adaobi Nwaku |
| (5). Ogbuefi Mrs Calista Azogu | (13). Dr George & Mrs Ugomma Uzonwanne | (21). Mr. Udoamaka Obikea | (29). Mr. Adizua Nwaku |
| (6). Ogbuefi Adobi Nwapa | (14). Mr. IJ Onumonu | (22). Mr.Okwosha Ifeanyi Okwosha | (30). Egnr. Ike Onumonu |
| (7). Mr Theo Ossai | (15). Prof. Afam Anene. | (23). Hon. Uzoma Ezediario | (31). Mr. Benneth Ohanyere |

Note. The league of Oguta professionals (LOOP) is a registered association of accomplished Oguta professionals determined to groom a crop of young leaders that will anchor the competitive participation of Oguta in the emerging economic and social order.



One Year Without you...

Brigadier General OL Olayinka DSS psc(++) fdc CM FTAM MSS (UI) BSc MIAD MLCJ FNIIS

June 13 1970 – May 21, 2021

Olatunji!

It's been a year since you left suddenly without saying goodbye. I am yet to come to terms that you have left me in this world, that you are no more and that all you meant to me is gone within the twinkle of an eye.

21st of May 2021, the music stopped abruptly when I expected the tempo to rise thereby leaving me in a confused, devastated and most shocking state of my life. This was the day all around my soul gave way and the whole world crumbled on my head.

Tunji, so much joy and happiness was centered around you but now those happy memories of you run through my mind to keep you near to my heart. I think of you every minute of the day, the mention of your name makes it clear to me that death cannot change a single thing about the love I have for you, my dear son. You were my hands and legs. You always stood by me, you were my hero, my star pride, my confidant and son of inestimable value.

You never for once, in your life time, made me feel unwanted or ignored. You'll always, without asking or say a word, do more than expected to make me happy and extremely comfortable. Your listening ears and perfectionate persona is undescrivable but now unavailable.

Tunji you were a bridge builder and a unifying factor for the family, your friends and mates, A jolly good fellow that had no match.

There are birds and there are birds but none like the Eagle and that was you my dear Son Olatunji To say that I miss you is purely an understatement because how I feel since you left is greatly unbearable.

I know I'll see you again in that place where no sorrow or sadness can ever be found. You will hug me passionately like you always do forever.

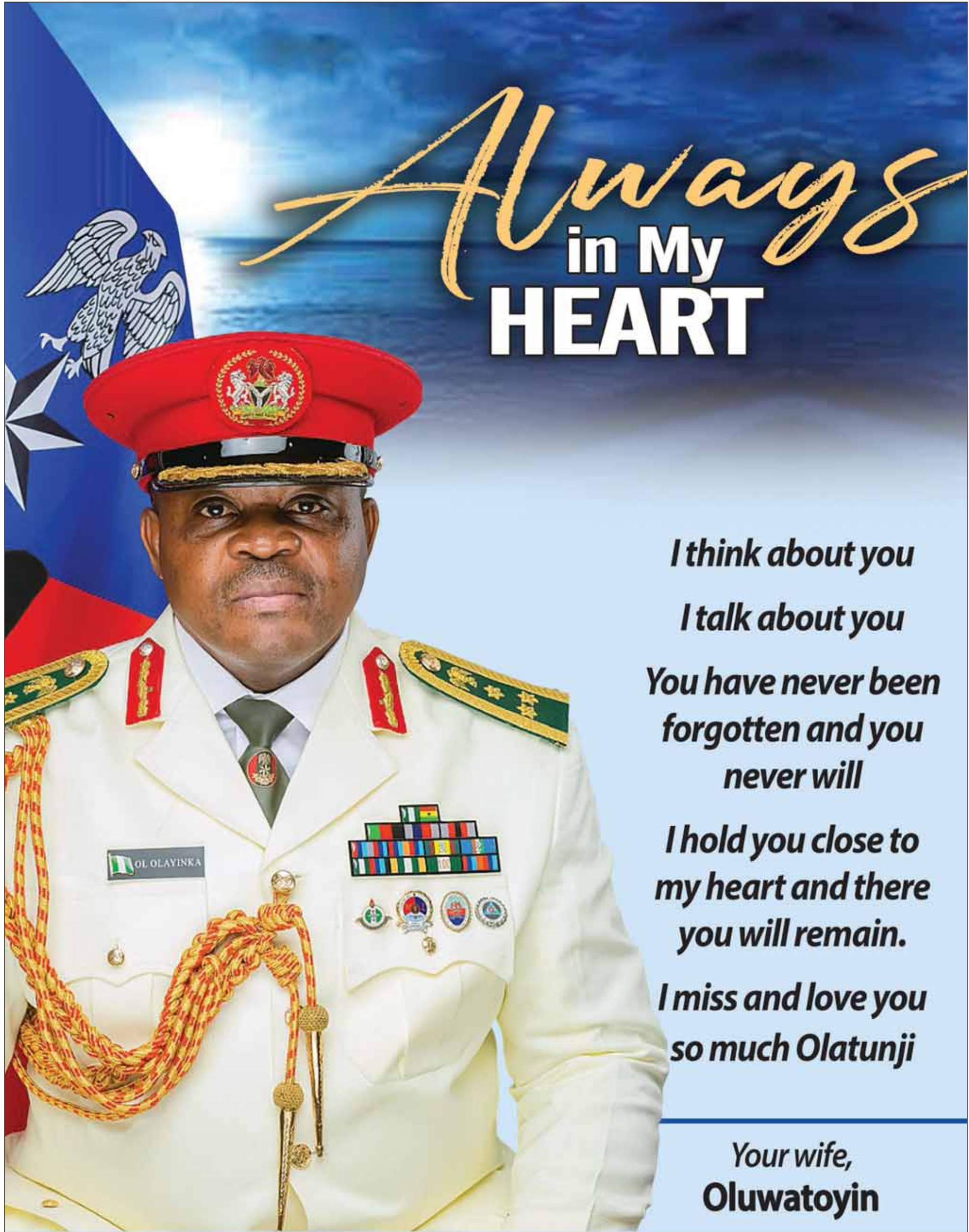
Oko mi, omo oluwewun, omo ola, omo odiyan, omo oguniwase, omo sagita, omo sagati ni saa jon, omo nono kukuru nita ereko.

Oko mi esho ikoyi, ikoyi o riku sa, omo kafowowa kafajewa, kafi ogedegede owo wa oko dele isheri mole, iwaju oloko ntan yebeyebe, eyin oloko so gbaileke.

Rest in heavenly peace with our Lord Jesus Christ,

From Your Affectionate Mother.

Olawanle Kike Olayinka



Always in My HEART

*I think about you
I talk about you
You have never been
forgotten and you
never will
I hold you close to
my heart and there
you will remain.
I miss and love you
so much Olatunji*

*Your wife,
Oluwatoyin*

**Brig. Gen Olatunji
Lukeman Olayinka**
June 13, 1970 - May 21, 2021



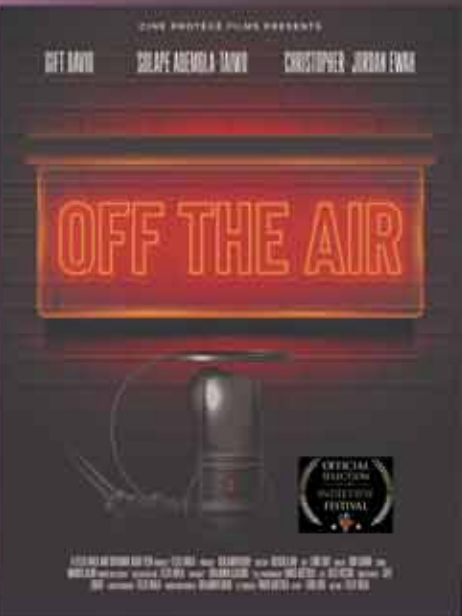
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L-R: Resident Pastor and National Superintendent, KICC Nigeria, Femi Faseru; Country Manager, ROSF, Dr. Ndudi Boweri; CEO, Verbatim Communications Limited, Bidemi Mark-Mordi and Managing Director, Tom Associates Limited, Temitope Jegede at ROSF annual youth empowerment programme held in Lagos...recently



L-R: Head Client Onboarding and COO, RB Nigeria, Yetunde Ogburn; Vice Principal, General Education, Lagoon School, Manee Ngozi Nnamani; Head Wealth Management, Nigeria, Lanre Olajide; Head, Priority and Premium Banking, Chima Ebor; and Representative of Russell International School, Ifeoma Samuel -at the launch of the Reward for 'As programme in Lagos... recently

SystemSpecs Revs up Activities for Children's Day Essay Competition

As part of preparations for the 2022 edition of its Children's Day essay contest, information technology company, SystemSpecs has announced the panel of judges for the competition to carry out careful assessment of the process.

The Judges as announced by the organisation included Chief Operating Officer of Fintech Association of Nigeria, Dr. Babatunde Ogburn; Frontline senior software engineer, Mercy Olayemi; Jumoke Lawoyin, Techpreneur and Chief Executive Officer at Lucy.ng; and Special Adviser to Anambra State Government on Information Technology, Chukwuemeka Fred Agbata Jr.

The organisation unveiled the judges

shortly after it announced closure of entries for the competition.

Speaking, SystemSpecs' Group Head in charge of Corporate Services, Oluwasegun Adesanya, stated that appointment of judges for the exercise was to ensure that merit is enshrined and also that top entries get their places.

He said, "Following the judging parameters and processes, we are convinced that top entries would give Nigeria, and indeed the rest of Africa and the world, some of the brightest and most original ideas on how the educational sector can be transformed, leveraging technology".

Other judges appointed to the evaluation panel were award-winning

journalist and media trainer, Wale Fatade; Social entrepreneur and founder of Edusko, Jide Awogbusi; and Payment and Tech Expert, Dewale Otolurin, – all returning judges.

Adesanya added that the judges were entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating and selecting winning entries in the junior and senior categories of the annual competition.

"They have the responsibility of bringing to national consciousness and recommending implementation options of the bright ideas espoused by participants from across the country."

He informed that winners of the competition will be announced May 27, 2022.

CTN to Chart Path for Tax Growth at Confab

The Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, CITN, has said that it would be addressing gaps affecting tax growth at its 24th International Tax Conference holding in Abuja

The conference is themed, "Global Disruption, Taxation and Digitalisation: Implications for Socio-Economics Development."

Speaking ahead of the conference in Lagos, President of the institute, Adesina Adedayo said huge gaps in data, accountability and governance are limiting Nigerian tax system.

He stressed the need for proper identification of tax payers to enhance accountability and to plug revenue leakages.

He said, "In a system like Nigeria where you have over 200 million people, these 200 million persons should not be anonymous. It is important that these people, including their base and family are known as they are the ones that constitute the tax payers. This is why we are having the data for tax initiative being championed by the

Joint Tax Board. Data is very important as it is not possible that we tax people that we don't know."

He noted that changes in the system including governance, administration interaction should reflect in the tax system.

He said: "The benefit of the conference is to let Nigerians know that with the way economic and business models have changed, tax administration and practice must also change. Unlike before when we wait for people to have physical office before we tax them, now virtual offices are now getting so economically viable than people think."

"With the global disruption, it is clear that we do not need physical interaction anymore to make money, which has caused us to have a discussion around it and how do we do business around it. On how tax comes into all these, it comes from administration to practice. These will form our fulcrum for this year's conference."

Financial Institutions Tasked on Closing Literacy Gap

Financial institutions in the country have been advised to take investors' education as a priority to boost level of inclusion in the country.

This was the resolve of industry experts at a conference co-hosted by Zedcrest Group and Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) in Lagos, recently.

The conference is themed "Securing and enriching Nigerians at scale: Prosperity inclusion through financial sector innovation".

The conference gathered financial experts from across banking, insurance and capital market where they charted path on way forward for the Nigerian economy.

At the conference, featuring different panel sessions, experts stressed the need for increased efforts on education of investors to guide against bad businesses and to

enhance financial inclusion in the country.

Speaking, Executive Commissioner (Operations), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Mr Dayo Obisan identified education as one of the key influences of inclusive prosperity.

"Proper financial education is essential, as, for every 100 businesses funded, only five are expected to be profitable. People may have the money but there is a wide gap in terms of how to use it which explains why they spend their time chasing illegalities such as Ponzi schemes."

Lending voice to Obisan's submission, Executive Officer at Graeme Blaque Group, Zeal Akaruiwe said, "One of the key areas for inclusive prosperity is education.

I don't mean going to school alone but being educated. If people are not

educated, having inclusive growth will be very difficult.

On his part, Chief Financial Officer at Standard Chartered Capital and Advisory, Oseikhume Anao advised institutions to partner with religious organisations and other bodies to be able to spread message of financial literacy.

Earlier, Group Managing Director of Zedcrest, Mr. Adedayo Amzat stated that the national discourse was aimed at re-evaluating and reconsidering the role of the government, regulators and the financial sector in building a secure future for inclusive prosperity in Nigeria.

He added the conference was a follow up to discussions at the 27th Nigerian Economic Summit (NES#27), which focused on finding ways to enhance Nigeria's financial environment.

Towntalk Expands Product Portfolio with 'Pulse' Service

Data-intelligence company, Towntalk Solutions has said that it is improving on its new service, 'Pulse' to strengthen security business in the country.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Towntalk, Folake Edun, pulse is an initiative that powers security companies to upsell services to clients and provide insights when needed.

Edun averred that the service would drive revenue growth of operators of security companies who are already overwhelmed by market pressures to lower cost of current services. She noted that despite huge prospect in security sector, inadequate service has been a major challenge, occasioned by gaps in intelligence gathering and

responsive emergency services.

"As an organisation, we exist to fill this gap by providing the industry with tools and software to support the real-time delivery of core security services"

Edun disclosed that part of efforts put forward to fill the gap was the development of Pulse, an artificial intelligence tool useful to curate, verify, analyze and act on real-time risk indicators.

She said, "Towntalk first built an innovative data collection model by steadily growing a community of 45,000 trusted sources, created through strategic collaborations where verified individuals and emergency responders were given access to their area.

Guinness Unveils New Headquarters, Marks 72nd Anniversary

Guinness Nigeria Plc. has unveiled its new corporate headquarters in Lagos as part of activities to mark its 72 anniversary.

The company explained that the move was towards its effort to develop newer and more strategic ways of working, enhance collaboration and productivity, promote creativity and sustain its business operations in the country.

It stated that the new office space would bring life to the company's purpose of celebrating life, every day and everywhere.

Board Chair of Guinness Nigeria Plc., Dr. Omobola Johnson added that the

modern and agile workspace was designed for maximum connectivity, collaboration and connection in line with the new world of work".

She said, "The open plan workspace features bright, colourful and multi-functional spaces with state-of-the art technology, and embraces leading sustainability practices as well as our commitment to inclusion and diversity."

Managing Director of the organisation, Baker Magunda reaffirmed that the development was in line with the company's commitment and drive towards sustaining its long-term business goals in the country.

CHI Set to Hold 2nd Annual Hollandia Dairy Day Celebration

Preparations are in top gear to hold this year's Hollandia Dairy Day celebration. The event, which is the second edition, would take place on Wednesday, May 18th, 2022, in Lagos. It will bring together relevant stakeholders towards driving national discourse on the unrivalled health and nutritional benefits of dairy consumption to people of all ages.

Retaining the same theme as last year's edition, "Dairy Nourishment to Support Healthy Living," this year's Hollandia Dairy Day celebrations will further highlight the role dairy consumption plays in our everyday nourishment. It will also address misconceptions regarding dairy consumption, while presenting innovative ways to incorporate dairy into the diet of all age groups for health benefits.

This year's event will be marked by activities to stimulate the minds of consumers and enlighten them on the need to prioritize dairy consumption. It will also feature discussions that will provide insight on the benefits of dairy consumption.

The 2022 Hollandia Dairy Day would raise consciousness

that would enable stakeholders as well as policy makers address some of the challenges that pertain to the Nigerian dairy sector. It would also examine the role of dairy in addressing the scourge of malnutrition.

CHI Limited Marketing Director, Mrs. Toyin Nnodi, said that this year's Hollandia Dairy Day celebration is another opportunity to showcase the health benefits of dairy consumption to people of all ages.

"As the market leader in dairy production, Hollandia is excited to continue the tradition of driving enlightening conversations and activities around dairy consumption to the general public through Hollandia Dairy Day. We look forward to an exciting, lively, and educational experience in this year's edition," she stated.

Hollandia's range of dairy products, including Hollandia Yoghurt, Hollandia Zero Yoghurt, Hollandia Evaporated Milk, Hollandia Slim Evaporated Milk, Hollandia Lactose-Free Milk, and Hollandia UHT Milk, are powerhouses of essential vitamins & minerals for healthy dairy nourishment and wellbeing.

NEWSXTRA

Nigeria Going Through Unprecedented Adversity, Frustration, Says Usman Bugaje

Oghenevwe Oghovoriole
in Abuja

A presidential aspirant of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Dr. Usman Buhaje, has said that Nigeria is going through unprecedented adversity, misery and frustration.

Dr. Bugaje disclosed this yesterday after he picked his nomination and expression of interest forms at the national headquarters of the PRP in Abuja.

According to him, Nigeria is going through the worst period of her history adding that no institution of government was working.

“Our country is going through an unprecedented adversity, misery and frustration, which have literally exasperated life and put citizens on the edge, with such irritability as would spark violence at the slightest of provocations.

“Every now and then one

hears about some gruesome crime and the constant desecration of human lives, symptomatic of the decomposition of our human society.

“There is hardly an institution of government delivering on its mandate or meeting the expectation of its citizens. Simply put Nigeria is not working, but worse still it has become one of the most dangerous places on the globe,” he stated.

According to him, if things were allowed to continue this way it will certainly consume the country one day.

The former presidential aide, said that the nation has found itself on a dangerous trajectory that is not only unsustainable but actually dangerous, “because the anger and frustration it has been generating can consume the polity, as it has always done in the history of human societies.”



RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENCE...

Founder of Zeetin Engineering Limited, Original Equipment Manufacturers, Robert Azibaola receiving his Vanguard Newspaper Inovator of the year 2021 award at Eko Hotels, Lagos from First Lady of Osun State, Kafayat Oyetola ...last night

Insecurity: Lawan Vows Security Agencies Must Account for Resources

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential aspirant and President of the Senate, Ahmed Lawan, has said that the Senate will ensure that the nation's security agencies account for resources given to them to tackle security challenges besetting the country.

He explained that the 9th Senate under his watch would continue to hold the country's security architecture accountable as long as insecurity persists in the country.

Lawan said the federal government had provided enough resources to security agencies to tackle banditry and other security challenges in the country “but we have not achieved the result that we want to achieve.”

While addressing delegates and leaders of the APC in Katsina ahead of the party's presidential primary, Lawan described the security situation in the North-west as worrisome despite efforts by the government to end the scenario.

He said, “We have done a lot in terms of providing resources

for our security agencies to fight banditry and other security issues but we have not achieved the kind of result that we want to achieve.

“We will continue to provide more resources and continue to hold our security agencies responsible for the resources we give them for as long as the insecurity persists.”

According to him, “Before, we in the North were living in peace more than any other region of the country but today we are bedeviled with insecurity. We were feeding the country but

today we can't, we must restore security in our country.”

The Senate President said the North-west as an agrarian region, if properly secured, can provide adequate food that could feed the entire nation and generate employment opportunities for the youths, create wealth for the country and bring stability.

He applauded President Muhammadu Buhari for returning normalcy in the North-east, saying “unfortunately, we have security issues especially in the North-west and other parts of the country.”

Lagos CP Parades 3 Alleged Gunrunners, Recovers Arms

Rebecca Ejifoma

The Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alabi, yesterday, paraded three suspected gunrunners for allegedly supplying arms to different robbery gangs operating in the South-West region.

He paraded the three suspects along with 22 others who, according to him, had committed different crimes including murder and arson.

According to the state police boss at a media briefing at the Command's headquarters in Ikeja, the arrest of the gunrunners is sequel to a complaint of misplaced luggage by one Aji Augustine, a resident of Ibeju-Lekki.

He said Augustine alleged that he went to receive some

food items which were sent to him by his mother from Cross River State through a driver.

According to him, the driver of the bus mistakenly gave him (Augustine) a sack that was meant to be delivered to someone else.

“The complaint alleged that when he opened the sack, he discovered seven locally made pistols and not food items as expected,” he added.

The CP further revealed that the complaint swiftly rushed to the nearest police division and handed over the arms to the police.

He said upon receipt of the case, detectives embarked on diligent investigation. That led to the arrest of Joseph Ashiwobel, who dispatched the sack from Calabar to Lagos.

I Didn't Beat up anybody in My Constituency, Says Nnamani

The former governor of Enugu State and lawmaker representing Enugu East senatorial zone, Senator Chimaroke Nnamani, has described as malicious reports that he or his aides attacked anyone at a meeting with party delegates in Enugu.

In a statement from his media office in Abuja, Senator Nnamani maintained that the scheduled meeting with party delegates of the People Democratic Party (PDP) from two local governments of the state was held at the open arena in the council secretariat of Enugu North Local Government Area under a convivial atmosphere.

According to him, the meeting with delegates was to seek their support for his re-election to the Senate in 2023. His first outing in the senate was between 2007 and 2011 while he won election for a renewed term in 2019.

Nnamani said on arrival at the venue of the meeting he went round to greet the delegates.

He stated that on getting to the pavilion where many delegates were seated, he noticed that there was an altercation between a group of suspected thugs and security operatives over an attempt to break into the security ring around him.

According to him, a scuffle ensued when the former chairman of Enugu South Local Government Area Chiene I. Chiene confronted the security men and reportedly held the rifle sling of an operative.

Other security operatives swooped on him in an attempt to retrieve the rifle, as the former council chairman dared them .

Any further escalation was however averted when he (Senator) intervened with appeal to all parties for calm.

Zinox Mourns as Founding Member, David Kan, Passes on

Emma Okonji

The management of Zinox Technologies Ltd., Nigeria's foremost tech giant, has reacted to the news of the passing of David Kan, a founding member of its Board of Directors and CEO of Mustek Plc, a leading integrated technology group listed on the Johannesburg and Taiwan Stock Exchange.

David Kan, 62, died on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

Originally from Taiwan, the late David Kan settled in South Africa. He was a founding member of the Board of Directors of Zinox at the launch of the tech brand in 2001 alongside Pierre Lanversin, a former Managing Director of Elf (Nigeria). He was also a very close associate of the Chairman,

Zinox Group, Leo Stan Ekeh, who expressed shock at his passing.

“It is with a great sense of sadness and loss that I received news of the death of Mr. David Kan. He was a gentleman, a tech whiz kid, very knowledgeable and blessed with a good business brain.

“David's Mustek taught South Africa local content and was the main technology backbone during the apartheid regime when major tech companies terminated business relationships with South Africa as he comfortably filled the gap. He will be greatly missed,” Ekeh said.

David Kan's death was announced by Mustek on Thursday, with the company revealing that further details of his demise will be made available at a later stage.

Methodist Cleric, Bishop Onuoha Joins Abia Guber Race, Promises Change in Abia

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

President of Vision Africa and high ranking Methodist Church cleric, Bishop Sunday Onuoha, has formally entered the governorship race to become the next Abia State chief executive in 2023, saying that he has embarked on a mission to transform the state.

Onuoha made his official declaration at the state secretariat of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), the political platform he would use to actualise his dream to govern Abia and “address the pains and sufferings of our people”.

He said that he was encouraged to seek to become the successor to Governor Okezie Ikpeazu due to the massive

support he had been receiving from not only the ordinary folks of Abia, but also stakeholders and groups yearning for a positive and impactful change in Abia.

“Change is possible, but it is a journey we all must be resolute to take. Unanimous in our belief that your call for me to contest, will not be wasted, we will win together, and hold hands in victory, as I walk with you to lead our dear Abia State to positive transformation,” he said.

“Without sounding immodest,” he added, “I am that Governor Ndi Abia have been praying for. I have garnered wealth of experience in administration, business, public and private sector; of course, in the religious sector; which is my place of primary assignment, calling and ministry.”

Nigerians in the Diaspora Set to Storm Lagos for Eko NAFEST 2022

As Lagos prepares for a mega hosting of the 30th edition of National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) also known as the Unity Festival, Nigerians in Diaspora have called on Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to use the hosting opportunity to draw global attention to the infrastructural development in the city of aquatic splendour.

Nigerians in Diaspora especially Lagosians are excited about Lagos government hosting the authentic Nigeria cultural vehicle and have indicated readiness to invite their friends to Nigeria to witness the event, commending the wife of the governor, Mrs. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu for her commitment and support as “Mama Eko NAFEST”.

NAFEST transformed into a

global cultural tourism brand under Nigeria's culture chief marketer and Director General, National Council for Art and Culture (NCAC), Otunba Segun Runsewe, which births in Lagos in November 2022, with Nigeria's politically structured 36 states confirmed to showcase the best of their indigenous cultural endowments.

As part of preparations for the fiesta, Governor Sanwo-Olu has embarked several infrastructural renewal projects in Lagos recently, such as flagging off the state rail systems, with intent to connect it seamlessly to the road transportation architecture and ferry services to the littoral areas such as Epe, Ikorodu, Victoria Island and Badagry.

Nigerians No Longer Happiest People on Earth, Says Kingsley Moghalu

Mary Nnah

Presidential aspirant for the 2023 elections on the platform of African Democratic Congress (ADC), Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu, has lamented that the ruling All Progressives Party (APC) and opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had over the years ruined Nigeria, saying the country has been rendered ungovernable and challenging to live in.

Speaking during the ADC Lagos congress held at the party's Logos Centre, Oregun, Ikeja, where the party's new executives were elected, Moghalu said, “At one time, Nigerians were known to be the happiest people on earth but today, I don't think we are as happy as we used to be. But we can recover our happiness if we look at ruling parties and say we will not be like them and that ADC will be different.”

NEWSXTRA



FOR SAFER ROADS...

Oba Kayode Adenekan Afolabi, Alapomu of Apomu inaugurating the FRSC Outpost Command in Apomu on May 28

2023: I Have Real Time Experience in Resolving Wars, Says Fayemi

Adedayo Akinwale

Ekiti State Governor and presidential aspirant on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr. Kayode Fayemi, has said he was one of the few Nigerians with real time experience in resolving wars.

In a statement issued yesterday

in Abuja by the spokesman of Dr. Kayode Fayemi Campaign Organisation, Femi Ige, said the governor stated this on Thursday in Kaduna, as part of his ongoing consultation to seek the support of delegates ahead of the presidential primary of the APC.

To this end, Fayemi promised to bring to bear all the wealth

of experience garnered while resolving internecine wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka towards the resolution of insurgency and banditry in the country.

Fayemi said, “I’m one of the few Nigerians with real time experience in resolving wars. I consulted for Nigeria under President Olusegun

Obasanjo, I was involved in the resolution of the wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda and bringing the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka to the negotiation table.

“Besides that real time experience in war resolution, I have a Doctorate Degree in War Studies. If I can bring peace to other lands, why not my own country.

PDP Primaries: Obi Woos Youths, Zonal Party Leaders

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

One of the presidential aspirants on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former Anambra State governor, Mr. Peter Obi, has reached out to zonal leaders and youth leaders of the party from the 36 states urging them to support his aspiration.

The meeting with the party stakeholders came just as Obi’s supporters have raised the alarm over plot to force him to step down.

Obi’s top campaign manager, Doyin Okupe while speaking at the meeting of the PDP zonal leaders and youth leaders from

the 36 states, said there were moves to frustrate his efforts to clinch PDP presidential ticket.

“From the present configuration of our party I am sorry to say it, the best is not still going to emerge except you people stand up and say no. Talking about money, how much can anyone offer you at the convention that can last you for the next five years.

“Let us begin something new, let us reject the idea of saying we know your candidate is the best but we can find a way to accommodate him. That is nonsense, with all due respect. It is about time that we begin to put merit above mediocrity,” he said.

Ex-NDDC MD Aide Bags Four Years Imprisonment

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Former Special Assistant to Mr. Dan Abia, erstwhile Managing Director of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Goerge Turnah Alabh, has been convicted and sentenced to four years imprisonment.

Justice A.T. Mohammed of the Federal High Court sitting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, convicted Alabh over failure to make full disclosure of his assets in his disclosure to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Alabh, who was prosecuted by the Port Harcourt’s Zonal Command of EFCC between 2017 and 2022 for obtaining

money by false pretence, money laundering and abuse of office, was arraigned together with his wife, Jennifer Tinipre Turnah, on four-count amended charges.

Part of the charges read: “That you George Turnah Alabh on or about 15th March, 2017 at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, South/South Zonal Office, No, 6A Olumeni Street, Old GRA Off Forces Avenue, Port Harcourt within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court knowingly failed to make full disclosure of your assets to wit: your interest in one of the Director and majority shareholder of Ashford Consult and Events Nig.

Police Parade Six Alleged Killers of Sound Engineer in Lagos

Bennett Oghifo

The Lagos State Police Command yesterday paraded six persons who allegedly killed a sound engineer, David Sunday in Lekki, Lagos, recently.

According to the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, who addressed journalists while parading the suspects, Sunday was killed when he was invited to settle a dispute between a commercial motorcycle rider and two of his passengers.

“On May 12, 2022, around 6.30pm, at Studio 24, Lekki, Lagos, an Okada rider by the name Dahiru, had a quarrel with his passengers, Frank Olatunji and Philip Balogun, over the bike fare.

“In the heat of the argu-

ment, Frank Olatunji and Philip Balogun invited one David Sunday to mediate only for Dahiru and his cohorts to violently attack him, kill him, and set him ablaze.

“A total of six suspects, Dahiru Ayuba, Susan Moses, Christopher Dauda, Joseph Tella, Chigozie Anthony, and Sunday Azi, have been arrested. Suspects will be charged to court after the investigation.”

The Police Commissioner also paraded other people that allegedly engaged in cult wars that claimed the lives of some of them. “On February 20, 2022, one Ayo Dada, now deceased and two others who were cult members were killed by some suspected rival cult members at Ketu, Mile 12, Lagos.

Wike: I’ve Got Capacity to Wrest Power from APC, Transform Nigeria

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

Rivers State Governor and presidential aspirant, Nyesom Wike, has urged the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to entrust him with the party’s presidential ticket for 2023 general election if they really want to regain their ruling party status.

He made the appeal yesterday when he came to Umuahia with his team to seek the votes of Abia PDP delegates at Government House Umuahia where he rounded off his campaign to win the party’s ticket in forthcoming presidential primary.

Wike said that among all the presidential aspirants of PDP he remains the only person with the capacity, courage

and integrity to wrest power from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and steer Nigeria back to the path of progressive governance.

“If you give me the ticket, go home and sleep with your two eyes closed,” he said, adding, “I, Wike is the only one who can fight this battle”.

He said that Nigerians should not judge him by his physical appearance, coarse voice and his abrasive nature, but should see him as a man with strong character to take tough decisions in the interest of the country.

“Forget about my face, forget my voice, I am the only one who can win APC in this battle (2023 presidential poll), adding that in the forthcoming election the PDP would need “our first 11 to win this people(APC) who know how to use power”.

Esin Tasks A’Ibom Govt to Develop Economic Stimulus Package

Nseobong Okon-Ekong

Mr. Larry Esin, a serial governorship contestant in Akwa Ibom State has challenged the state governments to develop an economic stimulus package to increase productivity across the land, and indeed usher in our century of industrialisation.

He said, “without industrialisation, our economy will continue to grow at marginal digits if at all, and rely on the mercy of the federal government, donor agencies and the international community.”

Announcing his fourth governorship bid in Uyo to journalists, this time, on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Esin. opined that, “Increased productivity can only be sustained by peace, security, social justice, quality education and health care for our people. In these areas, it is also the responsibility of the state government to provide direction. Our teachers, doctors and judges must be well trained and compensated; and residents of Akwa Ibom must be safe and free to express themselves.

Nnaji, Soludo will Catalyse South-east Development, Says Group

The election of former Power Minister, Bart Nnaji, as the next Enugu State governor will accelerate the development of the South-east as he will work in tandem with Governor Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State to make the zone one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

This is the view of the Association of Enugu State Young Professionals (ESYP), as it recalls that the defunct Eastern Nigerian Region was one of the fastest developing economies in the world until the military coup of January 15, 1966.

“Professor Nnaji and Professor Soludo are not just development-oriented leaders,” the young professionals disclosed in a statement

in Enugu yesterday signed by Dr. Nnamdi Nwoye, a medical doctor, who is the President of the association, and Dan Ani, an architect, the Publicity Secretary.

“They quickly remind us of our highly educated and farsighted leaders like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dr. Michael Okpara who during their days conceived and built the country’s first indigenous university, Nigeria’s first indigenous bank, Nigeria’s first steel company, Nigeria’s first gas company, Nigeria’s first cement company and many others, achievements which enabled Eastern Nigeria to have one of the finest competitive economies in Africa and beyond within a very short period”.

Good Shepherd Society Marks Golden Jubilee

Ugo Aliogo

Members of the Good Shepherd Society of Archbishop Vining Memorial Church Cathedral, Anglican Communion, Ikeja, Lagos State, marked the 50th anniversary of the society.

The society which was founded in the church to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ, has positively touched the lives of the less-privileged. The celebration provided an opportunity for new members to be ushered to the altar for induction into the forum.

The officiating minister, Rt.

Rev. Manases Okere, prayed for all the members, for a renewal of strength, as they re-dedicated themselves to God. They declared their readiness to promote God’s work and serve humanity better.

They promised to work hard, love and live in peace with all members of the church as well as their neighbours, pledging to avoid anything that would bring disrepute to the body of Jesus Christ.

A new set of patrons, matron and grand patrons were presented before the church and they were decorated with medals of service by the cleric.

Diversity, Inclusion, Critical for PWDs Contribution to Nigeria’s GDP

Oluchi Chibuzor

The organised private sector under the umbrella of Nigerian Business Disability Network (NBDN) has stressed the importance of more companies embracing diversity and inclusion at the workplace.

In view of this, they agreed that when organisations create opportunities for everyone without discrimination and employ people with disabilities, they are more secured and responsible and participate in contributing to the nation’s GDP.

The call is coming as about 25 million people in the country live with disabilities and remain a critical workforce with capacity, potential and competence that can benefit any organisation.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **NJOKU CHIAMAKA MARYCLARET**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EBIRIM CHIAMAKA MARYCLARET**, University of Port Harcourt, the general public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **GABRIEL SUNDAY EMMANUEL**, now wish to be known and addressed as **GABRIEL DENNIS ESSIEN**. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **EBENEZER EMMANUEL GOGO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EBENEZER KING-DAVID**. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

FAIRGROUND



with
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House of Sota Celebrates Black History, Lifestyle

It was an exquisite intimate affair as Folashade Balogun, founder and Creative Director of House of Sota celebrated Black History with the recent launch of her latest collections - Sota Diverse – in Lagos.

Hosted by the delectable Zainab Balogun rocking a House of Sota piece, the event had in attendance dignitaries including former Minister of State for Mines and Steel Development, Uchechukwu Ugah, Christine Ibori, HRM Oba Saheed Ademola Elegushi, Lisa Masillon, Kendra Miller and other stylish guests.

It kicked off with a welcome address, followed by a documentary showing the brands story in between the spectacular runway shows, an electrifying dance performance, a vivacious DJ and all-round vibes.

There were cocktails, shopping and the high point of the night was when Mrs Balogun gave an emotional vote of thanks to her family and friends for their constant support over the years. She also presented an award to Christine Ibori for her loyalty to the brand over the years.

House of Sota is an international fashion brand that incorporates African fabrics with contemporary fashion. The company was launched in 2016 with the aim of promoting African clothing globally. The pieces are enticed by the richness in colour, combined with texture of such artifacts in their raw form and adding a contemporary twist, thereby making it fresh and modern for clients both at home and abroad.

Black History Month is an opportunity to understand Black histories, going beyond stories of racism and slavery to spotlight Black achievements. It is a month-long observance in the US and Canada that provides a fresh reminder of systemic racism and gives visibility to the people and organisations creating change. Operating out of Lagos and Florida, the brand caters to males and females across borders whose style is sensual, trendy, urban, stylish, versatile, and unafraid of clothing designed with a statement.

The new collections celebrate the uniqueness of the African culture, hence the opulent burst of colours and prints. Sota Diverse consists of Madiba named after the great Nelson Mandela and Imani meaning Faith or belief. Since 2016, the brand has focused on offering a full spectrum of design-led solutions that allow them to build strong, lasting relationships with customers.

Balogun said: “Sota Diverse is a spring/summer collection for 2022. Here, we are redefining who a Sota Woman, Man, Boy and Girl really is. For this collection, we are inspired by the beauty of our African culture, with keen detailing from our artifacts, especially from the ancient Ekiti and Benin Kingdoms.

House of Sota is located in Ikeja. It also has Brick and Mortar stores in Owerri and Port-Harcourt, as well as visibility in other African countries via several retailers.



L-R: Folashade Balogun with two representatives from the American Embassy



Olori Bolanle Ogunbanwo; and Eniafe Momodu



L-R: Mrs Alice Onyema and Barr Ifeoma Morah



L-R: Kendra Eziada; Folashade Balogun; and Linda Massillon



Former Minister of State for Mine and Steel, Dr Uchechukwu Ugah



L-R: Eziada Folashade Balogun; and Martha Najomo



L-R: Mrs Christine Ibori; and friend



L-R: Mrs Folashade Balogun; and Prince Niyi Balogun



Mrs Aliu



L-R: Mrs Isoamaka Osita; and Mrs Ify Ekueme



L-R: Bola and Ishmael



Representatives from the Italian Embassy, Mr and Mrs Trowbe



L-R: Stanley Dike; and Nonye Odukwe

BACKPAGE CONTINUATION

MY PASSIONATE APPEAL TO PDP DELEGATES

veritable example, but they would have totally missed the point. America does not have the challenges Nigeria carries today. America has sufficient strong and viable institutions and substantial infrastructure even if it can still make do with more, like any other country. The next President of Nigeria must be fully ready to run a blistering schedule which would require all the stamina in the world. It would be most horrendously unfair to unleash another old leader on us immediately after the tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari. We have already seen and suffered the disastrous effect of our misadventures on President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Buhari whose health challenges affected the work of State and the polity calamitously. It is a risk not worth taking any longer. At Atiku's age and with his status, Nigeria may have an Emperor in power and the resources that would be required to maintain him would be hugely significant. Examples of such abound in Africa. We cannot afford to be another, yet again.

On Wike's part, he is much younger at 59 and extremely energetic and hardworking. He is one of the best Governors in terms of infrastructural development and this alone should have worked in his favour. However, his major shortcoming is his short fuse, very volatile temper, vituperations and intolerance. These are not the attributes that the President of a developing nation like Nigeria should possess. Many of those goading him on today mostly have reservations about these dismal qualities but are unable to tell him to his face. He himself knows this fact and says it regularly. However, he also believes with little humility that those ganging up against him will suffer a crushing defeat because of the undeniable State wealth at his disposal. I'm not so sure. As one of his biggest admirers, I have written to him that he should watch out for a grand conspiracy at the last minute and copied our mutual friends, Mohammed Adoke (SAN) and Chief Mike Ozekhome (SAN). While it is commendable that Wike has worked assiduously for the survival of PDP and is also campaigning hard for power to shift to the South, Wike may find it impossible, on this occasion to be the kingmaker as well as the king simultaneously.

THE TAMBUIWAL MAGIC: At 56, the Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Waziri Tambuiwal is one of the most experienced and exceptionally influential politicians in Nigeria today. His meteoric rise is a stuff of fiction and fairytales. He has been a trained teacher, legal practitioner,

federal legislator (rising to become Speaker of the House of Representatives), and now second term Governor. He has also handsomely developed Sokoto State given the meagre resources at his disposal.

PETER OBI THE ROCK: He is one of my favourite Nigerian politicians, for his passion for education and frugal disposition to managing government resources. Parsimony in government, especially in a developing economy, is counterproductive. Our country does not need savings at the kind of level that Obi posits. A lot of investment is required if the country is to progress. The kind of savings that Obi talks about may be good in a poor State but is minimal and does not do anything for the country. What both of us agree with is that profligacy and corruption need to be eliminated. At 60, age is still on his side. He enjoys cult following from his fans and supporters who want him to be President by fire by force, even though as I have inferred, his limitations are clear for all to see. Peter's major headache comes from his own people! None of the other Igbo aspirants is willing to step down for him, even though he towers above them in public perception and opinion.

DELE MOMODU THE UNDERDOG TO WATCH: I have always been underrated. Even before my birth, my Mum was taunted as someone incapable of given birth to a baby at her age, but she did, and here I am. I had a poor grade 3 in my first WAEC school leaving certificate examination attempt in 1976. An uncle told my Mum I was too empty brained to make it in life but here we are still. At a point in my life, of all my friends, I was the only jobless one, and I almost gave up. When I eventually got a job in Lagos, in 1988, at Concord Newspapers, I was homeless and had to be a squatter for about two years. When I was forced into exile in 1995, I was derided as an outsider crying louder than the bereaved because of my almost fanatical support for Chief M.K.O Abiola. But the experience compensated me with the birth of Ovation International in the city of London. I have gone through this preamble because of those who have wrongly written me off in this race for our Party's Presidential ticket. I will explain in a jiffy why I believe I'm the best in this race and why you should, very seriously, vote for me next week. Without being immodest and with all sense of humility, I am a totally fresh aspirant with global experience and exposure to entrepreneurship, entertainment, technology, tourism and hospitality, diplomacy, philanthropy,

education, job creation, traditional and social media, nationalities, politics and security.

I have only mentioned five of the 15 aspirants for specific reasons that you will appreciate below.

THE DISCARDED ZONING FORMULA: Zoning was in the Constitution of our Party, PDP, for obvious reasons. Just like the Federal character, it was meant to make life bearable for Nigerians from all parts of the country and give us all a sense of belonging. My view has always been that the best candidate should be fielded irrespective of where he comes from, but it is unfair to change the rules of a game midway through the game. That is history now though, and we must all live by the rules that we are now presented with. Now that zoning has been jettisoned, the race has become a free for all. And since the excuse is for our Party to be able to find and field the best candidate, then we must get our Arithmetic right. I shall return to this after the next paragraph.

EXPECTATIONS OF NIGERIANS: Everywhere I have been, Nigerians have not minced words about why they are tired of all career politicians, particularly those in the PDP and APC. PDP would do well to fulfil the hopes, dreams and wishes of frustrated Nigerians who want to retire our politicians of yesteryears, especially at the Presidential level since it is practically impossible to sack all politicians. We can identify the good ones.

Why would PDP want to bring back an inglorious past that most Nigerians are ashamed about, unquestionably reject and are seriously trying to distance themselves from? It is like insulting their intelligence, capabilities and perception.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEXT PRESIDENT: The PDP candidate would most probably slug it out with one of the most formidable technocrats and more youthful candidates APC has to offer. Our Party cannot afford to field recycled, ancient and controversial politicians at this time and age. The next President of Nigeria must be youthful, technologically savvy, well-educated and fully apprised of 21st century developments and life. The new Nigerian President must be charismatic, urbane, cosmopolitan, level-headed and globally recognised and respected.

HOW TO WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: Sentiment and emotion alone can't win elections. Since we have explained why we abandoned zoning, no zone can request that power be zoned to it again. Thus, we want the best Presidential/Vice Presidential team that can defeat APC. It is now a game of Mathematics,

logic and personal attributes. The first question is where are the votes? The answer is that the largest votes come from the North West, South West, North East, South South, North Central and South East in that order.

I will recommend that PDP should get its team from South West/North West or Vice Versa. Naturally, I favour the first combination rather than the second because equity and justice dictates that the President should come from the South since the North has had eight years bite at the cherry. It is a fact that the North has failed with the President Buhari administration despite Buhari being seen as the only alternative to President Goodluck Jonathan at the time.

No individual can lay claims to being the only omnipotent one who can win for us. The Party maketh a man and not the other way round. The Constitution recognises this. That is why the Parties are more relevant than any individual. In terms of age, integrity, personal accomplishment, global popularity, freshness of ideas and ideals, as at today, our Party is well poised to deliver with a Dele Momodu who stands head and shoulders in this regard, and incidentally automatically combines two Southern regions of South South (father) and South West (Mother) with extensive networks everywhere. From the North, I will consider a Governor Tambuwal as my runningmate, against other Northern aspirants like Mohammed Hayatu-deen, Bala Mohammed and Bukola Saraki.

PDP is blessed with many leaders like Governor Wike who will be the first to get my Ministerial appointment in Works or Power. He has the capacity and courage to handle both effectively. Former Governor Peter Obi will do fantastically well as Secretary to Federal Government, which is the engine room, in order to clean up the Augean stable called the civil service once and for all. A Bukola Saraki will do very well in Foreign Affairs with his upper-crust education and Queens English combined with silver spoon pedigree. I love what Governor Udom Emmanuel has done with Ibom Air and he will be considered for trade and investments. A Mike Ozekhome with his dazzling brilliance as Minister of Justice will shake up the judiciary. What I am doing here is only to give a sneak preview of my dream cabinet and assure Nigerians that ours will be a government of national unity, with a star-studded cabinet of brilliant and accomplished Nigerians from every part of Nigeria and the entire world.

•To be continued next week

PRODUCTIVITY, THE NATION AND FAKE NEWS

leading up to the elections in the various political parties appear unacceptably elitist, exclusivist and designed to ensure that only individuals and groups with heavy financial capabilities can now contest for political offices in Nigeria.

The RoundTable's proposed solution to this brewing anormally include (1) Outright reduction in the cost of forms, by over 95% and (2) Return of the balance to the Aspirants, except for those of them who may wish to donate such excess to the individual parties concerned. This is an unfortunate middle ground that should be precedent for future elections. It is so proposed because the INEC clearly shows that the parties will not have the time to start the process all over again.

The RoundTable invited participants and stakeholders to note the ease with which general communication, government efforts and even group initiatives can be easily distorted and misunderstood. In the case of government, it traced this to the public perception of integrity deficit, in the area of communication. The RoundTable observed that the government must reclaim its right to be believed, by giving clear, timely, honest and believable communication. Instances of deliberately misrepresented government action were brought up and examined. These included (1) Narratives around the COVID-19 palliatives and what government and stakeholders in civil should have done to regain public trust, (2) The CBN's Anchor Borrowers Program, which nearly lost the chance to be understood as an initiative that created and capacitated several farmers' cooperatives, enhanced their access to loans, created millions of jobs, took many youths off the crime path and rescued many local economies.

While emphasizing that only productivity-enhancing and economy-reflating activities, in addition to consuming what we produce and producing what we consume, the RoundTable noted that young entrepreneurs need further help in the areas of product quality and marketing. The call is for the government, stakeholders and new-found, (or fangled) entrepreneurs to take full inventory of what would lead to quick and sustainable success and ensure they have these



Buhari

in their kitty as the step into the dangerous waves of an inclement business environment. The RoundTable admitted that the youths face challenges at the levels of capacity, opportunities and wrong role models. Proposed solutions to some of the foregoing include (1) Tooling and retooling our youths for a 21st Century World, (2) Reopening of universities for the continuing education of university students, (3) Promotion of vocational skills and innovative entrepreneurship programmes, in addition to values Reorientation.

The element of values reorientation keyed into the RoundTable's observations and submissions on fake news and how to deal with it. Because

values create the right mindset for substantive citizenship, rather than nominal citizenship, the RoundTable held that the nation, advocacy groups and other stakeholders must work towards ensuring that we all imbibe the basic notions of "Confirm the source, determine its positive value, verify whether it is abridged, find out if the abridgment has led to a distortion, take responsibility and be ready to stand by it".

The matter of fake news and 'information distortion' came up because of some audio recordings in circulation which were found to be deliberately modified in order to convey/suggest something not intended by the full message. This included five audio messages which gave

modified versions of original conversations. They included a conversation between two young adults, part of which was changed in such a way as to suggest that the lady was soliciting her male counterpart. Another audio recording involved a responsible officer of the FRSC who stopped a driver. The exchange between them was apparently secretly recorded. Then it was edited in such a way as to suggest that the officer was asking for money, rather than the driving license of the driver. A third/fourth case had to do with two distorted audio recordings involving the CBN; one around 2019 and another, more recently, regarding "heart attack". Comparing the advertised audio and the full length of the conversation from which they were extracted, it was easy to see how a new narrative can be generated by taking a limited section of a discussion and presenting it in such a way as to create new meanings and interpretations.

The RoundTable averred that fake news, unverified statements taken out of context, and the fact that technology has made everyone a reporter, editor and Editor-in-Chief, every Nigerian should be wary of misinformation and disinformation. The deliberate mischief of iconoclasts, the malevolent machinations of those who distort, misquote or misrepresent audio and video content for all manner of reasons now pose a real threat to intelligent conversation all around us.

As the RoundTable rose with a firm resolve to continue driving objective national discourse, informed commentary, commitment to Chatham House Rules, rejection of hearsay as knowledge and the determination to keep all discussions rancour-free, it also reaffirmed its commitment to a better society and a better future for Nigerian youths. This new approach to national conversations, sociopolitical education and citizen engagement will come up again, next month. It called on INEC not to relent on its public Enlightenment and political education programs. The RoundTable held that the information about replacement of card readers with a more efficient system, for Nigerians to know, for a fact, who or what delivers the "Final Accepted Results" from a polling station.

