THISDAY Insists Governor Wike not a Consistent Personality

Rivers court fixes September 15 for adoption of addresses in libel case

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

A Rivers State High Court sitting in Port Harcourt yesterday adjourned till September 15, this year for adoption of addresses in a libel suit by the Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike against THISDAY newspapers and others.

The trial judge, Justice Adolphus Enebeli adjourned the matter, after the final cross examination of witnesses for the defendants in the case registered in suit No. PHC/1505/CS/2020.

Earlier, the third witness for the defendants during cross examination by the applicant's lawyer, Emmanuel Ukala (SAN) yesterday, told the court that the summary and interpretation of the report published in THISDAY of June 23, 2020, explained that Governor Wike was inconsistent when making public comments.

The witness, Mr. Iyobosa Uwugiaren, who identified himself as an Editor, Nation's Capital of THISDAY, insisted that "Wike is not a consistent person when it comes to his utterances and public comments."

When asked by Ukala to

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Ekweremadu: Documents Show Alleged Trafficked Minor is 21, But Exploitation an Issue... Page 46

THISDAY

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N250

S'Court: President Can't Ask Court to Remove a Law He Signed

Refuses to void Section 84 (12) of Electoral Act at request of Malami ● *Political appointees remain banned from voting at primaries*

Alex Enumah and **Udora Orizu** in Abuja

The Supreme Court yesterday struck out the suit challenging section 84(12) of the Electoral Act 2022 banning political appointees from voting at the primaries of political parties, for being incompetent and lacking in merit.

The Attorney-General of the Federation/Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, on behalf of the federal government, had filed the suit on the grounds that it violates the rights of political appointees and that it is in conflict with provisions of the constitution.

The section reads: "No political appointee at any level shall be a voting delegate or be voted for at the convention or congress of any political party for the purpose of the nomination of candidates for any election."

In a counter-affidavit filed by the parliament, the lawmakers argued that the constitution empowers them to make laws, and therefore, urged the Apex Court to

Continued on page 5

2023: Lawan, Umahi, Akpabio Missing as INEC Unveils Particulars of Candidates

'We are not under obligation to publish the names of candidates submitted by political parties if there are questions over the validity of primaries featuring such candidates'

Chuks Okocha and **Sunday Aborisade** in Abuja

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday published the particulars of the presidential candidates, vice presidential candidates, senatorial and House of Representatives candidates for the 2023 elections with the names of Ebonyi State Governor, Dave Umahi, the President of the Senate, Ahmad Lawan and that of the former Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio, missing on the senatorial list.

Also yesterday, INEC explained why some of the names submitted by the political parties were missing from the list published by the commission.

Lawan, Akpabio and Umahi, had been listed by the All Progressives Congress as candidates for Yobe North, Akwa Ibom North-west, and Ebonyi South senatorial districts, respectively.

All three had also contested the APC presidential ticket and lost.

But the leadership of the party decided to compensate them with the senatorial tickets in a manner not transparent.

It is believed that the three men were excluded on the list placed in various constituencies of the elective positions, because they did not emerge through validly

Continued on page 5



GOOD TO SEE YOU...

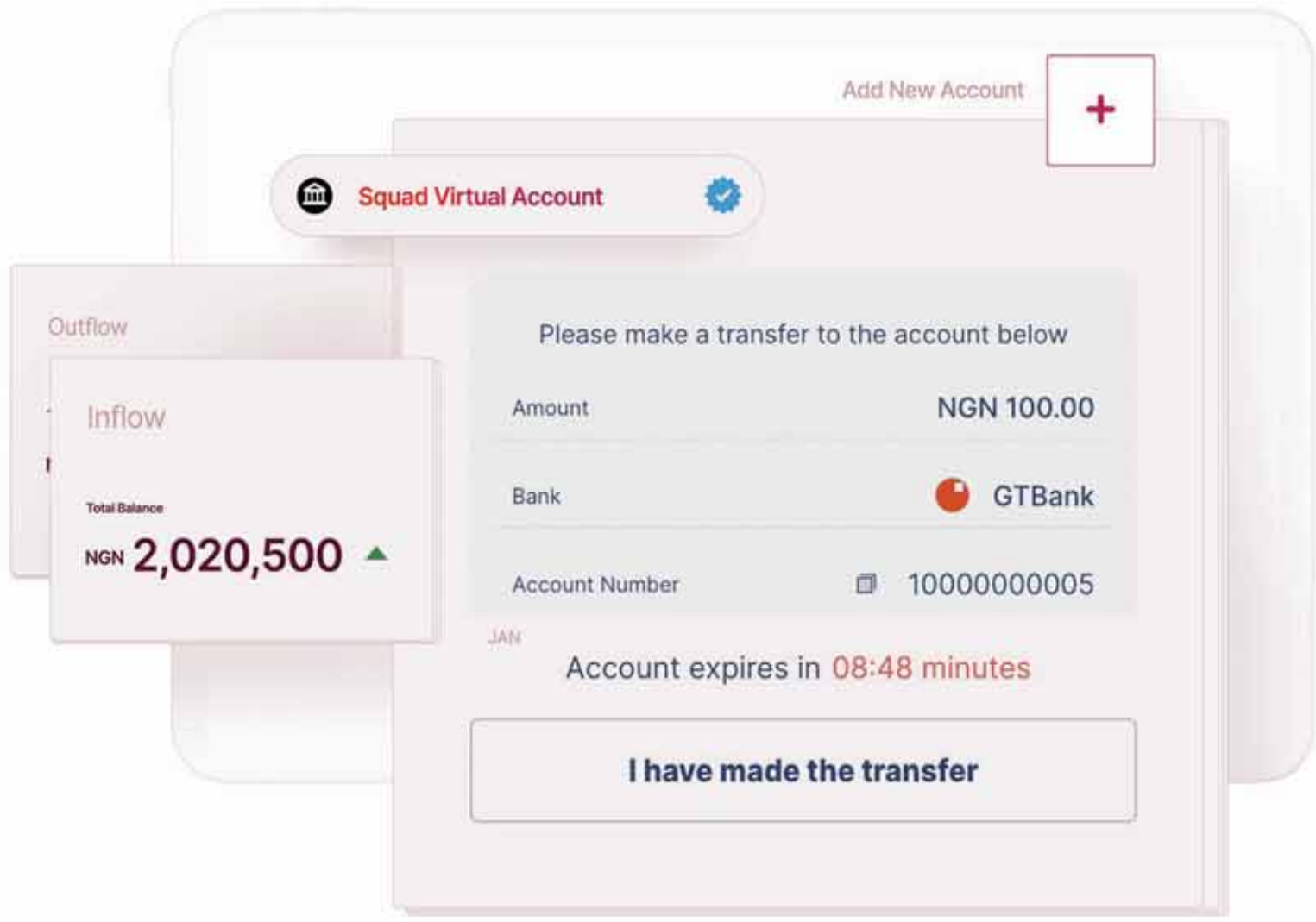
L-R: President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame and President Muhammadu Buhari after a meeting held on the sideline of the ongoing Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali, Rwanda...yesterday

Buhari, Tinubu, Lawan Celebrate Gbajabiamila at 60... Page 8



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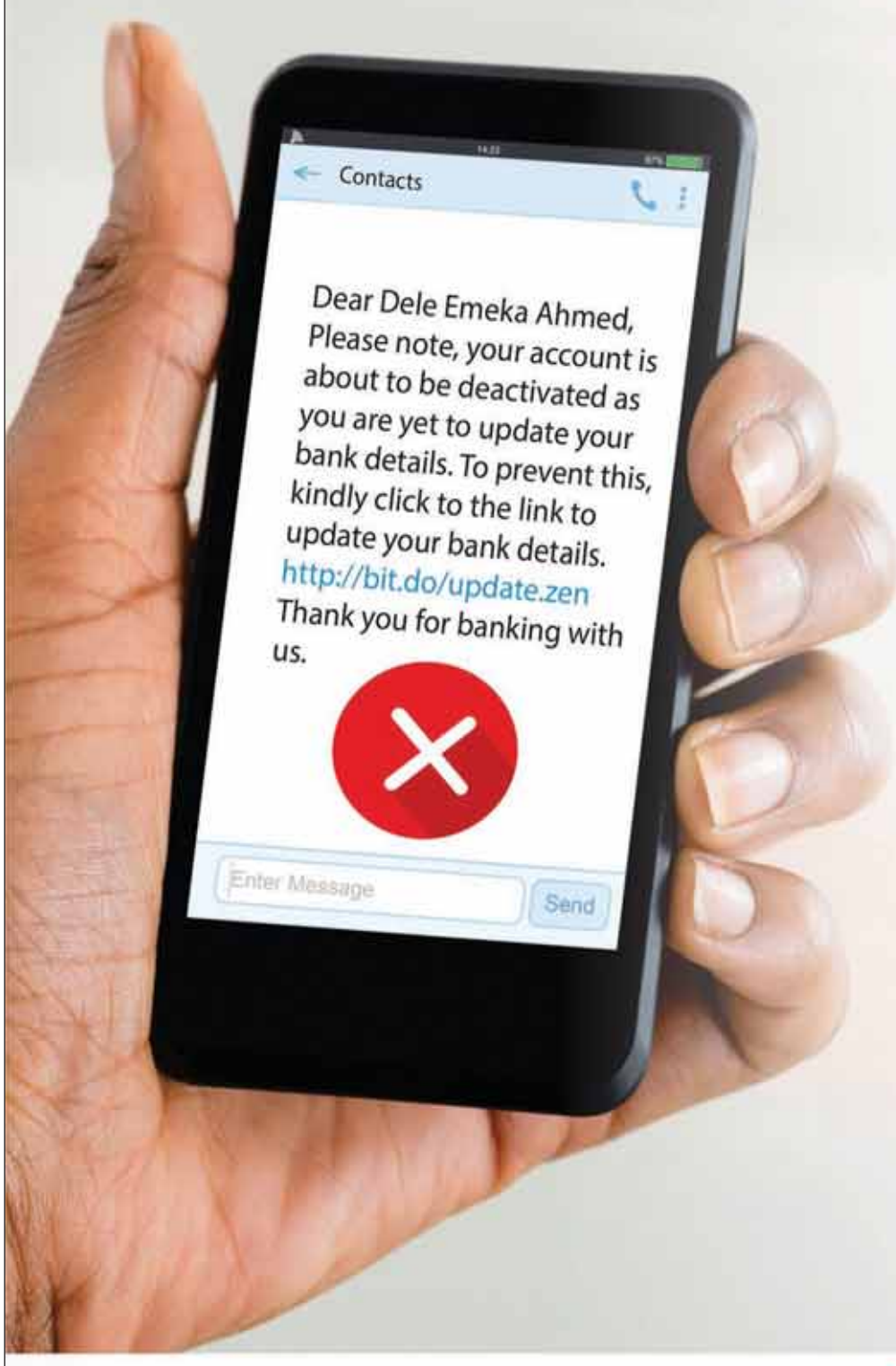
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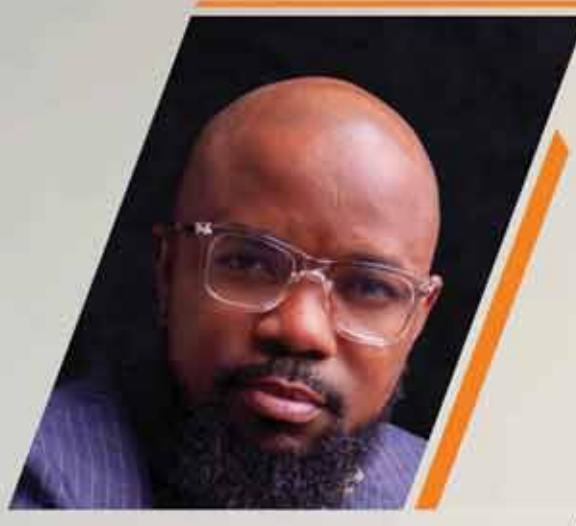
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THISDAY INSISTS GOVERNOR WIKE NOT A CONSISTENT PERSONALITY

explain the headline of the report "With a friend like Wike, Obaseki Meets His PDP's Waterloo: Almost", Uwugiaren explained that it was an interpretation and summary of the whole story as written by the reporter.

Again, Ukala asked the witness if the headline portrays Wike as a reliable friend of Obaseki's, Uwugiaren replied "By the time the publication was made, Wike and Obaseki were in the same political party. Therefore, they may be friends as at the time."

Speaking to journalists outside the courtroom, lawyer to THISDAY, Tuduru Ede (SAN) explained that his clients produced witnesses who judiciously testified in the interest of defendants.

Ede explained: "We have concluded defence with our last witness and so the matter has been adjourned for parties to file written addresses and then we come back on September 15 to adopt them.

"The case is not won or lost on the number of witnesses; we have fielded competent, capable, intelligent, well read and good witnesses who have testified on behalf of the defendants.

"Have shown that the interpretation which the claimant seeks to place on the publication does not arise. A newspaper had the right to make a fair comment on a man who has been all along in public life, and emphasised that the man is inconsistent."

He added: "The same Obaseki's story is now in the public domain. Is he today, in good terms with Obaseki and Shaibu? And that is the inconsistency the witnesses conveyed, that this is a man who relates with you today, tomorrow he turns 360 degrees."

Also speaking, one of the applicant's counsels, Mark Agwu said: "Incidentally, the defence called their last witness today. At our last adjourned date, they took a motion to call an additional witness and he led the evidence in chief and he was fully cross examined.

"The defence, thereafter, has closed their case. The next adjourned date, September 15 is for final written addresses and by the rules, the defendant has 21 days to file a written address.

"The court is going on vacation now but we want to believe as the court resumes we will be able to do the adoptions."

2023: LAWAN, UMAHI, AKPABIO MISSING AS INEC UNVEILS PARTICULARS OF CANDIDATES

conducted primary elections.

Lawan, who obviously did not participate in the Yobe North primary election had his name sent to INEC by the APC at the expense of Bashir Machina, who won the primary.

In Akwa Ibom State, an earlier primary election held on May 27 had produced Udom Ekpoudom, a retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police. But the APC dumped Ekpoudom and allowed an illegal fresh primary that produced Akpabio.

Umahi also had a primary election that produced his brother cancelled for a fresh one, but it was not recognized by INEC.

"Lawan, Umahi and Akpabio are not on the list. I can confirm that to you. They did not emerge through valid primaries and so, we can't accommodate them," a top INEC official told THISDAY last night.

Ekpoudom and Machina were also not listed by INEC for the elections.

INEC Defends Action

Speaking yesterday on a television programme, INEC's National Commissioner, Festus Okoye, said the commission was not under obligation to publish the names of candidates submitted by political parties if there are questions over the validity of primaries featuring such candidates.

He said: "If you look at section 29 (1) of the Electoral Act 2022. Section 29 says 'every political party shall not later than 180 days before the date appointed for a general election under this act submit to the commission in the prescribed forms, the list of the candidates they are proposing to support at the election, who must have emerged from valid primaries conducted by the political parties.

"The commission does not submit the list of candidates. It is the political parties themselves that has been given the locus to submit this particular list and in this case, there is no personal interference between the commission and the political parties.

"We open the portal — what we called 'candidate nomination portal' — and we give an access code to the national chairman of each of the political parties that conducted primaries with which they upload the list and personal particulars of their nominated candidates.

"So, if a political party has uploaded the list and personal particulars of a candidate that did not emerge from valid party primary, INEC is not under a constitutional and legal obligation to publish the particulars of such a candidate."

The INEC spokesperson added that a candidate who was validly nominated at the primary but whose name was excluded by the party can seek redress from a competent court.

He also said the list published yesterday wa not the final document for the 2023 polls, adding that the final list will be published at a later date.

INEC Releases Report Showing Lawan Did Not Participate in Primary

INEC yesterday released the formal report on APC Yobe North Senatorial primary, confirming that Lawan did not participate in the primary held May 28 in Gashua.

The APC National Chairman, Abdullahi Adamu, had last Monday, while presenting the Ekiti State governor-elect (Biodun Oyebanji) to President Muhammadu Buhari, insisted that Lawan participated and won the primary election.

But INEC, in the Certified True Copy of the Yobe North senatorial primary election report issued to Bashir Machina, did not list Lawan as one of the participants and stated that Machina won primary election.

The INEC's report, sighted by THISDAY in Abuja yesterday, indicated that Machina scored 289 votes from the 300 delegates that took part in the election.

The report dated June 23, 2022, did not corroborate claims by Adamu that Lawan won the ticket.

The report was prepared by the Resident Electoral Commissioner in the Yobe State through the acting Head of Department of EPM.

The report read, "The Senatorial Primary for zone 'C' comprising Bade, Yusufari, Jakusko, Nguru, Karasuwa and Machina local government areas respectively.

"The primary was held at the Government House in Gashua, the headquarters of Bade Local Government Area.

"The Primary started by 11am as scheduled. Security agents and respective electoral officers of the affected local government areas were all present at the venue.

"The primary was conducted by one Alhaji Danjuma Isah Munga.

"The primary started with opening prayer from the Secretary of the Planning Committee, Alhaji Lawan Modu-Sheriff."

The results by INEC showed that 300 delegates were present and dully accredited.

It also indicated that the poll was conducted by open ballot.

Machina had last Monday vowed not to step down for the Senate President, insisting that he won the primary and that he remained the candidate of the APC for the Yobe North Senatorial District for the 2023 National Assembly election.

Adamu claimed that a primary was held and that Lawan purportedly emerged winner.

Investigation by THISDAY yesterday revealed that Machina would file a suit to defend his alleged stolen mandate at a Yobe High Court next Monday.

Lawan lost the APC presidential ticket to Bola Tinubu and returned to his senatorial district for the party's senatorial ticket but met strong resistance from Machina.

There was apprehension yesterday when supporters of Machina organised a solidarity protest where they swore that their candidate won't step down for Lawan, who has repeatedly represented the constituency since 2007.

Machina had also written the leadership of the party last Monday, and vowed not to willingly relinquish his mandate.

Part of the letter read, "I write to reaffirm my continual aspiration as the All Progressives Congress unequivocal senatorial candidate for Yobe North Senatorial District, following my clearance and participation at the party primaries, where I pulled 289 votes out of the 300 total votes cast.

"I write to reaffirm that I remain committed to the mandate which I won at the primaries and I have not in form or manner communicated otherwise. I have been informed of a purported malicious and mischievous report and insinuation to the contrary.

"Please note that I never at any time signed or communicated in any form any intent to vacate the mandate, which was won at the primaries.

"I am totally committed to my mandate and I am working towards delivering Yobe North Senatorial District to our great party, the All Progressives Congress."

Adamu has however warned Machina, over his insistence on the party's senatorial ticket for the district.

Speaking with journalists in Abuja on Thursday, the APC chairman said the issues affecting the party on primaries were not unusual, adding that they had been resolved.

He said: If you don't know how to set a trap for a thief, the thief will set the trap for you. Machina should be careful; his issue is getting out of hand. As far I am concerned as chairman, my party did not violate any law.

"Is there any law that says you cannot contest for a position after contesting for another one. No law prohibits anyone from doing so."

S'COURT: PRESIDENT CAN'T ASK COURT TO REMOVE A LAW HE SIGNED

strike out the suit instituted by President Buhari and AGF.

The apex court, in a unanimous decision described the suit as an abuse of court process and subsequently struck it out.

According to Justice Musa Mohammed-Dittjo, who led a seven-man panel of the Supreme Court, the plaintiffs having earlier assented to the said section 84(12) of the Electoral Act 2022, cannot turn around to approach the court to strike it down.

The apex court faulted the federal government's request on the grounds that, "there is no provision in the Constitution that vests the President the power to challenge the constitutionality or desirability of a legislation after he has assented or denied his assent", especially in the instant case.

The panel in the unanimous judgment delivered by Justice Emmanuel Agim, agreed and upheld the submission of counsel to the National Assembly, Kayode Ajulo, that the suit is not one of such cases in respect of which the court's original and additional jurisdictions could be invoked under Section 23(2)(1) of the Constitution and Section 1(1)(a) of the Supreme Court (Additional Jurisdiction) Act 2002.

The apex court also disagreed with the plaintiffs that the suit was informed by the National Assembly's failure to give effect to President Buhari's request that Section 84(12) of the Electoral Act be deleted for allegedly offending the provisions of the Constitution.

According to Justice Agim, the suit touched on the essence of the powers given to the President by Section 58(4) of the 1999 Constitution, which he exercised by participating in its making.

Justice Agim held that since the President aided the creation of the Act, with the support of the AGF, both plaintiffs could not turn around to question its legality.

He added: "The Constitution did not provide for the involvement of the court by the President after exercising his powers under Section 58(4) of the Constitution one way or the other.

"I agree with the argument by the counsel to the National Assembly (Ajulo) that this suit is a reprobation of what the first plaintiff (the President) had approbated, and this cannot be allowed in law.

"Haven assented to the Electoral Bill 2022 and thereby accepted that it has become law, he cannot therefore bring a suit, contending that the act resulting from his assent is not constitutional, desirable and justifiable, thereby retracting from his assent.

"As it is, one of the cumulative requirements in Section 1(1)(a) of the Supreme Court (Additional Jurisdiction) Act 2002 for the invocation of the additional jurisdiction of this court to entertain an originating suit between the President and the National Assembly does not exist.

"The plaintiffs have no legally enforceable legal right or power that gives life to questions raised for determination in the originating summons, and that can be protected or enforced by the reliefs claimed for.

"The dispute in this case does not involve any question or include the existence or extent of any legal right to the plaintiffs. Therefore, this suit cannot be entertained by this court in the exercise of its additional jurisdiction under Section 1(1)(a) of the Supreme Court (Additional Jurisdiction) Act 2002.

"There is no part of the Constitution that makes the exercise of the legislative power of the National Assembly subject to the direction and control of the President of Nigeria.

"The first plaintiff's (the President) written request to the National Assembly to amend the Electoral Act 2022 by deleting Section 84(12) therein, is a violation of Section 4(1) of the 1999 Constitution.

"The court cannot be engaged in this kind of unconstitutional and illegal enterprise. The suit is therefore an abuse of the judicial process."

He further agreed with Ajulo that the court lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the suit, and added that there was no useful purpose to be served by determining the case on the merits.

Other members of the panel - Justices John Okoro, Amina Augie, Mohammed Garba, Abdu Aboki and Ibrahim Saulawa - agreed with the lead judgment.

President Buhari had in February this year signed the amended Electoral Act, 2022 with a caveat that the National Assembly deletes the said section in the interest of deepening the nation's democracy.

Although, the National Assembly had declined the president's request, it was not until Justice Inyang Ekwo of a Federal High Court in Abuja, restrained the lawmakers from acceding to the president's request.

The restraining order followed the suit and an exparte application filed by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) asking the court to forbid the lawmakers from deleting the said section on the grounds that only a competent court can take such action.

Before the federal government's suit at the apex court, two separate individuals had approached both the Federal High Courts in Ibadan and Umuahia requesting the court to strike down the section for breaching the Constitution, adding that the constitution had already taken care of the qualification and disqualification of persons seeking political offices.

While the Ibadan division of the Federal High Court, dismissed the suit on the grounds of jurisdiction because the plaintiff lacked the requisite locus standi to initiate the suit in the first place, the court in Umuhia, agreed with the plaintiff and ordered the striking down of the section and in addition ordered the federal government to delete it from the Electoral Act, 2022.

Meanwhile, the Court of Appeal in a judgment, set aside the decision of the Umuahia Federal High Court for want of jurisdiction, but agreed that Section 84(12) was unconstitutional and discriminated against a certain class of citizens (the political appointees).

Following the conflicting decisions and confusion the three judgments of the Federal High Court and Court of Appeal had created, the federal government accordingly approached the apex court for an interpretation of the said section.

House: Judgement is Victory for Democracy

The House of Representatives has hailed the Supreme Court for striking out the suit seeking to void the provision of section 84(12) of the Electoral Act, 2022.

Speaking to THISDAY, the House Spokesman, Hon. Benjamin Kalu described the judgement as "unequivocally lucid, a victory for the advancement of democracy and the nation's rule of law."

According to him, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed the legislative supremacy of the National Assembly, and has also done that in the spirit of doctrine of separation of powers, understanding that the efficiency of government will be driven by this democratic principle where every arm stays within the parameters of their mandate and to become the best in their assignment.

The House Spokesman added: "We have not lost sleep from the time this matter went to the Supreme Court for interpretation, because we knew that what we put together was in consultation with the public that gave us their mandate. And what we came out with was a reflection of the consultation we had with the Nigerian people. It is all about advancing our democracy.

"Just like the mantra of the House has always been, "Nation Building a Joint Task" the supreme court has restored the confidence of Nigerians in participatory democracy with the integrity of this judgement, delivered without fear or favor, but with Nigeria and Nigerians at the center of it all.

"The Supreme Court has reaffirmed the legislative supremacy of the National Assembly, and has also done that in the spirit of doctrine of separation of powers, understanding that the efficiency of government will be driven by this democratic principle where every arm stays within the parameters of their mandate and to become the best in their assignment.

"In conclusion, the Supreme Court has laid their own brick in the efforts towards electoral reform by this judgement. They have added their own bricks to Nation building through the electoral reform and electoral act 2022. So we are glad, and I'm sure Nigerians ought to be glad."

NEWS

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Oyegun, Oshiomhole, Amaechi Back Tinubu's Presidency

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

Some leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) from South-south region have thrown their weight behind the presidential aspiration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The South-south leaders made their resolutions known after a closed door meeting held on Thursday night in Abuja.

Some of the South-south leaders at the meeting were: former National Chairmen of the party, Chief John Oyegun and Adams Oshiomhole, Chief Don Etiebet, National Publicity Secretary of the party, Felix Morka, Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, National Women Leader, Beta Edu, APC National Vice Chairman, South-south, Victor Giadom, former Deputy National Publicity Secretary, Yekini Nabena, Sam Jaja, and former Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, among others.

In the resolutions made available to journalists yesterday, the South-south leaders commended President Muhamadu Buhari for providing great leadership and a level playing field for the successful conduct of the national convention of the APC which produced the national and other officers of the party on the 26th of March, 2022 and the special national convention that produced the presidential candidate.

The South-south leader also commended Northern Governors of the APC for their commitment to the unity of the country which they demonstrated in ceding the presidential ticket of APC to the Southern part of the country.

"That we congratulate His Excellency Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu for emerging as the presidential candidate of our party and thank him for the steps he has so far taken to unite those that contested that election with him and to assure him that the South-south zone will support that ticket and ensure his victory come 2023.

"The South-south zone in that direction has resolved to work with him and the party to ensure victory in the 2023 general election," they said.

The leaders called on party members in the South-south zone to embrace the presidential ticket of the party to ensure victory in 2023.



IN MOURNING MOOD…

L-R: Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun; Dean, Cathedral Church of St David, Akure, Ven. Ope Kujero and brother of the deceased, Segun Olugboyegun, at the funeral and internment of the late Olatunji Fagboyegun in Akure …yesterday.

FAAC Shares N680bn to FG, States, LGs for May

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) has shared a total sum of N680.783 billion to the federal government, states and local governments as May 2022 Federation Account revenue.

This is N24,181 billion higher than the N656.602 billion shared in the preceding month of April.

A communiqué issued at the end of the June FAAC meeting held in Abuja, indicated that the N680.783 billion total distributable revenue comprised distributable statutory revenue of N385.004 billion, distributable Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue of N198.512 billion and Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL) revenue of N97.267 billion.

Total deductions for cost of collection for the month of May was N36.996 billion and total deductions for transfers and refunds was N186.672 billion.

According to a statement issued by the Director (Information, Press and Public Relations), Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, Mr. Hensaw Ogubike, from the total distributable revenue of N680.783, the federal government received N229.563 billion, the state governments received N241.824 billion while the local governments received N175.942 billion.

The sum of N33.454 billion was shared to the relevant states as 13 per cent derivation revenue.

A gross statutory revenue of N589.952 billion was received for the month, which was lower than the N635.037 billion received in the previous month by N45.085 billion.

'Abiodun's Administration Didn't Receive N37bn Road Refund from FG'

James Sowole in Abeokuta

The Ogun State Government has declared that the current administration under the leadership of Governor Dapo Abiodun did not receive N37bn from the federal government, as reimbursement of expenses on road projects carried out by the immediate past administration in the state. It maintained that the said money was processed and received by the immediate past administration as payment for the state government expenses on federal government roads.

Some online news media had erroneously reported that the money was paid to the Governor Abiodun-led administration.

But reacting to the report, the State Commissioner for Finance and Chief Economic Adviser, Mr. Dapo Okubadejo, in a statement explained that the last payment on the federal government road refund programme was made before the current administration came on board as all efforts to recover further road refunds from the federal government have not materialised.

"A total of N37bn was paid to the immediate past administration for FG road refund to the state, in two tranches of FG Treasury Note instruments of N15bn and N22bn respectively.

"The first Treasury Note of N15bn issued in December, 2018 was discounted in January, 2019 for N10bn, while the second Treasury Note of N22bn was discounted for N17bn during the first quarter of 2019, thereby resulting in total financial charges of about N10bn incurred by the state," Okubadejo disclosed.

While noting that the explanation was necessary to put the records straight, he advised journalists to always verify their facts before rushing to publish.

Bauchi Police in Manhunt for Suspect Who Removed Eyes of 16-Year-Old Boy

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

A 16-year-old boy, Uzairu Salisu of Kwanan Gulmanmu Jahun in Bauchi metropolis has been found with his two eyes forcefully removed by an unknown suspect.

The Bauchi State Commissioner of Police(CP), Umar Mamman Sanda who made this known in a press release signed by the command's Public Relations Officer(PPRO), SP Ahmed Mohammed Wakil, yesterday, vowed to get to the root of the matter.

The CP said that the police will ensure that culprits behind the dastardly act were brought to book to serve as deterrence for future occurrence.

"At about 1800hrs a distress call was received from the ward head of Birshi Mohammed Lawal, that a boy of about 16 years was found in his pool of blood with two of his eyes removed," the police said.

According to the CP, the boy was found at Dutsen Jira of Yelwa area, Bauchi metropolis, adding that a team of Policemen led by DPO of Yelwa moved to the scene of the crime and evacuated the victim to Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Teaching Hospital Bauchi (ATBUTH) for treatment.

CP Sanda disclosed that "preliminary investigation reveals that the victim's name is Uzairu Salisu 'M' of kwanan Gulmammu Jahun Quarters."

He said the victim revealed that one Ibrahim of Rafin Zurfi whom he knew for some time lured him to the bush for a menial job on his farm where he used a cable wire to strangulate him before removing his two eyes.

The CP said that the victim is currently in the hospital receiving medical attention as demanded by the global best practices, assuring that the general public would be updated as the investigation unfolds.

The commissioner of police reiterated the need for parents and guardians to maintain strict vigilance of the activities of their wards.

"It is pertinent now more than ever that the whereabouts of wards and the company they keep are constantly kept in check by all those responsible," the CP advised.

He appealed to community leaders, elders and authoritative persons to also keep an eye on happenings within their environment and ensure the needed intervention before situations degenerate.

Sanda enjoined the citizenry of the state not to relent in partnering with the police, especially with information and to remain vigilant, and report any suspicious or abnormal movement to the police.

Again, Gunmen Attack Police Station in Kogi, Kill Police Inspector

Ibrahim Oyewale in Lokoja

Barely a monthy after a Divisional Police Command was attacked by hoodlums which left a police officer dead at Adavi, suspected gunmen early hours yesterday attacked another Police Area Command and killed a police inspector on duty at Eika-Ohizenyi in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The victim of yesterday's attack was identified as Mr. Jibril popularly known as Yellow.

It was gathered that the attackers invaded the station at about 12:15a.m., threw an explosive device believed to be dynamite at the police station which culminated in a loud explosion that woke up many residents.

A resident of the area, Mallam Momoh Abubakar who spoke to journalists, explained that the second explosion brought down parts of the Area Command office.

He said that the attackers had a field day as they operated for more than two hours without any interference neither from security agents nor the people of the community.

According to him, the only police officer on duty identified as Mr. Jibril popularly known as Yellow was killed in the attack while the only operational vehicle in the police station was also bombed.

Scholarship: TETFund Spends N185bn on 35,000 Scholars in 14 Years

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has revealed that the sum of N185 billion has been spent on 35,000 beneficiaries in the TETFund scholarship for academic staff programme which commenced in 2008.

Acting Director, Academic Staff Training and Development, Abdullahi Imam, stated this when the representatives of TETFund scholars paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Sonny Echono in Abuja, yesterday.

He explained that the project was established with the sole aim of training and upscaling the educational capacity of the academic staff of beneficiary institutions, adding that the project was the second in expenditure after infrastructural projects of the Fund.

Imam sought the Executive Secretary's approval to have a TETFund Scholars Alumni which he said would help identify areas of specialisation and pool them into a critical mass of knowledgeable workforce and change agents for the development of the nation.

He added that the Alumni through its planned journals on issues like innovation and entrepreneurship, science, engineering and technology, art, humanities and social science would help to prevent or curtail intellectual flight.

"Next is the compilation of soft copies of their thesis in order to have a repository for the National Library/State. We are not only thinking of the database, we want to have a repository of their thesis so that it will pass it to the libraries for reference purposes," he said.

While speaking also on the plans to showcase the capacities, competence and the scholars by developing a database for the Alumni, Imam noted that the scholars will serve as a voluntary advisory house on national research needs, institutional collaboration and industry partnership.

Speaking on the reason for their visit, one of the scholars, Prof. Kinsley Nwozor stated that they were there to appreciate the Fund for standing by them through out the period of their studies adding that even though some of them were tempted to stay back after their education, they have decided to come back to the nation to prove their mettle and showcase to the world that the dream of TETFund was a well-thought intention.

"There is no national agency that has done what TETfund is doing in Nigeria. An investment of N185 billion is not a chicken change. It is time for us to look at innovative ways of making TETfund stand out. You have done so much with gigantic infrastructures in universities. We also believe that gigantic structures don't make gigantic universities but gigantic minds. We are TETfund ambassadors wherever we are and with you by our side, there is nothing we cannot achieve," he said.

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NEWS

Buhari, Tinubu, Lawan Congratulate Gbajabiamila at 60

Deji Elumoye and **Udora Orizu** in Abuja

Prominent Nigerians from all walks of life yesterday sent congratulatory messages to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Femi Gbajabiamila,on his 60th birthday.

President Muhammadu Buhari in a release issued yesterday by his Media Adviser, Femi Adesina, joined members and leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in felicitating with the House Speaker as he marks his birthday anniversary on June 25, 2022.

The President sent warm greetings to the family, friends and associates of the political leader, whom he described as "patriotic, honest and deserves respect".

President Buhari, in the birthday message said: "I have observed the Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila for a long time, in the sense that when I was watching debates in the House of Representatives he used to be on his feet most of the time, passionately defending the party and issues he believed in.

"He impressed me very early as a committed member of the House of Representatives and I congratulate his constituency for keeping him there. I was very pleased that he eventually became the leader of the House.

"I am so impressed and pleased with the performance of the Speaker and the Senate President, Ahmed Ibrahim Lawan. At a certain stage, I called them and told them that I did not speak to them about what was happening in the National Assembly because I have so much confidence in them.

"Our party, APC, has majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. I know both of them and endorse their leadership so I should leave them alone to do their job.

"I wish Femi Gbajabiamila the best of luck and hope his constituency will maintain the confidence in him because he is a patriotic and honest person. I have a lot of respect for him."

The President prayed that the Almighty God will grant the Speaker, who is the second longest-serving member of the House of Representatives, long life, good health and wisdom to keep serving the country.

On his part, the All Progressives Congress presidential candidate and National Leader, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, said at 60, Speaker Gbajabiamila had recorded remarkable achievements and demonstrated positive leadership.

In a congratulatory statement released by his Media Office yesterday in Abuja, Asiwaju Tinubu wished him long life, good health and immense wisdom so he could continue to contribute meaningfully to the country's development.

"Today, I join family, friends, associates and colleagues of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, in rejoicing with him on attaining 60 on June 25.

"I congratulate Hon. Gbajabiamila on his huge accomplishments at 60. He has done remarkably well. He has made all of us proud.

"Speaker Gbajabiamila has contributed immensely to the growth and development of Nigeria, as he has done to Lagos, his home state and Surulere Federal Constituency.

"A partner on the progressive front, Hon. Gbajabiamila is a leader in our party and National Assembly where he is providing positive leadership.

"Under him, the House of Representatives has passed numerous landmark legislation, which have proved helpful in deepening our democracy and good governance. Of particular mention here are amendments to the electoral laws, engendering reforms and increased use of technology.



WE SHARE IN YOUR PAINS…

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State (2nd left) with the National Vice Chairman (South East), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Ali Odefa (middle), the State Chairman of the PDP, Hon. Augustine Nnamani (right), the PDP Governorship Candidate in Enugu State, Dr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah (left), and the Deputy Governorship Candidate, Barr. Ifeanyi Ossai, during the funeral rites for Ossai's Grand Mother, Mrs. Theresa Orie Ogbu (Nee Ugwuebonyi), held at Ezimo, Udenu Local Government Area...yesterday.

Gunmen Kill Five in Benue Communities

George Okoh in Makurdi

Gunmen in two separate attacks yesterday killed five persons including two policemen in two communities of Guma and Ukum local government areas of Benue State.

According to local sources, the gunmen suspected to be herdsmen attacked Yelwata community of Guma LGA, killed two policemen and took away their guns.

Also in another attack three persons including a lecturer with the Federal University, Wukari, were said to have been gunned down by armed bandits at Jootar, Mbaterem, in Mbayenge Council Ward, the Ukum Local Government Area of the state.

Three of the victims, all friends, were said to have sat at a drinking joint close to a Federal Quarantine Check Point

in the community at about 7p.m. when the unknown gunmen stormed the border town, shot them point blank killing them on the spot.

Eye witnesses said the attackers, two young men and a lady had rode on a Bajaj motorcycle came carrying a lady and two guys, while one of them pointed gun at their targets, shot and killed them after which he jumped back on the motorcyde and they rode away unchallenged.

When contacted, Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO SP Catherine Anene, confirmed the killing of the policemen in Yelwata community of Guma but said she was yet to receive information about the Ukum killing.

"I received information that two policemen died in an operation at Makurdi-Lafia Road but I am yet to receive details please."

On the killing of three friends in Jootar, Ukum LGA, the police spokesperson said, "I have not received this information."

Kidnapper Lynched by Mob As Security Rescue Victim

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

An angry mob has lynched a suspected kidnapper whose gang members abandoned along Obosi Road, Awada near Onitsha, Anambra State, after a security agency working in collaboration with the police gave the suspects a hot chase.

It was gathered that the seven-man gang of kidnappers had while taking their victim along Obosi Road, Awada in Onitsha were accosted by the security agents.

A press release by the Anambra State Police Command signed by its spokesperson, DSP Toochukwu Ikenga, stated that six out of the seven kidnap suspects abandoned their victims and vehicles and escaped when accosted by security operatives. But luck ran out of one of the kidnappers as he was apprehended by the security operatives. Ikenga said the incident happened at about 9p.m. on Thursday, but a mob killed the arrested kidnap suspect.

He said, "We rescued two kidnap victims, and recovered a Toyota Highlander jeep with Reg nos NSH 398 HA and Toyota Camry with Reg nos BRS 941 AA.

"Preliminary information, shows that security operatives intercepted a seven-man kidnap gang along Awada, and in an attempt to arrest the criminals, six out of the seven gang members escaped and abandoned both the victim's vehicle and their operational vehicle, also leaving behind their victim.

"The seventh person, arrested was lynched by an angry mob and set ablaze before police operatives could arrive the scene."

Buhari Hails Patricia Scotland On Reappointment as Commonwealth Secretary General

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has congratulated Hon. Baroness Patricia Scotland, QC, on her reappointment as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Leaders of the Commonwealth meeting in Kigali, Rwanda yesterday reappointed Scotland by consensus for a further two years to complete the balance of her period in office.

The Nigerian leader, in a release issued by his Media Adviser, Femi Adesina commended the purposeful leadership of the Dominican-born barrister and diplomat in the last six years, championing the values of the association in the areas of youth, women and childcare, trade, among others.

The President expressed gladness that under her tenure the organization is alive to its responsibilities in promoting shared commonwealth values and aspirations aimed at supporting collective interventions in health, climate change, environment, sustainable energy, ocean protection and blue economies, small and vulnerable island states, good governance, rule of law and democracy.

President Buhari also welcomed the various Declarations presented for consideration and adoption during CHOGM 2022 namely; the Declaration on Sustainable Urbanization; the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter; and the Kigali Declaration on Childcare and Protection Reform.

He noted that the letter and spirit of these declarations are relevant to the common desire and aspirations to promote international peace and security, sustainable economic growth, development and the rule of law, good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and gender equality.

President Buhari wished the SecretaryGeneral a very successful term in office, thanking her for being very supportive of Nigeria during her term in office.

He said: "My firm belief is that the Commonwealth will survive and thrive for as long as the principles of justice and equity remain the cornerstone of our political, economic and social contract".

ICPC: Raided House with Stashed Billions Belongs to Military Contractor Not Buratai

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Independent Corrupt and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) said yesterday that operatives of the agency raided a property in Wuse 2, Abuja, where billions of cash in naira and foreign currency were stashed.

There were reports that the said funds belonged to former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai.

But a statement by the commission said the property and the monies recovered belonged to a military contractor.

Consequently, the anti-graft agency arrested the contractor, the Managing Director of K Salam Construction Company Nigeria Limited, Mr. Kabiru Sallau, on suspicion of involvement in money laundering.

The agency said it had commenced investigation into the matter.

It said the commission recovered money and other items from the property including N175,706,500; $220,965; G-Wagon; 2022 editions of BMW and Mercedes Benz cars; customised mobile phones; several designer wrist watches, including three Rolexes, and some property documents.

Baptist Church Decries Hardship, Corrupt Electoral Process

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The Baptist Church has expressed worry over what it described as the unbearable high cost of living in the country.

Regarding the ongoing processes leading to the next year's general election, the church said that what happened recently during the party primaries leaves a very bad taste.

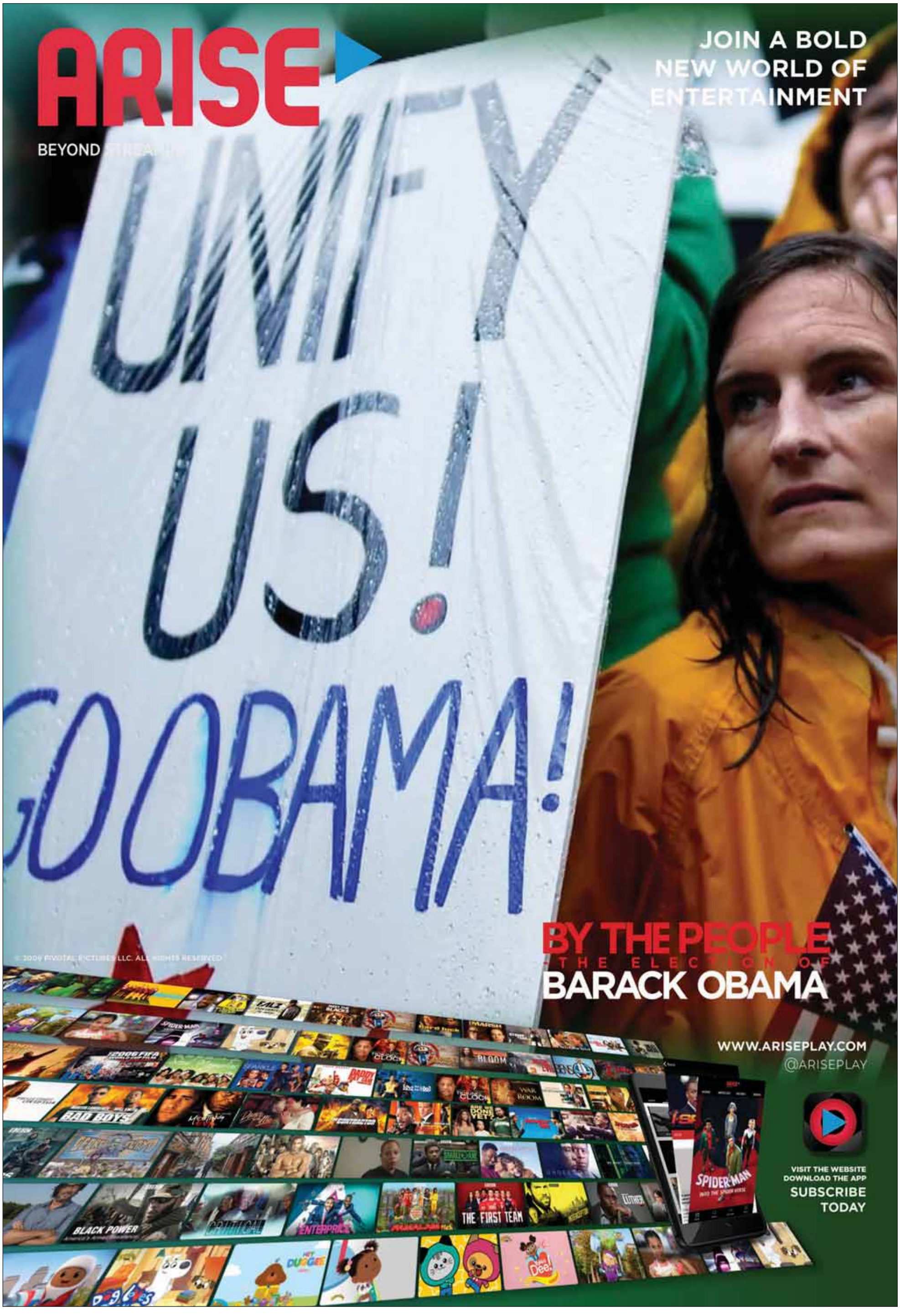
President, FCT Baptist Conference, Rev. Dogara Raphael Gwana, who disclosed while addressing journalists in Abuja as part of the opening of the 7th annual session of the church conference, said the Nigerian market and economy are practically at the rooftops with both the rich and the poor all crying.

According to him, "the cost of living in Nigeria today has become nearly unbearable. All facets of the Nigerian market and economy are practically at the rooftops. Everyone, both the rich and the poor, are crying. This is so because the Nigerian society is a consuming society not a producing one," he said.

Gwana said that it was regrettable that Nigerians at the moment are depending on importation for virtually everything they consume in this country.

He said, "The governments at the state levels don't put in any efforts in establishing factories or reviving the ones that have gone moribund. All they do is to queue to Abuja every month to receive their allocation of the national cake. Although the federal government has invested heavily into the local rice production, yet the price of even the local rice produced in-country is still at the rooftops.

"Foodstuff, transportation and other daily needs of the common man are completely unbearable. While the church prays for government to be guided and helped by God, the government should show deliberate commitment and interest in the rescue of the country and the support of the common man," he said.


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HAPPY 57th Birthday



On behalf of my family, the Government and good people of Ogun State, I felicitate my brother Governor, **Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu on your 57th birthday celebration.**

You have demonstrated uncommon and exemplary leadership, conviction and courage to build on the legacy of good governance at the Centre of Excellence with your people-centred programmes and policies.

While thanking God for making you a shining light among the governors, we pray that He continues to equip you with wisdom, knowledge and understanding to take Lagos to a higher notch.

Many Happy Returns, Your Excellency!

OGUN STATE NIGERIA

Signed

Prince Dapo Abiodun, MFR

Governor, Ogun State

Igbega Ipinle Ogun, Ajose Gbogbo Wa Ni

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COMMENTARY

THE RUSH FOR PERMANENT VOTERS CARD

Ayo Oyoze Baje *urges voters to resist all manner of inducements in 2023*

"We must all participate actively in the electoral process and avoid statements like, 'our votes do not count'. If votes don't count, politicians won't bribe or pay people to vote for them" -Most Rev. Bulus Dauwa Yohanna (CAN Chairman, Niger State)

Has the political revolution started here in Nigeria? That was the million-naira question that bogged the mind of yours truly a few days back. It was after the media got awash with news items of the rush for Permanent Voters Card (PVC) by thousands of eligible voters across the country. In fact, the recent demand by thousands of voters who besieged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), centres in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to register and collect their PVC got the top-notch of the electoral body alarmed.

One can therefore, understand the push by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and 185 concerned Nigerians on INEC to extend the deadline beyond June 30, 2022. They had filed the lawsuit against INEC asking the court to "declare unconstitutional, illegal, and incompatible with international standards the failure of the electoral body to extend the deadline for voter registration to allow eligible Nigerians to exercise their rights."

But beyond that, the rush must be all because many more Nigerians are getting to understand that: "Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country, and this world" as Sharon Salzberg, a New York Times bestselling author rightly noted. Given the gross failure of successive administrations, even under the democratic dispensation to meet the basic needs of Nigerians such as security, food security, stable electric power supply, sound and affordable education and healthcare delivery, millions of Nigerians are currently becoming aware that the choices they make during general elections would eventually define and determine their quality of life.

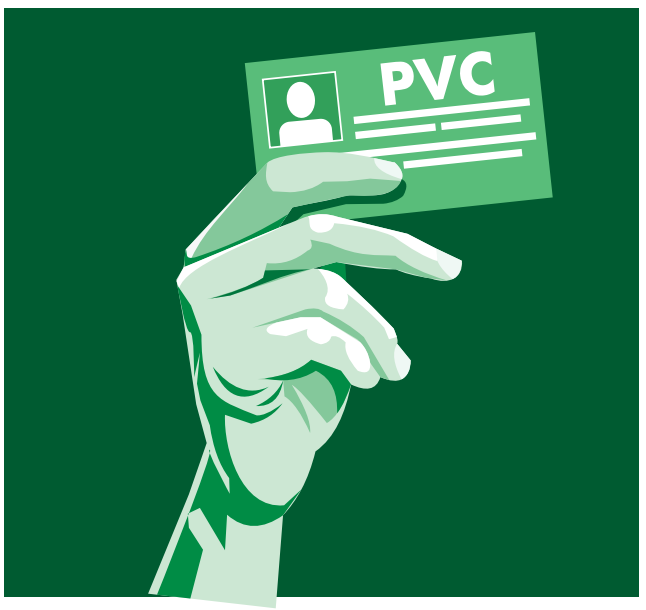
Indeed, many public affairs analysts have attributed this recent rush to the on-going massive sensitization by some notable musicians, movie-makers and other celebrities. Others include philanthropists, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media and some politicians who understand the power of the people when it comes to the electoral process. Not left out are clergymen.

For instance, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has not only called on its members to get their PVCs but has urged the INEC to publish names of centres where voters who registered online can collect their PVCs ahead of next year's election.

Furthermore, the CAN chairman, Niger State, Most Rev. Bulus Dauwa Yohanna has appealed to Christians who are eligible to vote in the 2023 general election to ensure active participation. He made the plea in his Democracy Day message to members of the Association.

On his part, revered General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye has ordered Redeemed Church pastors to demand PVC from members. "Provinces will be required to send a summarised report of parishes' compliance with the above directive to the office of the undersigned" he stated. Interestingly, RCCG has over 32,000 parishes in Nigeria. The import of this directive should not be lost on INEC and Nigerians at large.

Worthy of note is that the INEC was established by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to among other things to organize elections into various political offices in the country. The functions of INEC are contained in Section 15, Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (As Amended) and Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended).



IT MEANS THAT COME 2023, IT IS NOT ALL ABOUT ELIGIBLE VOTERS GETTING THEIR PVCS BUT MUSTERING THE MORAL COURAGE TO SAY 'NO!' TO ALL MANNER OF INDUCEMENTS, BE IT MONEY, FOOD ITEMS, CLOTHES OR SNACKS

Over time, it has conducted elections in the face of several challenges including logistics and infrastructural factors leading to the delay in the supply of electoral materials even late on the days of election. There have been many reports of the hijacking and burning of some of such sensitive electoral materials by paid political hoodlums, fraudulent thumb-printing of ballot papers, tampering with election forms as well as mass voter apathy.

There are however, electoral offences prescribed by Nigerian Law as at 31st January, 2017. Anyone found to be in breach of any of these provisions is liable to being arrested and charged to court and prosecuted by INEC after investigation by the relevant security agencies. In spite of this assurance, many desperate Nigerian politicians are getting more devious by the day.

That may perhaps explain the open bazaar of vote-buying that took place during the recent governorship election in Ekiti State. For instance, reports by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), revealed that many of its field observers documented 41 instances of vote buying and selling. These reportedly took place at polling units across some Local Government Areas (LGAs) at Ado-Ekiti, Ijero, Ikole Irepodun/Ifelodun, Ise/Orun and Moba LGAs of Ekiti.

Specifically, Prof. Adele Jinadu, the Chairman of CDD's Election Analysis Centre (EAC), identified vote-buying through cash collection in brown envelopes by naïve voters as responsible for the electoral fraud. Not helping matters is the current ASUU strike that has many undergraduates groaning with not much to do in their homes.

This nauseating issue of vote-buying was also frowned at by the British High Commission, as reported by its team of observers from the United Kingdom (UK) as having marred the credibility of the election, despite the orderly and peaceful manner of its conduct.

It means that come 2023, it is not all about eligible voters getting their PVCs but mustering the moral courage to say "No!" to all manner of inducements, be it money, food items, clothes or snacks. They should come to the full realization that as part of the principles of democracy, power belongs to the people and not the political elite. That is especially the crop of politicians who strongly but erroneously believe that with their Ill-gotten, filthy money they can buy anybody, including the voters.

These are conscienceless politicians who collect humongous sums from the Federation Account every blessed month but blatantly refuse to pay the hungry workers and pensioners their well-deserved dues. These are power-hungry politicians who turn deaf ears to the cries of members of ASUU and the undergraduates, who are agonizing over six months strike, while their children study under the best of enabling environment in foreign lands.

Nigerian voters must this time around NOT sell their children's future to their oppressors, masquerading as their saints and saviours. We have had enough of the king-slave mentality and enough of the masses suffering penury in the midst of our God-given abundant, natural resources. The voters should understand that: "The most important office, and the one which all of us can and should fill, is that of private citizen as " Louis Brandeis canvassed.

In the wise words of Harry Emerson Fosdick: "Democracy is based upon the conviction there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people." We, the voters who are the 'ordinary people' should stand firm and understand that "Our political leaders will know our priorities only if we tell them, again and again, and if those priorities begin to show up in the polls" as Peggy Noonan counseled.

Baje writes from Lagos

THE CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE IN WEST AFRICA

ECOWAS is increasingly finding it difficult to enforce its policies and protocol, writes **Wealth Dickson Ominabo**

Democracy in West Africa is in crisis. It is threatened by insecurity, human rights violation, digital repression, electoral fraud, institutional weakness and state capture. The region is becoming a flourishing ground for unconstitutional transfers of power, compounding the security challenges of the region. Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea are now governed by military leaders and ECOWAS has for the last two years been searching for a sustainable solution to the political impasse in the countries.

At the foundation of the issue of democratic reversals is the crisis of governance. The inability of States to function effectively; the lack of capacity of institutions to carry out their functions, the inability of political leaders to safeguard and protect the lives and properties of citizens is also seen as a major threat for the survival of democracy. Peace and security are the primary responsibilities of a State, and the government's relevance is to the extent to which it can guarantee the basic rights of people. The crisis of governance is better explained in the context of the current reality in many countries, where citizens are daily confronted with miseries such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity and hunger. This has created a trust deficit between the government and the citizens. Trust is the threshold upon which the legitimacy of a government is built and sustained and the deficit of trust portends a crisis of legitimacy.

Democratic sustainability is tied to adherence to democratic principles which include the rule of law, separation of powers, credible elections, access to justice, equality and inclusive governance. These virtues help to reinforce the wheel of governance and maintain state on the path of stability and national cohesion. Dictatorial instincts by political leaders have made many citizens lose faith in democracy, making citizens resort to the search of hope by all means even outside the constitutional democracy. In Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso citizens trooped out to the street to celebrate when democratic governments were overthrown. In some instances like Mali, civil society groups and political party leaders were reported to have endorsed actions of the putschist.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is threatened with legitimacy and governance crises - this impacts on its ability to deliver on its mandate and enforce its protocols. Democracy and security are major areas of interest of ECOWAS. Regrettably the region has been a melting pot for insecurity and flashpoint for democratic decline in recent years. Part of the challenge lies in the lethargy of presidents from member states to uphold democratic principles in their countries. Another factor lies in the absence of strong institutions in many countries which has made many presidents manipulate the state institutions for their interests.

The inability of ECOWAS leaders, especially those within the ranks of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the highest decision organ of the body comprising serving presidents to enforce its laws and protocols, has created a crisis of governance for ECOWAS. In recent times, most presidents of ECOWAS nations have defaulted ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance through electoral malpractice and tenure elongation.

Some leaders have also captured democratic institutions in their countries subjecting State institutions to act according to their whims and caprices. President Alpha Conde's decision to seek a third term has always been cited as the major reason for the coup in Guinea. ECOWAS today faces a legitimacy issue because many citizens in member states do not see the body as representing their interests because of their silence on the illegality of sitting presidents. For example, ECOWAS maintained sealed lips when Alassane Ouattara amended the Côte d'Ivoire's Constitution and sought a third term .

This practice by ECOWAS signals a departure from the old tradition when ECOWAS used to be assertive on issues of democratic principles involving member states. In 2009 ECOWAS suspended President Mamadou Tandja of Niger after the expiration of his two terms despite orchestrating a referendum and conducting a sham election to validate his third term. In 2010, ECOWAS also asserted its power and compelled President Laurent Gbagbo to vacate office after he was defeated by Alassane Ouattara in the 2010 Presidential Election of Côte d'Ivoire. Also in 2016 ECOWAS restored the presidential mandate of Adama Barrow of Gambia after Yahya Jammeh refused to vacate office after he was defeated in the presidential polls.

The deviation from this time tested practice is what has created a legitimacy gap for ECOWAS among citizens of member states. Today, ECOWAS finds it difficult to enforce its policies and protocol on dissenting members. The failure and refusal of military authoritarians in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso to abide by ECOWAS timeline of political transition despite sanctions imposed on them signals the irreverence of the body in the region.

For democracy to flourish in the region, presidents from member states must commit to democratic principles in their own countries, this will translate to wider democratic gains in the region. One way to achieve this is through the strengthening of democratic institutions in a way that it can withstand pressures from African strongmen and authoritarians. Strong institutions are the bulwark upon which democracy is preserved. The ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS itself is in need of urgent reforms that will guarantee its independence, from internal and external influences, so it can enforce its protocols without fear or favour.

Lastly, West African nations need to improve their level of statecraft, such that the government is able to deliver basic social goods to its citizens; this will help ensure trust and build faith in the hearts of citizens on the benefits and relevance of democracy.

Ominabo is the Communications Officer at the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation

INSIGHT



The suffering continues..

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.

Chibok's Eight Years of Anguish

It has been eight years, but like a festering wound, the national slight that Chibok in Borno State represents just refuses to go away, becoming in the process the symbol of the sinister scar.

In the dead of the night of April 14, 2014, while a country troubled by five frightening years of Boko Haram insurgency was wandering aimlessly in a wounded sleep, Boko Haram quietly made their way to the Government Girls Secondary School Chibok where they snatched about 276 female students aged between 16 and 18.

The timing of the attack was perfect as the girls were only in school to take their final exams in Physics after the school had been closed due to deteriorating security attacks.

The attack drew a collective gasp of horror from the Giant of Africa, and jarred the world fully awake to the depth of the danger posed by a group that has done only very little since then to conceal the danger it poses.

As news of the abduction spread, further tipping a country already on edge towards the precipice, there were the usual commitments by the federal government, then led by President Goodluck Jonathan, to find all the girls and reunite them safely with their families at all costs. Eight years and two administrations later, the last girl is yet to return.

About 58 of the girls were able to escape immediately after the attack by jumping from the trucks while about 80 of the girls were later released in exchange for the release of some Boko Haram Commanders by the Nigerian government.

The other abducted girls have continued to trickle in since then. While rescue efforts from the Nigerian authorities have borne fruits over the years leading some of the girls to return home, as of April 14, 2021, more than 100 of the girls were still missing.

According to the Nigerian Army, between June 12 and 14, 2022, Mary Dauda and Hauwa Joseph, two of the girls were found. Of course, they each had babies on them, further confirming the fears that the abduction of the girls was Boko Haram`s steamy stab at sexual slavery. While confirming that all the girls remaining in Boko Haram`s captivity were married, they also revealed that more than 20 of their school mates were still in Gazuwa camp in Sambisa Forest.

As terrorism has continued to rage in Nigeria, disrupting lives with frightening precision, it has been most frustrating to note that the response of the Nigerian authorities has simply not been forceful enough.

Of course, efforts have been made and remain ongoing to halt the hydra-headed monster of terrorism which seems to have designs on the complete takeover of Nigeria, the nagging feeling remains that not nearly enough is being done to check the deadly menace, thereby encouraging its spread in the process. The consequences for Nigerians remain there for all to see.

It is also deeply worrisome that in many ways, it is education itself that is directly under attack by terrorism in Nigeria. All over the country, especially in those areas where these terrorists have been known to set up camp, schools remain their favourite stomping grounds. Students whose only desire is to safely go to school and learn have been subjected to the most horrific of attacks.

The continued lack of safety in many Nigerian schools continues to betray the lack of adequate security that the country is experiencing at the moment. It would appear that unless this is addressed, and quickly too, Nigerians will continue to live in palpable fear.

Kene Obiezu, keneobiezu@gmail.com

NBA 2022 and the Challenges Ahead

In preparation for the 2022 NBA general elections, the Electoral Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association (ECNBA) headed by Ayodele Akintunde, SAN, had released the NBA electoral guidelines and schedule on May 16, 2022. All other things being equal, the general elections shall hold on July 16, 2022 as published in the electoral timetable.

As the election holds next month, virtually every legal practitioner is perturbed whether the electoral body of the NBA would either retain or rewrite the electoral history of the association which is characterized by various high scale malpractices. At the recently held NBA Bwari Branch (Cradle Bar) Law Week 2022, a renowned Law Professor and former Deputy Director-General of the Nigerian Law School, Ernest Ojukwu, SAN, gave credence to the irregularities with his revelation on how senior lawyers used to mobilize Law students for voting and rigging in the successive NBA elections.

Besides the anticipated free, fair and credible elections, the legal profession is under serious threat. The extent lawyers particularly the new wigs suffer unspeakable harassment, unwarranted assaults and ill-treatment while discharging their professional duty in the hands of security personnel is alarming. Gone are the days lawyers were highly respected by all and sundry. The incoming exco must set the administrative machinery of the NBA in motion to effectively tackle this affront.

Moreover, the successive leadership of the NBA have played little or no role in enlightening the public on the right to legal representation of all persons facing criminal charges. The sanctity and inviolability of this stipulated legal procedure is universally acceptable. Access to legal representation is not justice denial. Rather, it is instrumental to achieve justice. In India, legal aid was provided to Amir Kasab who participated in the 2008 attacks that claimed the lives of 166 people. In the USA, legal representation was made available to Farouk Abdulmutallab who attempted to murder almost 300 people. No Nigerian lawyer deserves moral ambush or public humiliation for providing legal representation to suspected criminals.

Binzak Azeez, Newworth LLP (Legal Practitioners), Onikan, Lagos

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Setting the Example

The rescue of the American artistic swimmer Anita Alvarez by her coach shows the courage that people display when they are called upon as well as the limitations of the human body. There are people whose courage is always on display when they run into fires, protect us, and save us but usually they are trained and ready although that should not diminish our respect for them.

We must praise and thank people for their bravery and hope that everyone will step up when called upon. Thanks to coach Andrea Fuentes for what you did and the example you set for everyone.

Dennis Fitzgerald, Melbourne, Australia



60

Hearty Cheers

to the

Rt. Hon. Speaker!

You are a consistent, reliable, amiable and dependable friend, statesman and supporter, whose goodwill, ethical politics and impactful leadership reverberate across not only the length and breadth of Nigeria but across Africa.

Your humility belies the success stories you have garnered as a lawyer, lawmaker and public office holder.

We are proud of your humble, kind-hearted and pious disposition to all and at all times. May this new milestone usher in abundant blessings, joy and fulfillment in all aspects of your life.

Many Happy Returns and Congratulations, the People's Speaker!

RT. HON. FEMI GBAJABIAMILA
Speaker, House of Representatives

Signed

Prince Dapo Abiodun, MFR
Governor, Ogun State

Igbega Ipinle Ogun, Ajose Gbogbo Wa Ni

"Even If you don't believe what we say, you cannot disbelieve what we are doing. Even if you don't like who we are, you cannot disbelieve what we have done. Even if you want to say we have not done anything, you cannot disbelieve what you see!"

- Governor of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu
(26 Jan, 2022)

Happy Birthday

MR TALK & DO

We see your Hardwork, We see the Progress!

BOS ARMOURY

Ring True

08054699539 yemi.adebowale@thisdaylive.com

Yemi Adebowale



Abdullahi Adamu's Road to Perdition

It was so depressing watching the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Abdullahi Adamu defend the dubious decision to replace Bashir Machina, the man that won the party's Yobe North senatorial primary election, with the President of the Senate, Ahmad Lawan, who evidently did not participate in the primary. APC's list of senatorial candidates sent to the electoral umpire, INEC, now has Lawan for Yobe North. Adamu, who spoke last Monday after presenting Biodun Oyebanji, the governor-elect of Ekiti State, to President Muhammadu Buhari, claimed that Lawan participated within the approved timeline. He then struggled to defend his position without facts and figures.

"Go and find out from the person who is responsible for organising the primary. I have done my bit. I do know in my honour that he did participate within the timeline," Adamu declared. This is a barefaced lie and I'm shocked that the APC National Chairman is unperturbed. While Machina was contesting the primary, which he won with 280 votes, Lawan was in Abuja battling to become APC's presidential candidate. So, when and where was the senatorial primary election, which Adamu claimed led to the emergence of Lawan as a candidate, was organised? He could not provide an answer to this. Adamu simply wanted to settle Lawan who on June 8 contested for the APC presidential ticket, but lost to Bola Tinubu. The President of the Senate did not take part in the senatorial primary. This is the truth but Adamu cares less and surreptitiously replaced Machina. So sad!

The APC National Chairman's decision to use his power and position to oppress Machina is disgraceful and all forces of good must rise against it. The removal of his name is illegal, inhuman and undemocratic. This is not the decision of the party's National Working Committee (NWC). The leader of a party that claims to stand for justice must not be seen acting in this manner. I stand with Machina's decision to tackle his oppressors in the law court. So far, he has shown great courage and grit, insisting that he remains APC's candidate for Yobe North.



Abdullahi Adamu

Machina states: "I did not withdraw for anybody and will not withdraw."

The same Adamu dubiously announced Lawan as the consensus presidential candidate of the APC during a meeting of the party's NWC, few days to the primary. He presented it as if it was the decision of all NWC members. All lies! It was Adamu's unilateral decision in support of his friend. This tentatively threw the APC into crisis. The APC governors and other members of the NWC had to move against Adamu. The party's national organising secretary, Sulaiman Argungu openly ridiculed the APC National Chairman, saying it was his personal decision. "It's just an information he gave us. All of us are entitled to our opinion. We are all democrats. This decision was never taken by the NWC, but an information given to the NWC," Argungu said. At the end of the day, Adamu thoroughly humiliated himself.

The former minister of the Niger Delta, Godswill Akpabio, is equally enjoying the support of Adamu in his bid to steal the Akwa Ibom North-west's Senatorial ticket. After his Abuja presidential race debacle, Akpabio returned to Uyo and manipulated the system. He desperately wanted something to keep him relevant in 2023. This former governor, with the support of Adamu, organised a fraudulent fresh senatorial primary election on June 8. An earlier primary election held on May 27 had produced Udom Ekpoudom, a retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police. The State Chairman of the party, Stephen Ntuekpo, cited imaginary security infractions during the May 27 primary and got approval from the national headquarters to conduct a fresh one. Akpabio won the scam primary and his name forwarded to INEC.

Ekpoudom is not the type that will succumb to oppression. I expect him to legally challenge this absurd, ridiculous and highly provocative conspiracy. The primary election that produced Ekpoudom was properly monitored by INEC as constitutionally required and Ekpoudom declared the winner.

That was why INEC expressed shock about Akpabio's sudden candidacy. The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Akwa Ibom, Mike Igini, declared that the commission did not monitor any primary outside the one conducted on May 27 that produced Ekpoudom. Igini said: "Senatorial primary was conducted on the 27th of last month. Was he (Akpabo) an aspirant on that day? The answer is no. And the report of that day has been written since. That event has taken place and concluded before the presidential thing came up. He's the one people should be asking questions if he participated in that primary. INEC is not involved in the conduct of party primaries. We are just an observer."

The law does not allow INEC to reject candidates submitted to them by parties. So, for now, Akpabio is the illegal candidate of APC for Akwa Ibom North-west. But it is only for the moment as I expect the law court to deliver justice. INEC's position as explained by Igini will be very useful to Ekpoudom in court. The election umpire's report is admissible as evidence whenever an aggrieved candidate goes to court. Ekpoudom should quickly apply for the Certified True Copy (CTC) of INEC's report for presentation as evidence.

Adamu's reign as APC's National Chairman may be one of the shortest in the history of the party if he continues running a one-man show with unprecedented impunity. Of course, Adamu inherited a culture of impunity in the party, but I thought he would ensure a bit of difference. It may never happen. This APC National Chairman has decided to just continue with this ugly culture. He amplified it so early in his tenure. He is also so happy sidelining the party's NWC. That was why two national vice chairmen of the party recently accused him of rendering the body useless.

A joint statement by the National Vice Chairman, North-west, Salihu Lukman and National Vice Chairman, South-west, Isaac Kekemeke said all was not well with APC's NWC and called for vigilance/urgent intervention. They accused Adamu of usurpation of other executives' functions, adding that he was guilty of unilaterally taking decisions without consultation and approval of committees as required by the party's constitution." The two chieftains urged the party stakeholders to call the national chairman to order "before his actions will damage the party completely."

Adamu assumed this position with the mentality of a dictator. He can't change. By last Thursday, he was threatening Machina, saying, "Machina should be careful; his issue is getting out of hand. As far as I am concerned, as chairman, my party did not violate any law." I know that very soon, Adamu would be changed by the genuine change agents in the party.

Tribute to My Mother

Call her "mother for all" and you will be right. That's my mother, mama Susan Taiwo Adebowale who passed on at 85 last Sunday in Mende, Maryland, Kosofe LG of Lagos State. Just like the late famed mother Theresa of Calcutta, who lived a life of service to humanity, my mother lived for all, taking care of the children of family, friends and relations. Mama Maryland, as many love to call her, having settled in Maryland, Lagos with her late husband, 65 years ago, was our own "Mother Theresa of Maryland." Mama, who was a successful trader and community leader, shared her life with many. Hers was a happy life rich in service to humankind. This was the central focus of my mother's days on planet earth.

Mama Maryland was a woman of astonishing determination, modest and without slyness. She was continuously enthusiastic to see the best in others. She carried herself with grace and difference. Many will never forget how she raised and improved the lives of countless people and readily overextended a helpful hand to those she hardly knew. She willingly did kindnesses without asking for reciprocity. Mama possessed that angelic capacity to know just how to enhance the life of people around her.

Born in Erigo, Ijebu North-east LG of Ogun State in 1936 to Ijebu parents, Mama Maryland relocated to Lagos as a teenager to live with her elder brother, late Joel Adesina. It was while living with him that she married my late father. The matrimony produced six children. Mama went into trading and became a huge success in her native Mende. She was the Otun Iyalode of Mende.



Mama Maryland

Mama Maryland had a major health challenge at old age. She was 75 then, but she remained undaunted. Even when it was clear that the end was near, she was fearless. The ailment took her right hand but she quickly learnt to use her left hand for feeding. She never for once challenged her creator for her health misfortune. Rather, her faith was strengthened and ceaselessly prayed. By God's unlimited grace and her absolute indefatigable spirit, she lived for another 10 years.

Mama Maryland has returned to her maker a victorious soul. I'm convinced that Almighty God (pleased and approvingly) told her on arrival, "welcome and well done my child." My mother lived a virtuous life. She ran very well and finished her race distinctly. May her specimen of prudent and virtuous living continue to challenge us as we continue to run. As excruciating as it is to say farewell to Mama Maryland, I give praise and thanks to my father in heaven for making it possible for me to experience this world through her. Through her, I have learnt not to mourn like an unbeliever. I also take solace in the treasured writings of Arabian Kahlil Gibran who said, "in the heart of every winter, there throbs a spring, and behind the veil of each night, a smiling morning."

Mama Maryland, not even death could dim your star on earth. You stood for all that is respectable, honourable and great in life. The candle of love you lit in our hearts shall never be put out. May Almighty God continue to bless you in his kingdom. Mama Maryland remains immortal as long as reminiscence lives. The countless people whose lives she touched continue to hold her in enduring esteem and affection. Rest in peace my dear mother. Rest in peace. Rest in peace.

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

Kizz Daniel's Colourful 'Buga' Visuals Out

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

After weeks of anticipation, singer and songwriter Kizz Daniel last Wednesday dropped the visuals for the Tekno assisted smash-hit and world #1 shazamed tune, 'Buga'. The massive hit that got millions of Kizz Daniel fans around the world grooving to this infectious new anthem is further celebrated in a cascade of vivacious colours that do justice to the monster hit.

Resplendent in colours that primarily celebrate the motherland and bursting with energy from all the characters displayed in these addictive visuals, 'Buga' visuals — are the stuff dreamt of and more. Where Kizz Daniel's enigmatic presence is undeniable, Tekno brings his original sway which lends an animated personality to an already perfected artwork.

This genius-of-an-artiste, Kizz Daniel has stolen hearts with these visuals and taken not a few on an emotional tourism where everything is rosy, happy and animated.

The video which was short on locations in Lagos and Abuja by TG Omori also featured award-winning comedian and skit-maker, Sabinus.

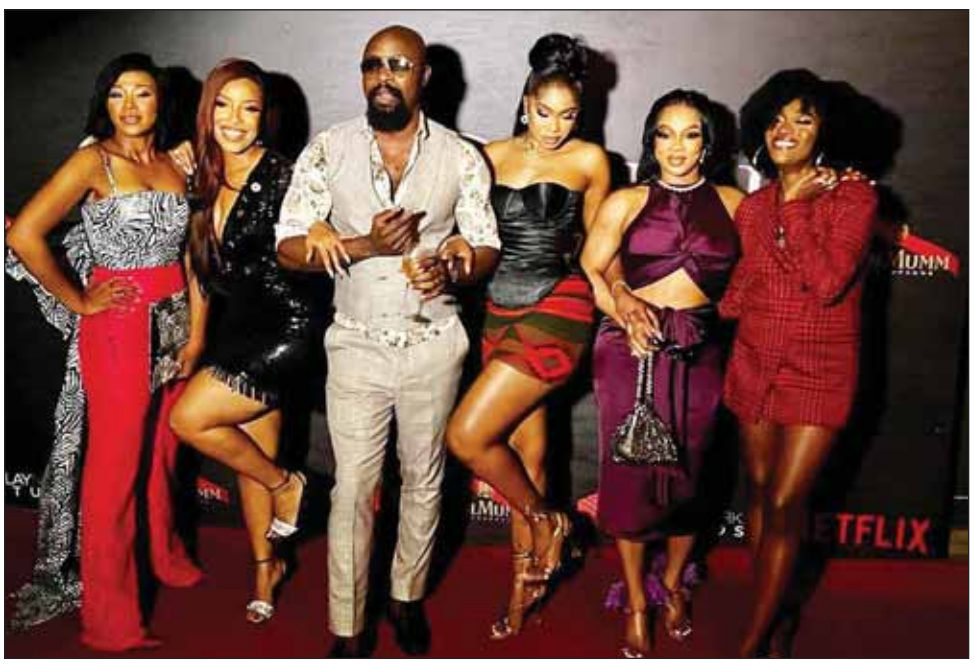
These visuals are all about clean angles and smooth lines, with its visual frames like mini universes of sound and poetry that helps find our way with this beautiful message and music. Just one word describes the 'Buga' visuals: Magic! Currently the buzzing sound on all social spheres and not just that, Kizz Daniel made sure to come through with a signature dance move.

Since its release, 'Buga' has enjoyed massive success spending multiple weeks at the number one spot on TurnTable Top 50 and even got the Liberian President participating in the #BUGACHALLENGE. With release of the visuals, it is believed that the song will continue to enjoy its fine run on the charts and in the streets.



Kizz Daniel on set of Buga video

Amazing 'Glamour Girls' Finally Lands on Netflix



The Glamour Girls - Nse Ikpe-Etim, Joselyn Dumas, Sharon Ooja, Toke Makinwa and Segilola Ogidan in company of Charles Okpaleke, CEO of Play Network Studios

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

After a long wait, Glamour Girls – a remake of the 1994 film with the same title – finally debuted on Netflix this week. The film has been remade with a lot of posh to suit the viewing pleasure of viewers while sticking partially to the storyline of the original film. The film is written by Kemi Adesoye, directed by Bunmi Ajakaiye, and produced by Abimbola Craig for Play Network Studios production.

This modern-day remake of the classic Nollywood film focuses on the story of four girls who are desperately trying to make a living to live large in the big city of Lagos. Within the usually patriarchal African community, they all dare to raise a stir with their professions as high-end escorts.

"The world of high-end escort promises glamour, wealth and the chance of reinvention for a group of women — till a killing and theft threaten it all", the synopsis reads.

These female characters: Emma (played by Sharon Ooja), Helion (played by Segilola Ogidan), Jenna (played by Joselyn Dumas) and Louise (played by Toke Makinwa) are led by the Madame of the business Donna (played by Nse Ikpe Etim).

They are called the Glamour Girls, and the reason for this is their ability to present a life of Glamour as a front while going around pretending to sleep with men and vacationing on Islands and beaches. The Netflix movie tells the story of how these girls try to hold it all together while deceiving men and relieving them of their valuables.

Sharon Ooja and Toke Makinwa in a sneak peek give a little more insight into their characters as Emmanuela and Louise.

"Growing up it was one of the films that I watched, and it was such a classic, such a beautiful story. It's just amazing that now I'm older, I'm an actor, and I get to play one of the leads… this opportunity to work with Play Network and work on a movie that I really, really loved growing up was just amazing," said Sharon Ooja.

Describing her character Louise, Toke said, "I played the character Louisa aka Louise. The character Louise is a handful. She gets want she wants. She will stop at nothing till she accomplishes it. She is a loving wife, an awesome mother, and also a hustler.

"I'm supper excited because a film of this magnitude, I mean it's been done before, and it had Nollywood legends that went on to shape the era of Nollywood we are enjoying now… I'm super excited that this is going to be such an epic movie."

Tiwa Savage Excites with Tour Performances

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Tiwa Savage, no doubt is one of Africa's biggest pop icons, whatever one thinks of her. In the modern history of Afrobeats, Tiwa Savage is one of the artistss whose talents have carried Afrobeats far and wide. For a decade, she has stayed at the top of the industry releasing numerous hits and establishing herself as the Queen of Afrobeats.

The singer has been in the news since her "Water and Garri" tour, which started mid-last month, ended last Sunday. The Afrobeats queen had disclosed that the 17-city North American tour was named after her August 2021 Extended Play (EP) 'Water & Garri', a five-track EP. "Don't even need to sing, y'all energy is gonna be incredible on this tour.

I can feel it already," she wrote on her Instagram page.

The songstress' debut album 'Once Upon a Time' was put out in 2013. She released her second 'R.E.D' in December 2015. In September 2017, she came with her debut EP 'Sugarcane' and followed it up with the 'Celia' album in 2020. This is one icon that has inspired a generation of young female musicians. She is doing great so far.

One cannot wait to see what she brings next be it concerts, albums, singles, and fashion, name it. Her exquisite fashion choices, collaborations with other artists, reconnection with a prominent friend and performer Wizkid, and the mother of all news, her sold-out tour, flooded all social media platforms.

In the sold out show, the excited audience were demanding for more and Tiwa Savage light heartedly responded that there's a lot more hit songs that she doesn't know which song to perform next. "I have too many f**king hits, I don't know what's next" Tiwa Savage said on stage while performing at the Canadian stop of her tour'.

Her statement received excited cheers from the audience who were getting absolute treat for their money. Tiwa Savage then proceeded to perform her hit single 'Love Me' which rolled back the years and brought memories of the early days of her great career.



Tiwa Savage

SHOWBIZFLAIR



Nikki Laoye with Soul Snatcha

Nikki Laoye, Soul Snatcha Express Love, Commitment in 'I Do'

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Best friends turned lovers; that's singers Nikki Laoye and her husband, Kunle Adeyoola, popularly known as Soul Snatcha have dropped a love song titled, 'I Do'. Snatcha used to be one half of Nigeria's music group, the Rooftop MCs. Recall that Snatcha proposed to Nikki Laoye in December 2021 in the presence of his four children.

Nikki Laoye and her ex-husband parted ways after seven years of marriage in 2018, while, Snatcha lost his wife, Adora in 2019. Since the news of their marriage went viral, fans had excitedly expected the love story would draw a soundtrack and the new jam is believed a perfect expression of their love and commitment to one another.

The couple teamed up with award-winning producer, Egar Boi to create the nostalgic tune. Laced with its captivating vibe and lyrics, the Afrobeats infused single, "I Do" is bound to become a favourite love anthem for couples worldwide. Snatcha & Nikki Laoye are also renowned for their relationship Podcast called "Meet The Snatchas", sharing their personal truths, opinions & advice on important topics regarding love, relationships & blended family life.

Talking about the new single, they wrote on their YouTube channel, "Our Love Story is definitely a God-given second chance of a lifetime, we call it #RemixOfALifetime and this song is a perfect expression of our love and commitment to each other."

Once speaking about their marriage, Snatcha said "Certain things happen and we would even be trying to grasp how it all came to be. It was so unlikely and unplanned. It was not something either of us had ever considered. I can categorically say God threw us at each other. It is a question we both ask ourselves because we never saw it coming. God inspired the decision and I have a history of trusting Him and He has a history of always giving me the best."

Ruggedman Hosts Faze, Adx, Konga at 'Foundation Night'

Tosin Clegg

The June Edition was on the 17th at De Saras Lounge, Lekki Phase 1 and he hosted Faze, Adx of Artquake and Konga. Supporting acts of the night were Spider Ridder, Dj Shevco, Whiteman, Hypeman Mc Platg and Dj Quest.

Mimicko and Tuoyo of bbnaija made surprise appearances.

Speaking about his reasons for hosting these events, he said, "I am doing this because I love giving honour to whom honour is due. I want to give fans who keep asking where some of the older artistes are a monthly event where they can come and see them.

It will also keep them in the eyes and ears of the new generation artistes and promoters.

"What I want the public to take from the foundation night series is that being older doesn't mean you have stopped being an entertainer and they have a place to come and watch their favourite artistes once a month." He added.

The newest cab company in town "Lagos Ride" supported the event and gave guests discounted rides to and from the venue.

Hiptv also supported the event. The night was fun filled as guests were taken down memory lane as they all sang and danced the night away with energetic performances from all the acts. The event was packaged by Smile Global Entertainment.



Ruggedman

Yetunde Adeyemi Bags Golden Stars Award

Tosin Clegg

Yetunde Adeyemi popularly known as Yetibae is a Canada-based Nollywood actress and producer whose works have been a testament to her creativity and passion for films and its productions.

After moving to Canada a few years ago, Adeyemi relentlessly pushed her career further without hesitation and produced movies which recently earned her the Most Promising Actress Diaspora award at the just concluded Golden Stars Awards held in Lagos.

Speaking about her award, she said, "Believe in yourself and anything is possible! Special Thanks to the awards organizers for honouring me with this and it's something I'm proud of. I'm sure my fans are proud of me also and it comes to sure that even as I'm far from home I'm still doing well."

Her 1st movie was Ashiri Gominor" which brought her to limelight and ever since, Adeyemi hasn't held back on giving her best to what she knows how to do best.



Yetunde Adeyemi

Yaw

I'm Currently Shooting 'Sparadice'

Steve Onu popularly known as Yaw is a famous stand-up comedian, on-air personality, actor, master of ceremony, event host, radio personality and all round entertainer. His time in the Nigerian entertainment industry has contributed more than just his personal artistry but added more of his capacity to add to its growth through his shows and on air programmes. In this interview with **Tosin Clegg** he talks about his projects, his just concluded show and a lot more



Yaw

Yaw's new project

I'm currently on set shooting a new TV show "Sparadice'. it's coming on star times and some other tv stations. It's an humorous tv series, so that's what Yaw has been up to. Well, I'm still on radio, the same radio station Wazobia FM. That's what I have been doing with my time.

Flatmates is like a family

We started flatmates, I think in 2002 or 2003 I can't even remember again jo! Myself, Basketmouth and Okechukwu Chioma started Flatmates and the rest is history because for now, it's the number one most sort out for tv series. I will just say it's grace and we loving what we know how to do, I really can't say the secret but we loving our craft and giving it our best.

About my just concluded show

Alright, so the show is titled PO! It's the normal PO that you go to toilet with, the normal ones kids use. It's written by actor Femi Branch, I'm sure it's in the 1990s he wrote it and the first ever performance was done in 2004 by late Jaye Aboderin and Keppy Ekpeyoung. And I did the play again in 2009 and it doesn't really have special meaning than the PO! You pass excreta with. So, I decided to make it a three-day show because the play on its own is to sensitize people about governance and the part the society plays; not just the people in power. We are all in this together. If we don't we don't get it right now, with the way this country has become now, believe me I don't know what will become of us. This is to tell people to vote, go out and get your PVC to vote and then vote wisely also. Not just because you want to get money.

Yaw as president of Nigeria

If I have the opportunity to become the president of this our great country, the first thing I would fix is the power. I will fix power because the things I have noticed about Nigerians is we are hardworking people.

Government hasn't provided us these things but we provide it for ourselves. Our lights, security, houses and all by ourselves to ourselves. . . so if I have the opportunity, I will fix power so that people can grow well in their doings. The money we spend our power alone is too much, too crazy! And gradually, we can start to have train, electronic cars.

57 Hearty Cheers

Happy BIRTHDAY

to a hardworking, visionary, and forthright leader



BABAJIDE SANWOOLU

On this special day of yours, the management and staff of the Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority wish you a very Happy Birthday. Mr. Governor, you have been an inspirational leader and mentor to many far and wide. Your perseverance, empathy and tenacity to move the State from "Great Lagos to Greater Lagos" is highly inspirational and remarkable.
May you be graced with many more years filled with joy, peace and progress.

Happy Birthday Sir!

LAGOS STATE LOTTERIES AND GAMING AUTHORITY

Signed by:

Mr Bashir Are

Chief Executive Officer



Happy Birthday MR SPEAKER!

I heartily felicitate my friend and brother, the Speaker of the House Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, as he clocks 60 today.

I join the family, friends and political associates of Mr Speaker in rejoicing with him for reaching this milestone in happiness and good health.

My brother Femi is a great Nigerian patriot and committed servant of the people.

Since the inauguration of the ninth Assembly in June 2019, I have been really impressed working side by side with him and our other colleagues in developing the Legislature and making it work always better for the people of this great country.

Together, we have steered the ship of the National Assembly with the aim every day to ensure stability and good governance in our country.

This smooth working relationship has been made possible by the fact that we share a grand vision of effective delivery of service by our governmental institutions to the Nigerian people.

Mr Speaker has been a worthy ally in this voyage of service to the nation and, with the continuous cooperation and understanding of our colleagues in both Chambers, we shall together anchor safely next year, satisfied that we have given our best.

Again, I wish Mr Speaker a happy birthday celebration.



Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila
Speaker, House of Representatives
Federal Republic of Nigeria



SIGNED:
AHMAD IBRAHIM LAWAN PhD, CON
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

HAPPY 60th BIRTHDAY TO MY BOSS

On behalf of my family, constituents and members of the 9th House of Representatives Committee on Navy, I wish to send 60 hearty cheers to our capable and indefatigable Speaker, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila as he marks his 60th birthday today.

Rt Honourable Speaker, I am indeed very proud of your inspiring and all-inclusive leadership style especially, in ensuring that all members of the 9th House of Representatives are always carried along in the scheme of things.

You have distinguished yourself as a great leader and I am super proud to associate and identify with you on this special occasion of your birthday celebration.

Unarguably, the 9th House of Representatives under your able leadership has recorded many feats in terms of the quality and quantity of Bills and motions passed to better the lots of the citizenry.

As you celebrate this special day, I pray the Almighty Allah grant you many more years ahead even as I pray that the Almighty Allah grant you opportunity for even higher responsibilities in the nearest future!

Once again, a very happy birthday Rt Hon. Speaker and many more years ahead!





Signed
Hon. Yusuf Gagdi,
Member Representing Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam Federal Constituency of Plateau State and Chairman, House Committee on Navy

POLITY

How Oyebanji Won Ekiti Guber Race

In this report, **RAHEEM AKINGBOLU**, who has been following the political trends in Ekiti for six months before the Saturday, June 18 election, writes on the factors that aided Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji's victory

Since the early hours of Sunday, June 19, when the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji was pronounced winner of the June 18 governorship elections in Ekiti, the result has been attracting mixed reaction from criss section of the society. To many political observers, especially those who don't reside in Ekiti or not in tune with the happenings on Ekiti political terrain, Oyebanji's emergence was like a miracle because he was not constantly in the news like many traditional politicians.

But to home based politicians and observers, Oyebanji, popularly known as BAO, deserved his day in the sun. And the sun shone on him on Saturday, June 18.

Unknown to many people outside Ekiti, Oyebanji has been involved in political activities in the state since 1994 when he was appointed Secretary of the Committee for the creation of Ekiti State, a position that endeared him to many and enabled him to mingle well with the traditional institution and prominent leaders in the state.

In the build up to the 1999 election, Oyebanji joined the mow rested Alliance for Democracy (AD) and tied his apron to that of Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo, who later became the first executive governor of the state. He later became the Personal Assistant to Adebayo and subsequently served as Special Adviser and Chief of Staff. That was the beginning of his active participation in politics and elections in the state.

Though he didn't contest for any elective post, the Ikogosi Ekiti born former Political Science lecturer, was not only actively involved, he was part of three administrations, including serving as commissioner and Secretary to State Government, until October 2021, when he threw his hat into the ring.

Among other attributes, the Ekiti governor-elect knew early enough that politics is majorly local and he played it locally by meeting his people periodically and addressing issues that affect them.

After winning the January 27 primary election, Oyebanji hit the ground running immediately by assembling a sizeable number of intellectuals, who also understood Ekiti politics and the challenges facing the state like the back of their hands and came out with a workable blueprint for his campaign. First, he identified the need to build his campaign on Governor Kayode Fayemi administration's record of performance having been part of the first and second term administrations of Governor Fayemi. He also insisted on giving priority to campaigning around continuity of projects and regular payment of salaries and pensions, which was a major attraction to workers who could not trust the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP).

In March, Oyebanji and his team, at a carnival-like event, which was later followed by a road show unveiled his manifesto titled; 'Together with You' where he itemized his six- point agenda which include, Youth Development & Job Creation, Human Capital Development, Agricultural & Rural Development, Infrastructural & Industrialization, Tourism & Culture and Governance.

Under governance, the APC candidate said he would design a sustainable programme to clear outstanding salary and pension obligations and ensure full compliance with the contributory pension scheme policy going forward. He also emphasized his determination to provide logistic and equipment support to existing security agencies.



Oyebanji

However, while the campaign lasted, Oyebanji was perhaps the only candidate who insisted on running an issue based campaign without maligning, denigrating or attacking any of his challengers for six months. He met about 500 groups and associations in Ekiti, preaching the gospel of all round development via his manifesto, while others were throwing jabs on social media.

One major edge he had during the campaign was that the elderly and Ekiti youths identified with him because of his past record as a quiet philanthropist who reaches out to the youth. The elderly also believe that the monthly stipends for elderly citizens and Onje Arugbo which provided food items for indigent old people will continue under his administration.

Another game changer was the women campaign, which was unprecedented in Ekiti politics. This was led by the wife of the Governor, Erelu Bisi Fayemi and Oyebanji's wife, Dr Olayemi Oyebanji and the deputy Governorship candidate, Mrs Monisade Afuye. They were later joined by APC National Women leader, Mrs Neta Udu. The women campaign activities went to the farmsteads and interlands and major and local markets to engage women for over six weeks while other people focused on party convention and primaries. None of the other parties had such initiatives.

Then the homeboy factor through which the promoters of the APC candidate played up the fact that Oyebanji had his primary, secondary and university education in Ekiti. He started work as a young lecturer at the state University before joining Politics. The locals identified with him for this because they knew his origin. The alumni association of the state University also launched a massive campaign for him in the hope to realise the emergence of an alumnus as governor of the state. To them, the 40 years old Ekiti State University was ripe enough to produce the governor of the state. Again, through this, they helped with roadshows as well as producing many campaign materials and mobilising members to achieve the dream.

However, the trend changed for the better with the emergence of the APC national leader, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu as presidential flag bearer of the party. At this stage, the supporters of the former Governor Segun Oni, who had been campaigning that SDP was Tinubu's creation and 'Plan B' for the actualization of the presidential ambition of the former Lagos State governor became dumbfounded. Tinubu didn't only come to Ekiti to campaign for Oyebanji, he, alongside 13 governors from different states, expressly stated that APC would go to the election as a unified party. The role played by Governor Fayemi at the mega rally and weeks before the election also helped to unite the various tendencies within the party and ended the speculation that the governor was not in support of Oyebanji's aspiration.

In a way, Oyebanji's record as Secretary to the Committee for the creation of Ekiti State creation, was also a connecting factor with Ekiti people. The Saturday, June 18th election thus turned out to be a payback time for the 54 years old Oyebanji who served the committee when he was barely 27 years old, working with the elders and Ekiti obas to agitate for the creation of what became Ekiti State in 1996. In towns and villages, Ekiti elders and obas indicated that they had confidence in Oyebanji's ability.

As stated by an elder statesman and PDP stalwart, Chief Tom Ikimi, at a recent forum that PDP is in comatose in Ekiti and that the party wasn't expecting anything better from the election because there wasn't any strong plan and national campaign council, PDP was literally nonexistent during the preparation for the election. According to Ikimi, PDP failed not because it didn't have followers again but simply because the man that was supposed to lead it has chosen to be its undertaker! Therefore, the hollowness of the SDP and PDP campaign made the journey an easy ride for the ruling party. The PDP and SDP campaigns were believed to have been built on empty electoral promises. SDP was banking on emotional blackmail and positioning itself to profit from internal wrangling within APC without addressing issues. Once the internal wrangling was resolved, it had nothing else to talk about.

Above all APC campaigned massively and strategically by going round the markets and farmsteads and structuring its campaigns along 14 directorates and 20 committees, headed by strong political leaders. With this background, all APC candidates in the 2023 elections took the election as a referendum on their ability.

In a way, the involvement of spouses of candidates in campaign mobilization also helped the party to appeal to female folks. BAO'S wife led a campaign to appeal for votes in her Ado Ekiti town and Aisegba, her maternal home. She is a princess in Ado and that earned her royal blessings and endorsement from the palace.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

2023: No to Identity Politics

Austin Tam-George

Nigeria is perhaps the world's greatest victim of identity politics - the politics of who you are, where you come from, and which deity you worship. Nothing seems to animate the primal instincts of Nigerians more than religion and tribe. We may endure almost any hardship, and forgive the ghastly incompetence and corruption of our leaders.

We may turn the other cheek when our educational standards collapse, or blame the antics of Satan when our children die from water-borne diseases. When our national power grid collapses, as it frequently does, plunging the entire country into medieval darkness, we murmur our national shame in private.

Rather than hold our leaders to account, we prefer to leave even matters of sanitation, health care delivery, and high maternal mortality "in the hands of God". But the same Nigerians are prepared to kill in broad daylight or go to war over religious "blasphemy".

We recruit our leaders, not according to their abilities or the brilliance of their ideas, but based on tribal identity, political zones, and religious faith. But in the 2023 election circle, we must set different standards in our leadership recruitment process. We must look for competence, empathy, inclusiveness, and innovative thinking in those who seek public office.

History teaches us again and again that when we "zone" or allocate political power simply on the basis of geography, only tribal demagogues with the vilest energy would seize it.

When we vote on the basis of religious identity, then we set the stage for incompetent religious bigots to win. President Muhammadu Buhari is perhaps the conclusive proof that a regional leader with an insular vision can never collectivize a nation, and propel it towards development.

Secondly, as we inch closer to the next general elections, the champions of "religious equity" are stepping forward with the old obsession about the religious match making of candidates. They are arguing for and against a so-called "Christian-Christian ticket versus a Muslim-Muslim ticket".

But Nigerians, especially young Nigerians, have seen the ultimate futility of these false religious debates. Nigerians want competent and visionary leaders who can move the country out of its current doldrums, and inspire Nigeria to greater heights.

After all, President Buhari is a Muslim. But he has failed to stop the kidnappings or killings of thousands of Muslims over the past seven years of his administration.

Similarly, despite being a pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria's largest Pentecostal church, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has failed to halt the relentless massacre of Christians in all parts of the country.

In fact, the abject failure of the Buhari-Osinbajo administration is both evidence and a warning to Nigerians that even a "balanced" Muslim-Christian ticket could spell disaster for the country.

Today, we can all see that the widespread poverty in Nigeria knows no tribe or religion. And a failed State endangers us all: rich or poor, Muslim, Christian, and those with no faith at all.

Nigeria has reached a critical inflection point where even "good governance" may no longer be enough to redeem her incredible promise. We need creative, competent, broadminded and audacious leaders at all levels to move the country in a different direction.

Every nation on earth can be recreated to reflect the finest values of its people. So let's get to work. We need to reinvent an equitable and compassionate nation where no one is killed or left behind simply because of where they were born.

Let 2023 be the year we turn the page on tribalism and identity politics in Nigeria.

Dr. Austin Tam-George is a former Commissioner for Information, Rivers State.

Life Bridge Dignostic Centre Receives ISO Award

The Registrar, Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN), Dr. Tosan Erhabor has called on medical laboratories in the country to always adhere to professional standards in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Erhabor made the call on the occasion of the presentation of the ISO 15189 certificate to Lifebridge Medical Diagnostic Centre in Abuja. ISO 15189 is an award of competence and quality by the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

The MLSCN Registrar disclosed that the Council had granted accreditation symbol certificates to only 14 laboratories in the country so far and said the quality and standard should not be compromised in the medical process, especially in medical laboratory science.

Erhabor, who congratulated Lifebridge on the Award, urged the organisation to sustain the high quality and standard service delivery that earned it the award.

He said that laboratory samples were very critical in determining the direction of about 70 per cent of treatment and monitoring of patients. "70 per cent of results provided by laboratories is what is used for treatment and monitoring of patients. The era of taking laboratory samples to three laboratories before getting results is over", he said.

Erhabor described Lifebridege as the first privately-owned laboratory with ISO 15189 certificate in the Federal Capital Territory.

According to him, it is a demonstration of its commitment to quality and standard in service delivery.



L-R :Dr. Tosan Erhabor, Registrar Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN); Dr Tawe G.S, Medical Director, Lifebridge Diagnostic Centre, Abuja (LBMDC) and Dr. Donald Ofili, Director of Accreditation Services, MLSCN, during the presentation of ISO Award to LBMDC ...recently.

The registrar warned that by the year 2025 laboratories with low standards and poor quality management systems would be stripped of their operational licences.

Earlier, Dr. Tawe Godwin Sale, Managing Director, Lifebridge Medical Diagnostic Centre, said the centre was set up to save both lives and money for its clients. Dr. Sale affirmed the determination of the centre to cut down on resources spent by Nigerians on medical tourism by providing quality and laboratory services.

"Shortly after commissioning, we became a one-stop centre for all diagnostic needs within the first two years of operation. Lifebridge expanded its services to include Endoscopy, Histopathology and a worldclass molecular pathology laboratory where all DNA and RNA basedtests/investigations are carried out," he said. Dr. Sale assured of the preparedness of the centre to continue to provide quality and standard healthcare to Nigerians in partnership with the Federal Government.

The Medical Director described the ISO 15189 award of excellence as a booster for the organisation to deliver more quality service delivery.

Dr. Ike Okonkwo, Consultant Pathologist, Maitama District Hospital, lauded Lifebridge Medical Diagnostic Centre for its commitment to quality services.

Okonkwo urged them to sustain the tempo, saying that quality service delivery was not negotiable in the medical sector.

Life bridge Diagnostic Centre, Abuja, officially commissioned in July 2012, provides comprehensive medical diagnostic services from 64 CT Scan, 1.5 Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imagining (MRI) of the human body mammography to breast cancer screening, endoscopy and colonoscopy e.t.c.

The Centre had in January, 2022 been recognised by Afribex Magazine for the Outstanding Diagnostic Facility in Africa.

AIFA Reading Society, NNPC, Shell Donate to Eko Akete Grammar School

AIFA Reading Society, in its mission to achieve sustainable educational development by promoting literacy and a reading culture, has partnered with the NNPC/Shell Nigeria and its co-venture partners – ExxonMobil, TotalEnergies and Agip to promote reading culture and literacy among students in Eko Akete Grammar School, Lagos State.

On June 15, 2022. Through this partnership, textbooks and notebooks amongst other educational materials were donated to the school and its students. To sustain the interest in reading sparked by the donations, the partners launched a Book Reading Club which will be supported by Women in Shell (WIS) volunteers.

The Representatives of NNPC/SNEPCo, Lagos State Ministry of Education and the Education District III, Directors of AIFA Reading Society, the School's Administrators, and members of the Junior School Parents' Forum attended the event.

AIFA Reading Society, a non-profit organisation focused on fostering a reading culture and promoting quality education for sustainable development, achieves its objectives through its unique initiatives such as this event.

Its partnership with NNPC/SNEPCo provided the opportunity to extend its Book Recycle Scheme and AIFA Book Club Initiatives to Eko Akete Grammar School.

The CEO of Whyte Cleon Limited and a Director of AIFA Reading Society, Mrs. Nireti Adebayo, reiterated the Society's commitment to its mission to achieve sustainable educational development by promoting literacy and a reading culture. She advised the students to take advantage of the Society's opportunities to improve themselves as the future of Nigeria lies with them.

Also speaking at the event, The Strategy, Planning and Operations Manager, Corporate Relations Nigeria, Mr. Tunde Adams who represented the Managing Director, SNEPCo, applauded SNEPCo's commitment to improve the quality education in Nigeria as education takes the place of pride in the list of social investment activities of the company.

Mrs. Tolulope T. Derin-Adefuwa, representing the Group Managing Director, NNPC, stated in her remarks that NNPC believes in touching lives through education and will continue to support education. She encouraged the students to believe in themselves, represent Nigeria positively, and shine the light wherever they find themselves.

In addition to the book donations to the school library, 30 students with commendable academic performances from the Junior and Senior School received backpacks donated by Ibikunle Dashur Foundation, Fabian Ajogwu Foundation and Kenna Partners. Engineer Ibikunle Dashur and Professor Fabian Ajogwu, SAN, Directors of the AIFA Reading Society, championed this donation.

Miss Ifebuchi Ozougwu, a student in her final year (SSS3), received a scholarship covering her tertiary education from Fabian Ajogwu Foundation. Professor Fabian Ajogwu, SAN, on congratulating Miss Ifebuchi Ozougwu, urged stakeholders and individuals to empower the younger generation for a better nation.



L-R: Member, International Chamber of Commerce Nigeria [ICCN], Mrs. Omolara Akanji; Chief Executive Officer, Pan African Payment and Settlement System, Mr. Mike Ogbalu; Chairman, International Chamber of Commerce Nigeria [ICCN], Mr. Babatunde Savage; Treasurer ([ICCN), Mrs. Dorothy Ufot; and Secretary General (ICCN), Mrs. Olubunmi Osuntuyi during the Post Annual General Meeting of International Chamber of Commerce Nigeria / Pan African Payment and Settlement System held in Lagos…. recently



L-R: President, Nigeria Agribusiness Group, Mr. Emmanuel Ijewere; Deputy Director General, Corporate Services, International Institute for Tropical Agriculture,(IITA), Hilde Koper; Country Head, Nigeria-Mastercard Foundation, Chidinma Lawanson; Divisional Head, Agric and Solid Mineral, Finance Group, Sterling Bank Plc, Olusola Obikanye and Executive Director, I-Youth Project, Aline Mugisho during the I-Youth Project Agribusiness Investment Forum held in Lagos…. SUNDAY ADIGUN



Cross section of Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc 1st quarter 2022 Staff Motivation Award Recipients during the Company's Staff Motivation Scheme award presentation event held at their offices in Apapa Lagos ....



L-R: Deputy Manager, Corporate Communications TGI Group, Ebose Aziba; Business Development and Strategy, Tanvi Savara; Head of Operations, DashMe Foundation, Tomisin Akinwunmi; Head, Corporate Communications, TGI Group, Rafiat Gawat, and Head, Organisational Development and Change, Abayomi Bello during the handover of donations from TGI Cares Foundation to the DashMe Foundation in Lagos… recently

Let's Match Buhari's Fairy Tales With Realities



THEFRONTLINES

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Nothing amazes me more like President Muhammadu Buhari's penchant for self-adulation, puritanism, and a very poor attempt to rewrite and stand history on its head. To him, he is the best thing that has ever happened to Nigeria since 1960. Soon, he would pass himself off as the father of modern Nigeria. Whatever that would mean, only time will tell.

While the President seems to be ensconced in his fairy tale world of make-belief, the reality is befuddling and captures the deep-rooted insensitivity and detachment of the President from the same people he professes to be serving.

After exit polls in the Ekiti state governorship election called the outcome in favor of the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Biodun Oyebanji, Buhari declared that the victory was an indication that things are getting better.

Hear him: "I loved how the APC governors mobilized and supported you. I think the party is very lucky, and things are getting better." Rather than investing in the people who voted for him and through whom he took an oath of office to serve, the President's overriding interests are politics and how to perpetuate himself and the party in power.

For a man who does not fail at every given opportunity, especially while hosting donors, to boost his ego by promising that he would deliver a free and fair election in 2023, the cacophony of voices including the opposition parties, election monitors, and aggrieved voters alleging widespread vote-buying were all lost on him.

At the same time that the President was praising his party and candidate for their exploits in the Ekiti elections, people were still protesting and alleging vote-buying against the ruling party. As it has become his hallmark approach to state issues, the President preferred cherry-picking what appealed to him.

While the President ignored these allegations, the declared winner, Biodun Oyebanji at least acknowledged the allegations of vote-buying but was quick to say that "I did not witness any vote-buying in the polling unit where I voted."

With barely a few months to another general election holding in February 2023, these allegations cast a huge shadow on the likely outcome or credibility of the polls. Will Buhari keep a straight face and still vouch that he would deliver free and fair polls next year? I have strong doubts.

Listening to the President speak, sometimes you begin to wonder whether he is in the same Nigerian space or operating from Mars. Apart from his delusional answers, for somebody who should be a unifier, the President is openly divisive. While he sees people of his ethnicity as saints, he exhibits outright hostility and voices his hatred for other tribes, especially the Igbo.

To him, Nigerians should learn to tolerate his tribesmen who have constituted themselves into a major nuisance and security threat to the entire country. Nigerians are told to tolerate the idiosyncrasies of his tribesmen who have turned kidnapping, banditry, and insurgency into a new way of life and demonize the genuine self-determination of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) as terrorists.

In a recent interview with Bloomberg, when asked about his legacies, the President said "We leave Nigeria in a far better place than we found it. Corruption is less hidden for Nigerians feel empowered to report it without fear, while money is returned; terrorists no longer hold any territory in Nigeria, and their leaders are deceased, and vast infrastructure development sets the country on course for sustainable and equitable growth."

The question is: is Nigeria better off under Buhari now after almost eight years on the saddle than when he came in 2015? A recent fact check undertaken by Daily Trust in collaboration with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) returned a negative verdict. It emphatically stated that using world bank measuring standards, Nigeria has done far worse under Buhari in eight years making Nigeria far worse than how he met it in 2015.

On the economy, the President told Bloomberg how his administration boosted domestic production. According to him, "For years we have been criticized by the likes of the FT, the Economist, and others for supposedly mistaken attempts to de-globalize and re-localize food production and boost manufacturing. Now with the war in Ukraine breaking global food supply chains "Davos Man" is in retreat as the energy crisis makes countries everywhere think again about energy independence and security. We have spent our two terms investing heavily in the national road, rail, and transport infrastructure set to unleash growth, connect communities, and lessen inequality. This is structural transformation."

But Buhari was quick to add a caveat stating that these achievements "may not show on standard economic metrics now, but the results will be apparent in good time." If for almost eight years that he has been in the saddle, the economic metrics can not show now how many more years would it take them to manifest? The truth is that because Buhari's economic policies were rooted in quicksand, they could not stand the test of time and therefore evaporated in thin air.

The stark reality is that Buhari, who plunged the country into its first recession the first in 26 years as soon as he took power, according to the facts check is economical with the truth because "Nigeria's inflation rate in 2015 was a single digit of 9.01 per cent. A breakdown of inflation figures year on year showed that the inflation rate at the end of 2015 was 9.01 per cent. In 2016, in the thick of the recession, it skyrocketed to 15.68 per cent. In 2017, it further moved up to 16.52 per cent. It however slowed to 12.09 per cent in 2018 and later 11.40 in 2019.

The check went on to show that inflation again rose to 15.75 per cent in December 2020 which is the highest recorded in the past three years. In 2021, the inflation rate rose for the first time in eight months to 15.63 per cent, the reason attributed to the high yuletide spending. Subsequently, the latest Consumer Price Index report by the National Bureau of Statistics indicated that Nigeria's inflation rose to 15.7 per cent in February from 15.6 per cent in January.

Continuing its upward swing, the check revealed that contrary to claims by the President Inflation rose to its highest level since 2017, rising from 16.82% recorded in April 2022 to 17.71% in May, according to the recently released Consumer Price Index report, by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

On the debt level, as of 2015 before President Buhari took over power, Nigeria's debt revenue stood at N8.8 trillion, according to the Debt Management Office.

However, recent statistics from the DMO showed that Nigeria's debt skyrocketed from N8.8 trillion in 2015 to N41 trillion as at June 2022. This represents an increment of over 500 per cent,

The country's debt rose from N39.56 trillion in December 2021 to N41.60 trillion in the first three months of 2022 alone.

FUEL PRICES

In the same vein, checks show that fuel price at the Buhari government's inception stood at N87 per litre. As of May 2016, it had moved from N145 per litre representing a 66 per cent increase.

In 2020, it was further reviewed upwards to N162 per litre. The same year, the product sold for between N165 per litre and N220 per litre at the fueling stations. This was further compounded by the unavailability of the product with the major oil marketers saying they could not continue selling fuel at N165 per litre.

EXCHANGE RATE

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

NCPC's Executive Secretary, Pam Bags Award

Justina Uzo

The Executive Secretary, the Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission (NCPC), Rev. Dr. Yakubu Pam has been bestowed with an "Award of Excellence" by Making Life Better Care Foundation for Better Tomorrow, Abuja.

Speaking during the event at the organisation's NCPC Corporate headquarters on June, 22, 2022, the President of the Foundation, Hajiya Aishata Abubakar said the recognition is for the role Rev. Pam has played in the country especially in the volatile areas.

"Pam's visits to the crisis regions brought calm and restored peace," she said. Abubakar hinted that her Foundation considered the NCPC Executive Secretary worthy of an award of excellence as "you have indeed touched lives through peace keeping and you have used your office to better the lives of so many Nigerians."

She urged Pam to use his good offices to touch more lives in order to add more value to the country.

Speaking at the event, Pam told his audience about NCPC, saying that the Commission is charged with the responsibility of airlifting Christian pilgrims from Nigeria to holy lands around the world such as the holy sites of Israel, Jordan and Rome, Italy as well as Greece.

Pam also said the Commission had recently flagged-off its 2021 main pilgrimage precisely on June 16, 2021 with pilgrims from FCT and Bayelsa State.

He spoke on the Commission's modest achievements excitedly, pointing out what happened during the pandemic when they were able to airlift pilgrims to the Kingdom of Jordan for the 2020 pilgrimage exercise, the first time in the history of the Commission.

He said the state of Israel had shut its doors to pilgrims due to the Covid-19 pandemic and noted, "We took our pilgrims to the Kingdom of Jordan and we recorded zero abscondment."

He thanked the Making Life Better Care Foundation for Better Tomorrow for honouring him.

He advised Nigerians to live together in peace and harmony not minding the differences in their religions. "Let us all be united in purpose. Unity and oneness is all we need to move this country forward," he said.



Rev.Dr. Yakubu Pam (middle) with Hajiya Aishata Abubakar (left) and a guest at the award ceremony in Abuja

AMACOG 92 Marks 30th Graduation Anniversary, Renovates MAPOLY's TV Studio

The Association of Mass Communication Graduates of the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, has concluded plans to mark its 30th graduation anniversary on Friday, July 1, in the school.

AMACOG 92, an association of 1992 graduates of the then Ogun State Polytechnic, Abeokuta, said the visit would allow the old students to support the Department of Mass Communication of their alma mater in key areas.

A statement by the Chairman, AMACOG 92, Mr. Adekunle Adeshina, on Thursday, stated that the members planned to unveil a television studio which the old students had renovated and in which modern equipment had been installed.

The presentation of the presentation of the renovated studio is expected to draw the Acting Rector, MAPOLY, Adeoye Odedeji; the Head of Department, Mass Communication Department, Mr. Lekan Togunwa; and the Olota of Ota, Prof. Adeyemi Obalanlege, who is also a member of the association.

Adeshina said, "We can't allow 30 years of our graduation from the school to pass away unnoticed and uncelebrated. Many of our members have grown in their fields; but don't forget that they started their tertiary education in this place.

"In this unique set, we have editors of national newspapers, publishers, general managers of radio and television stations, proprietor of broadcast stations, directors in both state and federal ministries, a first class traditional ruler and many outstanding professionals."

The AMACOG chairman added that the association recognised that such celebration could not be deemed notable without the set giving back to the school through the department.

"We have renovated a television studio in the Mass Communication department and installed modern equipment which will aid the impartation of modern education and practical skills in contemporary media practice to the current and future students," he said.

Adeshina stated that the one-day event would be rounded off with a dinner on Friday, saying this would allow the old course mates to network and exchange ideas on how to move the association and the department forward.

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20 TO 26 JUNE 2022: SUMMER REFLECTIONS

This week, as we enter the political season in Nigeria, we want to reflect on the process of democracy especially in the United States starting with the civil rights movement and the fight to eliminate slavery. We also reflect on the process that led to the election of the first Black President of the United States, Barack Obama. Stream our collection of reflective and inspirational documentary stories now, exclusively on ARISEPlay.



UNDERGROUND
Co-created by Misha Green and Joe Pokaski, Underground is executive produced by John Legend who features in the series as iconic abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass. It is an American period drama which first aired in 2016. This series is significant, not just because it reminds us that the Declaration of Independence did not end tyranny in America.





THIS WORLD: THE BLACK AMERICAN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM
With 50 years passed since the promise of equality and the Civil Rights Act, The Black American Fight for Freedom examines key moments where America had the opportunity to become more equal and asks why that didn't happen. It is also an insight into the anger experienced by the millions who marched during the Black Lives Matter protests.

BY THE PEOPLE: THE ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA
As he took the podium on election night, Barack Obama made history. Few saw his unguarded moments before he addressed the nation. In this documentary, you'll meet the man and the campaign workers who helped him achieve his goal. Get behind-the-scenes footage of Obama during his campaign to become the President of the United States of America

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EXPRESSION

Fail Abysmally, not 'Woefully'



MEDIAGAFFES
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PAGE 2 BUSINESS of June 22 welcomes us today with this brief case: "Consumers laud 'Everyone has a Chivita campaign" A rewrite: Everyone-has-a-Chivita' campaign

"Ibeto vs EFCC: Out of court settlement failed woefully" Another reconstruction: Out-of-court settlement failed abysmally—not 'woefully' Also note the hyphenation in the correction.

"NDLEA arrests 487 for drug related (drug-related) offences in Yola, Benue"

"The status of Chris Ngige, Pauline Tallen and Timipre Sylva, who initially indicated interest to contest for elective positions, but chickened out, are (is) unknown." (NATIONAL NEWS, June 22)

"President Buhari also assured to provide an enabling environment for…." Who did PMB assure?

"To avoid future occurrences (avoid recurrences)…."

Overheard in the morning of June 20 as I was sun-bathing in my sabbatical circumstance: "How is children"? From time to time, I get to hear this tragic salutation! Please, how are your children?

The Guardian of June 5 goofed: "The decision by the Federal Government to once again increase electricity tariff against public disapproval, and despite the poor power supply situation, smacks of obduracy and disdain to public feeling." Before the irresponsible hike: disdain for (not to) public feeling. You do not need to be a lexicologist to know this.

The PUNCH of June 4 published multifarious improprieties on the country's hapless insecurity and leadership disaster: "As at 8.15pm (8.15 p.m.) ('when' is missing at this point) our correspondent left the area, the policemen were still keeping guards (guard)." No callousness intended in this season of national grief.

"My children and I escaped death by the whiskers (by a whisker). My son… who is 13 year (why?) was just about to step outside to buy recharge card (what of the article 'a'?) when the crash occurred."

"Suddenly (a comma) I heard the sound of the plane; it was too close, so I look (looked) out of the window…."

"I heard a loud bang." The woman (that's the respondent) heard a bang (not 'a loud bang'!). It is the reporter's (and the editor's) responsibility to check for basic grammatical lapses in an interviewee's response—even if it is verbatim reportage! I stand challenged on this twist. Mind you, communication is dynamic. No convention in language deployment.

Lastly from The PUNCH under review: "…there is (are) also a two storey (two-storey) building and a storey building." And this: single-storey and two-storey buildings to avoid structural clumsiness.

Let us welcome back Sunday Independent to this column after its long absence from our lexical court. Its June 19 edition threw up a couple of errors: "The best way of to (sic) describe the PDP primaries last week Saturday…." Beyond entertainment: last Saturday or Saturday, last week.

"Bimbo Akintola, Gbenga Adeyinka, Funsho Adeolu shines (what?) at May Celebrity"

"Our leaders should be sworn-in (sworn in) with traditional objects" Will there ever be an end to this serial goof? Phrasal verbs abhor hyphenation.

"Sexual (sic) transmitted diseases" Humanity has moved from sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) to sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), just as we have moved from total quality management (TQM) to total quality improvement (TQI) in health and management science scholarship.

"Two epoch making (sic) events" (Full-page Colour Advert by Government College Ughelli Old Boys (sic) Association) Keep the Ship sailing: Two epoch-making events and old boys' association.

THE GUARDIAN of May 31 disseminated two shibboleths to round off the month: "…I think what the country requires at the moment is to amend the law that would empower INEC to begin gradual use of the equipment culminating into (in) what will be perfection."

"Mixed reactions over CBN's cash reserve ratio" My reaction to (not over) this is that a publication of THE GUARDIAN status should not commit juvenile blunders!

"Some people have in recent times been advocating for a sovereign national conference" No government in power (and authority) will allow such a convocation that has the potentialities of invalidating its constitutional mandate. By the way, 'advocate', as a verb, does not take 'for'.

"…the prospects of bilateral military co-operation between Nigeria and the US in the troubled spots of West Africa." One of the fascinating aspects of the English language: trouble spots.

"…the first to establish a coloured television in sub-Saharan Africa." Creating a new NTA: colour TV.

"The truth or otherwise of these allegations were put on different occasions to both…." The truth was (not were).

"The untimely and avoidable death (which one is timely and unavoidable?) is another bloody feather on (sic) the cap of drivers of trailers and other haulage vehicles." Another lexical feather in the cap of my late 'cousin', Mr. Bayo Oguntuase, who exited this cruel world a few days before his 80th birthday not long ago!

Still on the Dana Airline fatality 10th anniversary; take note that it is contradictory and blasphemous to say: "With gratitude to God for a life well spent, we regret to announce the death of our…." It is impossible to be grateful to my Almighty Father and in the same breath express regret, sadness, grief.... If your emotions overwhelm your spirituality and belief in eternal life, then swallow your gratitude. In that case it becomes: "With grouse about the Creator and disappointment in all He stands for, we regret to announce the untimely (excuse the trite expression) demise of…!

"It must also be remembered that the party made an effort to integrate with either of the two parties...." No riot: either of the parties. 'Either of the two parties' can lead to avoidable morphological brouhaha.

"The players were now absorbed in the game when somebody ran into the yard, towards the backyard and breathlessly dashed passed (pass) them."

"Oil prices hit $33, Iraq accuses U.S. of double standards" Conscience, nurtured by truth: double standard (not standards).

"Iraq…continues to point accusing fingers at its major adversary, the United States, over alleged double standards (sic)." Fixed expression: point the finger.

"Students of the University of Lagos yesterday demanded for immediate and unconditional restoration of the institution's brand name, insisting that the equity is beyond political placation." 'Demand' does no admit 'for' except when used as a noun.

Three Hunchbacks And Their Heavy Baggage



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Among many Nigerian societies and cultures, the hunchback is a perplexing mystery. To some it is a special disability that victims must be protected so that ritualists do not kidnap them to savagely deprive them of the hunches. In others, they are victims of stigmatisation and discrimination, marginalised as a matter of communal belief that hunchbacks are subhumans unworthy of institutional compassion or personal dignity. Hardly do we see them as victims of physiological malfunction - a spinal disorder that modern medicine calls Kyphosis, often as a result of tuberculosis of the spinal cord, hereditary deficiency, among other causes.

We see the hunchbacks as "beasts of burden" who suffer great discomfort in activities other regular fold take for granted. Now, if the hunchbacks are saddled with extra bags and whatnots to carry from one point to another, the excruciating exercise can hardly be imagined, as you cannot fathom what it is like to be in their shoes. Such is the fate of the three major presidential flag bearers with arguably the most vociferous supportership in this current electioneering season. Our focus will therefore be on Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (henceforth addressed as Atiku), the presidential candidate of People's Democratic Party (PDP); Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT), the candidate of All Progressives' Congress (APC), and the current "rave of the moment", Mr. Peter Gregory Obi of the Labour Party (LP).

We hope to spend quality time reviewing the enormous "baggage" - code switch for unsavoury issues and incidents in their pedigrees they would rather wipe off, but that stand as unshakable reminders of their frailties, possible stumbling blocks, and herculean obstacles their spin-doctors must roll up sleeves to tackle frontally. And their detractors would be joyously smacking their lips to sink their teeth into.

Let us start with Atiku Abubakar, GCON. The most succulent pie is the "infernal" book of his former boss, President Olusegun Obasanjo (OBJ) published in 2014, "My Watch". It is a morbidly virulent character attestation. Few excerpts would suffice. In reference to actions that took place before his ascendancy in 1999, OBJ wrote:

"That night, I settled for Atiku Abubakar. Some of the reasons were: he worked hard for the project, he never indicated interest in the job to me, he had worked closely with Shehu Yar'Adua and Shehu never passed any adverse comment on him… What I did not know, which came out glaringly later, was his parental background which was somewhat shadowy, his propensity to corruption, his tendency to disloyalty, his inability to say and stick to the truth all the time, a propensity for poor judgement, his belief and reliance on marabouts, his lack of transparency, his trust in money to buy his way out on all issues and his readiness to sacrifice morality, integrity, propriety, truth and national interest for self and selfish interest….

"On a number of occasions, I had told him to his face that I saw him differently from Shehu Yar'Adua, who was partly his political mentor and my second-in-Command during my military administration. Shehu would never lie to me. Atiku would look at me in the face and say no when the answer should be yes. I found it curious and inexplicable."

A deft politician and seemingly astute businessman, he has never been convicted, and no charges have stuck on him. But OBJ set the sparks flying in the same book: "... we received a letter dated 22 June 2006 written by the US Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Office of International Affairs, which was brought to me by Nuhu Ribadu, the Head of EFCC, requesting us to investigate a number of Nigerians for suspicion of criminal activities in the US.

"Atiku Abubakar's name was among the names sent to us... I gave the green light to Nuhu for the investigation as requested by the US Authorities. He carried out the investigation and forwarded his report to the US. The report was a bit uncomfortable and unsavoury for Atiku and his associates. I thought it was bad enough that the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was under investigation for corruption, when my Administration had made fighting corruption one of its cardinal objectives. As it turned out, the investigation in Nigeria and in the US led to Atiku's house being searched by the US Bureau of investigation (FBI), the arrest and detention of his newly married wife, Jennifer. She was also declared wanted at one time. It was so embarrassing for our Administration and Embassy in Washington under Ambassador George Obiozor."

In 2019, OBJ made a volte face, and endorsed Atiku as PDP candidate for the presidential election - a strange decision, made stranger still when a money laundering case was reported in a 13 November, 2019 Punch news report where Atiku's son-in-law, Abdullahi Babalele, was accused by the EFCC of: "laundering $140,000 in the build-up to the 2019 general elections… The trial began before Justice C.J. Aneke at the Federal High Court in Lagos with the testimony of one Bashir Mohammed, who described himself as a close friend of Babalele.

Mohammed, who was led in evidence by the EFCC prosecutor, Rotimi Oyedepo, narrated to the court how he delivered the naira equivalent of $140,000 ('to someone in Obasanjo's library') on Babalele's instructions… Obasanjo endorsed Atiku... ahead of the February 23 (2019) presidential election."

However, Babalele pleaded 'not guilty' to the two charges against him. Before the year ran out, Babalele was off the hook on account of a technicality! A ThisDay report of 22 December, 2020 reveals: "A Federal High Court in Lagos has freed Abdullahi Babalele, a son-in-law to former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar on a two-count allegation of alleged money laundering of $140,000. Justice Chukwujekwu Aneke threw out the charge and discharged the defendant on the grounds that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had chosen a wrong venue. The court held that the charge against the defendant ought not to have been filed in Lagos when the alleged offence was said to have been committed in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital." End of story.

Some folks believe that a man capable of handling his home in a peaceful, orderly and congenial manner would likely succeed in piloting more challenging offices. In this case, Atiku's detractors would feel a little energised by his performance on the home front. Media reports paint some challenging episodes that had rocked his marriages to a number of women. A 31 January, 2021 report (ThisDay) gives a front-row view of the Turak's entanglements: "So far, there are about six women who have publicly borne his name (and 29 children): Titilayo Albert in 1971, Ladi Yakubu in 1979, Princess Rukaiyatu Mustafa in 1983, Fatima Shettima in 1986, Jennifer Douglas sometime after, and the Moroccan lady in 2017. However, Atiku divorced Ladi Yakubu much earlier, which ushered in Jennifer Douglas, and now Douglas might be out of the picture, giving room for Lady Morocco - a total of four wives."

No wonder, his former boss, no less a slouch in these affairs, could not help pass a sniggering remark in his vitriol on Atiku: "We moved on as all sorts of clouds started to gather around Atiku if not at home, surely in the US, with his newly acquired wife to complete his total Nigerian husband outlook - Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani and Igbo wives. Here, he achieved Federal character."

Because of the fumes of corruption swirling around Atiku, many have tried to pin all sorts of heists and warts on him. Some have been comprehensively rebutted. Case in point, fact-checked by TheCable: "The viral social media post (2018) claiming Obasanjo said Atiku stole money that can feed 300 million people for 400 years is false." Here's another: "The claim (2019) that Obasanjo said he was forced by Atiku to cede Bakassi to Cameroon is false".

Surely, the Turakin Adamawa has his tasks well arranged ahead of him. Time will tell how he meanders through the thickets and barbs.



SET FOR MOROCCO

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT 25.6.2022

Taiwo Awoniyi

Finally, Premier League Dream Comes True



GLOBAL SOCCER



Taiwo Awoniyi Finally, Premier League Dream Comes True

Taiwo Awoniyi...set for Nottingham Forest

His dream has always been to play in the Premier League since being signed by Liverpool but getting a place in the star-studded Reds' side and also securing a work permit have been issues culminating in going on a seven-loan spell to various European clubs before finally being sold to German Bundesliga side-Union Berlin. However, succour has finally come the way of the Super Eagles striker to achieve his dream with newly promoted side, Nottingham Forest that is ready to cough out a club record signing of £17.5m for the signature of the Nigerian international

After his exploits with the Golden Eaglets of Nigeria at the 2013 U-17 World Cup, he was seen as one of the youngest talents in world football, which led to scrambling for his signature by big European clubs. In 2015, Taiwo Adeniyi joined Liverpool and had a dream of making an impact with the Merseyside giant, but it was not to be as he never got the chance to lace his boots for the Anfield side for once in a competitive game.

All that have however changed now with Nottingham Forest set to pay £17.5m to sign the striker, and with the Imperial Academy product already granted a work permit by the UK government, he can jolly well say, 'Premier League here I come'.

Awoniyi on Wednesday waved goodbye to his Union Berlin teammates ahead of his move to Premier League club, Nottingham Forest.

Awoniyi is expected to complete his transfer to the Premier League new boys this week.

Nottingham Forest will pay £17.5m to sign the striker from the capital club.

Awoniyi, according to a report in dnachricten.de visited his Union Berlin teammates on the first day of pre-season to say goodbye to them.

Head Coach, Urs Fischer, however, declined to comment on the situation.

"I saw him, but please don't dig deeper now. I won't say anything about that,"Fischer told the website Awoniyi missed the sports medical examination and the performance tests on Monday and Tuesday, further proving he is leaving the club.

The 24-year-old was Union Berlin's top scorer with 20 goals in all competitions last season.

Awoniyi was one of just six players to have preceded Jurgen Klopp at Liverpool and still was at the club when they won the Premier League.

The difference between him and the likes of Joe Gomez, James Milner, Jordan Henderson, Roberto Firmino and Divock Origi is that he never played a game.

On paper, the 24-year-old should be an experienced Premier League player for Forrest having spent the same amount of years at Liverpool as Sadio Mane.

But while Mane has now departed for Bayern Munich after a glittering trophy haul during six seasons on Merseyside, Awoniyi's first experience of playing at Anfield will come with Forest.

However, that is through no fault of his own as the talented striker consistently struggled to secure a work permit at Liverpool.

Awoniyi had very humble beginnings in Nigeria, having had to get creative in order to have football boots to play in as a youngster.

After impressing at the Imperial Soccer Academy, Liverpool swooped to sign him for a cut-price £400,000 back in 2015.

But while Awoniyi waited on a work permit, he was farmed out on loan to FSV Frankfurt, NEC Nijmegen, Royal Excel Mouscron, Gent and Klopp's former club Mainz.

Yet, it was at Union Berlin where the forward finally started to find his feet and even drew comparisons to Erling Haaland.

"I think he's found his level there, he's what you would call a utility player, so he is perfect for the role they've given him. He works quite well for the Union Berlin system, which is also kind of direct, a lot of vertical passes, he makes a number of runs behind the backline," German football expert Constanin Eckner told Blood Red.

"In a way he reminds me of Erling Haaland with the runs he makes behind the line.

"Of course, he's nowhere near the level of Erling Haaland, but just his style is somewhat similar, and he's a good, not great poacher inside the box, he's a decent finisher at least."

Awoniyi ultimately turned his loan to Berlin into a permanent £6.5m move last summer but not before he had the chance to link up with Liverpool for their pre-season camp in Austria.

And it gave him the chance to finally work under Klopp and also receive one of the German's famous bear-hug greetings.

"He said 'What took you so long?!' To be honest, I have always been thinking about working with him. Even when I was at FSV Frankfurt and he had not signed for Liverpool yet, my teammates there would always say that they wanted to play under him," Awoniyi told GOAL in December.

"I was wondering why, really curious as to what he would be like. Then, when he signed for Liverpool, I was thinking 'Wow! Maybe one day I will have my opportunity to meet him.' And the first time I met him, I realised everything they said about him was true; the smile, the passion, everything he brings to the game."

Awoniyi then began his second stint in Berlin in style, scoring in three successive matches on route to notching 15 Bundesliga goals.

He helped the club earn Europa League qualification and could even be set for a quick reunion with Forest due to play Die Eisernen in a pre-season friendly next month.

It'll be his first showdown with Liverpool that'll grab the headlines in the coming months.

And despite the fact that if things had been different, Awoniyi could have been lining up under Klopp next season, the attacker has no regrets about how his career has panned out.

"Life is a journey. Everyone has different steps to take and routes to follow. Our destinies are different," he told Tribal Football.

Taiwo Awoniyi has told TribalFootball.com that he has no regrets over joining Liverpool. The Nigerian forward was...

"I signed for Liverpool at a period in my young career as a footballer; when I did not understand how it works with work permit issues, but at the end we are still here talking about it.

"It shows that I did not make a bad decision to sign for Liverpool. I have always said that Liverpool is one of the best things that happened to me as a footballer.

"They gave me the platform to achieve my dream and with them I have no regret at all.

"I do not see not being able to play a game in the Premier League as a regret because in life, with time, everything is still possible."

And in lesser time than he could have imagined, Awoniyi is set to turn that possibility into reality.

"It's been a long process but finally Taiwo Awoniyi can now focus on his career somewhere in England. He has the ambition to play in the Premier League," a top official at Imperial Academy told BBC Sport Africa.

Meanwhile, Liverpool are poised to net just shy of £2 million with their former forward Taiwo Awoniyi on the verge of joining Nottingham Forrest.

Awoniyi never made a single senior appearance for Liverpool despite joining the club in 2015 as he was unable to gain a UK work permit. However, now that he has featured on the international scene with Nigeria, that is no longer an issue as he is set to return to the Premier League.

Ademola Lookman

Future Still in Limbo

With Leicester City dillydallying on making his loan deal permanent in spite of having a good season with the Foxes, Ademola Lookman will be joining his parent club RB Leipzig for pre-season training. With Serie A side, Atalanta, ready to cash-in on the situation, Super Eagles striker's future will remain in limbo



Ademola Lookman celebrates his goal against Liverpool last season

With his future still unclear, Super Eagles forward Ademola Lookman will be returning to Germany to begin pre-season training session with RB Leipzig on June 27, if things remain as they are between the winger and Leicester City.

Lookman spent the 2021/22 season on loan with the Foxes, impressing with eight goals and five assists in 41 appearances across all competitions.

Leicester retained an option to buy the Nigerian forward, who Leipzig expect to leave in exchange for €16.5 million.

Lookman's loan contract with Leicester will expire on June 30.

The Telegraph of UK last month reported that the Foxes were keen to hand Lookman a permanent deal, with manager Brendan Rodgers a big fan of the 24-year-old attacker.

The winger, 24, has had a useful campaign at the King Power Stadium, scoring eight goals in 41 appearances in all competitions, and Brendan has confirmed he would like to keep him.

'He is a young player I really like and he has done very well in his time here,' said Rodgers.

'We just have to wait and see from a financial perspective if that's something we can do. He gives us real healthy competition and challenges Harvey Barnes in that left-sided position because that's where he's at his best. He is the type of player that of course I'd like to have.'

Rodgers has said several times that he is keen to refresh the Foxes squad this summer and player sales will be needed to fund that transfer campaign.

But recent reports from Germany, via RB Live indicate that RB Leipzig have not received 'an adequate offer' for Lookman and have not sanctioned any move for the Nigerian.

If matters stay that way this week, Leipzig expects Lookman to return to Germany and partake in the Bundesliga side's preseason programme.

Leipzig paid 18 million euros to acquire Lookman from Everton in 2019, but the Super Eagles star failed to settle in Germany.

Meanwhile, Atalanta have joined the race to sign Lookman, with the Italian Serie A side looking to beat Leicester City to the exciting attacker, Megasportsarena.com understands.

Gian Piero Gasperini is in market for an offensive player and Lookman fits the bill.

The Foxes number 37 scored six goals in 26 appearances, as well as giving offensive quality both in the Europa League and in the Conference.

Leicester are the overwhelming favourites to land Lookman on a permanent deal from German side RB Leipzig this summer.

Lookman was born in West London to Nigerian parents. He represented England from U-19 through U-21 levels, winning the FIFA U-20 World Cup with the Three Lions in 2017.

He made his Nigeria debut in March's World Cup qualifier against Ghana in Kumasi, where he came off the bench and started the return leg at the MKO Abiola Stadium in Abuja.

When asked about his decision to play for Nigeria rather than England, the RB Leipzig winger said:

"It was a tough decision. A decision I had to make because obviously it was my country's call. My parents are Nigerians and I came to Nigeria a lot of times growing up and Nigeria wasn't new to me. Being around the coach, players and people wasn't strange.

"Making decisions wasn't a tough decision in terms of knowing where I was going. Coming into the team, the squad has been great and everyone has been very receptive and welcoming. I love this group and the people."

Lookman came on as an 81st-minute substitute against Sierra Leone in the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier match. The winger scored his first goal for the Super Eagles against Sao Tome and Principe in Nigeria's second Group A match.

"Whenever I step out onto the pitch, I give 100 per cent but for Super Eagles, I give 150 per cent and that is because I know what it means to the people.

"I hope to endear myself to Nigerians by playing well and winning as many games and laurels." he added.

GLOBAL SOCCER



Super Falcons eye Women AFCON win



John Obi Mikel in photo session with Lagos Island team after the match

MOROCCO 2022

Ebi, Oshoala, Plumptre, 22 Others for Women AFCON

Head Coach, Randy Waldrum has picked Captain Onome Ebi and 24 other players to represent Nigeria at the 12th Women Africa Cup of Nations taking place in Morocco, July 2– 23.

The list of the nine-time champions is an interesting mix of the old guard and new blood, with veterans Tochukwu Oluehi, Ebi, Rita Chikwelu, Osinachi Ohale, Francisca Ordega and Ngozi Okobi-Okeoghene on board, as well as defenders Ashleigh Plumptre, Nicole Payne and Michelle Alozie, midfielder Regina Otu and forwards Vivian Ikechukwu, Gift Monday and Ifeoma Onumonu.

Dropped from the contingent that made the camp in Abuja were goalkeeper Rita Akarekor, defenders Chidinma Okeke, Ngozi Emenayo and Opeyemi Sunday, midfielders Suliat Abideen, Amanda Uju Mbadi and Charity Adule, and forward Anam Imo.

The Super Falcons will confront South Africa's Banyana Banyana in their first match of the tournament on Monday, July 4, before other games against Botswana July 7 and Burundi July 10.

All four semifinalists at the championship in Morocco will qualify to represent Africa at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

The Falcons' contingent will depart Nigeria for Morocco on Monday, June 27.

Flamingos to Play Germany, Chile, New Zealand in FIFA U17 Group Stage

Nigeria's U17 girls, Flamingos have been placed in Group B of this year's FIFA U17 Women's World Cup finals in India, alongside women's football powerhouse Germany, Chile and New Zealand.

At the draw ceremony done inside the Home of FIFA in Zurich, Switzerland today, hosts India are in Group A with powerhouses United States of America and Brazil, as well as African representatives Morocco. Cup holders Spain, Colombia, Mexico and China make up Group C while Group D has Japan, Tanzania, Canada and France.

India and the United States of America will kick off the tournament officially inside the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar at 8pm India time on Tuesday, October 11.

The Flamingos, who missed the last tournament in Uruguay in 2018, will have a great re-integration party as they confront Germany at 8pm India time on Tuesday, October 11, at the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadiun in Goa.

Nigeria's other matches are against New Zealand on October 14, also at the Nehru Stadium in Goa, and against Chile at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on October 17. (4.30pm).

Danjuma Invites 30 to Falconets' Camp for World Cup Preparations

Head Coach, Chris Danjuma has invited 30 players to the camp of Nigeria's U20 girls, Falconets to kick off preparations for this year's FIFA U20 Women's World Cup finals in Costa Rica.

Nigeria has never missed a FIFA U20 Women's Championship since the competition began as an U19 Championship in Canada 20 years ago, and will play France, Canada and Korea Republic in Group C of this year's tournament scheduled for Costa Rica between August 10–28.

All invited players are to report at the Chida Hotel, Abuja on Sunday, June 26.

The Falconets overcame the challenges of Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Senegal to qualify for the World Cup, at which they have been runners-up twice (2010 and 2014) and reached the semifinals in 2012.

Nigeria Beat Burkina Faso 2-1 to Win WAFU B U17 Championship

Few weeks after claiming the WAFU B U20 Championship, Nigeria again underscored her undoubted strength in youth football when she swept to the U17 title in the region, as five-time world champions Golden Eaglets edged the Young Stallions of Burkina Faso 2-1 in Saturday's final at the Cape Coast Stadium in Ghana.

Forward Abubakar Abdullahi had threatened the Burkinabe rear as early as the 8th minute when his low drive streamed away from goal, but in the 22nd minute, he rose highest in the box to powerfully nod Emmanuel Michael's perfect delivery into the net for Nigeria's first goal.

In the 34th minute, Abdullahi missed a golden opportunity to make it two for himself and for Nigeria, but he flulled his lines, allowing the Stallions a respite. The miss would knock hard seven minutes later, when Abdulramane Ouedraogo, also with a header, equalized for Burkina Faso.

Two minutes into the second half, Abdullahi got his second and Nigeria's second, taking the Golden Eaglets to a 2-1 lead. However, 12 minutes later, he should have made it a hat-trick and Nigeria's third but he lost the opportunity.

That loss could once more have proved costly, as the Stallions broke forward, only to see Nigeria goalkeeper Richard Odoh come up with a magnificent save.

In the 67th minute, Ebube Okeke rocked the crossbar from 25 yards, but there were to be no more goals and Nigeria collected a second regional diadem at youth level five weeks after the U20 boys defeated neighbours Benin Republic in the final to win the WAFU B competition in Niger Republic.

Mikel Donates N2m, Wheelchairs to Para-soccer Players

Former Super Eagles captain John Obi Mikel on Wednesday extended his philanthropy to physically-challenged sports people in Lagos as he made a cash donation of N2m and five wheelchairs to two Para-soccer teams.

Mikel who only recently finished a talent hunt programme with his Back2Base project decided to extend his goodwill to the Para-soccer players who were wowed by the kind gesture of the Chelsea legend.

The arrival of Mikel and his team led by Fadekemi Ahmed, CEO and Founder, of Avianna & Harvey Entertainments at Ojo Street in the heart of the densely-populated Obalende area of Lagos was greeted with wide jubilations as the fans jostled to catch a glimpse of one of Africa's most-accomplished football star.

"I thought it was a dream when I saw the man wearing white walking past me and it was Mikel live and direct in Obalende, this is very commendable and inspiring" one of the fans enthused as he brandished the selfie taken with the FG Youth Ambassador.

After enjoying the thrilling encounter between the Oyingbo Para-Soccer team and their Lagos Island counterparts, Mikel rewarded both teams with N1m while he also gave three wheelchairs to the winning team and two to the losing side.

"This is a token to appreciate the unique talents they have and their resilience to be the best at what they do despite being physically challenged," Mikel said after the donation

"I thoroughly enjoyed the game between the two teams and I am happy I can reciprocate by making the players smile also with the donations made" he added.

The two teams expressed profound gratitude to Mikel for counting them worthy not just to be watched but also handsomely rewarded.

While they prayed for the former Nigeria international, they described him as a shining example that should be emulated by others.

FIFA WORLD CUP

Dempsey Points Where USMNT Needs Improvement

The United States men's national team (USMNT) will be returning to the FIFA World Cup this year, having missed out on Russia 2018. Prior to that tournament, the Stars and Stripes had appeared at seven successive World Cups, with their best performance coming at the quarterfinal stage in 2002.

SuperSport viewers on DStv and GOtv will be counting down the days to the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, with the tournament set to run from November 21 to December 18, and provide the most thrilling distillation of the widely-watched tournament

The US did not qualify for Qatar 2022 with any great flourish: they finished three points off the pace set by Canada and Mexico in the third round of the CONCACAF tournament and were only ranked ahead of Costa Rica on goal difference.

Clint Dempsey, who racked up 141 caps for the USMNT and shares the record as their all-time leading scorer in international football (57 goals, tied with Landon Donovan), has pointed the areas where coach Gregg Berhalter's team needs to improve before facing the likes of England and Iran in the group stage at Qatar 2022.

"We're missing a No. 9," said the retired striker. "I think someone needs to kind of solidify that role and be the main guy. For example, if you're looking at Canada with Jonathan David and Cyle Larin, they've both been doing a great job … if one is out, another one steps in and they don't really miss a beat.

"Also, with teams that are going to be pressing us, I think that we need to do a better job of building out of the back with our centre backs and having that confidence to try to play. So it'd be interesting to see how things play out for the team. I think that they do have the quality to get out of the group in Qatar.

Clubs Storm Major General Jidda Retirement Golf Tourney

As Major General Adamu Jidda Retirement Golf Tournament slated for UBTH Golf Club, Benin City begins today, no fewer than 135 golfers will eventually tee-off at the event.

The golfers will cut across Benin Club Golf Section (BCGS); Sapele Athletic Golf Club, Ibori Golf and Country Club, Asaba, Ogunu Golf Club, Warri, Delta State; IBB Golf and Country Club, Abuja, TYB Buratai, Abuja; Ikoyi Golf Club, Dolphin Golf Club, and Ikeja Golf Club, Lagos as well as the host club.

They are to participate in the men's and ladies category, veterans, guests and sponsor events while the professional golfers will add glamour to the Saturday event.

The Jidda retirement golf event is being organised by Matthew Iduoriyekemwen led UBTH Golf Club management team in honour of their former Captain, Gen. Jidda for his successful retirement from service in the Nigerian Army.

The tournament is sponsored by Nigeria Army Corps of Supply and Transport; Kassid Investment Nigeria Limited as well as Committee of Friends.

World Athletics Championships: Team Nigeria Grab men's 4x100m Ticket

Team Nigeria's men's 4x100m relay team are through to the World Athletics Championships in Oregon last month after running an impressive 38.34secs personal season's best at the Nigerian Athletics Championships holding in Benin City, Edo State.

The quartet of Favour Ashe, Godson Brume, Alaba Akintola and reigning World U20 champion, Udodi Onwuzurike have now moved one step up from 17th to 16th, the final qualifying position for the relays.

Nigeria has now moved above South Africa who were occupying that position before the race in Benin with the 38.51 seconds her U20 team ran at the World U20 Athletics Championships in Nairobi, Kenya in August last year.

Nigerians will now be hoping the team is not overtaking before the close of the qualification window on Sunday June 26,2022.

Team Nigeria will also be hoping they return to the podium at the World Athletics Championships 25 years after the quartet of Osmond Ezinwa, Olapade Adeniken, Francis Obikwelu and Davidson Ezinwa ran 37.94s in the semifinals before storming to a silver medal finish (38.04) behind the Donovan Bailey's inspire Canada who ran a world leading 37.86 to win the gold medal.

Paul Onuachu Takes Scoring Prowess to Ghana

In 2020-21 season, Paul Onuachu won the Belgium Golden boot, scoring 33 goals in 38 Jupiler League appearances but due to spate of injuries he was restricted to 21 goals last season. He still emerged as his club-KRC Genk's top scorer. Not satisfied, the Super Eagles striker still went in search of more goals- this time to Ghana and his shot shook the net to catch a beautiful Ghanaian nurse-Tracy Acheampong



Paul Onuachu and wife

Last Sunday, Super Eagles and Genk of Belgium striker, Paul Onuachu had his wedding ceremony in Lagos with his heartthrob from Ghana, Tracy Acheampong, after the first one took place in Accra, capital of Ghana on May 29.

The couple had been dating during Onuachu's days at Danish Super Liga club FC Midtjylland and got engaged in Paris, France in January, 2022.

They officially got married in May in Ghana in a ceremony stormed by both Nigerians and Ghanaians alike to witness the nuptials between both lovebirds, while the second reception however took place on Sunday in Lagos.

His Super Eagles' teammates which include Samuel Kalu, Chidera Ejuke and Frank Onyeka who were present at the traditional wedding in Ghana also witnessed the Lagos version as Onuachu and his wife Tracy danced to music by Nigerian musician Chike-Ezekpeazu Osebuka.

The party came alive when popular Nigerian musician Oluwatobiloba Daniel Anidugbe, better known by his stage name Kizz Daniel performed his hit song Buga.

Earlier this year, Onuachu received another feather to his growing cap of honour, as his jersey at the club became the fourth costliest in the multi-lingual European country.

Soon after Onuachu shot into the spotlight as top scorer in Belgium last season, the former FC Midtjylland of Denmark towering striker gained another level of attention after his No. 18 jersey at Genk was sold for 1,600 Euro.

The sale occurred at a special auction organised by officials of the Belgian Jupiler Pro League, during which Onuachu made headlines when his top ended up as the fourth most expensive jersey at the event that was staged as a Christmas campaign. The special campaign, which was also organised to support the Belgian league's social partner, eventually garnered a record 145,000 Euro, with the most expensive jersey being that of Club Brugge attacker, Charles De Ketelaere, which was bought for 4,100 Euro. Four other players from Emmanuel Dennis Bonaventure and David Chidozie Okoreke made the top 10 most expensive jerseys at the auction.

It was another fillip to Onuachu's growing image, as he ended the year 2020 as the joint-highest goals scoring Nigerian player in the world, as the FC Ebedei of Shagamu product's tally of 17 in the Belgian First Division A is the same with FC Prishtina of Kosovo rising star, Otto John.

A move away from the league was largely expected last season but it didn't happen largely due to Genk's valuation but they have since dropped their asking price. A source who approached the player with a deal from a Serie A side was told by his management team that he is heading to the English Premier League next summer as an agreement is already in place.

"We had an offer for him to consider. So, he directed us to his new management team. They told us Genk have reached agreement for his sale to a team in the English Premier League," Several reports in the Belgium media tends to also agree with that stand as it was widely reported that Onuachu will leave the team in the summer with fellow Nigerian, Cyriel Dessers as his replacement. Dessers has impressed mightily on loan to Feyenoord but the Dutch side don't have the €4m required to make the deal permanent and Genk are not willing to compromise on their stand."

A €6 million arrival from Midtjylland in 2019, Onuachu found the back of the net a whopping 20 times last season despite the spate of injuries that denied him of playing time, making him one of the best performing centre forwards across Europe.

Speaking to Genk's official YouTube page, Onuachu said : "For me you never know what the future holds but I think scoring a lot of goals this season for KRC Genk and of course my career it is going to be one of the most important periods for me.

"It is going to be difficult to say I'm going to repeat it where I am going but I think the players we have in this team really make all this possible for me, but like I said earlier you don't know what the future holds.

"As it is now I think I'm really happy for the figure I have in the league and of course for KRC Genk."

The Nigerian international struggled in his first year in Belgium but won the hearts of many after delivering numerous excellent performances.

Onuachu indeed admitted that the Belgian First Division A is a challenging championship, but the determination to push himself beyond the limit helped him become the best in the country. The 27-year-old only managed nine goals in 22 matches in his maiden campaign two seasons ago after completing his switch from Danish side FC Midtjylland.

But his turnaround in fortunes, 12 months later, has been evident for all to see. Onuachu is clear about how he was able to improve his efficiency in front of goal.

"I struggled a bit when I arrived here. At the start of the season, I said to myself that I had to push myself more and give more.

"I am proud of myself and my team, and I am happy to have the support of my companion, who is always behind me."

Lazio, Sevilla, and Lyon are among the top European clubs already looking to lure Onuachu to one of the continent's big five leagues.

The big striker, however, refuses to hide his affection for English Premier League giants Arsenal. "Arsenal is the club of my dreams," Onuachu continued.

"It is the club that I support, that I like to watch, and whose style of play I like.

"However, I am still in Belgium, and I am still a player of Genk."

The forward has a year left on his current contract but he is unsure of seeing out the deal with a number of European clubs believed to be interested in signing him in the summer.

Onuachu has been with Blue and White since the summer of 2019 when he teamed up with the side from Midtjylland.

The attacker delivered scintillating performances in front of goal during his time with the Danish club to earn a move to Genk.

Onuachu's move to Lazio will however depend on whether the Biancocelesti will be able to meet with Genk's 25 million Euros valuation of the striker.

GLOBAL SOCCER

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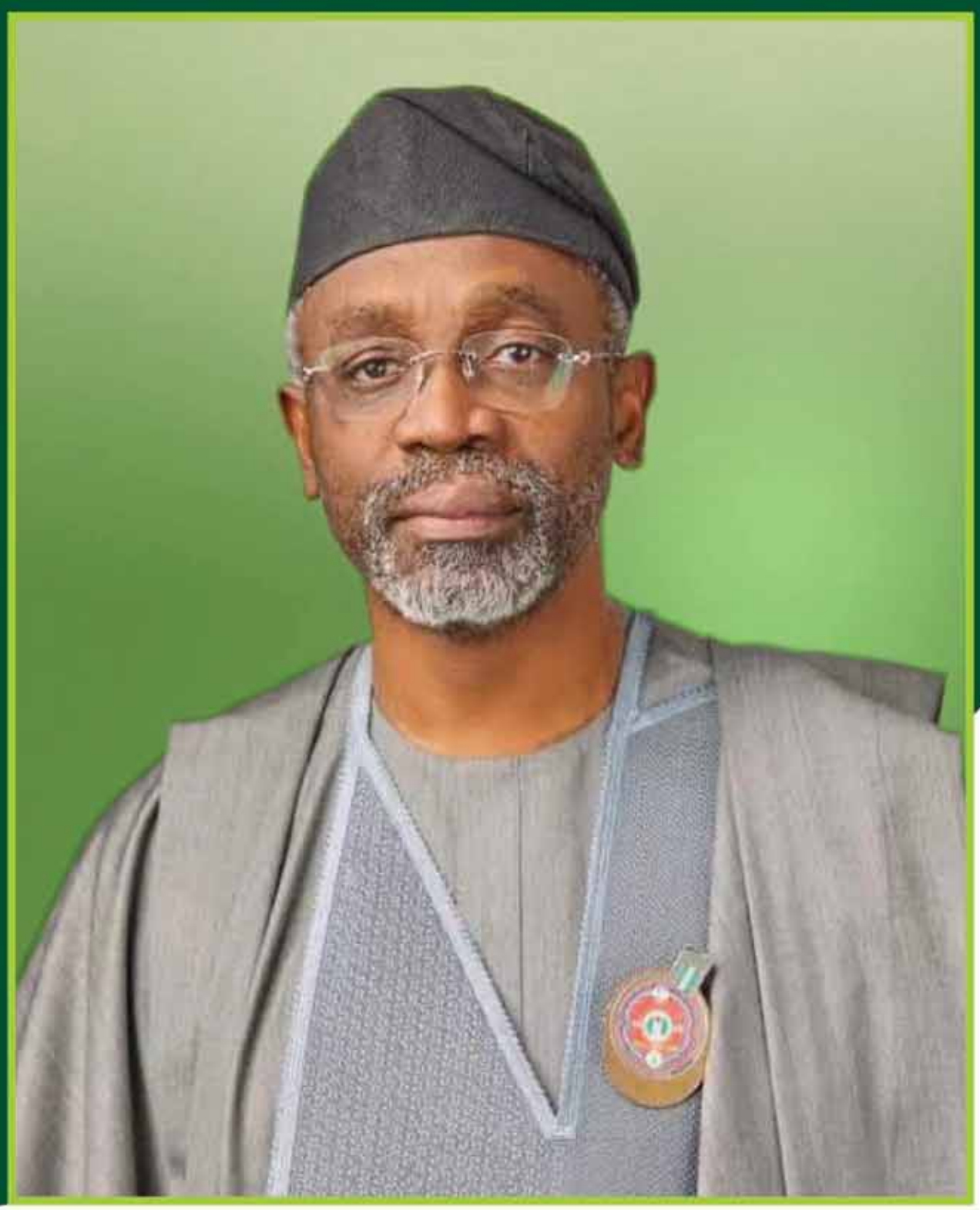
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60 GARLANDS TO THE PEOPLE'S SPEAKER!



RT. HON FEMI HAKEEM GBAJABIAMILA OFR

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nigeria

Our dear Brother,

As you turn 60 today be rest assured that Nigerians are counting the epic and gigantic steps you've taken in legislative excellence and parliamentary harmony. You've discharged all your national duties with unquantifiable patriotic zeal and unparalleled dignity worthy of the exalted office you occupy. We particularly as "Fellow Lagosians" are truly proud of you, you are really doing us proud indeed.

May Allah SWT continue to guide you and bless you with the wisdom and grace HE has kindly bestowed on you, as you continue to masterfully discharge your duties in service to the nation.

Here's wishing you a Happy Birthday and many joy filled returns of the day.

Abé & Amina Ibraheem

Happy Birthday

HONOURABLE SPEAKER



Parliamentary stability is the major plant of democratic success. Since your emergence as the SPEAKER of the House of Representatives, this has been your goal and you have pretty much accomplished that.

We celebrate you today, as we will, always, as one of the pillars of our democracy, and as you mark your 60th birthday, our prayers, good wishes, and support will remain with you as you strive for a better country for our generation and the generation to come.

Happy birthday!

Thomas ETUH & FAMILY

AUTO WORLD

Bennett Oghifo
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The All New Range Rover SV

All New Range Rover SV, Excellent for Rider, Driver

The sheer nimbleness of the All New Range Rover SV will excite any good driver, particularly with its swiftness at turns, inclines, and navigating off-road terrains.

The All New Range Rover SV is a fine piece of luxury machinery to be enjoyed by a rider and driver. Coscharis Motors Plc., presented a rare opportunity for some journalists to experience the full option technology imbued in this fifth generation Range Rover, which is the latest and one of the most desirable ever created by Land Rover.

Taking this machine on a spin was an invaluable and cherished experience. The ride and drive experience took place during the week at the huge motor vehicle assembly plant of Coscharis Motors, located at Awoyaya on the Lekki-Epe stretch to the Free Zone, the Dangote Refinery, and the Deep Sea Port in Lagos.

The vehicle is fitted with all forms of technologies to make driving effortless. This drive begins with the soft close of the doors- no need to slam- to get into the comfortable cabin which is so noiseless all through the drive, encouraging distinct low level conversation. The swiftness of the car brings the destination closer without noticeable rush.

There is a huge touch screen that can present a panoramic view of this lovely piece of engineering- the location of the wheels, the terrain ahead, the head clearance, vehicles at the rear. It is so interesting to have a double view of vehicles or objects behind the car. This view is possible using the usual rear view mirror in the cabin but if this view is blocked by a sea of heads or for whatever reason, a flip of the rear view mirror brings the images alive.

There is a new gear selection knob that fits only the palm, the car holds whenever it senses the need to and it is released by a tap on the accelerator. This is good for fuel economy and lowering of CO_2 emission.

The new Range Rover has a distinguished design, clean and essential. It is a uniquely distinctive design, defined by its uninterrupted edge that accentuates Range Rover's strong, beautifully sculpted body. It has flush elements, clean expansive surfaces, hidden-until-lit tail lamps and precise detailing that take the design philosophy to new levels of emotional engagement.

There are so many features and prospective buyers and existing collectors are welcome to configure their vehicle to suit their lifestyles. It is bespoke, said Mr Abiona Babarinde, General Manager, Marketing & Corporate Communications, Coscharis Group, while presenting the All New Range Rover SV prior to the ride and drive.

Ford Trucks Ready for Heavy Duty in Nigeria

Ford Trucks has found a home in the Heavy Duty Commercial Vehicle (HDCV) sector of the Nigerian economy. This was made known by Coscharis Motors, the sole distributors of Ford Trucks in Nigeria, during the presentation of the Ford Trucks brand at the recently concluded Lagos Motor Fair.

While presenting the Ford Trucks products to guests at the fair, Abiona Babarinde, General Manager, Marketing and Communications, Coscharis Group, said "Ford Trucks is in this market to help fill identified logistics gaps in the areas of long and short distance haulage, construction, mines, refuse disposal, etc. Since the formal introduction of the brand into the market at last year's edition of the Lagos Motor Fair, the brand has been making remarkable inroads into the Nigerian HDVC market. In order to help our customers keep their Ford Trucks on the road, Coscharis has invested heavily on after-sales facilities with OEM trained technicians, original parts and OEM recommended equipment. This is to show that the brand has truly come to stay in Nigeria."

To further attest to the fact that Ford Trucks has found home in Nigeria, Babarinde said that Coscharis Motor is almost ready with its ultra-modern sales and aftersales facility for the brand at Ikeja, Lagos. Babarinde said, "Coscharis Motors has invested heavily on an ultra-modern sales and aftersales facility for Ford Trucks products, which is being set up in Ikeja and will soon be launched, to add zest to our product and service offerings to our esteemed Ford Trucks customers."



Sales Manager, Ford Trucks, Coscharis Motors Plc., Anthony Emuoborowho; General Manager, Marketing & Corporate Communications, Coscharis Group, Abiona Babarinde; Brand Manager, Coscharis Motors Plc, Felix Mahan, during the presentation of Ford Trucks brand of HDCVs at the Lagos Motor Fair… recently

Also speaking at the event, Helyn Osandu, General Manager, Sales, Ford Trucks, Coscharis Motors said, "We wish to remind our valued customers that purchasing a Ford Trucks product need not be a herculean task, as Coscharis Motors has arranged flexible finance schemes through Coscharis Mobility and a number of other financial institutions, whereby customers can purchase the trucks with equity contributions as low as 30% of the price of the trucks, while the balance is spread over a period of time."

TIPS OF THE WEEK

How to Fix a Leaking Car Roof

Whether you find water leaking from the passenger side of the car or from the roof to the driver's side, you should find effective solutions to fix it. Interestingly, you can fix this type of problem yourself in your garage with the help of some auto sealant. These commercial products are formulated to effectively block leak holes and provide a waterproofing solution that prevents water from leaking into the car when it rains.

Still, it will help if you leave the severely damaged ceiling for professionals to fix, as such sealants will not help.

With this in mind, you should take the following helpful steps to fix a car roof leak.

#1. Inspecting Leak

If you're not exactly sure that water is leaking from the car driver's side of the roof, it's best to find out where the leak is. Again, even if the roof is leaking, you should try to find the exact places where there are holes that let water in.

While working on the roof, please sweep out all the dirt and debris so that you can reach the ceiling unhindered. Wherever such leaks occur, you often get water stagnation. Again, it will help if you look for cracks and rusted areas, and a few bubbles should also tell where the leak is.

#2. Start Applying Sealant

After purchasing roof sealant, you should apply it to a certain hole following the manufacturer's instructions. By now, you should know that this sealant comes with different formulations, consistency, and packaging, and as such, they will require different application methods. However, you will need to use an applicator pad or use a small piece of cardboard. Then, carefully rub the sealant over all of the pores while making sure you don't rub them excessively on any particular area.

#3. Drying Sealant

After the sealant is completely applied, you should allow it to dry. The drying process often takes on 20 to 30 minutes, but you can use a hairdryer to speed up drying time. So, set the heat of the dryer to be appropriate and apply it evenly over the applied sealant.

#4. Test Sealed Roof for Leaks

Using your garden water hose, splash water on the roof of the car (around the sealant areas) to check if it's still leaking. If the water doesn't leak, you've done a wonderful job. Again, you may decide to repaint the roof of the vehicle depending on the type of sealant. But, if this problem persists, professional service may be required.

Things you'll need:

Car Roof Sealant
Sealant applicator pad
Cotton Raga
Dryer
Garden water hose

(Source: MechanicalJungle)

AUTO WORLD

Mercedes-AMG Rounds off Range of Exclusive Special Editions with GLE SUV

Mercedes-AMG is celebrating its 55th anniversary with six "Edition 55" special models based on the GLE SUV and GLE Coupé in this demanding market segment as well. The customers have the advantage that exquisite equipment scopes and details that are only available for the "Edition 55" make this limited-edition model particularly desirable. The anniversary models are available to order now until December 2022. The colour selection with obsidian black metallic or MANUFAKTUR diamond white bright, the special car film, the 22-inch AMG forged wheels and the specific trim parts in carbon matt black underscore the classy and exclusive appearance.

As a special identifying feature of the "Edition 55", both sides of the vehicle feature special car film with the AMG emblem and an AMG diamond. Further exciting contrasts are provided by the 22-inch forged



Mercedes-AMG GLE SUV

AMG cross-spoke wheels, painted matt tantalum grey with high-sheen rim flange. The wheel hub covers with "Edition 55" lettering and laurel wreath testify to great attention to detail.

With the AMG Night Package, selected exterior elements are finished in high-gloss black. Depending on the selected paint colour, this results in bold contrasts or fluid transitions. High-gloss black is used for the front splitter and the trim strip of the AMG front apron, the exterior mirror housings, the window surrounds and the trim strip of the AMG rear apron. Added to this are heat-insulating dark-tinted glass aft of the B-pillar and two black chrome-plated twin tailpipe trims.

An exclusive detail for connoisseurs is the fuel filler cap in silver chrome with AMG lettering: This classy element is only revealed when the fuel filler cap is opened.

The interior is characterised by the contrast of black and red. Stainless steel door sill trims with red illuminated AMG lettering welcome driver and passengers. To match, the black AMG floor mats made of high-quality velour feature red contrasting stitching and "Edition 55" lettering woven in red.

The AMG Performance steering wheel in DINAMICA microfibre also commemorates the anniversary with the "AMG" and "55" badges and underscores the impression of the special models as exclusive collector's items.

The AMG seats are upholstered in two-tone nappa leather AMG in red pepper/black. When equipped with exclusive nappa leather AMG, the door panels and centre console are also designed in this colour combination (standard on GLE 63 S 4MATIC+, optional on GLE 53 4MATIC+ and GLE 63 4MATIC+). The hand rest in the centre console is enhanced with an embossed AMG crest. The luxurious, sporty ambience of the interior is rounded off by the AMG trim elements in carbon matt black.

The scope of delivery of the "Edition 55" also includes a tailor-made AMG Indoor Car Cover. With its breathable outer panelling made of tear-resistant synthetic fibre fabric and antistatic inner fabric made of flannel, it protects the vehicle in the garage from dust and scratches.

Why 30 KM/PH in Built up Areas?



SAFE DRIVING

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

It is almost a year since I published this piece that merely re -echoed the United Nations (UN) drive to kill excessive speed globally. Although the UN and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has consistently identified excessive speeding as the number killer on global roads, it heightened its position against excessive speed when in 2021, it sought the buy in of Government as well as road users to tilt the trend of road traffic crashes and deaths in urban /built up areas by advocating for a reduction of speed from 50kmph to 30kmph.

This was the trust of the piece I published which is being rehashed today following certain developments on our major corridors as well as tragedies that have occurred within city centers. I have chosen to rerun this piece although with a slight update on some of these ugly developments which has claimed lives. Let me first start with the most recent tragedy which occurred on 19th June,2022.

I must confess that I was startled by the news of the tragic death of 18occupants who died as a result of a road traffic crash which occurred at 0500hours at Gidan- Kwano about six kilometers from Minna, the Niger state capital along Minna- Bida road. This tragedy is certainly not the worst in terms of deaths as followers of road safety reportage would have read the events that happened in Bauchi as well as Kano just to mention a few.

In the case of the crash in Bauchi, on 12 march 2022, a crash occurred along Zaria Kaduna road by Tariyan Sarki Zaria. It was alone crash involving a Toyota Corolla that killed 10people while one was injured. Speed was the probable causative factor. On 28 February, 2022 12 people were burnt to death in a fatal crash along Kano Zario road. Similarly, 20people were also burnt in a speed related crash which occurred in 19 April, 2022 along the Bauchi-Ningi road.

These are just snippets of crashes all attributable to excessive speeding on major corridors. The situation is not different from urban or built up areas which has prompted the Federal Road Safety Corps to redesign its accident reporting formats to properly capture incidences within the city centers. These developments underscored the dire need to rethink this ongoing campaign to achieve our goals as a nation to cut down fatalities. Please enjoy the last piece which is a precursor to a piece I hope to share thereafter.

On Tuesday 18th May, 2021, I was privileged to be a guest on Kakaaki, the morning breakfast show on the African Independent Television (AIT). The mission was to raise awareness of the 6th Global United Nations Road Safety Week which was flagged off globally on 17th May 2021 and would run till 23rd May, 2021. Dr Sydney Ibeanusi, Country Director, the United Nations Decade of Action on Road Safety was also on the programme. The theme for this year is one that excites me among other themes. The focus is on cutting down speed which is identified as the number one killer globally. Excessive speed in built up areas is the sub focus with the theme, The Streets for life: #love30.

Before I dwell on the essence, let me first bring you up to speed on how we have fared so far in Nigeria. The records provided by the Federal Road Safety Corps reveals that road traffic crash statistics consisting of casualties (persons killed and person injured) for the period January to December, 2018 in Nigeria was 9,741 road traffic crashes which resulted in an increase of 3.8percent from 2017. These crashes included 2,739 fatal cases, 5,849 serious cases, 5181 fatalities, denoting an increase of 1.2percent from 2017. The report also reflected speed violation as the major cause of road traffic crashes which accounted for 51.7percent of the total reported.

The Federal Capital Territory Command which is under my watch as Zonal Commanding Officer recorded the highest number of road traffic crashes in 2018 with 1,051 cases representing a reduction of 5percent compared with the figure in 2017. These crashes involved 6,069persons with 2,347 sustaining various degrees of injuries and 281 deaths. Closely followed was Kaduna with 830 cases of crashes involving 6,804 crash victims out of which 3,300 sustained injuries while 679 died. States such as Borno, Bayelsa, and Cross River States recorded low crashes of 46, 53 and 56 cases respectively.

Hearty Cheers!

Our outstanding, loyal and dependable friend and brother, an astute businessman, 'the Gas King', a committed patriot, a nonpareil philanthropist, unstinting humanist, pride of the nation and blessing to humanity, Julius Rone. We felicitate with you on your attainment of 48 years of age.

Your effortless doggedness, visionary leadership and commitment to excellence are inspiration to us. Our prayer is that God would bless you with sound health and long life to conquer more territories and enjoy the fruits of your labour.

We wish you scores of many years ahead and may you continue to win, achieve more highs and conquer higher grounds, JR.

May the friendship we share grow deeper with each passing year!

Congratulations, bro

SIGNED:
Raymond and Udeme Abia



MARKET PLACE

with Omolabake Fasogbon... 08155131874



L-R: Country Manger, Rose of Sharon Foundation (ROSF), Dr Ndudi Bowei; National Coordinator, ROSF, Oloruntosin Taiwo; Representative of Lagos State Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Mrs Awoleye I.O; Assistant Account Officer, ROSF, Adegoke Bukola; Admin Secretary, ROSF, Seriki Toyin and Front Desk Officer, ROSF,Omolola Omosuwa during the Foundation's Advocacy Walk to Lagos State House of Assembly as part of activities to mark 2022 Int'l Widows Day....recently



L-R: Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Lagos, Mr. Chu Maoming; Director, Bethesda Home for Blind, Mrs Ohakwe Evelyn Chioma and Chairman, Nigeria Anhui Entrepreneurs Association, Mr Wu Yang, presenting cheque to the Home for the Blind, during the unveiling of the association at the Oriental hotels, Victoria Island, Lagos...recently

Hollandia Strengthens Bond with Northern Nigeria Consumers

Hollandia, Nigeria's leading dairy brand, is deepening its strong connection with Northern Nigerian consumers who are prioritizing dairy consumption by choosing Hollandia Evaporated Milk and Hollandia Yoghurt as their preferred milk and drinking yoghurt for moments of wholesome nourishment.

Through television commercials, out-of-home boards, radio jingles, and activations in several cities across Northern Nigeria, the brand is reiterating its functional and emotional value to consumers in a relatable language.

A cross-section of consumers in Jos, Plateau, and Wuse, Abuja stated that the already beloved Hollandia Yoghurt and Hollandia Evaporated Milk have grown even more popular since television and radio commercials recently began airing as the products resonate with their local needs and way of life.

Some residents in Jos, where Hollandia Evaporated Milk is becoming popular with local tea sellers popularly known as Mai shai, spoke on the ever-growing acceptance enjoyed by the product.

Musa Bello, a marketing executive with Bestcom Ventures, stated that his early morning routine involves a stop at a local Mai shai (tea seller) to enjoy a hot cup of tea or coffee for a healthy and wholesome start to his day. He observed that in some of the Mai shai shops he visited, Hollandia Evaporated Milk was commonly requested by consumers.

"Upon enquiry, I was told by Alhaji Idris, my favourite tea seller, that Hollandia Evaporated Milk was preferred. My guess is that the renewed campaign by the brand to further connect with consumers is gaining traction" he stated.

Thirty-eight-year-old Samson Gonsum who lives in Abuja stated that the ongoing Hollandia radio and marketing activations are very noticeable in the city.

"Hollandia has done well in communicating its value to us the consumers in the north. We are glad about the brand's ability to communicate and relate with our lifestyle here" he noted.

Marketing Director, CHI Limited, Toyin Nnodi, stated that the commercials and activations enable Hollandia maintain and enhance its deep connection with Northern Nigeria as the preferred brand for dairy nourishment and healthy living in the region.

"We are thrilled to continue to impact the lives of our consumers in Northern Nigeria, with whom we have developed a strong connection as a result of the role we play in their daily lives with the dairy nourishment our brands provide," she said.

China Strengthens Ties with Nigeria, Unveils New Association

A new association, Nigeria Anhui Entrepreneurs Association has been unveiled in an effort to deepen Nigeria- China relationship.

The association was officially inaugurated by Consul General of the People's Republic of China, Chu Maoming at an elaborate ceremony in Oriental hotels, Victoria Island, Lagos, recently.

The association's Chairman, Wu Da Yang restated that move was thought of to further promote economic and trade exchanges between China and Nigeria.

He said, "With the new group, we hope to have improved and stronger affairs with Nigeria, and also strengthen relationships among members and clients, fostering unity, understanding, social progress and mutual assistance between the two countries.

"This association will prioritise promotion of economic and trade exchanges between China and Nigeria."

On his part, Maoming reaffirmed China's support for growth of African economy.

He said, "Chinese community will continue to tell the Chinese stories, spread Chinese voices, and also share the joint promotion and reunion in the culture, international exchanges and cooperation in the era of epidemic, while promoting the construction of a China-Africa community with a shared future".

Group Unveils Business Directory to Support Artisans

As part of efforts to develop the youths and drive innovation among them, Our Lady Mother of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, OLMPH, Ajah, Lagos,has challenged its youth arm, Young Catholic Professionals(YCP) to productivity, ahead of its 2022 harvest of transformation programme.

According to OLMPH, the move was necessary to enable the youths harness their talents towards self productivity and church's growth ,while also preparing and positioning them as tomorrow's leaders.

The call led the YCP's mobilisation sub-committee to come up with several initiatives, Including a business directory service that aimed to support artisans in the building and construction industry.

Specifically, the mobilisation sub-committee would see to promoting parishioners' businesses and services, while ensuring financial independence.

Speaking further on the initiative, a YCP Ex-officio and committee's Head of Business Unit, Maryam Owunene Umar commended the parish priest of OLMPH for giving the youths an opportunity to serve and express their talent, adding that it was a step in the right direction.

She stated that the directory, which is a corporate page for catholic professionals, offers seamless market place for buyers and sellers, and enhance visibility of vendors.

She said that the platform would service the needs of parishioners in a conversational way and ease operational delivery.

She added, "The idea basically is to create a networking platform whereby parishioners operating in the building industry i.e. painters, electricians, tilers, carpenters, building materials suppliers, e.t.c are captured in a singular parish database.

"Most times, parishioners go outside to get service right within their nose because there was no system in place to identify and connect vendors to end users.

"We want to harness this platform to build up each other and connect service providers to people that needs it in the church, and in the process foster togetherness, trust and a sense of community for the parishioners."

Hypo Teams-up with NYSC, Lagos to Lead Hygiene Walk

Hygiene and sanitation brand, Hypo has led a hygiene sensitisation walk, along with National Youth Service Corps, NYSC and Lagos State Ministry of Health, to raise awareness on sanitation and toilet hygiene.

The walk which tagged, "Say No to Unsafe Toilets and Open Defecation", is according to Hypo, designed to support the fight against open defecation and use of unsafe toilets in Nigeria.

The exercise began at Amuwo Odofin Local Government, Festac Town, with the support of Hypo Toilet Rescue Volunteers in the NYSC who joined in spreading the message on safe toilet hygiene practices.

NYSC official representing, Apapa Local Government, Mr. Richard Aloye commended the NYSC members who had now become volunteers of the brand and its toilet rescue initiative

Aloye extolled their bravery and willingness to join in the campaign for a healthy living.

Government Tasked on Financial Empowerment for Widows

The Lagos State government has been charged to prioritise issues that concern widows, especially on matters that bother on their welfare and financial limitations.

A non-government organisation, Rose of Sharon Foundation (ROSF) gave the charge during an advocacy walk it led to the Lagos State House of Assembly, as part of activities to commemorate the occasion of International Widows Day, IWD, 2022.

IWD was set aside by the United Nations to draw attention to issues affecting widows around the world, and the need to safeguard and advance their rights.

Addressing the theme of the day, "Sustainable Solutions for Widows Financial Independence", Country Manager of the Foundation, Dr. Ndudi Bowei stated that the foundation was working on sustainable strategies to make widows financially independent so widows do not turn to beggar.

Bowei said: "Many widows face economic challenges. They are within the poverty line because they do not have financial power. As a matter of urgency, we are seeking socioeconomic protection for Nigerian widows".

She also stressed the need for the Lagos State Government to domesticate Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, VAPP, to give widows legal backing, and make the environment enabling for them.

She said that the Lagos State Prohibition Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL), 2007 did not address the challenges of widowhood.

Preparations Hit Top Gear for 2nd STEAM Fun Festival

The organisers of STEAM Fun Festival has announced that this year's programme would be exposing children to happenings around the real world, away from classroom experience.

The initiative is a collaborative effort of four Edtech companies namely: 9ijakids, STEM-MET, Edufun Technik , Lagos STEAM UP as well as Access bank.

According to the Founder of 9ijakids, Titi Adewusi, STEAM which is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics is programmed to prepare children for future challenge by equipping them with diverse set of problem-solving and digital skills.

The 2nd edition of the programme, which is billed for July 23, 2022 is themed, "STEAM From Classroom to the Real World", which Adewusi said would explore various aspects of STEAM including robotics, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, internet of things, coding, animation, graphics design, games, and fun science experiments.

She said, "STEAM is the foundation for modern-day economic growth and equipping young children with the required skills is critical if Nigeria wants to fully reap the benefits of a digital economy. Thus, the event aimed to spark a love for STEAM education"

Unilever, SupplierGATEWAY Launch Social Procurement Initiative

Unilever Nigeria has joined force with SupplierGATEWAY to launch its social procurement initiative in Nigeria. The initiative is in line with the organisation's vision to make sustainable living commonplace and more specifically, to increase investment in female and disability owned businesses in Nigeria.

SupplierGATEWAY is a provider of globally recognised Enhanced Digital Certification (EDC) that ensures that everyone, including women and people living with disabilities get exposed to new opportunities needed to scale in business, without suffering discrimination.

Speaking at the launch, Managing Director of Unilever West Africa, Carl Cruz restated that the move was part of the company's global commitment to invest in diverse businesses worldwide.

He said, "We class businesses as diverse if they are at least 51% owned, managed, and controlled by groups underrepresented in business, such as women, people with disabilities, ethnic and racial or other minority groups.

"SupplierGATEWAY will aid in the certification of businesses owned by women and people with disabilities in Nigeria.

This is part of our Equity Diversity and Inclusion journey to contribute to a fairer, and more socially inclusive world. We are also pleased to have WIMBIZ, United Nations Global Compact Nigeria Network and Nigeria Business Disability Network as our support partners on this initiative."

LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO OUR
CLASS CAPTAIN



MR. BABAJIDE OLUSOLA
SANWO-OLU
GOVERNOR, LAGOS STATE

From
The Lagos State Executive Council

LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT

Over 57 visions have guided us in the provision of infrastructure for the greater good of Lagosians.

Calling you an inspirational leader is least of the 57 ways to celebrate you today.



Happy fifty-seventh birthday

Boss!!!

MR. BABAJIDE OLUSOLA
SANWO-OLU
GOVERNOR, LAGOS STATE

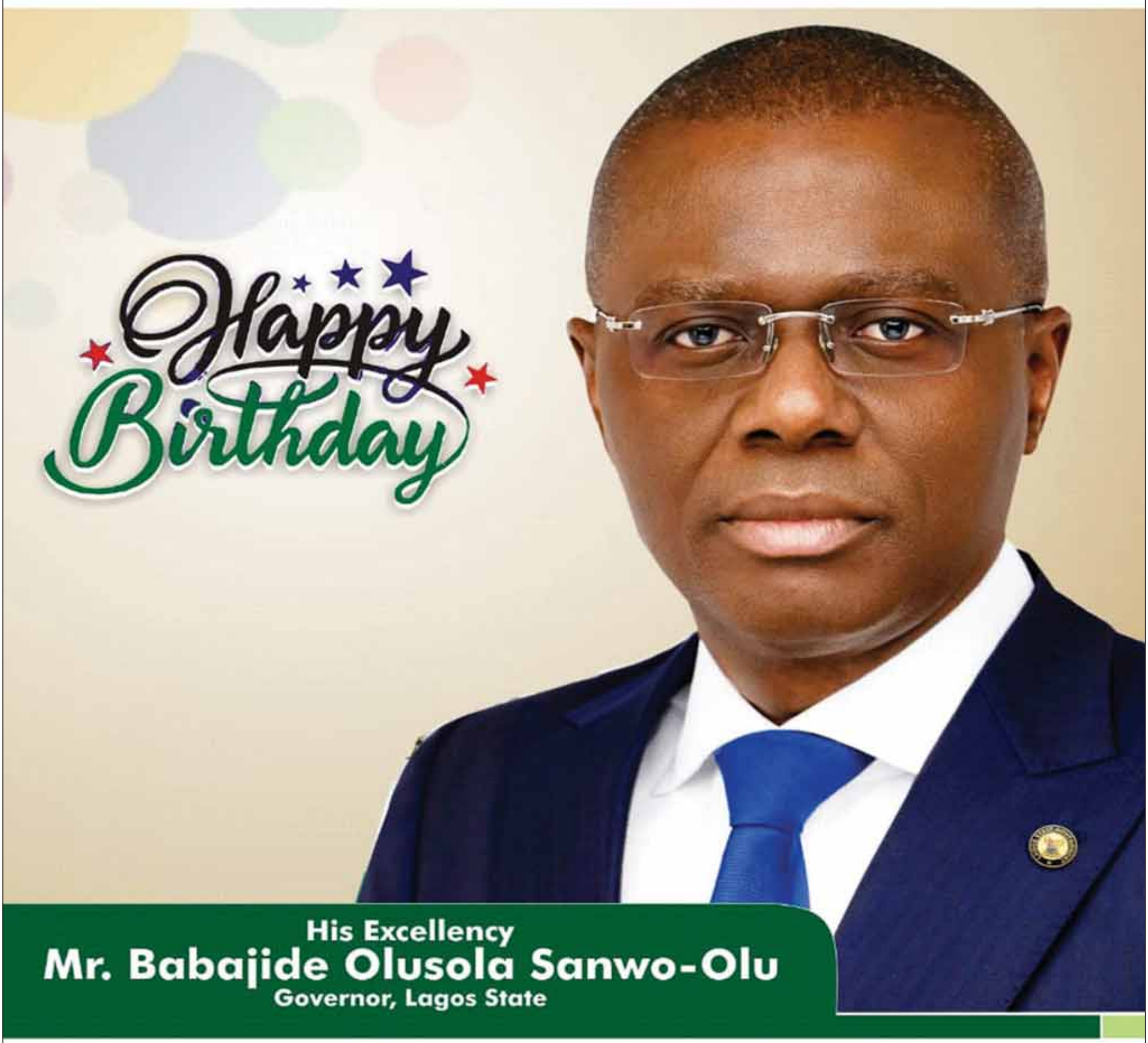
We Are Building Lagos

From All Of Us
Lagos State Ministry of Works & Infrastructure; **(LSMOWI)**

Lagos State Public Works Corporation;**(LSPWC)**
Lagos State Material Testing Laboratory;**(LSMTL)**
Lagos State Infrastructure Maintenance and Regulatory Agency;**(LASIMRA)**
Lagos State Infrastructure Asset Management Agency **(LASIAMA)**

GOVERNMENT OF ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA

Lion Building, Government House, Independence Layout, Enugu



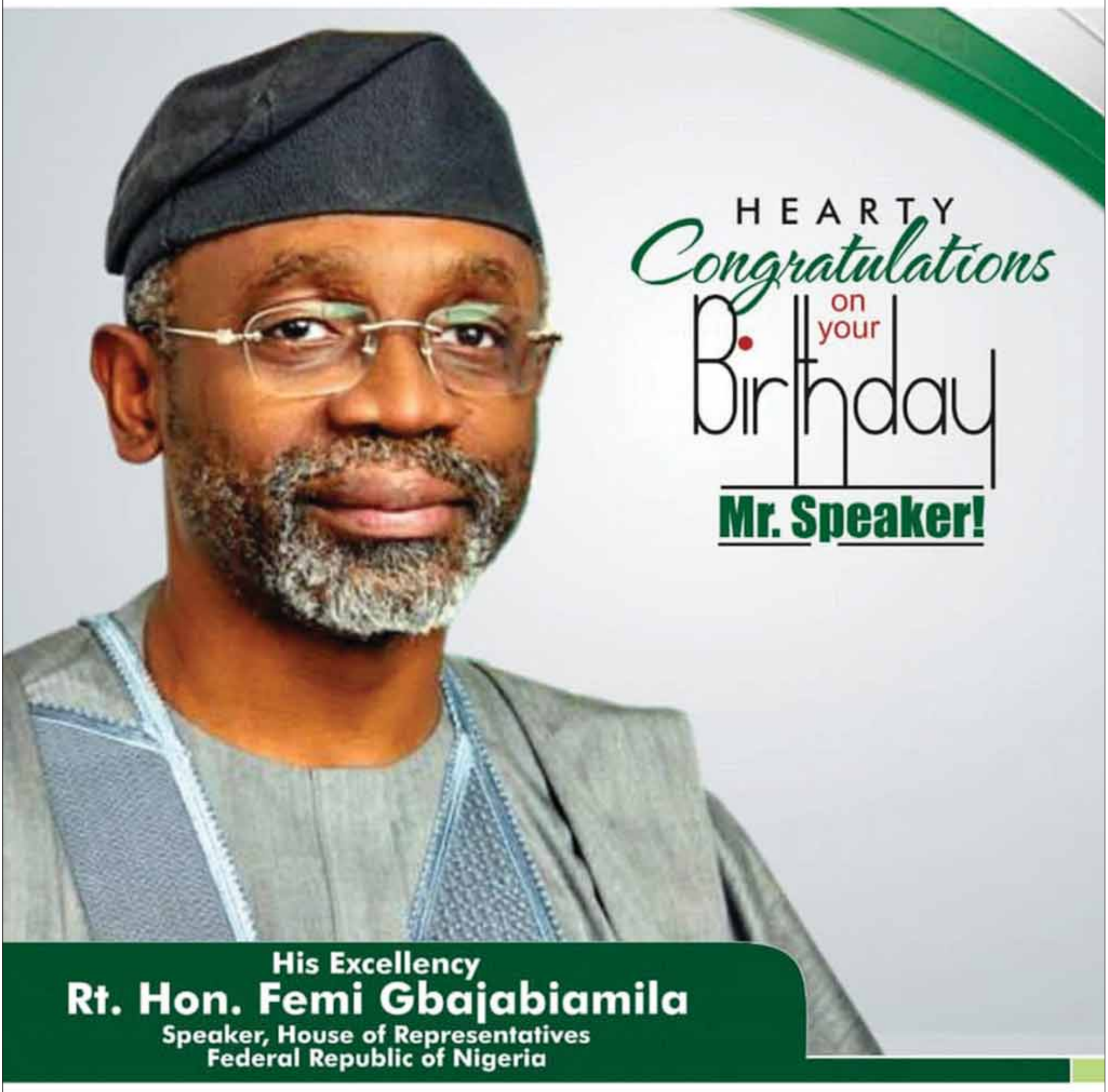
Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi

Governor, Enugu State

ENUGU STATE IS IN THE HANDS OF GOD.

GOVERNMENT OF ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA

Lion Building, Government House, Independence Layout, Enugu

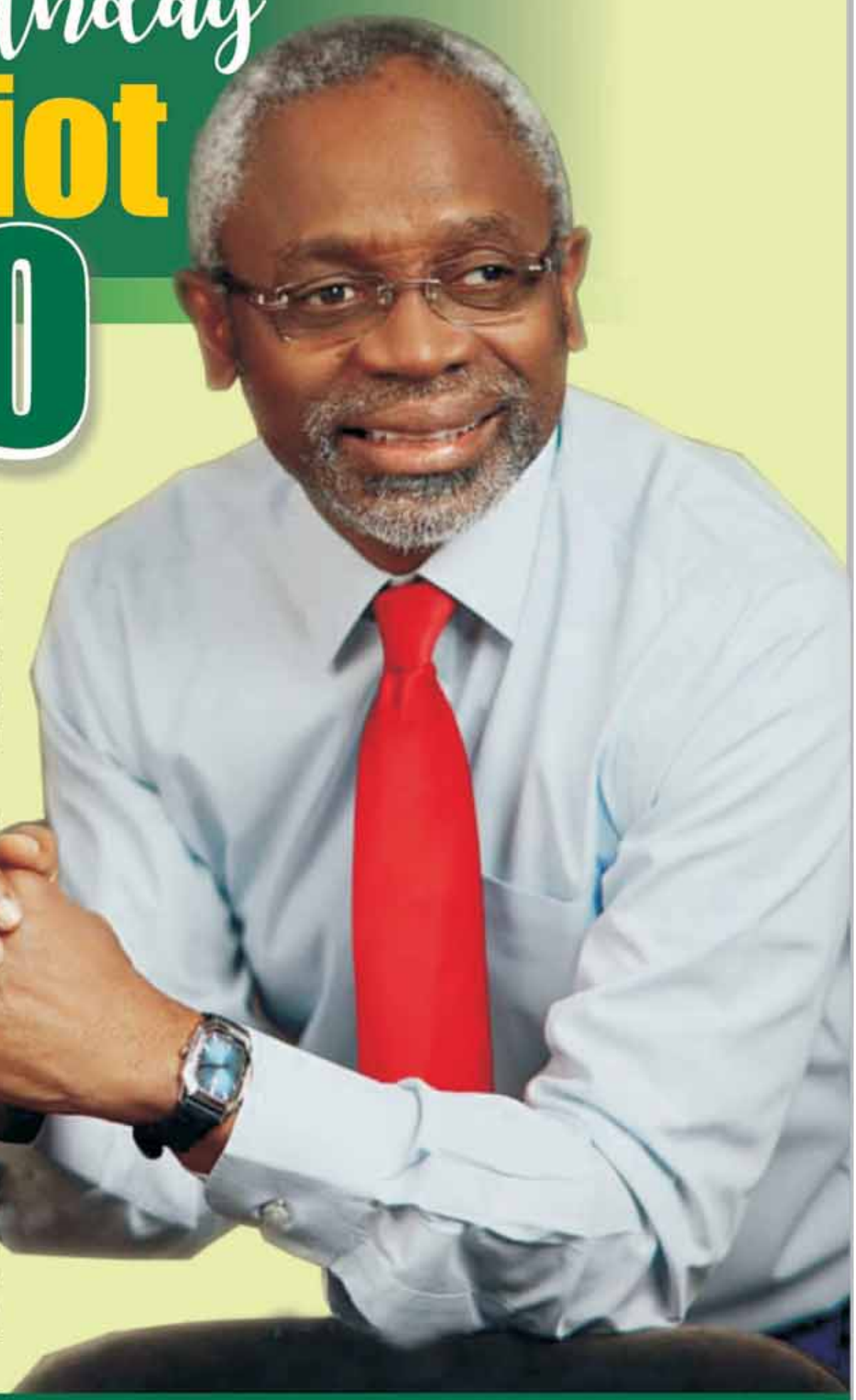


Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi

Governor, Enugu State

ENUGU STATE IS IN THE HANDS OF GOD.

Happy Birthday to a Patriot at 60



On behalf of my family, my constituents and the entire members of the House of Representatives, I joyfully rejoice with my brother and leader, a democrat and a patriotic Nigerian, **His Excellency the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rep. Femi Gbajabiamila,** as he clocks 60 years today.

You are an exemplary leader who unites and harnesses the potentials of Everyone irrespective of their political affiliation. Working with you has been an exciting and insightful experience that has Enriched my political career.

Your commitment to the Independence of the legislature And the growth and sustenance Of our democracy through Effective legislation is never in doubt.

As you celebrate an additional year today, I pray that the Almighty Allah will bless you with many more decades of good health to continue to serve your fatherland to the best of your ability.

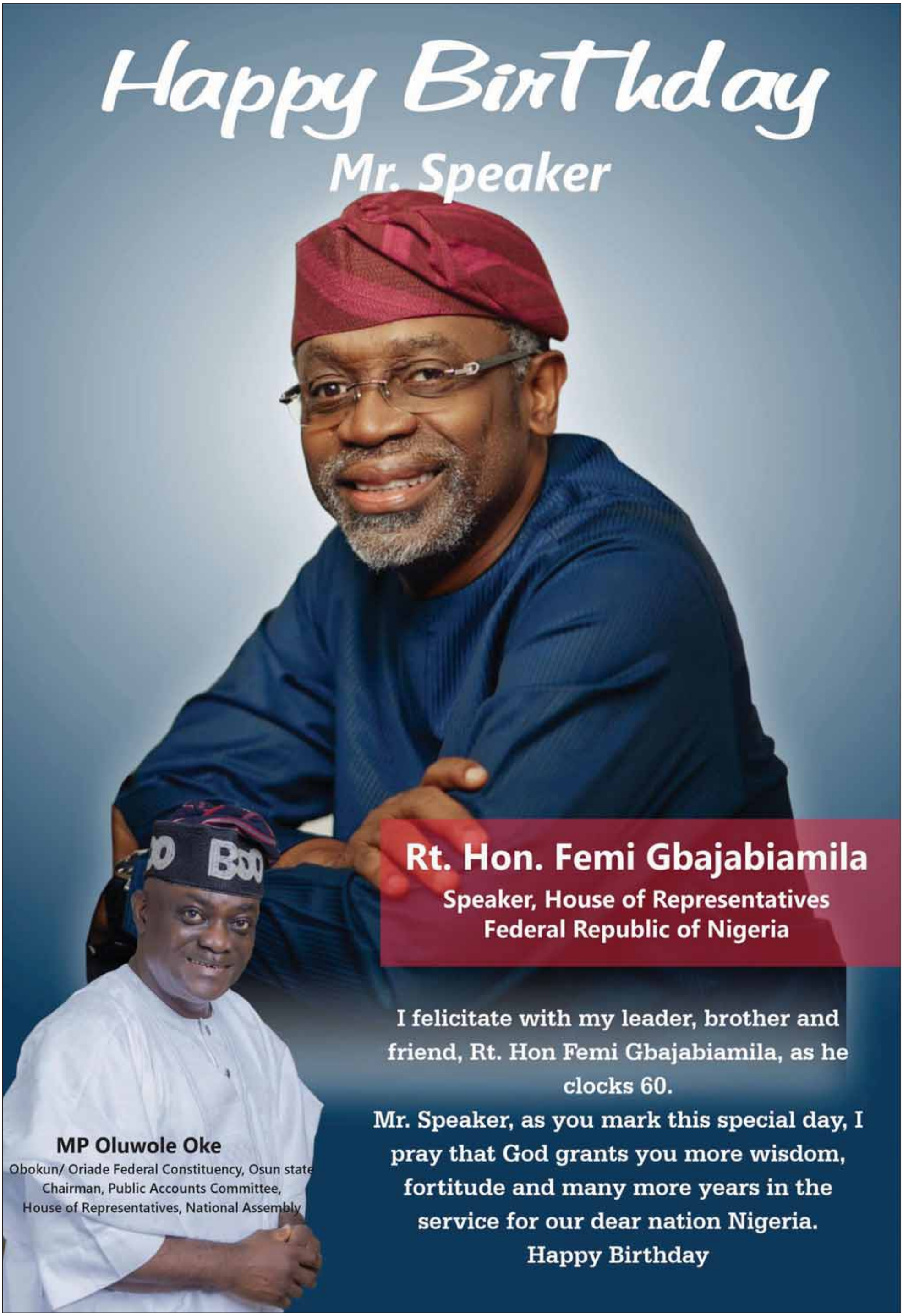
RT. HON. FEMI GBAJABIAMILA
Speaker of the House of Representatives



Signed:
His Excellency
RT. HON AHMED IDRIS WASE
Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives

Happy Birthday

Mr. Speaker



Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila

Speaker, House of Representatives
Federal Republic of Nigeria

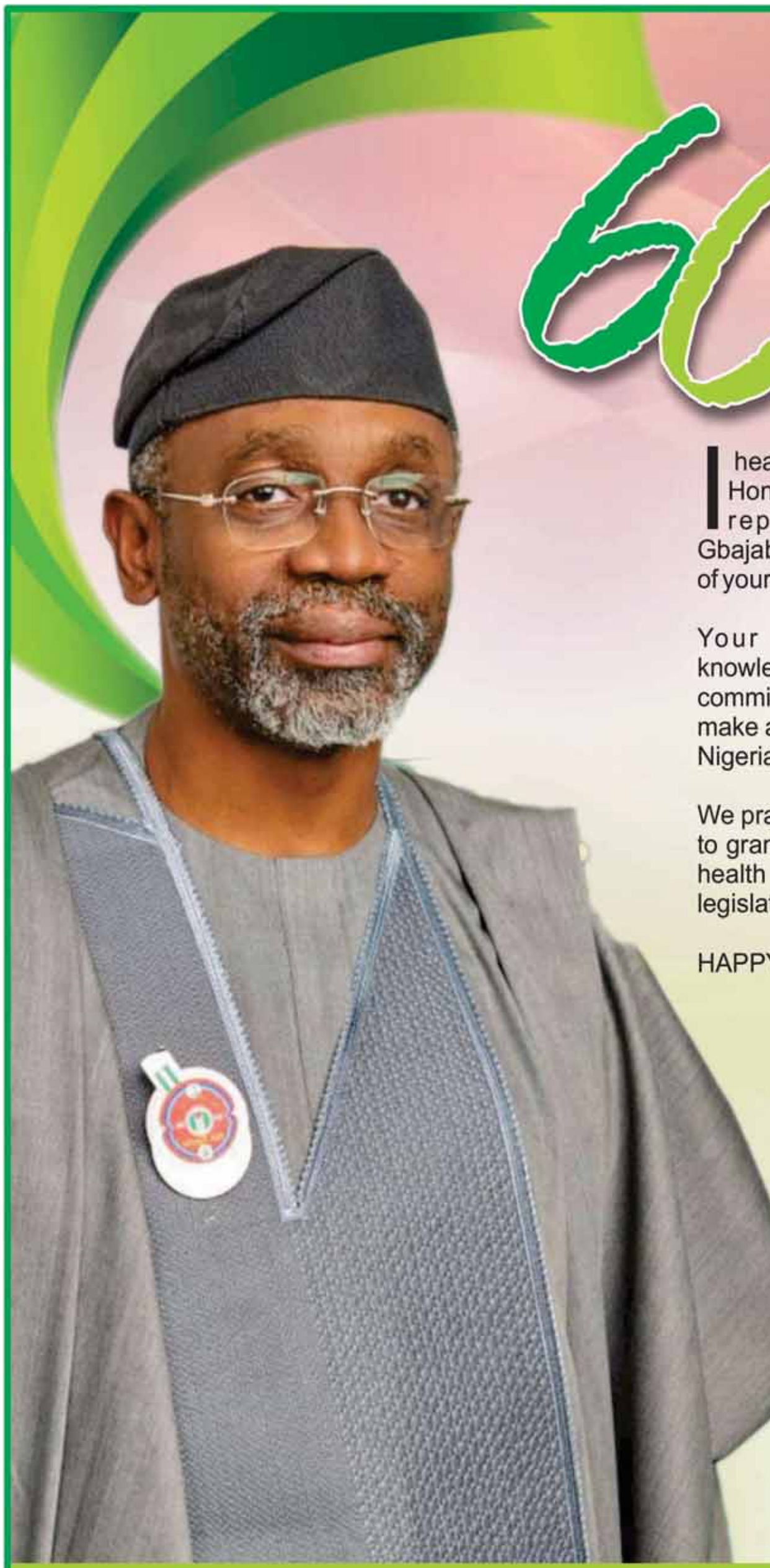
I felicitate with my leader, brother and friend, Rt. Hon Femi Gbajabiamila, as he clocks 60.

Mr. Speaker, as you mark this special day, I pray that God grants you more wisdom, fortitude and many more years in the service for our dear nation Nigeria.

Happy Birthday

MP Oluwole Oke

Obokun/ Oriade Federal Constituency, Osun state
Chairman, Public Accounts Committee,
House of Representatives, National Assembly



60 Hearty Cheers

I heartily felicitate with our indefatigable Honourable Speaker of the House of representatives, Rt. Hon Femi Gbajabiamila on this auspicious occasion of your 60th birthday.

Your vast pool of parliamentary knowledge as well as your uncommon commitment, focus and determination to make a difference in the task of rebuilding Nigeria cannot be downplayed.

We pray that the Almighty Allah continues to grant you wisdom, guidance and good health in the task of discharging your legislative interventions.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Rt. Hon. **Femi Gbajabiamila**
Speaker, House of Representatives
Federal Republic of Nigeria.



Signed:

Rt. Hon. Lynda Chuba Ikpeazu

ARISE MOVIE BOX X INDIEVIEW

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NIGERIAN UPSTREAM PETROLEUM REGULATORY COMMISSION (NUPRC)

7, Sylvester Ugoh Crescent Jabi, Abuja FCT. PMB 399 Garki, Abuja.
+234 (9) 903 2000 nuprc@nuprc.gov.ng www.nuprc.gov.ng

INVITATION TO THE PRESENTATION OF MODEL LICENCES AND CONTRACTS TO THE 2020 MARGINAL FIELD AWARDEES

The Governing Board and Management of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has concluded arrangements for the issuance of model licences and contracts to the 2020 marginal field awardees and the unveiling of Host Community Regulations. The event is scheduled to hold as follows:

Date: Tuesday, 28th June, 2022
Time: 10.00am Prompt
Venue: Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja

The following Stakeholders are invited to kindly attend:

- All the Marginal Field Awardees
- OPTS Representatives
- IPPG Representatives
- Senate Committees on Petroleum Upstream, Gas and Host Community
- House of Representatives Committees Upstream, Gas and Host Community
- Governors of the Eleven (11) oil producing states
- Host Community Representatives of the oil and gas producing states
- Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources
- Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF)
- Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA)
- Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC)
- Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC)
- Nigeria Extractive Industries Transperancy Initiative (NEITI)
- Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA)
- Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB)
- Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC)
- Federal University of Petroleum Technology, Effurun-Warri
- Petroleum Training Institute, Warri
- World Bank Representatives
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA)
- Upstream Service Providers
- Lease Operators
- GMDs of financial institutions in Nigeria
- Insurance companies
- NEXIM
- Afrexim Bank
- International finance corporations
- The Press

We look forward to welcoming all invitees at the event, please.

Signed:

Engr. Gbenga Komolafe (FNSE)
Commission Chief Executive

NEWSXTRA

Ekweremadu: Documents Show Alleged Trafficked Minor is 21 Years Old, But Exploitation an Issue

Peter Obi prays for deputy senate president to overcome trial

Fresh facts on the ongoing trial of former Deputy President of the Nigerian Senate, Ike Ekweremadu and his wife, Beatrice, in the United Kingdom for alleged organ harvesting show that the alleged trafficked minor, David Ukpo David Nwamini, is well over 21 years.

They were arraigned before a UK Magistrate court last Thursday.

The senator and his wife got legal representation and begged the court for bail, stating that their passports had been seized but the judge denied them bail and remanded them in custody till July 7, 2022, pending further investigation.

Only persons below age 18 are considered minors in the United Kingdom.

But the issue of whether the Ekweremadu's acted in a manner that amounts to exploiting Nwamini remains strong in the court.

At the court hearing, Prosecutor Damla Ayas stated: "It is conspiracy in relation to human trafficking offences for the purposes of organ harvesting. The victim in this case is 15 years old. They, the couple, were interviewed at the police station. Both of the defendants have provided a prepared statement.

"Ekweremadu, in his prepared statement, denied allegations of human trafficking. He said he did not at any stage arrange transport for anyone with intention to exploit them.

His wife similarly denied the allegations in her prepared statement.

However, new documents have shown that the alleged minor might have lied about his age.

Ukpo's international passport with number B00569974 issued on November 4, 2021, shows that he was actually born on October 12, 2000. It means he is aged 21, hence and will clock 22 on October 12, 2022.

His National Identity Number (NIN) on the passport is 19438077110. Further investigation shows that his NIN registration, which was done on June 15, 2022, has October 12, 2000 as his birthday.

Also, Ukpo's Bank Verification Number (BVN), which was enrolled at the Ikotun branch of Stanbic IBTC Bank on January 31, 2019, equally the same birthday as his international passport and NIN.

A letter had also surfaced on Thursday showing that Ekweremadu wrote to the UK High Commission in Nigeria in support of the Ukpo's visa application wherein he also stated the purpose of the UK trip and hospital to be used.

Consequent upon the visa application, Ukpo was granted a Type/Category D visa, where the purpose of visit is stated as "Private Medical Treatment".

Meanwhile contrary to media reports (not THISDAY) that Ekweremadu travelled with David on the trip during which he was arrested, the prospective donor actually arrived London in February 2022.

However, following series of medical examinations to determine the suitability of the donor's organ to the receiver, it was established that they did not match; hence the procedure was called off.

David was therefore billed return to Nigeria in May.

Contrary to the claim that it was the hospital that invited the police into matter when they allegedly discovered that he was a "minor", investigation showed that it was actually Ukpo, who on getting to the airport on the day of his departure from the UK, allegedly told the police that he was a 15-year, Lagos-based homeless minor trafficked to the UK by the duo of Ekweremadu and the wife for organ harvest.

He was said to have further alleged that he was being forcibly taken back to Nigeria.

It is alleged that he might have taken the step with a view to securing asylum status in European nation.

A source familiar with the development said: "It is unfortunate how some people desperately want to benefit from other people's misfortunes.

"Here is a couple desperately, but legitimately doing everything they can to save a daughter whose life is on line, but only for someone to want to put them take them to hell for his selfish benefit.

"This young man has been in the UK since February 2022 undergoing necessary medical investigations and didn't deem it necessary to report to the UK authorities.

"He suddenly came to the realisation of being 'trafficked' and 'enslaved' for 'organ harvest' as an alleged 'minor' on the set day for him to depart the UK back to Nigeria, and in this case, at the airport.

"The fact that Ekweremadu wrote to the UK High Commission stating the purpose of the visit by the donor clearly shows that there could not have been mischief or motivation towards crime in the first place. Isn't the UK High Commission the representative of the UK Sovereign in Nigeria?

"If they suspected anything shady, they would have corrected it or even denied the visa or reached the lawmaker, who requested them to contact him should the need arise".

Meanwhile, information and activities on donor's page do not suggest that he was homeless in Nigeria or was enslaved in London.

Information on his Facebook show that he hails from Ebonyi State, but lives in Lagos in Lagos where he is into phone business.

Also, posts on his Facebook Page showed him in a cozy environment having fun.

It was however observed that there have been a lot of alterations on his Facebook account since the early hours of Friday.

Peter Obi Prays for Ekweremadu

The presidential candidate of Labour Party, Peter Obi yesterday expressed support and prayed for Ekweremadu and his wife, over the trial.

In a tweet yesterday, Obi expressed concern over the allegation, saying justice should be served on the case.

"My family and I are with the Ekweremadu's over their travail. We join all men of goodwill in praying for the healing of their daughter and commit them into God's hand for justice to be done," Obi tweeted.

A statement by the Metropolitan Police on Thursday said, "A woman and a man were charged today (Thursday) with conspiring to arrange the travel of a child into the UK to harvest organs.

"The charges follow an investigation by the Metropolitan Police's Specialist Crime team.

"Beatrice Nwanneka Ekweremadu, 55 (10.9.66) of Nigeria is charged with conspiracy to arrange/facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation, namely organ harvesting.

"Ike Ekweremadu, 60 (12.05.62) of Nigeria is charged with conspiracy to arrange/facilitate the travel of another person with a view to exploitation, namely organ harvesting."

The investigation was launched after detectives were alerted to potential offences under modern slavery legislation in May 2022, the force said.



EYES ON THE PRESIDENCY…

Presidential candidate of Labour Party, Mr. Peter Obi, after a meeting with Ambassador Samuela Isopi of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS during which they exchanged views on issues of mutual interests

Nwafor: We Must End Era of Puppet Governors in Abia State

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

Governorship candidate of the Young Progressives Party (YPP) in Abia State, Mr. Enyinnaya Chima Nwafor, has called on Abia voters to end the cycle of electing puppet governors by giving him a mandate to become the chief executive of Abia come 2023.

He made the call yesterday at Igbere in Bende Local Government Area during a familiarisation visit to the community where his deputy, Chief Chima Anyaso hails from.

The YPP governorship standard bearer said that he was not anointed by any godfather before he entered the race for Abia Government House hence he would not be controlled like a puppet.

"I asked God that I don't want to be a governor that somebody would point at and say, 'I made him governor', '' he said, adding that Abia has been the worse for it by electing puppets as governors.

Lagos Leads 25 States in Pension Payment, Pays 10,380 Retirees

Rebecca Ejifoma

Lagos State has emerged as the top performer in pension payments among other quality indices of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) for the first quarter of 2022.

As listed by the National Pension Commission (NPC) on 'Status of implementation of the CPS by states', it shows that Lagos tops five other states in the payment of accrued rights of retirees as well as regular remittance of the monthly pensions contributions under the CPS.

The state enacted a Pension Law for CPS called the Lagos State Pension Reform Act 2007. It also set up a pension commission called the Lagos State Pension Commission.

According to the commission, under Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration, workers and pensioners have not had it so good as the state government continues to remit the employer and employee contributions promptly monthly.

According to the Commissioner for Establishments, Training and Pensions, Mrs. Ajibola Ponnle, Lagos State is almost set to provide free health insurance and transportation to its pensioners. This is currently being finalised and would be launched shortly.

2023 Presidency: Bala Ribiu Drums Support for Kwankwaso

Businessman and Managing Director of Balnara Universal, Nafiu Bala Rabiu, has implored Nigerians to vote for New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNNP) presidential candidate, Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso in the forthcoming elections.

Rabiu described the former governor of Kano State as the only and best man for the presidency given his antecedents in politics and track record as the governor of Kano State.

In a show of solidarity, Rabiu who was one of the dignitaries that graced the NNNP presidential primary in Abuja, maintained that Nigeria needs a man like Kwankwaso to get out of the woods.

He said, "Kwankwaso has a strong reputation for excellence and integrity; thus is evident in his legacy in educational reforms, infrastructural development and human capital development as a former governor.

"His tempting profile and achievement is a testament to his capacity to hit the ground running if elected Nigerian president come 2023."

Meanwhile, as preparations for the 2023 elections heightened, Kwankwaso has also urged youths in the country to register and get their permanent voters cards (PVCs) so they can cast their votes in 2023.

He also charged the youths in the country against engaging in acts of violence during and after the elections.

German Agency Trains 30,000 Students in Entrepreneurial Skills

James Sowole in Akure

No fewer than 30,000 secondary school students have benefitted from the entrepreneurship and technical training programmes, being sponsored by a German International Development Agency, GIZ through its Student Entrepreneurship Activity Hub (SEA-Hub) programme.

The beneficiary students were drawn from 350 secondary schools spread across 11 states in Nigeria and Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The Head of Programme, GIZ SEDIN, Mr. Markus Wauschkuhn, disclosed this in a remark at the opening of the Ogun State SEA-Hub Exhibition and Competition 2022 in Abeokuta, the state capital.

He listed the beneficiary states to include: Ogun, Plateau, Edo, Lagos, Yobe, Kaduna, Delta, Imo, Osun, Oyo and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

According to him, 6,350 students in 95 schools in Ogun State, had benefitted from the programme, adding that, the training programme was designed to equip secondary school students with entrepreneurship and technical skills for economic sustainability.

Wauschkuhn disclosed that the training which started in 2016, has led to the creation of over 45 different innovative mini businesses and products by the beneficiaries.



INFRASTRUCTURE ON THEIR MINDS…

Delta Governor, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa (middle), being conducted round ongoing projects at the Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, by the Project Consultant, Mr. Kester Ifeadi (right). With them is the Contractor of the project, Peter Okpuzor (left)…yesterday

Tinubu, Gbajabiamila Hail Governor Sanwo-olu at 57

Udora Orizu in Abuja

Former Lagos State governor and presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, have congratulated Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-olu on his 57th birthday.

In a statement by his Media Office yesteday in Abuja, Asiwaju Tinubu said "Governor Sanwo-Olu has, in the past three plus years, far exceeded even the most optimistic expectations from his tenure.

"His achievements, too numerous to mention here, have garnered him the love and adoration of Lagosians young and old, male and female.

"Governor Sanwo-olu's exceptional leadership and steadfast dedication to the task of bettering the lives of all Lagosians are showcased daily in the smoothness with which the administration of the state now runs. He is, indeed, a prime exemplar of the excellence upon which our beloved state prides itself.

"Mr. Governor has demonstrated uncommon compassion and humility as well as a strong will and steely determination. He has risen to every challenge placed before him. In return, he has the full faith and confidence of our party in the state and I look forward to him leading all Lagos APC candidates to victory at next year's polls.

Ikeja Electric Boss Tasks Engineers on Power Challenges in Nigeria

Funmi Ogundare

Chairman, Board of Directors, Ikeja Electric PLC, Mr. Kola Adesina, yesterday, called on engineers in the country to activate their intellect to produce the change in the power sector that Nigerians desire to see.

Adesina who made this call at the inauguration of Nigerian Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (NIEEE) Egbin- Ikorodu chapter and investiture ceremony in Lagos, said it could be through innovation and scientific method.

He expressed concern that the country is not generating enough gas regularly and that our plants are not working at fullest capacity, adding that Nigeria is also making so much money in the area of oil and gas, but not in power generating.

According to him, "why are we not generating gas regularly? Why are our plants not generating at fullest capacity? Why are the distribution companies not receiving enough power? We are making so much money in oil and gas, but actually not in power. We have committed over a billion dollars into this."

He said since humanity appreciates the contribution of engineers and scientists, they should activate their value to solve the power problem confronting the nation rather than point accusing fingers at the government and individuals.

In his lecture titled, 'Sustainable Development and Energy Generation in Nigeria' the General Manager (Lagos Region), Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Olugbenga Ajiboye, emphasised on why there had been collapse of the national grid, saying that there is no agreement between the transmission and distribution companies.

Ogunbiyi Welcomes Over 1,000 PDP Members to Accord in Osogbo

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

As the July 16th governorship election in Osun State draws nearer, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, Chief Sakariyau Oyediji, has led over 1,000 of his supporters to join Accord Party.

The rally which took place at Alie Junction in Osogbo, attended by a large crowd of party faithful led to the decamping of all Ward 14 executive members of PDP and several others from Wards 2,4 and 10.

Oyediji, popularly known as Alhaji Marboro expressed his delight at dropping the PDP for Accord, saying among other reasons for jettisoning his old party was the incompetence and lack of solid educational background of its governorship candidate.

Besides, the Aremo of Oba-Ile accused Adeleke's family for their "insatiable desires" to occupy positions of authority to the detriment of others in the state.

He said his Ward 14 has the highest numbers of votes in Osogbo and that he will deliver it to the Accord candidate, Dr. Akin Ogunbiyi in the forthcoming election.

He urged all Osogbo indigenes to support Ogunbiyi who picked his deputy, Alhaji Kunle Jimoh from Isale-Osun, Osogbo, noting that all other major political parties did not consider Osogbo for anything.

The PDP Chairman of Ward 14, Waheed Adetayo and the ward's party leader, Alhaji Hammed Moshood and the women leaders Mrs. Suliat Ojuawo, Omokehinde Ogunsade and Lateefat Oyediji led over 1,000 of their members to their new party.

Also, Alhaji Mohammed Daood Temini Olohun (Osogbo Ward 2) Pastor Samuel Adeogun Ekeloju-oti (Osogbo Ward 4) and Isiaka Lawal (Osogbo Ward 10) led tens of their members from PDP to join Accord.

Onyema Honours Nigeria's Sports Heroes, to Build Wall of Fame

The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Air Peace, Allen Onyema, has pledged to build a Wall of Fame for Nigeria's distinguished sports icons whose strides played a tremendous role in unifying the country, projecting her in a favourable light and representing the entire black race positively.

Onyema, who was represented by his daughter, Nnenna Onyema, Executive Director, Air Peace, made the statement while delivering a keynote speech at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, NIIA's, second conversations with the theme 'FESTAC of Sports', held in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, on Thursday in Lagos.

INEC: Voter Registration May Be Extended By At Least More 30 Days

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday assured that the ongoing voter registration exercise may be extended to at least an additional 30 days.

This is contrary to the position by the House of Representatives Chairman on Electoral Committee, Aisha Dukku, who said that the exercise will be extended by 60 days.

The INEC National Commissioner for Information and Chairman Voter Education, Festus Okoye disclosed this while addressing some restive prospective and eligible voters in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

According to Okoye, "We are going to extend this registration process to make sure that every eligible Nigerian is registered."

Firm Partners Nigerian Conservation Foundation on Tree Planting Exercise

Mary Nnah

To help protect and restore nature and biodiversity, Pernod Ricard Nigeria, the local affiliate of Pernod Ricard, a global leader in wines and spirits, in line with its commitment to nurturing terroirs is observing the 10th edition of Responsib'All Day.

This year's theme is being implemented with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), the premier NGO dedicated to nature conservation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the day was commemorated with the planting of 2,000 tree seedlings at various locations including Old Oyo National Park, Sapateri, Oyo State; Pan-Atlantic University, Ibeju-Lekki; Omo Forest Reserve, J4, Ogun State; Lagos Business School, Lekki and then rounded up at Lekki Conservation Centre, Lagos.

Managing Director, Pernod Ricard Western Africa, Sola Oke, said "As 'créateurs de convivialité' our mission is to unravel the magic of human connection by bringing good times from a good place, as we impact our communities in our efforts to build a more sustainable and responsible world without excesses. We are delighted to partner the Nigerian Conservation Foundation to bring our vision to life as we play our role in protecting the environment."

Launched in 2011, Responsib'All Day is in line with Pernod Ricard's Sustainability and Responsibility 2030 roadmap, 'Good Times from a Good Place', this year, more than 18,500 Pernod Ricard employees globally are taking action by volunteering on a variety of community projects to inspire, learn, engage and educate their local communities to impact the environment.

Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria Inaugurates New Exco

The youth wing of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) Eti Osa Province in Lagos State has inaugurated a new body of executive members.

The event, which was largely attended by both members and friends of the province, was held at Miracle Breed Church.

Speaking on the theme: 'Stronger Together', Bishop Femi Soneye of Miracle Breed Church charged the new executives to work together to realise a uniform goal.

On his part, the newly elected Province Youth Director, Joel Obikoru, said that the new executive members would use the platform to provide opportunities for Nigerian youths in realising their dreams of singing and acting.

He also urged Nigerian youths to get their Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) to enable them vote for a credible candidate come 2023.

"What happened today is like a platform for us to work, if we don't do this we won't be able to operate.

"We all know that Nigeria is having leadership issues. So, we want to have so many people into politics, conquer the mountain of education and sports. We have many of our youths who feel that the church is not supporting them. "

Dubai Roadshow Targets More Nigerian Travellers

The Government of Dubai has put in place measures to stimulate the number of Nigerians visiting that country, from its 2019 statistics when Nigeria was one of its top performing source markets with a year-on-year increase of 33 percent in visitor numbers.

This projection is envisaged because of the merger of its tourism department with the department of economy, in an intentional move to position tourism as a huge starter in the economy of Dubai.

It is also supported by the increase in seat capacity from Emirates Airline between Dubai and Nigeria in the summer.

This was disclosed by Regional Director International Operations, Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), Stella Fabura, during the recent Annual Dubai Roadshow in Lagos.

The event, which featured 33 partners across hospitality, medical and entertainment sectors, also held across key Nigerian cities.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **FUMILAYO ABIKE OYALAYO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEBAYO TOAFEEKAT OYELAYO.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as, **MISS. ICMEZ, DILARA,** now wish to be known and addressed as, **MRS. CHUKWU ICMEZ DILARA.** All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

I formerly known and addressed as **HAUWA ABUBAKAR TIJANI** now wish to be known and addressed as **HAUWA ABUBAKAR.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

This is to notify the general public that my name **MUHAMMAD ABUBAKAR TIJANI** was wrongly spelt on my **WAEC** as **ABUBAKAR MUHAMMED.** My correct name is **MUHAMMAD ABUBAKAR TIJANI.** All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MEMUDU PRISCILLA MAYOWA,** now wish to be known and addressed as **EGBONRELU PRISCILLA MAYOWA.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known as **TEMITOPE RACHEAL ISAIAH,** now want to be addressed as **TEMITOPE RACHEAL OSUKI.** All documents remain valid. General public should please take note.

I, formerly known as **MISS JULIET ONYINYECHUKWU EZE,** wish to be known and addressed as **MRS JULIET ONYINYECHUKWU OSAZEE-DANKARO.** General public should please take note.

Former **ONOH ARINZE KESTA,** now wish to be known as **JONATHAN ARINZE CHINEDU.** All former document remain valid. The general public should please take note.



THISDAY

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MISSILE

PDP to APC

"Instead of personally addressing the issues raised, the CJN rather allowed his media aide to respond to the revered Justices of the Supreme Court via a press statement in a manner that shows impunity and utter disregard to the Justices and the institution of the Judiciary" *–The opposition PDP chiding the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Ibrahim Tanko over his response to issues raised by the justices of the Supreme Court.*

THISDAY 27 years OF ROBUST JOURNALISM SINCE 1995

JEROME-MARIO **UTOMI**

GUEST COLUMNIST



Widows' Day, Raj Loomba and Okowa's Examples

As the world on Thursday June 23 celebrated the International widow's day, the credit of the celebration, going by reports, goes to Raj Loomba, an Indian national/ member of the House of Lords in London. He is the founder of the Loomba Foundation. The Loomba Foundation was established to address the problems widows in developing nations. The Foundation has been observing the day since 2005. Loomba and his wife received much admiration among governmental and non-governmental organizations in India and abroad.

Following this persisted but private effort, the 21st December 2010; the UN General Assembly in its 65th General Assembly session adopted the resolution A/RES/65/189 that explains the designation of International Widows' Day.

The purpose of celebrating the International Widows' day is the acknowledgement of the United Nations (UN) that they are invisible to policymakers. Policies are focused on common citizens, labourers, jobless youth, and other suffering segments of society. However, nothing is specifically discussed about widows in policy-making meetings. Such an ignoring attitude means that issues affecting more than 258 million people remain unaddressed. Widows' Day stresses highlighting the issues of this ignored community to make the world more sustainable.

In the same sense, as the world celebrates, evidence also abounds that like Loomba Foundation, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, the Governor of Delta State has shown that there exist a ray of socioeconomic hope for Nigerian women, particularly widows in Delta state.

Aside from that, Okowa has in the past sustainably manifested leadership traits that qualifies as people-focused, a recent telephone talk with Elder (Dr) Isioma Okonta, the Governor's Senior Special Assistant on Social Investment Programme and Coordinator of the Delta State Widows Welfare Scheme, further demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that Okowa is a believer in the words of the late former Secretary General of the United Nation (UN), Kofi Annan, that there is no tool for development more effective than empowerment of women, and no other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant and maternal mortality.

For a better understanding of the piece, a report recently noted that a widow is a woman who has lost her husband by death and has not remarried. Widows it



Okowa

added, are invisible in society. They are scattered across the globe, owing to their condition and the enormous challenges, reproach and shame the majority of them are undergoing. For widows to secure expectation by keeping their hopes alive by way of feeding, providing accommodation and qualitative education for their children, they must assume the position of their dead husband who happened to be the breadwinner.

Speaking on how the state government decided on a life changing scheme, widely known as 'Widows Alert' in 2018 to provide succour and wipe away their tears, remedy their despair and perplexity, and assuage their hunger, Okonta explained that the initiative of the governor is focused on taking care of the poor and vulnerable widows in Delta State and cuts across the 25 local government areas.

To those that are saying they are widows, indeed and to those that are saying they are poor and vulnerable widows, the community leaders are there to ascertain those points

Okonta said: The Communities are touched by this programme. This program"me is non-political and cuts across religious lines. It takes care of stipends of the widows monthly and also there is a third scheme attached to it. The widows can benefit from free healthcare. The premium of this healthcare is born by His Excellency, the governor by way of the Delta State contributory healthcare. So, even if the widows have to undergo surgical operations, it is free of charge. And we have 5,607 widows enrolled in this scheme.

On how the state tracks those that are real widows, he explained that the names of these widows were drawn from the communities and the state makes sure the community leaders are involved to help ascertain the veracity of the widows. "To those that are saying they are widows, indeed and to those that are saying they are poor and vulnerable widows, the community leaders are there to ascertain those points."

Okonta stressed that the state does not draw up a list without making sure the community leaders are cross checking the facts: And recently, the Governor brought in a consultant "to conduct an integrated service. They were saddled with the responsibility of coming up with an electronic database of widows across Delta State. So, today, they have rounded off their work and we have over 50,000 widows in the Delta State widow's electronic database. So, we now have a compendium of widows that have been electronically generated. This database is used as veritable tools for government to make decision and plans concerning the widows.

On Okowa's style of supporting the project, he captures it this way: The Governor is the reason for the success of the programme. You know, "he is an astute Chief Executive, and for every aspect of governance that is involved, there is feedback mechanism that has been set up by him. Whenever there is a programme, the governor doesn't just keep the programme. He pays attention to every detail of the program.

"The structure we have today in the widow's welfare scheme has been set up solely by Okowa. Apart from me being the State Coordinator, there are three supervisors, each supervisor is in charge of each senatorial district in every local government, there are two coordinators that are saddled with the responsibility of taking care of the affairs of these widows and we have very little or no complaint coming from the widows. Okowa is the reason why the programme is successful.

"When you look at before 2018, the issue of widows in Delta State was not known by anybody. Widows are part of our society that nobody cares about. Their welfare was not taken care of by anybody. Then, Okowa changed the narrative. When he came in, he has been able to make sure that the poorest of the poor among these widows have their issues brought to the front burner. Now, every year on June 23rd, we participate in International Widows Day. They have been recognized by the United Nations as a day to remember the issue of widows.

"The Governor is the first Chief executive among the 36 states in the federation to observe this day. Okowa is the only governor in the Federal Republic of Nigeria that has a programme of this nature where widows are paid monthly, where the healthcare benefits of these widows are taken care of monthly."

In other states, you might have the Chief Executive Officer take care of widows only in seasonal times, like Christmas and Easter or during electioneering periods. But Okowa made sure that the issue of widows is brought to the front burner.

Okowa has reached out to life. He has touched the untouchable. He has dropped Delta State from a point where the roads are not ploughable to a point where there is massive construction of roads everywhere. He has touched the youths in Delta State through several programmes. He has made sure that programmes for the girl child has emanated in Delta State where the girl child is no longer dependent on her parents. Business opportunities have been provided for them.

This Okowa programme for widows has come to stay. I think the way Okowa structured this programme, anybody that takes over from him must keep the programme going. His Excellency in his wisdom appointed a Commissioner for Humanitarian Services. And of course, widows' welfare is part of humanitarian services. So, you can see how detailed the governor is. You can see he is looking into idealing structures that will make sure the widows welfare scheme will not fade away. With the structures on ground by the governor, I think the programme is sustainable. He concluded.

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