Owa Kingdom Alive for Princess Margaret Obaigbena's Burial Today

● *Okowa, Ganduje, Prince Aghatise Erediauwa, Amosun, Emefiele, Jim Ovia, Herbert Nwigwe attend service of songs*

Ahamefula Ogbu in Lagos and **Omon-Julius Onabu** in Asaba

The remains of Princess Margaret Obaigbena (Nee Usifoh), matriarch of the Obaigbena family, who died on June 17 will be laid to rest today in the family's compound in Owa-Oyibu, Ika North-east Local Government Area of Delta State.

The late octogenarian Dame of Anglican Church and mother of the Chairman/Editor-in-Chief of THISDAY/Arise Media Group, Prince Nduka Obaigbena, was a former chief nursing officer in the defunct Bendel State.

The series of activities, which will culminate in the accomplished mother's burial today, commenced with a commemorative birthday and Day of Tributes held on August 16 at Owa-Oyibu.

The Owa-Oyibu community is alive with hundreds of dignitaries from all walks of life on ground for the historic burial today.

The funeral service for the Princess will commence at 11am in Owa Oyibu and would be followed by a private burial of the matriarch at the Obaigbena family compound.

Yesterday, there was lying-in-state of the Princess at the

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Reconciliation: Team Atiku's Meeting with Team Wike in Port Harcourt Deadlocked

● *Mimiko: There are some issues requiring further deliberation* ● *Gana begs Rivers gov to stay in PDP*

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Members of a committee created by the Peoples Democratic Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar and Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, as part of the framework for the resolution of their differences, met in Port Harcourt for over four hours yesterday, without achieving the desired reconciliation.

Wike has been at loggerheads with Atiku ever since the PDP candidate declined to pick him as his running mate for the 2023 election and instead, named Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State. The Rivers governor had earlier contested the presidential ticket of the party and lost to Atiku.

Former Governor of Ondo State, Olusegun Mimiko, who

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BON, NGE, NUJ Kick As NBC Orders Closure of AIT/RayPower, Silverbird TV, 50 Other Stations

● *N2.6 billion debt triggered revocation, says regulator, moves to ensure immediate compliance using security agencies*

Bennett Oghifo

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) yesterday revoked the licences of the AIT/RayPower FM, Silverbird TV and 50 other broadcasting stations across the country over N2.6 billion indebtedness to the regulatory body.

In a swift reaction, the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), all described the action of the NBC as harsh and insensitive, in view of the economic crisis in the country, and called for immediate reversal.

The Director-General of NBC, Malam Balarabe Ilelah, who announced the revocation of the licences at a news conference in Abuja, also ordered the affected stations to shut down within 24 hours and to pay their debt

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SERVICE OF SONGS FOR PRINCESS MARGARET OBAIGBENA...

L-R: Senator Ben Obi; Kashim Ibrahim Imam; Emeka Ihedioha; Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano State; Chairman/Editor-in-Chief, THISDAY/Arise Media Group, Prince Nduka Obaigbena; Delta State Governor/Vice-presidential candidate of the PDP, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa and the Sarkin Dawaki Babba of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Babba Danagundi, during the Service of Songs for Princess Margaret Obaigbena (Nee Usifoh), matriarch of the Obaigbena family, at Owa Oyibu, Ika North-East Local Government Area of Delta State...yesterday

KUNLE OGUNFUYI

Terror Leader Moves to Forcefully Marry 21-Year-Old Train Abductee... Page 45



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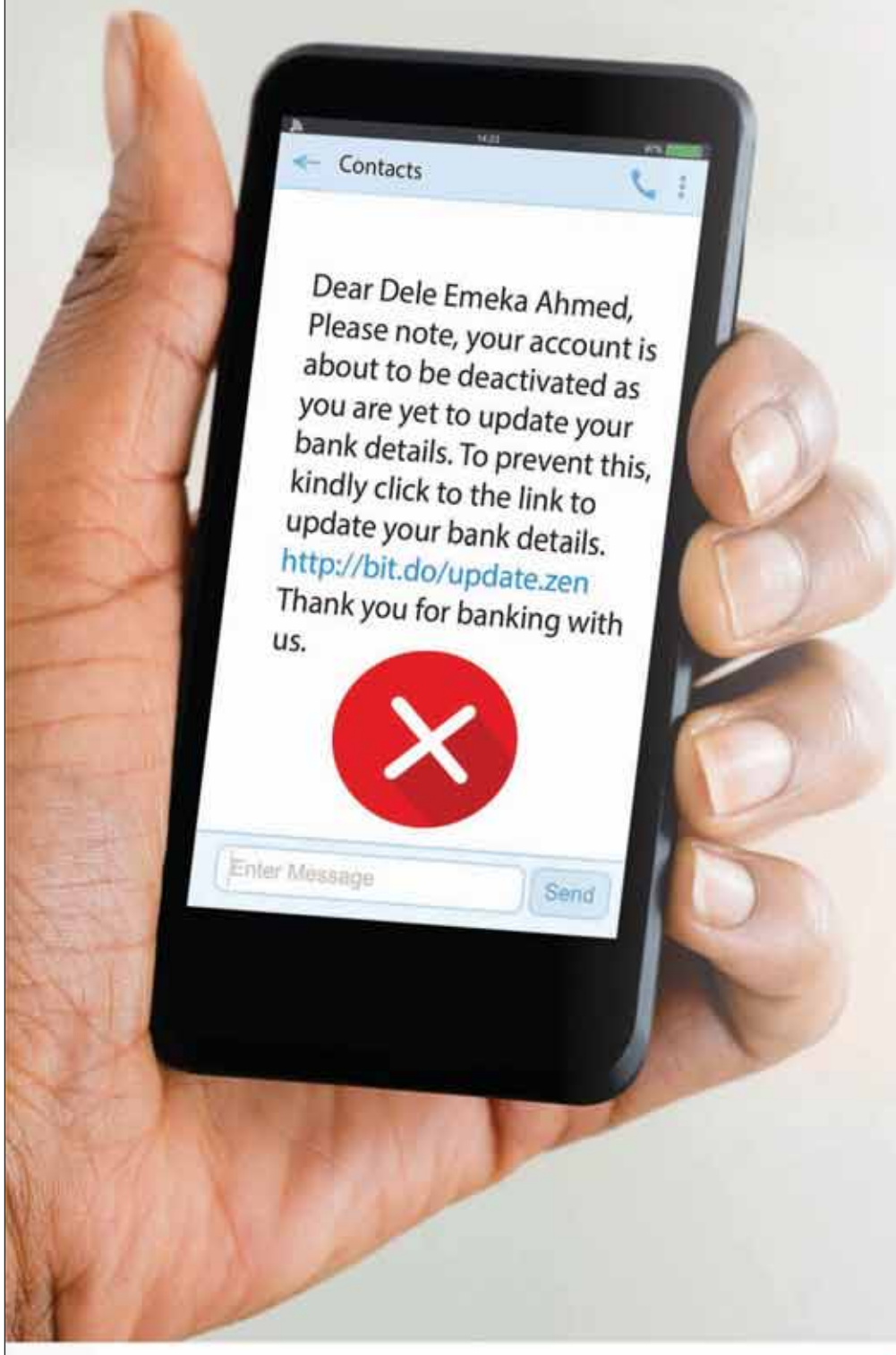
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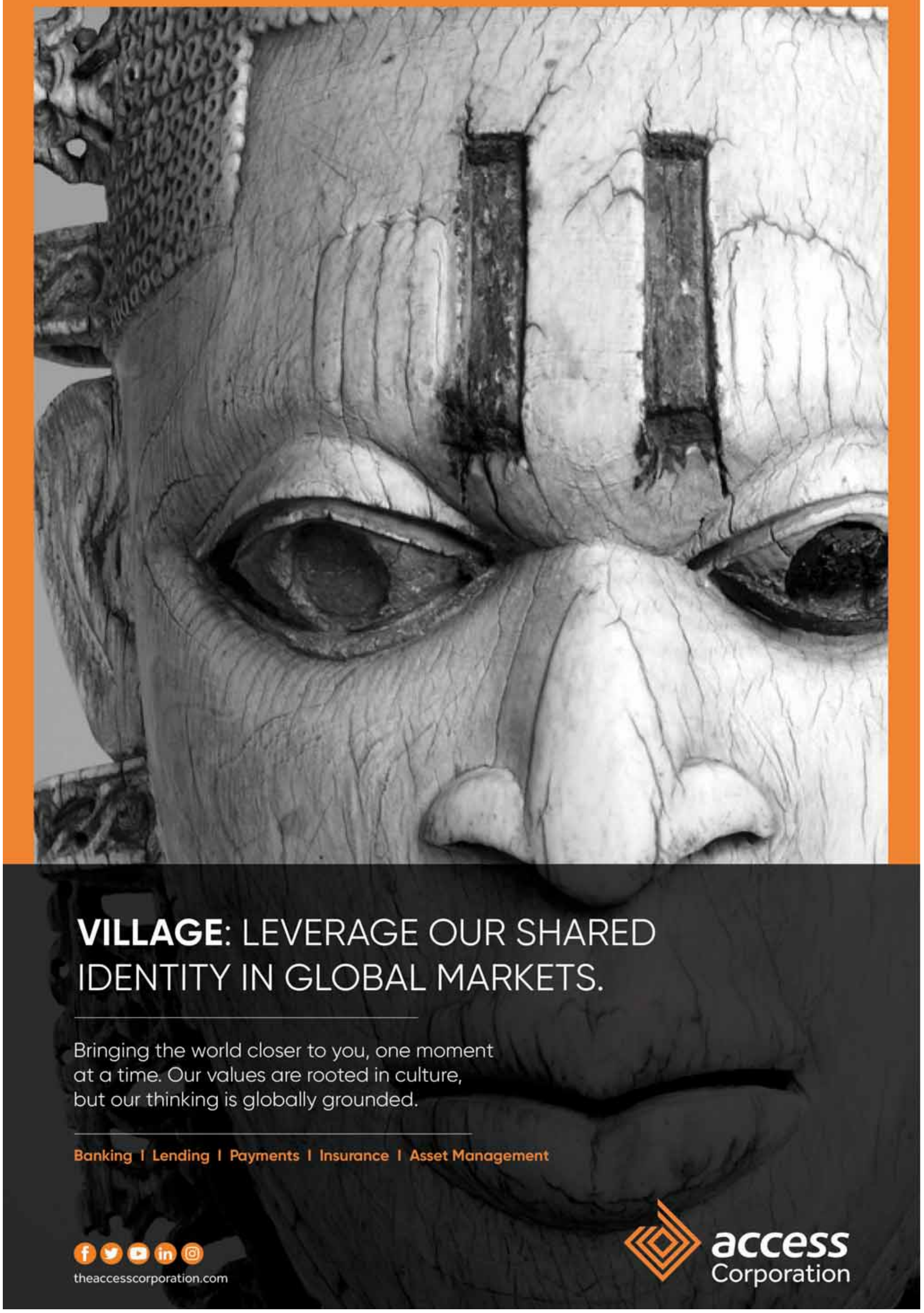
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OWA KINGDOM ALIVE FOR PRINCESS MARGARET OBAIGBENA'S BURIAL TODAY

Obaigbena family compound, followed by a service of songs in the afternoon at Ika North-East Local Government premises, and later, Christian wake.

The list of dignitaries among the multitude that defied the downpour to attend the service of songs included Delta State Governor/Vice-presidential candidate of the PDP, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa; his wife, Dame Edith; Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano State; former governor of Ogun State, Ibikunle Amosun; former deputy speaker, House of Representatives, Emeka Ihedioha; Zenith Bank Chairman, Jim Ovia; Senator Ben Obi, Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele; Deputy Governor of CBN, Kingsley Obiora and Managing Director of Access Bank, Herbert Nwigwe.

Prince Aghatise Erediauwa led a high-powered delegation to the event from the Benin monarch, Oba Ewuare II.

Others in attendance include the Delta State Commissioner of Police, Ali Ari Muhammed; the minority caucus leader of House Representatives, Hon Ndudi Elumelu; member representing Ika Federal Constituency, Victor Nwokolo; Managing Director, THISDAY, Eniola Bello and his Arise News counterpart, Ijeoma Nwogwugwu.

The Anglican Bishop of Etsako Diocese in Edo State, Rt Rev Felix Olorunfemi, who delivered the sermon at the service of songs, harped on the need for people to serve God in their neighbours, noting that there is an urgency in such call to serve because our purposes on earth are time-bound.

"Just as the Lord Jesus himself put it, You must work while it is still day, because night comes when man cannot work," Bishop Olorunfemi stated, adding that people from far and near, and from all walks of life were gathered in Owa because Princess Margaret Obaigbena lived a life of service to humanity by impacting countless number of people with the light God put in her.

The clergyman noted: "Light is the only solution to darkness that today looms over the nations of the world. Princess Obaigbena was always conscious of the fact that God raises people to impact others positively.

"When a man, who has been given the light of God by virtue of the position he finds himself, fails to render help to the needy at the appointed and appropriate time, it is useless if he does it later.

"Our God-given assignment on earth is time-bound, so we must work while it is day, for night comes when no man can work. Shine your light that God has provided you and impact lives meaningfully while you still have the time."

The Choir from Salisbury University in Cape Town, South Africa also thrilled the audience with rendition of Zulu songs.

Tomorrow, August 21, there will be an outing service between 9:00am -12:00pm at Owa Oyibu.

On Thursday, President Muhammadu Buhari and his wife, Aisha, in separate letters, condoled with Prince Nduka Obaigbena over the death of his mother.

On the same day, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, paid a condolence visit to the Obi of Owa, HRM Obi (Dr.) Emmanuel Efeizomor and the Obaigbena family over the demise of Princess Obaigbena.

The two condolence letters were personally signed by the president and his wife.

While expressing his sympathies to the Obaigbena family, the president described the late special adviser to three governors in Delta State, as a treasured daughter of the land.

He noted that the demise of the mother of THISDAY's publisher would create a huge vacuum, but urged those she left behind to take comfort in the fact that she lived her life caring for the disadvantaged in the society.

The Emir of Kano, during his visit, described the Publisher of THISDAY, Nduka Obaigbena as the greatest Nigerian he has met.

Welcoming the Emir of Kano and his entourage in his palace at Owa-Oyibu, Obi Efeizomor II expressed delight at receiving the highly regarded monarch having traveled with his entourage all the way from Kano State.

The Kano monarch said, "When I was leaving home, I told my people that I am leaving Kano State to come to Kano city and I believe when I go back my people will confirm that, indeed I traveled to a place called home.

"I am really delighted to be here; I didn't come to make a speech but I came to pay homage and condole with my brother. My brother's mother, Princess Margaret is an icon of hope, a mother to all who has left a legacy that cannot be forgotten.

Princess Margaret Obaigbena: 1934 to 2022

The late Princess Margaret Obaigbena was born in Enugu on August 16, 1934 to Pa Paul Owakwe and Mrs. Grace Osinole Usifoh of Owa Kingdom in present day Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

Fondly called "my pearl" by her father, Princess Obaigbena spent her early years in Enugu and Onitsha before she finally settled in Agbor when her father retired.

Growing up, late Princess Obaigbena was obsessed with the sight of nurses, especially their immaculate white uniform and finally had her dream fulfilled when she was admitted into the school of nursing and midwifery in Ibadan and later, Benin.

She was a winner of many awards, including Best Academic Nurse in 1971 by the British High Commission and Best Practical Nurse in 1972 by the military Governor of the then Western Region.

Armed with her training and adroit discharge of her duties, the late Princess rose to the position of Chief Nursing Officer in the defunct Bendel State and later transferred her services to Delta State when it was created in 1991.

She left her footprints in the health sector of the defunct Bendel State and later, Delta State, where she was adviser to three successive governments in Delta State due to her wealth of experience.

The late Princess was married to late prince, Edwin Ukperi Obaigbena and the marriage was blessed with six children – Prince Ben Obaigbena who retired as Group General Manager of defunct Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation; Prince Alan Glory Obaigbena, a retired Florida Director of Highways, USA; Princess Isioma Ukwa; the late Prince Rotimi Obaigbena; Prince Ndukka Obaigbena, and Princess Ogochukwu Aneke.

Princess Obaigbena, who passed on at age 87 after a brief illness, was also survived by many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The demise of the Obaigbena matriarch was announced by the Royal family of Owa Kingdom, led by the Obi of Owa Kingdom on June 17 in what he termed "celebration of life and times" of the matriarch.

BON, NGE, NUJ KICK AS NBC ORDERS CLOSURE OF AIT/RAYPOWER, SILVERBIRD TV, 50 OTHER STATIONS

to prevent total disconnection.

22 state government-owned broadcasting stations were on the list of stations whose licences were revoked yesterday.

Ilelah further directed NBC offices nationwide to collaborate with the security agencies to ensure immediate compliance.

He insisted there was no political motive in the revocation of the licenses of the broadcast stations.

He added that the Commission had been in talks with the affected media houses for more than a year, to clear their indebtedness but they refused to revert.

He recalled that in May 2022, the NBC published in the national dailies, the list of licensees that were indebted to it, with a grace of two weeks to them to renew their licences and pay their debts or consider their licences revoked.

He, however, regretted that three months after the publication, some of the licensees were yet to settle their outstanding debts, "which is in contravention of the National Broadcasting Commission Act CAP N11, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, particularly Section 10(a) of the third schedule of the Act."

As a result, he declared the debtor-stations were operating illegally and constituted a threat to national security.

"Therefore, after due consideration, the NBC hereby announces the revocation of the licences of the under-listed stations and gives them 24 hours to shut down their operations. Our offices nationwide are hereby directed to collaborate with security agencies to ensure immediate compliance," Ilelah said.

He also advised all broadcast stations, yet to renew their licences for the current duration, to do so in the next 30 days to avoid sanctions.

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

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

He also called on all Internet Protocol Television and all other broadcast stations that are streaming online to register with the Commission to avoid disconnection.

"Broadcasters should note that, having a DTT or FM licence doesn't warrant a broadcaster to stream online; they are two different licenses," said the NBC boss.

BON Appeals for Debt Scheduling

Yesterday, BON appealed to the NBC to withdraw the shutdown and revocation orders and to allow the implementation of the debt recovery template already submitted to it.

In a letter of appeal addressed to the Director General of the NBC, signed by the Executive Secretary of BON, Dr. Yemisi Bamgbose, the organisation said it is "seeking for further understanding with the 54 stations listed for shutdown and licence revocation."

He continued: "Kindly recall that our intervention on this matter in the recent past facilitated debt reconciliation and payment of the backlog of some stations and agreed staggered payments for others."

The organisation premised its appeal on the "hostile economic situation," stating that it was not unmindful of the fact that it was statutory for them to pay licence fees, but that "it is a known fact that media income has seriously nosedived as a result of the global impact of COVID-19 on the general economy which had negative consequences on the income of broadcast media houses."

According to the organisation, they had little or no earnings, even from advertising, during the pandemic, explaining that they operated when other sectors of the economy were shut down on account of the scourge.

The letter stated that members of BON were still adversely affected by the extended economic impact of the pandemic and "global economic recession which has affected the nation's economy continued to escalate the economic woes of broadcast media organisations.

"Within the last one year, broadcast media houses have been groaning under heavy burden created by high cost of running the stations, specifically the cost of diesel which has gone up beyond reach.

"While many sectors have closed operations as a result of the current economic problems, Radio and Television stations remained on air at a loss, recognising the essence of prompt information in a precarious situation like ours."

The "escalation of social media impact," was also cited by BON, stating that "state stations provide verified information to the rural areas and closing 54 stations will negate the efforts of the government in fighting insurgency which may lead to regrettable consequences. This will give room to the thriving of the social media with its attendant consequences.

BON said the closure of the broadcast houses would lead to job loss and "will throw thousands of workers to an already over-saturated labour market therefore taking food out of the tables of millions of people. Without exaggeration, this will not be complementary to the efforts of the government at generating employment."

The organisation observed that shutting down the stations would create further problems, as the non-broadcast of commercials already booked would lead to non-payment.

NGE, NUJ Kick

The Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), the professional body of all the editors in Nigeria, in a press statement signed by its President, Mustapha Isah and the General Secretary, Iyobosa Uwugiaren, said the NBC hammer, if not reversed, would lead to the loss of thousands of jobs in a country where jobs are scarce.

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

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

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

The Guild added that several broadcast stations were just managing to survive in the midst of the high competition in the industry, following the licencing of hundreds of more stations by the NBC.

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

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

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

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

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

In its own reaction, the Nigerian Union of Journalists described the NBC hammer as "ill-advised, ill-timed and reckless."

The NUJ in a statement signed by its National Chairman, Chris Isiguzo said, "It should be noted that this wholesale revocation of licences at this critical time of insecurity in the country appears to be a decision taken without careful prior deliberation, consultation or counsel.

"While we regret the inability of these broadcast stations to fulfill their obligations to NBC, in-view of dwindling resources, we caution against such large-scale clampdown of broadcast stations in disregard to security issues and the attendant consequences.

"We cannot afford the unpleasant outcome of such a media blackout at this time. We call on NBC to exercise more restraint on this issue in consideration of national security and allow for more dialogue and consultation to find a better way of dealing with the situation."

RECONCILIATION: TEAM ATIKU'S MEETING WITH TEAM WIKE IN PORT HARCOURT DEADLOCKED

led Wike's team to the meeting held at Government House, Port Harcourt, came out saying, "This is a reconciliation process, there are some issues out there which need further deliberation when the committees meet again."

Though, Mimiko did not disclose the main issue drawing back the reconciliation, sources said the insistence of Wike's team that the national Chairman of the party, Iyorchia Ayu, must step down before any reconciliation can commence, remains a big issue.

Atiku's camp was represented by Governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Fintiri; Hon. Adamu Waziri and Hon. Eyitayo Jegede.

Those on Governor Wike's team were former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adoki; Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State; former Governor of Cross River State, Donald Duke; former Governor of Gombe State, Dr. Ibrahim Dankwambo and Mimiko.

Addressing journalists at the end of the meeting, Fintiri stated that talks were ongoing to achieve the desired objectives.

This, he opined, is in cognisance of the fact that Nigerians were waiting patiently for the PDP to wrest power from the ruling All Progressives Congress in 2023, and redeem the country from the bad governance brought about by the current federal government.

He urged Nigerians to be patient and expressed optimism that at the end of the day the committee would broker peace, unify the party and Nigerians.

Fintiri said: "We are aware that Nigerians are anxious and waiting for the PDP to take over government in 2023. We have met as leaders, members of the same political family and we have opened the discussion, work is in progress and we will continue.

"At the end of the day, we will broker peace and we will unify the party and Nigerians."

Also speaking, Mimiko noted the agreement by members of the committee to bring about unity in the party would be achieved soon

Mimiko hinted that the committee would meet again to further deliberate on issues that need to be addressed.

"We have agreed that there is a need for us to enhance unity within our party," he said.

Members of the committee later met with Wike at his private residence in Rumueprikom, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of the state.

Atiku and Wike had agreed to constitute the committee at a meeting they held in Abuja a few weeks ago at the residence of a former Minister of Information and National Orientation, Prof. Jerry Gana, as part of the framework for the resolution of their differences.

Previous efforts by PDP stakeholders and elders to resolve the Atiku/Wike crisis proved abortive, fueling speculations that Wike may support a presidential candidate from another party in the 2023 election.

Gana Begs Wike

In a related development, a former minister of information, Jerry Gana, yesterday asked Wike to put away the disappointment of the past and look to the future when he will become Nigeria's president.

Gana spoke during the flag-off of a flyover in the Obio-Akpor area of Rivers State.

Making reference to the PDP crisis, Gana appealed to Wike to stay in the party and not relent on his commitment to the PDP.

NEWS

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Mummified Bodies: Edo Govt Gives Police 7 Days to Carry Out 'Proper Investigation'

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

Following the controversy generated over the discovery of 20 mummified bodies in a private facility in Benin City, capital of Edo State, the state Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has given the police seven days to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the purpose and ownership while calling for calm among the citizens of the state.

Obaseki, who sued for calm, gave this directive yesterday at a joint press briefing with the police at the headquarters of the Edo State Police Command.

Represented by his Special Adviser on Media Projects, Crusoe Osagie, Obaseki said the public would continuously be briefed on the progress of the investigations.

He said, "We want to call for calm from the public, we don't want to preempt the outcome of police investigation but the police are actively doing their investigations. There are a lot of speculations going around; some people suspect that the place is a quack morgue, and could be for ritual purposes and we are giving that to the police.

"People have been apprehended and they are undergoing questioning. Some people are still being looked for. The governor has given seven days for them to come back to us with the details of what they have found out, was it just a morgue or is there any ritual involved? No conclusions have been reached yet so police will be allowed to do its work.

"We are going to continuously brief the public and we are also taking measures through the Ministry of Health to ensure that there is no public health crisis in that area. Edo is safe and there is no evidence yet that anything ritual is involved until the police are through with their investigation."

On his part, the Deputy Commissioner of Police SCID, Olawore Oluwole who is handling the investigation, assured that the police would do a thorough job.

He said, "based on credible intelligence a bungalow was located at Asoro area and in that bungalow we found some dried bodies and some items like generator, gas cylinder, oxygen cylinder; while investigation was in progress five suspects were arrested and they are Chimaobi Okoewu and Samuel Okoh both from Ebonyi State, Gideon Sunday from Akwa Ibom, Victor Obeche from Anambra and Yusuf Lawal from Katsina State.

"So far we are still looking for one of the suspects and efforts are being made to get him and his name is Otu Chukwu who is alleged to be the owner of the bungalow and soonest he will be apprehended. I want to appeal to all members of the public to remain calm as the Command is assuring that everything will be done to ensure that all hidden facts are unraveled."

ASUU: We Won't Cover Lost Academic Session If FG Seizes Salary

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Professor Emmanuel Osodeke, has said that its members will not be able to cover for unfinished academic sessions if the federal government makes good its threat not to pay backlog of salaries incurred during the ongoing strike.

Osodeke, who spoke during an interview on national television yesterday in response to government's insistence on non-payment of the lecturers over their industrial action, said such a move will mean that the students would lose one session.

"If we agree on that, therefore, the lectures we should have given (to students) for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 (sessions), should be allowed to go so we start a new session, 2022/2023, in September.

"Therefore, by July next year, I would go on my leave as we used to have in those days so that the backlog is gone. All the lectures that remain; all the two sets of admissions that JAMB has given that are waiting should become irrelevant," he said.

According to him, the normal practice is for the university teachers to go back to work after suspension of strike to cover the backlog of work.

"For ASUU, when we go back today, we are going to start from the 2020/2021 session. For these two sets of students that have been admitted by JAMB, we have to teach them over these periods to ensure that we meet up with the system.

"So, we are going to do the backlog of the work we have left behind. We are not going to start today and say 'This session is 2022/2023, therefore, all these two sets of people that have been admitted by JAMB are cancelled'. We have to take another admission for the 2023/2024 session," Osodeke said.

The ASUU president further said that the seizure of salaries of members will not deter them, adding that "ASUU can take care of its members."



SOLIDARITY FOR POWER…

L-R: PDP candidates for Nsukka East and Nsukka West state constituencies, Amos Agbo and Mrs. Christiana Onah respectively; Chairman, Nsukka Local Government Area, Walter Ozioko; Enugu State Governor and candidate for Enugu North Senatorial District, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi; member representing Nsukka East Constituency, Dr. Chinedu Nwamba and the candidate for Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South Federal Constituency, Vita Abba, when members of Ochudo Foundation and Ochudo Support Group for Gburugburu and Peter Mbah, paid a solidarity visit to the governor, at the Government House, Enugu…yesterday.

55 Communities Protest Edo Govt Illegal Acquisition of their Farmland

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin

No fewer than 55 communities in four local government areas of Edo State yesterday protested the acquisition of the communities' rainforest reserve and farmland by the state Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, in spite of pending court cases on the matter.

Some of the impacted communities which protested include Odighi, Odiguetue, Uhiere, Owan, Agbanikaka, Orhua, Oke-Irhue, Ekhen-Irhue, Ago Oshodin, Ekpan, Ofumwegbe, Umokpe, Agudezi, Ozalla, and Igbira Camp.

Others are Uhonmora, Sabogidda-Ora, Avbiosi, Oke-Ora New, Oke-Ora Old, Avbiosi, Ukpujie, Eme-Ora, Agubezi, Ogbeturu, Ewei, Atoturu, Uzebba, Ogbetuo, Sobe, Olelo-Era, and others.

Addressing journalists at Uhonmora, Owan West Local Government Area of the state, Spokesman of the affected communities, Mr. Tony Erha, lamented that the governor was bent on ceding their land to his allies, regretting that the governor had acted defiantly to courts cases on the issue and other series of petitions written by the communities.

He said rather than suspend action on the "illegal acquisition" the governor had deployed bulldozers to destroy crops and other economic trees on their land. Erha also accused the governor of being insensitive through constant harassment and intimidation of the said communities with law enforcement agencies; police, civil defence and vigilante groups.

He stressed that the communities would not relent on the matter until the governor removed himself from their land.

"Today, the over 55 communities, supported by the Owan General Assembly, the Tabitha Women Prayers Group, a global charity with headquarters in Belgium and the United Kingdom, the Nature Conservation Observance of the United States of America and indigenes of our communities at home and in the diasporas, are intensely opposed to the movement of bulldozers by the Edo State Government (EDSG) and its proxy companies to our two remaining ancestral rainforest reserves of Owan BC 10 and Iuleha/Ora/Ozalla, respectively, consisting the Owan Forest Zone (OFZ).

"Governor Obaseki is insistent on grabbing, bulldozing and replacing our biodiversity rich forest lands and our crops with mono crop oil palm, for open grazing and mining, to Fayus Nigeria Ltd, Saturn Ltd, A & Hatman Limited and several other of his almighty business friends and owners of the local multinational companies.

"This means robbing our poor of the poor to pay his superbly rich associates.

"After months of arm twisting, blackmail and intimidation of our poor villagers with heavily armed policemen, soldiers, civil defence corps and other security men, the public machinery of the state has finally been deployed with the bringing of the bulldozers for the forced possession, cruel destruction of the forest biodiversity, our farmlands and livelihood.

Rivers Government Seals Businesses of Pro-Atiku PDP Members

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Security operatives early hours of yesterday, sealed-up business outlets of supporters of presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Abubakar Atiku and former Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives, Austin Opara, located in the Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

THISDAY gathered that the affected outlets include Mega Tool Filling Station at Ojoto Street in Diobu axis of Port Harcourt, owned by Hon. Chinyere Igwe, a serving House of Representatives member, Priscy's Lounge, owned by Jones Ogbonda, a former lawmaker in the Rivers State House of Assembly and Preray Hotel, property of Mr. Ikechi Chinda, former PDP Chairman, Port Harcourt Local Government Area.

It was further gathered that scores of persons were arrested by the security operatives at the sealed Preray Hotel located at Eagle Island area of Port Harcourt.

The sealing-up of the business premises took effect about two weeks after the state Governor, Nyesom Wike, threatened to shut down any hotel or entertainment centres linked to criminal political activities

Governor Wike had stated that he obtained intelligence reports that some misguided politicians had started recruiting cultists, ex-convicts and thugs in furtherance of their political aspirations for 2023.

He said the state government was aware that owners of hotels and entertainment centres were in the process of giving out their premises to politicians and political parties as a convenient base for the gathering of political thugs across the state.

"Similarly, we will not allow any political party, be it the All Progressives Congress, the Peoples Democratic Party or the Social Democratic Party to threaten the safety and security of lives and property during the campaigns with mayhem, thuggery or violence.

"Accordingly, we have already alerted and set the security agencies on the trail of these misguided politicians and leaders of political parties and stop them in their tracks with the full weight of the law.

"We also wish to warn owners of hotels and proprietors of relaxation centres to take notice and desist from releasing their facilities for politicians and party leaders to use to meet and plot against the peace, safety and security of our state.

"I wish to reiterate our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the sanctity of lives and property throughout the state and to reassure everyone that we shall continue to spare no effort to keep Rivers State safe and secure," Wike stated.

One of the victims of the sealed outlets, Hon. Chinyere Igwe has lamented that they are suffering from political victimisation.

The federal lawmaker who spoke with THISDAY on phone, alleged that their offence was because they are supporting Atiku.

PDP Governorship Ticket: Anxiety As A'Court Reserves Judgment in Oborevwori's Appeal

Alex Enumah in Abuja

There is palpable anxiety over who will fly the flag of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 governorship election in Delta State, following the reservation of a date for judgment in the appeal filed by the speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly and winner of the May 25 primary of the PDP, Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori.

A three-man panel of the Court of Appeal, yesterday, announced that its judgment has been reserved in Oborevwori and PDP's appeal against the judgment of Justice Taiwo Taiwo of the Federal High Court, which ordered the removal of Oborevwori as PDP candidate in the 2023 governorship election in Delta State.

The panel led by Justice Peter Ige, took the decision after taking submissions from lawyers who had argued for and against the appeal.

Justice Taiwo had in a judgment delivered on July 7, found the PDP standard-bearer guilty of forgery allegations and ordered his removal as PDP's candidate, on the grounds that such acts tantamount to disqualification from public office.

The court had agreed with Edevbie, that Oborevwori, ought not to be on the ballot for the PDP primary election on account of supplying false and forged documents to the INEC in aid of his qualification for the governorship election.

Justice Taiwo subsequently ordered that the person who came second in the primary, Olorogun David Edevbie be made a replacement for Oborevwori in the 2023 gubernatorial election in Delta State.

Dissatisfied however, Oborevwori had approached the appellate court for an order setting aside his sack and another order declaring him the candidate of the PDP.

At the hearing of the appeal yesterday, lead counsel to Oborevwori, Mr. Damian Dodo, SAN, after adopting his written address as his brief of argument, urged the court to accept the appeal and grant all the reliefs sought including setting aside the July 7 judgment of Justice Taiwo which sacked his client.

Also adopting his written address as his brief of argument against the appeal, Edevbie's lawyer, Mr. Ejembi Eko, SAN, urged the court to dismiss the appeal for lacking merit and affirm the decision of the lower court.

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LATE DAME
MARGARET OBAIGBENA
(1934 - 2022)

A Matriarch Goes Home

We thank God for the wonderful life that she lived - a life of faith, love, joy, selflessness, commitment, and great accomplishments.

May God grant her soul eternal repose.

Senator, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa
Governor, Delta State



Celebraton of Life

PRINCESS MARGARET OBAIGBENA

(NEE USIFOH)

My dear brother Nduka,

I join the world at large to commiserate with you on the demise of your dear mother. Mama was a loving, caring and wonderful mother to all.

She lived an exemplary life worthy of emulation.

May her gentle soul rest in perfect peace. Amen.

Signed:
Abdullahi Musa Bello

Celebration

OF THE LIFE & TIMES OF THE LATE PRINCESS
MARGARET ONYEMAKONOR OBAIGBENA
(1934-2022)



ON BEHALF OF MY FAMILY AND I,
ACCEPT OUR HEART FELT CONDOLENCES AT THE
PASSING ON TO GLORY OF THE MATRIARCH OF THE
OBAIGBENA FAMILY PRINCESS MARGARET OBAIGBENA
WHO WAS A PILLAR IN OUR SOCIETY, A PHILANTHROPIST
AND A MOTHER TO ALL.
MAY HER GENTLE SOUL REST IN PEACE.

SENATOR GEORGE AKUME
Honorable Minister of Special Duties and Intergovernmental Affairs.

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Adieu Mama...



PRINCESS MARGARET ONYEMAKONOR

OBAIGBENA

Dame of the Anglican Church

(1934-2022)

THE GREAT DUKE....

Our deepest condolences on Mama's Transition....
We commiserate with the entire Obaigbena
family on this irreparable loss of their Matriach...
As she returns to mother earth, may Mama's soul
find eternal rest in the bosom of our
Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

OGBUESHI **CHIKE OGEAH &** PASTOR **ITUAH IGHODALO**

INSIGHT



Farewell to the Princess of Owa Kingdom...

TO OUR READERS

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

Nigeria and the Misery of the Masses

The progressive suffering of the masses of this country, Nigeria, should give any human being with blood running in the vein a serious concern. Few days ago, on arrival in the Federal Capital Territory, I stumbled on two citizens - a commercial driver and passenger fighting over a gallon of kerosene allegedly kept carefully in the boot but discovered to have emptied away inside the boot. It was a fierce disagreement developing to violence between the duo. Whilst the accusations and counter-accusations persisted, I intervened as a good Samaritan, volunteered to pay for the kerosene not knowing the present-day market value of kerosene in the country.

I had expected that it was the price I used to know, maybe at most N700 for the full gallon until the owner announced that the five litres in the gallon was bought at a cost of N5000 at N860 per litre. I shouted, thinking he wanted to exploit me. To verify the claim, we drove down to the nearest filling station. Behold, the passenger was correct. It dawned on me why the aggressive resistance. Apart from my commitment to pay for the wasted kerosene, it was painful that a commodity for the poorest of the masses could cost higher than gas, diesel and petrol used by the advantaged class. How did we get to this point? If I didn't confirm the price at the filling station, nothing on earth would make me believe the passenger. To call a spade a spade, the country is in a coma.

It is well known that the class of people that use kerosene in the country are those with the lowest incomes. The question? How did the leaders allow such abnormality to befall the masses, and yet, seemingly behave as if all is well? How could a litre of kerosene rise to such price when many do not have livelihoods? Indeed, there is 'fire on the mountain' as 'ASA', a music artiste echoed recently to 'entertain' President Muhammadu Buhari and his audience in the Presidential Villa at a function. This exorbitant price must be arrested by the authorities. In a sane climate, the authorities should do everything humanly possible to ensure that an essential commodity like kerosene is available and affordable to the vulnerable masses.

It is loathsome that while the poorest class of citizenry are helpless, hopeless, abandoned, subjected to misery, hunger, starvation and all manner of deprivations, politicians including public officeholders are flaunting wealth. Recently, the presidential aspirants of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) paid a sum of N100 million each for a nomination form. Their PDP counterparts paid N40 million. Governorship, Senate, Houses of Representatives and Assembly aspirants also paid huge amounts too. These are manifest insensitivity. They even brag about it, meanwhile, this is a society where the youths have taken over the forests as an operation base for sundry criminal activities for survival including banditry and kidnapping at highways for ransom. Lots of children are still out of school despite robust interventions through UNICEF in conjunction with foreign partners. The question is - how will these foreign donors mirror Nigeria and Nigerians?

These dangerous results point to a dire need for orientation for public office holders. This is the reason the clamor for a president based on ethnic background should take the second row. Although, the rotational arrangement is a step in the right direction and should be sustained for a harmonious and peaceful coexistence considering that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society, nonetheless, competence and capacity to lead with expected results must remain profound. Interestingly, all the ethnic groups have proficient personalities with outstanding antecedents to justify being entrusted with the destiny of the citizens of the country.

Carl Umegboro, umegborocarl@gmail.com

Thorns of Human Trafficking

Of all the crimes which confront humanity today, perhaps, none is more graphic than human trafficking, especially in Africa where almost every event that happens in the present can reopen past wounds.

Perhaps, of all those crimes, none prods old wounds more than human trafficking which in commoditizing people repeats the darkest tales of the slave trade.

The tales told are often as haunting as they are harrowing: they are of children taken away from their poverty-stricken but peaceful homes after promises of better lives have been made to them, only to be turned into commodities in foreign lands with no one to come to their aid; of young boys and girls traded by criminal gangs and used as sex slaves in a crime that shames us all.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons only came into effect in December 2003, but it has inspired widespread legislative response. As of November 2008, 63% of the 15 countries and territories had passed laws addressing the major forms of trafficking.

According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation. The victims of sexual exploitations are predominantly women and girls. Surprisingly, in 30% of the countries which provided information on the gender traffickers, women make up the largest proportion of traffickers. In some parts of the world, women trafficking is the norm.

The second most common form of human trafficking is forced labour (18%) although this may be a misrepresentation because forced labour is less frequently detected and reported than trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority (up to 100% in parts of West Africa).

Although trafficking seems to imply people moving across continents, most exploitation takes place close to home. Data shows intra-regional and domestic trafficking are the major forms of trafficking in persons.

The United Nations Protocol against Trafficking in Persons – the foremost international agreement in this area – entered into force in 2003. The Report shows that in the past few years the number of member states seriously implementing the Protocol has more than doubled (from 54 to 125 out of the 155 States covered).

Human trafficking remains a grave stain on humanity, one which continues to shame us all. Over the years, technology has also been shown as a tool that can both enable and impede human trafficking.

With the global expansion in the use of technology – intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift of everyday life to online platforms, the crime of human trafficking has also conquered the cyberspace.

The internet and digital platforms offer traffickers numerous tools to recruit, exploit and control victims, organize their transport and accommodation, advertise victims, and reach out to potential clients, communicate among perpetrators, and hide criminal proceeds. All that with greater speed, cost effectiveness and anonymity.

But technology can only help to halt human trafficking in its tracks.

Kene Obiezu, Twitter: @kenobiezu

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CONDOLENCE



On behalf of my family and the Bichi Emirate, I commiserate with the Chairman of THISDAY Newspapers and Arise Media Group, Prince Nduka Obaigbena on the passing to eternal glory of his beloved mother, Princess Margaret Obaigbena.

Princess Margaret who will be buried today, lived a fulfilled life as evidenced in the children she is leaving behind.

NASIR ADO BAYERO
EMIR OF BICHI

PRINCESS MARGARET
OBAIGBENA
(NEE USIFOH)
1934 – 2022

CG
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Celebration of Life



The Management and Staff of Century Group commiserate with the Chairman, General Hydrocarbon Limited - **Prince Nduka Obaigbena** and the entire Obaigbena family on the demise of their endearing Matriarch.

We join the entire family and good people of Delta State in celebration of the life and impact of MAMA.

MAMA was a revered leader, an accomplished health worker who dedicated her life to selfless service and was a source of inspiration to many. May God grant Mama eternal rest.

AGED 88
1934 - 2022

PRINCESS MAGARET OBAIGBENA (NEE USIFOH)

DAME OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Signed: **Management Of Century Group**

Appreciation for a Glorious Life Well Lived in honour of

MAMA PRINCESS MARGARET OBAIGBENA



Mama, we give glory to God for your life. It was well lived. You left behind a great legacy. To God be the glory.

We thank God we had the opportunity to be with you in London, not knowing that your time to go to your Maker was so near. We enjoyed the reminiscences.

By the grace of God we shall meet again on the resurrection morning.

Iyare Iyare Iyare.

NANCY AND TOM OGBOI
FOR OGBOI FAMILY OF THE OWA ROYAL FAMILY

GOVERNMENT OF ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA

Lion Building, Government House, Independence Layout, Enugu



Farewell

Princess Margaret O. Obaigbena (Nee Usifoh) 1934-2022

Dame of Anglican Communion

Late Mother of **Prince Nduka Obaigbena,** Chairman and Editor-in-Chief, **THISDAY/ARISE Group**

Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi

Governor, Enugu State

ENUGU STATE IS IN THE HANDS OF GOD.

PEOPLE

Inuwa Abdullahi is Adventurous, Gritty

He is a technocrat per excellence, a game changer, an "oracle" of Nigeria's ICT whose tentacle has continued to resonate across the country. A man of many parts: tech savvy, patriot, and a leader who switches easily between his career and devotion to the nation. Having covered many grounds in his field, if the name Inuwa Kashifu Abdullahi still sounds strange to you, it is because you are not familiar with revolution going on in the ICT sector or National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) where he is a presiding officer. **Funke Olaode** writes about exceptional leadership of Abdullahi, the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the NITDA as he clocks three years in office

Few intellectuals rock like him in the field of Information Communication Technology where he has called the shot over the last 18 years. He enraptures you in the knowledge of information technology. In Nigeria today, he is unarguably one of the go to "oracles" of Information Technology. With his innovative, creativity and remarkable leadership, the Young Turk has revolutionised and modernised the Nigeria ICT sector. Thanks to his intellectual acumen, which has helped to push him beyond boundaries. That is Abdullahi, the boss at NITDA.

On August 20, 2019, President Buhari appointed Abdullahi as the fifth Director-General/CEO of NITDA. He was only 39. Many were baffled. Majority were a bit confused trying to figure out who is this new man in the saddle. For those who have followed his career trajectory, Abdullahi possesses both leadership quality in terms of administration and as an intellectual who is conversant in his field.

Fresh from the tutelage of his mentor, and current Minister for Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami where he has learnt the ropes of administration, Abdullahi, within a short period, has become "father of innovation" because of his vision and mission to transform the Agency which he has pursued vigorously.

He came to NITDA prepared and hit the ground running as soon as leadership mantle fell on him with a decision to make a mark and to impact the nation. In his 36 months in the saddle he has ticked all the positive boxes and still counting.

Looking at the glorious heights of his career, it is hard to reconcile that with the less-than-inspiring conditions of his childhood years in Hadeja, a small rustic village in Jigawa State. Like it is in many rural communities far removed from the bustle and glitzy sheen of capital cities, life in Hadeja reflected a social reality that seemingly imposed some glass ceilings on children's future.

His formal education, albeit rendered in Hausa and Arabic, began in Hadeja, amidst the familiar monotony of daily household chores. Little Kashifu always dreamt of life beyond the confines of Hadeja. The economic circumstances of his childhood, however, meant it will take some very good fortune for such dream to be realized from relative obscurity. But the saying that fortune favours the adventurous has been particularly useful, not least so by his father's rather prescient choice of name for him, Kashifu - literally meaning an adventurer or explorer.

And like an explorer, he is conquering his terrain in very splendid ways, simplifying the somewhat rarified world of ICT and stoking the interest of the youth as a result.

The academic fire in him was lit at the Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, where he studied Computer Science. In doing so, he embodied the saying: "what you desire you will acquire". In his insatiable quest for knowledge, he has traversed Ivy League universities collecting certifications in leadership, telecommunications and more. The universities include Harvard University, University of Cambridge, and IMD Business School, Switzerland. He is also an MIT-Sloan Strategist trained at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With a robust experience in IT operations, business transformation and solutions architecture across both private and public sectors, it is thus not surprising that he is the first Cisco-Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE) in Nigeria's public sector. In addition to being a member of the Nigeria Computer Society and the British Computer Society, Kashifu is also a Certified Project Manager and Solution Architect with many professional certifications in networking, telecommunications, service management and solutions design



Abdullahi

Although, providence plays some significant role in the affairs of humans, yet, as the Roman philosopher Lucius Seneca rightly observed, "luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity". Kashifu's meteoric rise might seem providential; but it derives, primarily, from hard work. His strength lies in his tenacity, diligence, simplicity, and a mind that pays sufficient attention to details

Self-effacing and unassuming, Kashifu, at just 42, boasts a resume that most of his contemporaries can only dream about. Between 2004 and 2013, he was at Galaxy Backbone where he held positions such as network engineer, IP network field engineer, and senior network and lead senior solution architect and lead technical solution design.

The time spent at Galaxy Backbone enhanced his IT proficiency. So, when an opportunity to join the Central Bank of Nigeria as a technology architect in 2014, he was sufficiently prepared for the challenge. At the CBN, he was one of the brains that developed a technology architecture repository that gave a holistic glimpse of the CBN's IT infrastructure, which helped ensure that decisions on new IT investment are made swiftly. Indeed, his contribution as a member of the team that implemented software license rationalization was just as crucial. That team's work is credited with helping the CBN substantially cut costs in annual license subscriptions.

Although, providence plays some significant role in the affairs of humans, yet, as the Roman philosopher Lucius Seneca rightly observed, "luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity". Kashifu's meteoric rise might seem providential; but it derives, primarily, from hard work. His strength lies in his tenacity, diligence, simplicity, and a mind that pays sufficient attention to details. But, above all, he possesses an array of academic qualifications that would be considered impressive by global standards.

Joining the NITDA in 2017 as Technical Assistant to the Agency's then director-general Pantami, Kashifu still displayed the work ethic that has been a defining feature of his stellar career. At NITDA, the IT regulatory body in Nigeria responsible for implementing National ICT policy, he was the coordinator of local content initiatives that boosted local production of ICT by over 200 percent in 2017. He also excelled in the execution of a strategic plan that resulted in a significant rise in ICT's contribution to Nigeria's GDP by over 13 per cent in the second quarter of 2018. Another highlight of his career as a technology architect was the production of seven Solution Architectures for critical IT initiatives that helped in achieving a cashless society in Nigeria.

It was thus quite fitting that he was appointed the DG of NITDA in August 2019, stepping into the shoes of his mentor and former boss, Pantami.

For him, there was no time to bask in the honour. He was preoccupied with thoughts of not disappointing the many people who have, over the years, shown a huge confidence in his capacity. Working with Pantami helped Kashifu to further hone his ICT skill and offered him the privilege to be part of a team that developed a turnaround vision for Nigeria's IT sector, and identified ICT as a key enabler in the quest for economic diversification. Being NITDA's helmsman was an opportunity to continue with that project and broader vision of his mentor and bring both to fruition.

Given that he prefers to work in the background than hug the limelight, a common question when President Buhari confirmed his appointment was, "who is Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi?" He did not have to explain. His work as a technocrat did the talking.

Not long after assuming office, the benefits of his passion and fidelity to the dream of an ICT-enriched economy had become evident. With over 300 infrastructural projects implemented in the ICT sector in just the first year, NITDA was understandably adjudged the most prominent parastatal in the ministry of communications and digital economy. His dream is to position NITDA as a foremost IT regulatory agency that has the capacity to compete with other international IT regulatory institution. He also would like to transform the agency into a smart, respected, focused and success-motivated institution. Today, NITDA's competitive edge is clearly not in doubt.

NITDA's launch of a scholarship scheme was indeed consistent with Kashifu's conviction that to be globally-competitive, it is important to operate in an environment where the youth possess a level of expertise at par with their counterparts anywhere else in the world. In pursuit of this, the agency has trained over 2,000 Nigerians for both Masters and Ph.D programmes across the world. It is gratifying that most of the beneficiaries often return to the country after their sponsored studies.

There is no doubt that the scholarship programme was shaped by his passion for youth development, which he believes is a catalyst for growth and development of the country.

Aside from the scholarship programme, over 940 digital capacity centres, IT hubs, innovation and incubation parks and IT community training centres have been built across the country. There are also programmes like Start-Up Friday, Start-up Clinic, FutureHack, NITDA's Graduate Internship Programme and training for artisans. Under his leadership, NITDA has executed several projects that have saved the nation billions of Naira. Kashifu as a revolutionist hasn't gone unnoticed when in May 12th, 2022, at the National Productivity Order of Merit Award, NITDA became the only government agency that won the coveted award. Born on February 21, 1980, soft-spoken and somewhat reticent, Kashifu's desire to leave enduring legacies and impact lives is unmistakable.

RingTrue

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Yemi Adebowale



$418m Paris Club Fees: The Facts, Fictions

A massive US$418 million. That's what six consultants have been battling to grab from the 36 Nigerian states and 774 local governments, supposedly for facilitating refunds of the over-deductions against states and local governments, in obligations to Paris Club, an association of Western creditors. This is evidently one of the highest professional fees in the world. At the official rate, it should be about N180 billion. This is more than the 2022 budgets of some states. Recall that the federal government, under the Obasanjo presidency, had paid $12 billion to secure an $18 billion debt exit from the Paris Club. State governors later discovered over-deductions and took on the federal government using the Nigeria's Governors Forum (NGF). The amount disbursed to the states in 2017 under the refund was over N1 trillion.

Several state governors, between 2005 and 2019, are culpable in this weird $418 million consultancy fees, but the main conspirator is the former Zamfara State governor, Abdulaziz Yari. It was during his tenure as chairman of the NGF that all sorts of consultants were recruited (for selfish reasons) to facilitate the refunds of the over-deductions. This governor certainly has a lot of questions to answer on these sloppy deals with consultants. I will return to that later.

However, it does not stop these consultants from being safely called rent seekers. They are trying to gain wealth without any reciprocal contribution of productivity. The services they claim to have offered are contained in a FAAC Reconciliation Committee Report constituted in 2005 and submitted in 2007, with recommendations on how states and LGAs should be refunded the excess deductions from the Paris Club repayments. This is the truth that must be told. The documents are still there. So, which useless services did they render? These consultants, in conjunction with some dangerous elements in government are determined to fleece Nigeria.

Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State, as NGF Chairman, exposed the creepiness in the claims of the consultants. That was why the 2019 set of governors refused to pay them. The consultants can't even provide any contract signed individually by the governors, who they claim gave them jobs. The 774 local government chairmen of that era in Nigeria don't know them. They can't show any evidence of rational contractual agreement before embarking on the bizarre job they claimed to have done. Suddenly, they came up with bills running into millions of USD, after the refunds to the states had been made.

The consultants later went to court to obtain judgement compelling the federal government to pay them from the shares of the states in the federation account. They



Yari

claim it was a consent judgement. Fayemi has since been fighting this incongruity very hard. The 2019 class of governors insist the states and local governments were not parties to the court action which resulted in the purported judgement being bandied by the consultants. The judgement is clearly not binding on the state and local governments. There are no documents to the contrary.

The governors are at the Appeal Court to challenge the decision of Justice Inyang Ekwo of the Federal High Court, Abuja, that threw out their demand to stop the federal government from debiting their accounts in respect of the purported judgement. In the ruling, Justice Ekwo advised the states to go and get the so-called consent judgement obtained by the consultants vacated. This makes sense.

The role of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Abubakar Malami, in these shenanigans has left me bemused. Last year, based on Malami's recommendations and Buhari's concurrence, the Federal Ministry of Finance directed the Debt Management Office to commence issuance of promissory notes to the consultants. This is also weird. Why the rush to make such payments when there are litigations? The Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed, the DG of DMO, and Malami were duly notified of these court actions. Why should the finance minister then direct that Promissory Notes be issued in favour of the consultants? I see a long chain of corruption here.

I agree with the current NGF leadership that the decision by Malami to throw his weight behind the consultants battling desperately to grab $418 million from the accounts of states and local governments raises questions of propriety and the spirit of justice.

Malami has suddenly become the Attorney General of the consultants. Last year, he argued that the consultants obtained four judgements, "two of which are consent judgements" and that the governors "consented, expressed no objection to the payments and had already paid part of the debts to the said contractors and consultants." But he failed to indicate that the governors were already in court to appeal the judgements.

Besides, if indeed Malami is Attorney of the Federation, he should have initiated appeals against the judgements immediately he got wind of them, because huge public funds are at stake.

Fayemi has been doing a good job in the legal battle with the consultants aiming for Nigeria's $418 million. One of them, a beneficiary of a $142 million Promissory Note, who had lost his case for payment of the consultancy fee at the high court and Court of Appeal, further appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court on June 3, 2022 dismissed the appeal as lacking in merit and also made it clear that neither the NGF nor ALGON has the power to award contracts and charge the same directly to the Federation Account as done in this case.

The apex court ruled: "The funds belonging to a state or local government must be kept in an account belonging to the state or local government as the case may be and disbursed or expended by the state strictly in the manner and for the purposes prescribed in the Constitution and an appropriation law or as prescribed by the House of Assembly of the State and in the manner and for purposes prescribed in the Constitution, a local government law, or as prescribed by the Council of the local government."

The dismissal of this case by the Supreme Court also clearly affects payments to two lawyers to the firm who were likewise beneficiaries of Promissory Notes by the DMO.

The Fayemi-led NGF is also challenging, either on appeal or in other courts, the claims by the five other consultants.

Fayemi insists that these cases are pending and no steps ought to be taken to enforce the Judgment and alter the status quo until the matters are fully determined, adding that a caveat restraining all parties concerned and the public from dealing or honouring Promissory Notes issued had earlier been published.

It was on the strength of all these that President Buhari, last week, directed Malami, and Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed to halt the payment of $418 million to the contractors.

It is pertinent to also look at the very sad Abdulaziz Yari era as NGF chairman, when all sorts of consultants were engaged for the Paris Club refund. In 2007, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC) carried out a number of sting operations on the payments made to the consultants by the NGF, after collecting the Paris Club refund. It was discovered that the payments found their way to accounts connected to many of the governors of that era.

At a point, the EFCC discovered a N10 billion slush fund. Investigation revealed that the money was fraudulently diverted by the NGF under the usual guise of paying consultancy fees. The anti-graft agency was in court in December 2017 and a Federal High Court in Abuja approved the temporary forfeiture of seven accounts which the EFCC alleged were used by the NGF leadership to launder the N10 billion. Justice Gabriel Kolawole, who approved the temporary forfeiture, gave seven days to the account owners to file an application which must be served on the EFCC. Nobody came forward to challenge the forfeiture order.

Earlier in 2017, another Federal High Court in Abuja ordered an interim forfeiture of N500 million and $500,000, alleged to have been laundered by another governor, using another set of consultants. The sums were recovered from two firms by the anti-graft agency and Justice Nnamdi Dimgba (now retired) gave the interim forfeiture order on June 30, 2017. Nobody from the affected firms came forward to challenge the forfeiture order.

Also, in 2017, the EFCC obtained another interim forfeiture of N1.8 billion paid to an additional set of consultants by the Yari-led NGF. In fact, one of the consultants confirmed to EFCC's detectives that he did not do any job for the NGF. This particular consultant had $3 million transferred into his account by the NGF from the Paris Club repayment to states. This forfeiture order was also not challenged. By my calculation, a whopping N38 billion must have been paid to the ghost consultants from the N766.53 billion Paris Club refunds to the governors as at October 2017.

Virtually all the governors nominated ghost consultants for the fees paid out to the specialist by the NGF. This is evidently a money laundering arrangement. When the first tranche came out, the NGF allegedly caused the Central Bank of Nigeria to pay N19.4 billion to consultants.

The EFCC in a 2017 report stated: "N10bn of the N19.4bn paid to the NGF account by the CBN was fraudulently disbursed to the seven accounts of companies and individuals, who were not part of the said BizPlus GSCL Consortium. Substantial amounts from the fraudulent disbursements into these accounts have further been laundered to some other accounts or withdrawn as cash. The NGF had agreed to pay a success fee of two per cent to BizPlus GSCL Consortium. But upon the success of the recovery, rather than stick to the two per cent fee, the NGF caused the Central Bank of Nigeria to deduct five per cent, amounting to the N19.4bn."

Many can now understand when I said Yari has a lot of explanations to do about weird payments to shadowy Paris Club refund consultants and on the current case with six consultants hounding Nigerian states and local governments in courts.

The Rascality of Electricity Workers

Electricity workers shut the national power grid on Wednesday, throwing the entire country into darkness for several hours. They cared less about the effect on business and domestic consumers. The workers cared less about the impact on productivity. They cared less about those who will die in hospitals due to sudden disruption of electricity supply. The workers cared less about the consumers that had made advance payments for this service. Billions of Naira went down the drain while this reign of terror lasted. No matter how just the demands of these electricity workers might be, that decision to throw the entire country into darkness made nonsense of it. Common sense dictates that they should find a way of resolving their issues with their employers without hurting consumers. They did not do this. Shutting power stations and setting off grid collapse is terrorism and economic sabotage. The leaders of that madness that occurred last Wednesday deserve to be thoroughly hammered. Unfortunately, we don't have a government that can do this. This is the weakest federal government in the history of Nigeria. What a shame!

One of the demands of the workers was for the reversal of the directive of the board of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) mandating principal managers in acting capacity to appear for a promotion interview. They insisted that the directive was in contravention of the workers' conditions of service and career progression paths, adding that "it was unilaterally done without the relevant stakeholders." What garbage! The leaders of these workers should be on trial for terrorism and economic damage.

COMMENTARY

THE BATTLE FOR THE HEART OF ABUJA

Adewale Adeoye urges government to address the grievances of Abuja's indigenous people

This August, President Muhammadu Buhari should at this moment, have an important memo on his table. The brief should be on the fear and trembling among nine indigenous peoples of Abuja, the seat of power. If he has none, then, some people are definitely not doing their job or are treating the President's authority with absolute contempt.

If Nigeria works effectively, the President should be having a memo telling him to take a number of actions on the boiling grievances of original inhabitants of the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT). He or his top officials could visit them or at least send a fact-finding mission to ascertain their grievances which may soon find a violent outburst if nothing is done. But I doubt it this has happened. I doubt if it will ever happen, at least, not so soon, judging from the tradition of Nigerian authorities who are notorious for ignoring warning signals.

Let history be a witness: If the federal government does not address the growing concern of Abuja indigenous peoples, the ancestral owners of Nigeria's most honoured city, the government may not be able to sleep soundly in the nearest future. On August 9, 2022, I was a witness to their hues and cries, to their passion and to their bottled up disenchantment. They are alarmed that their history and civilization flounder in their very eyes, a sordid scene they can no longer continue to watch in silence. Many times the youths have threatened to block all the Abuja highways, but are calmed by their elders. They complain that in 1976, the military government asked them if they would wish to stay on the land or quit. Out of fear, many of them left their homeland. Those who stayed back, the leaders said, were given stipend. One leader said the government would pay some N5000 for crops on a piece of land but sell the same plot for N50m. They are worried that their shrines, sacred groves and burial sites have been usurped. They said the Aso Rock and the location of the Abuja National Stadium used to be ancient territories for traditional worship.

At the Abuja old pack on August 9, the nine indigenous peoples came together for the first time through the Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education with the support of MacArthur Foundation.

I have always known about the indigenous people, who now refer themselves to as the Original Inhabitants of Abuja, but I honestly was ignorant of how rich their culture is and less aware of the level of deprivation and the seething rage and anger. On this day, myself with many visitors from across Nigeria and the world stood in awe as the indigenous people exhibited civilizations dating back to 1300s when their forebears first occupied today's FCT. Masquerades of different types and shape, drum men, locals with time ancient costume came out with ancient harp, lire and flute. It was the first time many of us were seeing Abuja in its raw, original. 'Our history was deconstructed in 1976 by the Nigerian central government. Our children are asking questions. They are worried that their land have been taken away and their civilizations almost extinct,' one of the participants, who was born in 1976 told me.

Overwhelmed by industrialization, skyrise buildings, a rainbow of people from diverse culture, the original people are deeply troubled about what they now consider as the complete loss of their treasure and humanity. Some of the nine indigenous ethnic groups in Abuja are: Koro, Gbwari, Gade, Nupe, Gwandara, Dibo, Bassa and Ebira. In 1976, the Gen Murtala Mohammed military administration issued Decree Six that took away the Federal Capital to Abuja following the recommendation of the Justice Akinola Aguda Panel. The people under the FCT Original Inhabitants now argue that their history was deconstructed with the movement of the Federal Capital from Lagos to Abuja. The movement led to dramatic changes in the sociology, land ownership, control and management.



All over the world, indigenous peoples are recognised by their own history and values backed by international instruments like the International Convention on Indigenous Peoples, the ILO Convention 169 all of which emphasise the protection of indigenous peoples including their intellectual and cultural property.

The UN as far back as 1982 had started to affirm the rights of indigenous peoples following protests across the world. On December 23, 1994, the UN General Assembly resolution 49/214 adopted the International Day of Indigenous Peoples. Nigeria is a signatory. The UN went further to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples and the first decade of indigenous people in 1995. The Forum encourages leaders of indigenous peoples all over the world to meet at the UN where they address world leaders using their native languages. I was the West African Regional Secretary of International Alliance on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, (IAITPTF) based in Chiangmai, Thailand and have had the privilege to attend the Forum at the UN Headquarter in New York and also their regional meetings in Europe and South East Asia. The UN describes the indigenous peoples as 'holders of unique languages, knowledge systems and beliefs and possess invaluable knowledge for sustainable management.' UNESCO says there are 4000 to 5000 of the 6000 languages in the world spoken by indigenous peoples. The UN also classified them as those 'having historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that have developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.' Nigeria should not only meet her international obligations, it should domesticate the various international conventions that will strengthen the indigenous communities in Abuja, protect their culture, include them in the political and economic development processes so as to avoid upheaval and outburst of the growing social discontent. This may include the FCT allocating, for a start, five percent of its yearly budget to the education, health, cultural preservation of indigenous peoples of Abuja. It will mean giving them access to political and economic opportunities on their land which they had held for centuries only to be taken over by the whirlwind of our own concept of civilizations which annul the identities of the original owners of the land. The federal government should also immediately open up a window for constructive engagement to address all grievances before it is too late.

Adeoye writes from Abuja

NIGERIA SHOULD NOT ONLY MEET HER INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, IT SHOULD DOMESTICATE THE VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN ABUJA, PROTECT THEIR CULTURE, INCLUDE THEM IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES SO AS TO AVOID UPHEAVAL AND OUTBURST OF THE GROWING SOCIAL DISCONTENT

ENHANCING SANITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Yakubu Baba has worked hard to strengthen Nigeria's capacity to respond to local and global health challenges, writes **Bashir Ibrahim Hassan**

If there is a list of government establishments in Nigeria that are strengthening the country's capacity to respond to a variety of challenges confronting humanity, Environmental Health Officers Registration Council of Nigeria (EHORECON) is one of them. EHORECON is an agency under the Federal Ministry of Environment charged with the responsibility of regulating Environmental Health profession in Nigeria. At the head of the Council is Dr. Yakubu Mohammed Baba as Registrar/CEO.

Indeed, there is something unmistakably Nigerian about this man. Born in Azare, Bauchi State, the 48-year- old flaunts his identity through his credentials on the strength of having received his education, starting from primary, secondary and diploma level in Bauchi before heading for the neighbouring Gombe School of Health Technology for his Higher National Diploma. He later obtained a Master of Science (MSc) on Environmental Health Management from Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, after studying for a Bachelor of Science (BSc), Environmental Health, Houdegbe North American University, Cotonou, Benin Republic. He obtained another Master of Public Health (MPH) at Imo State University Owerri, and returned to the neighbouring Abia State to earn a PhD in Environmental Health and Safety at the Abia State University, Uturu.

It was, for him a dream come true, given that he has always itched too assume a challenging position "in order to meaningfully contribute to the improvement and achievement of organizational systems and objectives by working with team members, striving to attain excellence driven by innovation and creativity."

Indeed, since he mounted the saddle, Dr Yakubu Baba has worked hard to strengthen Nigeria's capacity to respond to local and global health challenges. For a start, the law governing the practice of environmental health in Nigeria dates back to 1958. In 2015, he worked towards its amendment, and upgraded the National Environmental Health Practice Regulation in collaboration with then Minister of Environment. The reworked regulation is what the practitioners are using today.

Another significant achievement of the Council is the issuance of about 17 guidelines that cut across various aspects of the practice -- from sanitation in aviation industry, guidelines for accreditation of programmes in the training institutions to school sanitation – to the opening up of the profession to the private sector.

The Council has also opened a register and approved five practice areas in environmental health, namely: inspection of premises; public health pest and vector control; waste collection; air quality monitoring and healthcare waste management. These are the areas that have been opened up for private sector to come and invest in. "We have issued guidelines where people can come and invest," says Yakubu Mohammed Baba.

He has also effected the issue of the merging of licences. "When we started, all environmental health officers were using the single licensing protocol. But since the profession has grown, we have now de-merged our licensing," he says. "Those that have PhD and professors are called environmental health specialists, and we issue them license as such. By law, you cannot be signing some professional documents when you are not at some certain level. This was intended to bring sanity to the practice."

In 2021, the Council was able to host the first National Environmental Health Summit, and one of the outcomes of that summit was a road map for environmental health. The essence of the road map is to move the profession of environmental health to global standards.

Joining EHORECON in 2005 as Senior Environmental Health Officer, Dr Baba acted as acting Registrar/CEO from 2020 to 2021 before his elevation to the apex of the Council. In his career, he has also held various positions in other establishment including Senior Environmental Health Officer, Assembly Service Commission – Abuja and Senior Environmental Health Officer, Federal

Staff Hospital, Abuja.

His ability to deliver on the terms of his appointments has been enhanced by exposure to a variety of professional training and programmes in different parts of the world -- Dubai, United Arab Emirates; People's Republic of China; Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; South Korea, Malawi; USA, and the United Kingdom

He has given to his chosen profession as much as he has received, attesting to his intellectual standing and evidenced by his numerous technical publications in professional journals.

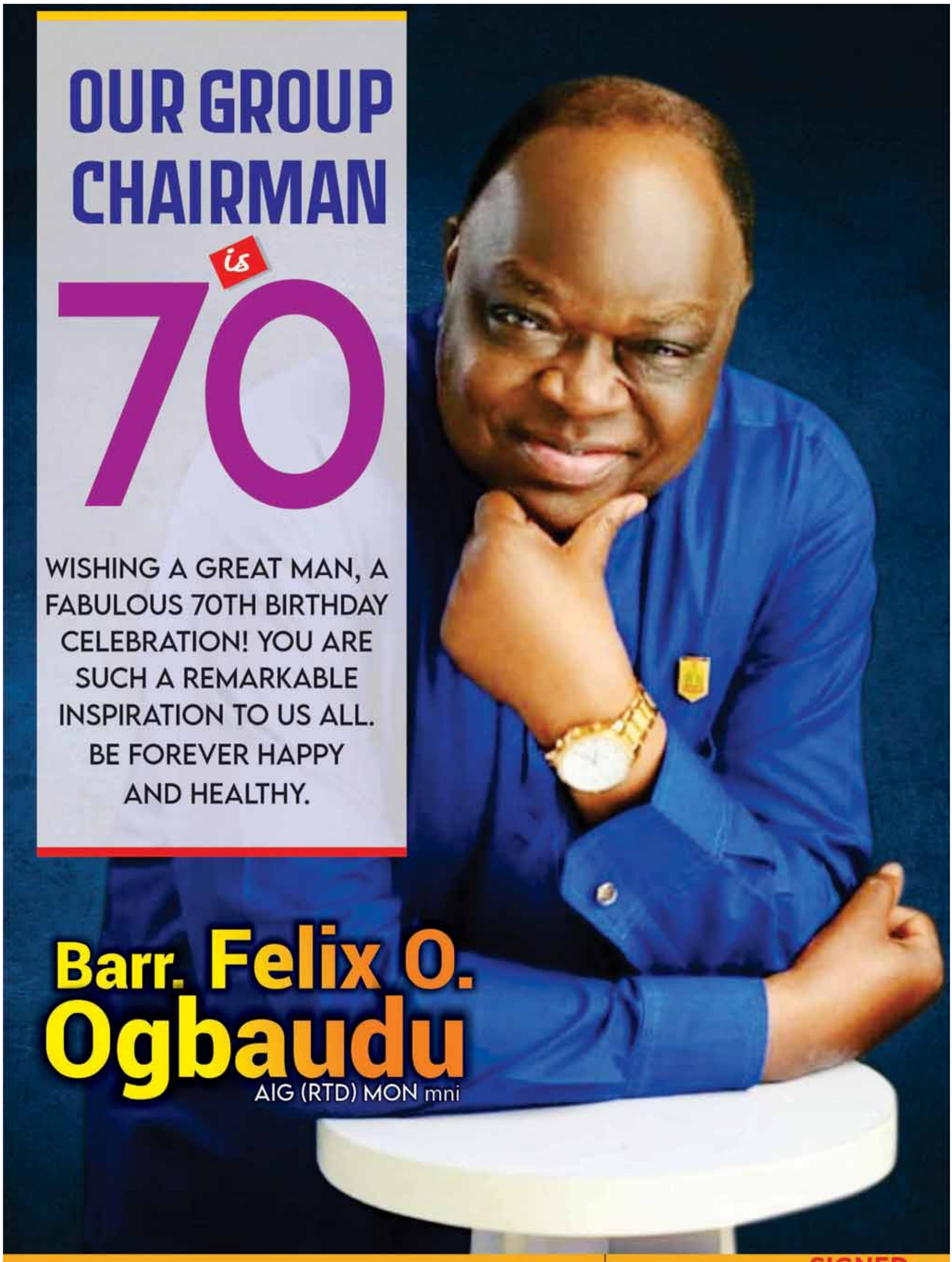
However, he acknowledges the persistence of challenges, one of which is how to, in compliance with the International Health Regulations, effectively deploy environmental health officers to mount what he calls "Health force" point of entries to Nigeria. He recalls that the first index case of COVID-19 came from somewhere into the country, underscoring the need to strengthen the nation's port health services. "All the measures that are put in place to prevent direct transmission of COVID-19 are all environmental health measures," he says. These include social distancing, sanitization, basic hygiene measures that were not strictly enforced in Nigeria until the pandemic.

Hassan writes from Abuja

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Burna Boy: From Stefflon Don to Diamond The Body

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Music superstar, Burna Boy got the social media space buzzing this week after Jamaican rap artiste, "Diamond The Body", real name Brittany Nicole Carpentero, shared a nude photo of her with the Grammy award-winning artiste last Sunday. The curvy brown chocolate Jamaican-American was cozy with Burna Boy in bed.

Though Burna Boy's face wasn't visible in the picture, his tattoos gave him up. In the caption on the photo, the rapper revealed what the Afro-fusion singer told her. Diamond wrote, "He says he feel safer over here….." She however deleted the picture soon after it got trending. Diamond The Body posted it on her private chat with her close friends.

It was alleged that one of Diamond's close friends leaked the picture, stirring speculations the two are an item. However, neither Burna Boy nor Diamond has confirmed they're in an exclusive relationship.

With this nude picture with Diamond, Burna Boy has clearly moved on from his British-Jamaican ex-girlfriend, Stefflon Don.

The two called it quits late last year after Burna Boy posted a cryptic message, claiming to be single. He soon dropped a song - "Last Last" – which was believed to be reflecting on past relationships before concluding everything will be okay which many of his fans believing he spoke about the relationship he had with Stefflon Don and how they eventually broke up. Stefflon also released a new single she calls 'First of All' which is believed her reply to Burna's.



Diamond The Body



Burna Boy



Stefflon Don

Back in 2018, Burna Boy, real name Damini Ebunoluwa Ogulu and Stefflon Don went public with their relationship after they met at one of his shows in Ghana. Speaking to American radio personality Ebro in March 2019, Burna Boy called her wifey.

"On a more serious note, that's my wifey. If you wanted a wifey, she's like the most perfect person with that perfect description," he said. Another time, in a video of the couple locking-lips on Instagram, Burna Boy in the comment said; "can't wait for our wedding." In another interview, Stefflon Don revealed that Burna Boy told him she was going to be his wife the first time they met.

"He told me I was going to be his wife, and you know how boys always talk shit, but I didn't remember he said that but he told me and I was like wow," she said in an interview with New York's Hip-Hop and R&B radio station Power 105.1.

Prior to their breakup in 2020, Stefflon Don continuously battled rumors that her Afro-fusion artiste boyfriend was cheating on her. There was a 23-year-old London model, Jo Peal who alleged that she and the singer had secretly dated for two years. She narrated how she met and fell in love with Burna Boy before he started dating Stefflon Don. According Pearl, Burna loves them dark and curvy. "He always emphasized how much he just loved black women, African women," said Peal.

Rumors swirled that Burna Boy allegedly stepped out on the "Calypso" rapper with his ex-girlfriend and sultrily curvy Ghanaian-Senegalese actress, Princess Shyngle.

However, Stefflon refuted the claims, taking to her instagram to post the message: "Old old videos Please let it rest. We good over here Thanks!" The two seemingly called it quits shortly after, as more cheating allegations with another one of the singer's exes came to light.

Stephen Damian Unveils *'This is How it Ends'*

Rarely is domestic violence against men given the limelight. This silent societal menace is being highlighted in a movie produced by Nollywood actor, Stephen Damian.

" This is How it Ends" is a movie whose subject matter revolves around domestic violence in marriages. The movie focuses majorly on domestic violence against men and showcases the importance of speaking up and seeking help despite societal and cultural expectations and stereotypes that forces a man to "man up" and act strong even when they are breaking down emotionally.

The movie is full of drama and intrigue.

Written by Anyanwu Sandra Adora and directed by Simon Peacemaker, the Nollywood flick features Stephen Damian, Chy Nwakama, Kalu Ikeagwu, Segun Arinze, Ben Touitou, Joseph Momodu, Jenniffer Eliogu. This Is How It Ends is powered by 926company.

Speaking on the theme of the movie, the producer, Stephen Damian said "it's is a subject that nobody wants to talk about. Most abused men are ashamed to speak out. In the end, we all become victims to our bad decisions."



Stephen Damian

Damian, who has established himself as one of the promising top actors in Nollywood, added that fans should expect authenticity in the storyline of the drama including a different kind of Stephen.

Damian is notable for his roles in The Wedding Party (2016), Disguise (2018), and The Washerman (2018). Having carved a niche for himself as an actor, he hopes to transcend that by producing Flicks that resonate with his fans. His latest produced movies – Tigertail, Fatty, and Sons & Passports – will hit cinemas soon.

Beejay Sax Lifts Souls at Indigo 02 Live Concert

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Gospel minister, Beejay Sax has thrilled fans and lovers of gospel music at his just concluded 'Beejay Sax Live in London' praise and worship concert. The show which is in its first edition was held at the Indigo 02 and was a huge success, with the venue filled.

The event project managed and packaged by Akinlolu Jekins was 'hot' from start to finish, and everyone had an awesome time in the presence of God. The renowned saxophonist gave fans an unforgettable experience that won't be forgotten in a hurry. Beejay Sax Live is a unique praise concert organised with the sole aim of bringing together individuals, young and old, irrespective of tongue, tribe, and status, to offer relentless praise to God.

BeeJay Sax who discovered his ministry while in secondary school and has since then transformed millions of lives around the world noted that his joy is found in the testimonies that come from his concerts.



Beejay at Indigo 02 live concert

A Celebration of Eedris Abdulkareem



Eedris Abdulkareem

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Social crusader and music star, Eedris Abdulkareem's health challenges are no secret in the public domain. The veteran rapper was recently diagnosed with kidney failure. To give support to him, his friends and colleagues in the industry gathered last Saturday at Freedom Park, Lagos to draw awareness to his health condition.

The event celebrated the singer's impact and achievements and was tagged "Towards 2023, The Role of Artistes in Making our Lives Matter". One of the objectives of the Eedris Abdulkareem colloquium was to help draw more attention to his health challenges. It was noted that Eedris is one of the few artistes consistently using their music to criticize and demand good governance.

One of his most popular songs, "Jaga Jaga", which targeted government, was released in 2004, under President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. It pitched him against then president Obasanjo as the government banned the track shortly after it was released. And since then, the singer has remained "Obasanjo's best friend", a mantra Eedris figuratively refrains often.

The song bemoans corruption, suffering and political assassinations in Nigeria. To date, the music still resonates, and the message it conveys still holds sway. The Eedris recent meeting was graced by friends and colleagues of the veteran rapper, including; Dede Mabiaku, Ara, Sam Uche Anyamele, Jude Orhorha, Jahman Anikulapo and record label owner Kenny Ogungbe.

The veteran music executive Kenny Ogungbe, who nurtured Eedris career under his music label (Kennis Music), said of the rapper: "Any day to celebrate Eedris Abdulkareem is a beautiful day; it's a day to celebrate a legend and a king. Let's celebrate our legends while they're alive. I was his best man on his wedding day. Since he got married, he has only ever been with one woman."

The convener of the Eedris Abdulkareem colloquium, Ayo Ganiu, the executive producer of Unchained Vibes Africa, used the event to call on artistes to use their music to sensitize the general public while also calling on the artistic community to become more active in civic responsibility. Ayo Ganiu had this to say about Eedris Abdulkareem: "He is one of the few artistes still alive who uses their art to influence government."

Eedris Abdulkareem, for over 20 years he's been in the music industry, is well-known for consistently being the voice of the voiceless and echoing the cries of the ordinary Nigerian people and even artists.

The artiste's management, Lakreem Entertainment revealed the rapper had been undergoing dialysis at St Nicholas hospital in Lagos. He would undergo kidney transplant soon. They called for prayers from fans and concerned Nigerians on behalf of the singer.

SHOWBIZFLAIR

Bakia Thomas

We Have to Tell Our Own Stories to the World

Last weekend, C.O.L.D, a blockbuster movie opened in cinemas nationwide with a stellar cast such as Pete Edochie, RMD, Hilda Dokubo, Ireti Doyle, Kanayo O. Kanayo, Ik Ogbonna, Keppy Ekpeyong, Lisa Viola (Australian), Femi Branch, Freddie George, and Lincoln Edochie. Produced and directed by Bakia T. Thomas, the suspense-packed movie is projected to create a new cinema record for a Nollywood movie. In this chat with **Ferdinand Ekechukwu,** Bakia T. Thomas shares more about the movie, his journey as a filmmaker, and the "cartel" in the industry



Bakia Thomas

What is C.O.L.D. all about?

C.O.L.D is a movie that seeks to address the rot created by religion in our society. People have asked why we choose such a sensitive topic at a time like this and my response is simple. Film is not just for commercial purposes like Spielberg said and I quote: "I make films to make money so I can make more films". Film is also a tool for societal transformation. So C.O.L.D seeks to address issues created by religion which also affects society.

Why the title/theme spelt C.O.L.D?

Congregation of the Living Dead (C.O.L.D), that's the abbreviation.

Is this your first cinema movie?

C.O.L.D is my first cinema film but not my first film to break into bigger platforms. I have made films for Netflix and this time I felt it is necessary to go to cinema with the film before it hits the bigger platforms.

What inspired the movie?

Hmmm, what inspired the movie? There is a serious moral decay within society and this is a function of the ideas that were sold to us during pre-colonial era and the era of slave trade. The white man in trying to explore our mineral resources in Africa used religion as a tool to enslave the people to pave way for the theft of mineral resources. Since after slave trade was abolished, the ideas they sold were not questioned so the people carried on with that enslaved mentality and that has greatly affected our people in the way we pursue religion and religious activities.

It parades not just some of the best actors in Nollywood but some of the biggest names... What informed your choice of cast?

Every film has specific characterization. When it was obvious I was going to make the movie C.O.L.D The first thing I did was to identify the cast. Some say I choose legends but I said I choose actors. I understood the budget I had for the film so I needed people who will give me depth in terms of interpretation and those I casted did justice to the film.

What are the other movie projects you have been involved in either as a director or producer…

I have been around for 19 years as a director. I wrote, produced and directed the 'Last Trigger', starring Jim Iyke, Hank Anuku, and Halima Abubakar in 2009. I wrote, produced and directed 'The Unknown', starring Rita Dominic, Yul Edochie, and Alex Osifo. Also 'Bakassi' (The Lost Homeland), a film detailing the plight of the homeless indigenous people of the oil rich portion of Cross River State, following the transfer of sovereignty from Neighbouring Nigeria through a judgment of the International Court of Justice ceding the area to Cameroon, was written, produced and directed by me. This film will be coming soon on bigger platforms also. It features Sam Dede, IK Ogbonna, Bimbo Akintola, Bishop Imeh, and others.

What are the challenges?

Every industry has a cartel whether you believe it or not. The worst of it is in the cinema industry. There is a gang up on my film C.O.L.D because it challenges a film they wanted to promote so badly and after the first weekend, the margins of what the film everyone within the cartel was pushing for and refusing to show C.O.L.D was shocking, in terms of what it made. So they now realized that fighting a man who is grazed can disgrace anyone. They have no choice than give C.O.L.D the audience and show time it deserves. Some cinemas like EbonyLife Cinema did so well for C.O.L.D. Their halls were sold out and a lot of people had to go back the next day to watch and that is because of the show time and support they gave C.O.L.D. The reviews we have gotten so far have been very encouraging. People have to realize that the sky is so large that beds don't clash while flying. The fans in Nigeria outnumber the films we make so every film should be given the right opportunity to showcase at the cinemas and this useless malpractice of going behind to pay some cinemas staff so they direct people to go watch one film and deny fans the right time to watch others is devilish and it must stop. We have videos of these malpractices which we will have to present if some distributors and studios don't stop immediately such devilish acts.

How lucrative has movie production and directing been for you?

Well, I keep saying no one hangs around a business that isn't lucrative. If film wasn't, I would have gone into cassava farming (laughs).

You mentioned Netflix in your response. And now the movie industry seems to be having more streaming platforms coming into Nollywood. What do you make of their entries?

Over the years, a lot of investors who came into the industry got discouraged after their first attempt because they never recovered their investments back. The coming of Netflix and Amazon Prime really helped boost the industry because now people can be sure of their investments. We hope this country will attract and not use taxes to pursue intending investors in the motion picture industry.

What has the experience been like working in Nollywood?

Telling stories has been my life. I run an NGO, Neighbourhood Child Foundation which I founded and also an established hospital, Neighbourhood Foundation Hospital to cater for the health needs of the less privileged in the society. I spend more time with less privilege people. And have heard things that make me depressed most times. Filmmaking gives me such a platform to tell lots of stories and connect people everywhere.

What next can we look forward to from you?

We are currently working on a script which will be a story centered on slavery. The West have fooled themselves for ages thinking they can tell our stories to suit them and make their narrative accepted as what really happened. They never tell you the real cause of the genocide that happened in Rwanda or the young men whose hands were chopped off by Belgians in Congo. Because they couldn't meet their harsh demands of working in their Gold Mines because of their quest for mineral resources or the Mpaw Manku (rotten cocoyam) war that was fought in Mamfe, a town in the English speaking part of Cameroon ignited by the colonial masters because they needed the people to grow palm trees for palm oil because of their soap production but the people disregarded the order and instead choose palm wine. We have to tell our own stories by ourselves to the world.

Damola Sells Out First Ever Comedy Show

Tosin Clegg

Sunday, August 14th, 2022 witnessed an epic event at the Terra Kulture, Lagos, as comedian, Adegboye Damola and a host of other acts thrilled guests to rib cracking comedy on what was to be his first ever show which was completely sold out. The other acts were Mr.Yaw, Lepacious Bose, Forever, Kennyblaq, SLK, MC Saco, Mc Remote, and Dr.Smile.

Damola has graced many events as MC and his simple, classy and humorous approach to the job has earned him an enviable spot among the elites and other comics.

The Comedian, after the event, expressed his utmost gratitude to his teeming guests who came out in numbers to witness the grand event.

"I'm grateful to all the sponsors of the show and everyone that came out to be a part of this as without them nothing would have been possible," he added.

Damola is a corporate compere, standup comedian and university lecturer. He started anchoring events and comedy professionally ten years ago.

He had a First Class in political science and got retained at the Osun State University where he lectures in the Department of Political Science and International Relations.

This has given him the opportunity to present academic papers at both local and international conferences.



Damola

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We condole with our Chairman, Prince Nduka Obaigbena, and his family as they lay to rest, their dear mother and princess of Owa Kingdom, Delta State,



PRINCESS MARGARET ONYEMAKONOR

OBAIGBENA

Dame of the Anglican Church

(1934-2022)

(SIGNED)

• Eniola Bello • Ijeoma Nwogwugwu • Kayode Komolafe • Olusegun Adeniyi • Israel Iwegbu • Emmanuel Efeni • Ayo Arowolo • Bolaji Adebiyi • Shaka Momodu • Peter Iwegbu • Tony Ogedengbe • Yemi Adebowale • Davidson Iriekpen • Ruth Osime • Iyobosa Uwugiaren • Olawale Olaleye • Obinna Chima • Victor Danboyi • Konye Nwabogor • Ejiofor Alike • Peter Ishaka • Chuks Onwudinjo • Eromosele Abiodun • Eric Ojeh • Uche Dibiagwu • Nduka Moseri • Abimbola Taiwo • Chiemelie Ezeobi • Simon Kolawole • Lanre Alfred •

EXPRESSION

'Assure' Can't Stand Alone



MEDIAGAFFES

EBERE WABARA
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"WE commend the President for taking the bold step, especially considering that he is not in (on) the same political platform with Adeleke."

"The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) performed better than in (on) previous occasions."

"West Africa (Africa's) stability tied to free, fair, credible elections—Buhari"

"Awoniyi, Aribo EPL debut end (ends) in disappointment"

"ASUU strike: Buhari gives Adamu 2-weeks (either 2-week or 2 weeks') ultimatum to resolve impasse with varsity unions"

"KLT Customs generates N23bn revenue, intercept (why the discord?) container of mosquito coils"

"Buhari unveils NNPC Ltd, assures of value with global best practices" Who did the President assure? 'Assure,' definitely, cannot stand (function) alone or independently.

"Zara, Queen's granddaughter, wins Olympics silver" 2022 Commonwealth Games (adjectival circumstance—only before noun): Olympic silver.

The Guardian of July 31 intervened this week with four flying contributions: "The CBN had, while injecting the fund to (into) to the sector, said that (sic)...."

"There is no doubt that the aviation industry is facing very severe financial crisis." Conscience, Nurtured by Truth: a very severe financial crisis or severe financial crises.

"...ageing aircrafts and high operating costs." 'Aircraft' is non-count.

"Of all the first generation (a hyphen, please) universities, OAU is arguably the one that was able to preserve its known ideology for the longest." I do not agree with the usage of 'arguably' by a majority of Nigerian writers. The explanation I got from one of the country's frontline editors a fortnight ago was not convincing: when you have points to justify your claims, it becomes arguable and when there are no justifications, you employ 'unarguably. If you are sure of your statement, make it declarative by jettisoning 'arguably.' And if you are unsure, do not make claims. If you do, be ready to argue it elsewhere when confronted (not in your contribution). For the avoidance of doubt, 'arguable' (adjective) and its adverb (arguably) mean: '…for which good, if not necessarily convincing, reasons may be found/open to doubt/not certainly, but reasonably held to be'. (Source: THE NEW LEXICON WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, 2020) My grouse about this excerpt is the intrinsic element of doubt.

"Guinea elected a president in an election that witnessed series of crises and postponements." (Blueprint, July 23) The long road to democracy: a series of crises and postponements.

THISDAY of July 19 contained a gaffe: "In one breathe, there are those who are still…." Take a fresh breath before we continue.

"…it was a soothing balm." (THE GUARDIAN, July 19) What else do balms do apart from soothing?

The next three blunders are from THISDAY of July 20: "It is however a consensus opinion that the home, that is parents, should bear the prime responsibility of introducing the subject." For grammatical sanity, jettison 'opinion' from the extract.

"The occasion was held in Victoria Island." Get it right: on Victoria Island.

"The accused policeman was said to have actually demanded for N10,000 before he was…." Simply yank away 'for' from the excerpt.

"Lawan advocates for more states" 'Advocacy' in the verbal context does not take 'for.'

"Two arrested over heroin seizure at Lagos Port" (THISDAY, July 20) Very soon, I will arrest THISDAY editors for (not over) juvenile mistakes.

The July 30 edition of THE NATION ON SATURDAY entertained four unwholesome lines: "…she opens up on how she gained entry into the world of make-belief…." Grammar is not make-believe.

"…the food situation in the continent…." Classical writing: on the continent

"Conspicuously absent at the wedding reception was former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida and his children…." Three issues: 'Conspicuously absent' is sheer illiteracy! (Absent at the….). 'Military president' can only come from a confused head. We can talk of military leader or military ruler (not the contradictory and vexatious extract). Finally, IBB and his children deserve plural treatment (were, not was).

THE NATION of July 23 offered its readers an incorrect line: "…Ciroma will continue to advocate for a Northern president." Delete 'for' in the interest of our diseased democracy.

"Producing ice-blocks without tears" (Source: as above) English without tears: ice cubes (not blocks).

Nigerian Tribune of June 30 advertised two offensive lines: "Unfortunately, the reality in Nigeria today is: who will throw the first stone?" The hard fact: cast the first stone. Some expressions are fixed/stock—not subject to any rewriting or editing in whatever circumstance.

"Customs intercept tanker load (what happened to the hyphen?) of drugs" The Nigeria Customs Service is an entity. So, NCS intercepts….

"A masquerade cooling off with pure water after a street show…." (BUSINESSDAY, July 23) Just this: sachet (or packaged) water. 'Pure water' is Nigerian English and smacks of cerebral infantilism.

THISDAY of July 3 contained two blunders: "…is aspiring for the gubernatorial (governorship, preferably) seat in the state under (on) the platform of ANPP."

"Fayemi orders for reduction of fees at UNAD" Let us delete 'for' in the interest of scholarship.

FEEDBACK

THANKS for your very educative column. It is a shame that newspapers publish all these gaffes. What is the work of their editors? I used to advise students to read novels, magazines and newspapers. Not anymore! (Dr. Inyang Etoh, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State)

YOUR lengthy reaction to the anonymous respondent on the issue of the count and uncountable nature of 'property' was rather gratuitous, as his assertion on the subject must be a reflection of his shallow knowledge of English language. At best, he should have been referred to the dictionary meanings of the word as you did in your paragraph two, and hope that he and others like him would learn something this time. Considering the plethora of ludicrous assumptions and views of the numerous arm-chair critics that abound in Nigeria on every subject under the sun—from football to astrology—are you prepared to be upset every week? Do not allow anyone to frustrate your laudable efforts. (Max Uzor/Abuja/07067789391) .

Miscellaneous Thoughts Nigeriana - 2



COUNTERPOINT

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The first statement of our early morning greeting rituals should now be: "Good morning, my neighbour. How is Nigeria treating you today?" Thus, here is the second part of our perspectives on how Nigeria and her managers have been treating us lately.

The Change We Need

Politicians, by their acts and words, seek to increase their "fan base"... while some of their supporters struggle hard to build a "hate base". Change!

What's All the Hoopla About Jandor and His Jenifa?

Why do some people blame Jandor for appointing Funk Akindele? They should start by blaming Lagos PDP for electing Jandor as their flagbearer in Lagos State.

If you choose a 44-year old man, roughly moving away from your old unprofitable ways of selecting staid, colourless political bystanders as candidates (minus one exception) then you should expect some strange-looking decisions. The young ones don't think like you old folks, mostly.

For instance, you pick a man who had spent about five years building a groundswell of malcontents and youthful support, deep in the disenchanted bowels of APC... with a name like a guy-man's nickname... You should not be surprised that he would desire a "fresh breath" in another "J" with a massive social currency that has turned her into a sprawling entertainment empress.

If the choice to pick Jandor is bold and brazen...so is the pick of Jennifer as running mate - petulant and abrasive. A crazy challenge needs a crazy assault weapon - and when you're in uncharted terrain, no one has the master-manual of how to proceed or survive.

Stop macro-managing what has never been attempted. Lagos polls would be interesting, if not ground shaking.

Those who mock or disdain this "J-J" collabo should borrow themselves "brains" and don't dismiss them as jesters, and no-hopers, or they'll spend many harrowing nights spooning mud off their proud faces. Some smart pundits predicted last year Jandor would fizzle out by February 2021… Don't start another February prediction that can mess with your sanity.

NEWS: FG: Terrorists to Blame for Power Outage Nationwide - ThisDay

MY POINT: When a father comes home to say to his hungry children that he could not buy food for supper because "area boys" were fighting at the garri market, It will not be strange to expect the children to wonder if the man is actually their father.

And to add to their misery, he promises to throw more money into the food-basket for bigger meals... hoping tomorrow would be better or safer. Shameless in Suleija!

Random Musing: Hello, Powerful Politician

Your country is a forgiving nation...if you want to fulfill your ambition to "rule" this nation, then search in your heart for the power to confess your sins - especially those relevant to character and accountability.

Yes, the haters will lambast you; the youth will mock and make memes, the impatient will dismiss it as a stunt…however, shortly and surely, everyone will move on, and the majority will recognize that you have obeyed the will of God, and overcome the fear of men (and women). And what shall be will be.

Seize the moment - confess, restitute where possible, and sin no more.

NEWS: Ngige invites electricity workers for emergency meeting as strike begins - TheCable

My POINT: Great Nigerian government! That's why I respect our politicians and administrators so much. When people threaten to go on strikes, they ignore them, or call their bluff... even if their services are critical to the well-being of the Nigerian people.

But when they start the inevitable strike, the government would run helter-skelter, begging the workers to a sit-down, and to negotiate a speedy return to normalcy.

Genius - very efficient, proactive and competent set of leaders... shining examples to the rest of the world... in labour relations and conflict resolutions.

In A Moment Of Solemn Irritation, And Reflection… I Mused Thus:

Anybody who thinks that ruling Nigeria is no big deal is either in a tramadolic Dreamland, or he hasn't met Nigerians. We are a tough knot to untangle.

When the president didn't speak at the times we thought he ought to speak, we lamented, and lambasted him; some in very colourful and uncharitable manner.

Then, in June, he spoke twice! And he was in trouble. Some didn't like his insensitivity; some his glibness; some harped on his usual incoherence, and linguistic challenges; and yet others zoomed on his several bare-knuckled nuances and ungainly attempts at clarity and doggedness.

I don't know which group is harder to please: the leaders who cannot stop stealing, and pontificating about the dangers of indiscriminate corruption; or the followers who cannot effect decisive changes but whine, wail and lambast.

Abuses and lampoons have never led to revolutionary, or even generational, changes. It's planning, cooperation, organisation, mobilisation, and action that can. Arise, o compatriots. Stop yakking and yawning... Do something creative, and paradigm-shifting. Time dey go….

NEWS: Niger Republic, Chad part of Nigeria, says Buhari's Chief of Staff - Gazette

My POINT: If this report is true, it buttresses the urgent need for us all to go back to our history books... And an opportunity to thank Gov. Jide Sanwo-Olu (of Lagos) for returning history to our primary schools.

Let's get to know our neighbours who were once our actual siblings. You see, education is good, isn't it? Especially when you're playing politics of inclusion with other people's money.

When PVC Hell Can Be Averted…

Why do we invent hassles and problems for ourselves where we can make life much easier and beneficial.

In normal circumstances, the enrollment, management, and distribution of Permanent Voter's Card, PVC should be a continuous exercise all year round. It is not something people should injure themselves while scrambling and queuing to register...then return months after to repeat the same hell, trying to collect the plastic!

It's not something people have to threaten INEC, and go to court before you'd extend the registration closing date - and you are still not able to accommodate willing and eager prospective voters. Who gazumps youthful patriotism?

In a normal situation, we should not be seeing mountains of uncollected PVCs littering INEC local and zonal offices all over Nigeria...or in worse scenarios, we should not be seeing videos of abandoned stacks of PVCs littering gutter-sides in urban areas; or scattered in unidentified dumping grounds and all sorts of soul-sapping spectacles.

Yet, we can make PVC distribution and management some sort of an employment yielding activity. After all, every registrant indicates residential address, among other personal details.

So, why don't we have PVC mail-men/women physically go around dropping PVCs at registered addresses (or via courier services where possible)... in each of the 774 local government areas? Why subject people to all sorts of indignities we witness regularly while performing civic duties?

As soon as you hit 18 years, or you change your house address or your name, simply walk into any INEC office, or visit their website, all year round - at least, it ought to be that simple. And since the permanent card is not for financial or billable transactions, you should get your cards in intervals of two weeks - right in your mailbox or your doorsteps. Even banks give out their ATM cards on a "wait-and-get" basis nowadays.

With this mail-drop process, there will be an accountable chain of distribution, and redress can be dealt with effectively, while the Nigerian people would be galvanized to provide feedback whenever services fail or become sluggish.

GLOBAL SOCCER



BATTLE OF THE MONEYBAGS

PAGE. 29

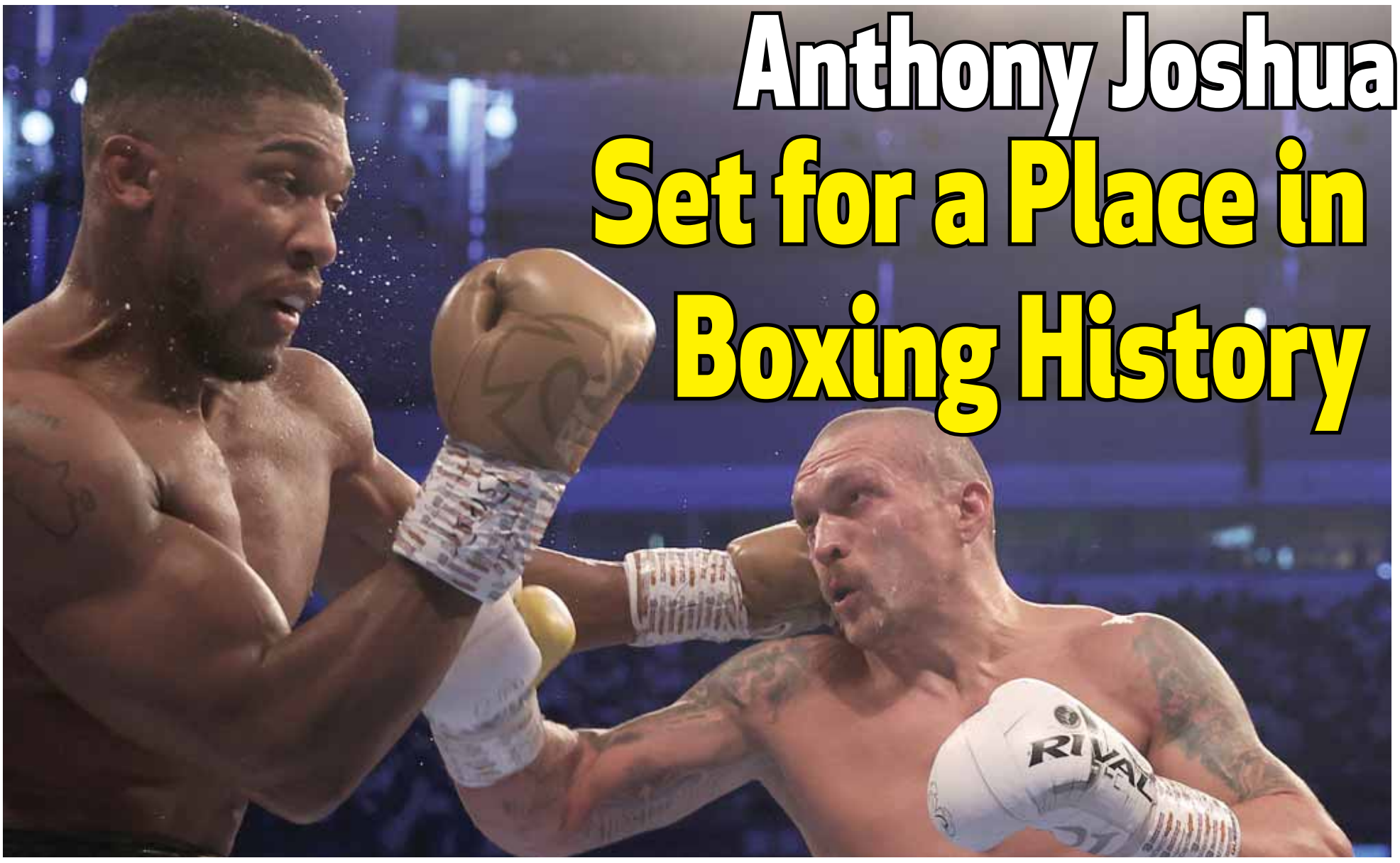
A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

20.8.2022



Anthony Joshua

Set for a Place in Boxing History



Anthony Joshua Set for a Place in Boxing History

Anthony Joshua is hoping to join the ranks of three-time heavyweight boxers as he is set for a a rematch with Oleksandr Usyk in Saudi Arabia, today

Boxers such as Muhammad Ali, Evander Holyfield among others enjoy special place in boxing history today not just because of their boxing prowess alone but their ability to regain their belts not once but twice, therefore, ranking them as one of the few boxers that have gone to hold the heavyweight boxing title thrice. Today, indeed presents Anthony Joshua an opportunity not only to rank among the boxing greats but also a place in history as he goes toe-to-toe with Oleksandr Usyk at the King Abdullah Sports Centre in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in his attempt to regain the title he lost to the Ukrainian last year's September

Anthony Joshua and Oleksandr Usyk's path first crossed at the 2012 London Olympics with both boxers winning gold medals in their categories. While the Anglo-Nigerian fought in the super-heavyweight category and Usyk was fighting in a division below as a heavyweight, and since then, both boxers have gone to respect each other-at least mutually.

Having announced themselves to the world by claiming Olympic gold at London 2012 Olympics, 10 years later, the pair once again take centre stage as they prepare for their career-defining rematch.

Joshua and Usyk are set to take centre stage once more today when they face each other in a heavyweight rematch following the Ukrainian's unanimous decision victory last September, and it promises to be an engaging battle between two men who have both been at the top of the sport for the past decade.

Joshua has revealed his desire to "harm" Usyk ahead of their highly-anticipated world title rematch this weekend.

'Want to do him harm', AJ said.

Joshua was stunned by Usyk last year in London, with the underdog claiming all four belts after he won the 12-round battle by unanimous decision.

While Usyk etched his name in the history books, his more fancied opponent went back to the drawing board after losing his world champion status for the second time in four bouts.

Joshua (24-2-0, 22 KOs) had lost to Mexican Andy Ruiz at Madison Square Garden in 2019 by TKO, before he won all his belts back later that year in Saudi Arabia.

The British-Nigerian superstar is hoping that history can repeat this weekend, as he takes another world title rematch to the Middle East.

With the IBF, IBO, WBA and WBO titles on the line, Joshua is confident he'll become a three-time world champion against Usyk, who helped his country's war efforts against Russia earlier in the year.

"I do want to do him harm this time, despite all my respect for what he has done in the war in Ukraine," Joshua told the Daily Mail.

"I do know that if I use my elements of height and strength, I will have a better chance of winning."

Joshua burst onto the world boxing scene at the London 2012 Olympics where he won a gold medal, but so did Usyk in a lighter division.

The 32-year-old went on to beat some of the biggest names in the sport including Dillian Whyte and Wladimir Klitschko, before the loss to Ruiz stunted a shot at further greatness.

After winning back his belts by unanimous decision, and then beating Kubrat Pulev, Joshua wanted to "prove" to the world that he could box by going 12 rounds with Usyk.

The Ukrainian, who signed up with the Kyiv Territorial Defense as part of the ongoing conflict, had only fought twice as a heavyweight before fighting Joshua after making his name as a cruiserweight.

"It sounds crazy but I'm not going to lie. My objective was never to hurt him, to land damaging punches," Joshua said.

"My aim was to go the full 12 rounds and prove I could box as well as he does, to land scoring punches.

"But I didn't work hard enough to prepare for a 12- round fight at that pace. I wasn't in the right mindset.

"Training camps are so challenging, so draining, so brain-fatiguing. I need to be better conditioned.

"I need adjustments to deal with a southpaw because to me these lefties are a nightmare. I swear that if Oleksandr wasn't a lefty I would have smoked him, one hundred per cent."

Even though he had the height advantage, Joshua was out-boxed by a fighter that he potentially hadn't trained hard enough to fight.

The loss in September has stayed with him ever since, with Joshua describing the "nightmare" he's had to live, waiting for his next chance to return to the ring.

"It has been a nightmare just sitting on this loss for so many months. The time-frame does change every day.

"I had dedicated a lot of my life to a very tough sport. I will do this for as long as I can but I think I'm quite smart at business now.

"I will be 33 shortly and a lot will come down to how long my body can hang on."

Meanwhile, Usyk felt that he was potentially just "30 seconds" away from dropping Joshua, after 12 rounds of dominance.

"Perhaps if there were another 30 seconds or another minute in the 12th round, Anthony would have been knocked down," Usyk told Parimatch.

"But I don't think about it anymore because it's just guessing. It happened as it happened. I boxed 12 rounds and I won."

But former world title holder Callum Smith believes Joshua can turn the tables on the champion this weekend, although he feels "he has to go back to the old Joshua".

For Joshua, victory has never been more vital. "There's a lot at stake. It's a big fight for both of them. You've got three of the four belts on the line, you wouldn't expect anything less but I like the two of them personally, they're two likeable characters," said Smith, a World Boxing Super Series winner like Usyk.

"Usyk kind of did that to Joshua (in the first fight), he couldn't land his jab," Smith added. "With Joshua, if he can't land one shot, it kind of stops you throwing two, three or four when fighters are elusive like that.

"But he knows now. He's been in with him. He's had a long time to think about it and come up with a plan to beat him second time. He got it right with Ruiz second time around. It's kind of the opposite, he fought against Ruiz and had to box second time. This time he probably boxed too much (in the first fight) and has to go back to the old Joshua. It's a good fight and one that hopefully I can sit and enjoy."

Smith believes Joshua can turn the table against Usyk in a rematch. "I think the first fight, for me, was convincing for Usyk. Joshua made it pretty easy for him. Stood off him and stood in front of him. I think Usyk was probably surprised at how easy it was. I'm not Joshua's coach, but I think I speak for a lot of people when I say I think he needs to go for him a little bit more and make him feel like he's in with the bigger man," he said.

"I don't think he used his size as much as he could have. He's got to make it a little bit uncomfortable, but he's got to be clever while he does it. I think Usyk's smart and he'd counter every mistake Joshua does make, so he can't really be reckless.

"It could backfire if he goes for him and doesn't get rid of him, then he could become gassed and he becomes a bit more of a sitting target for Usyk.

"I think they'll both adjust from the first fight, they've both done 12 rounds with each other so they both know each other a little bit better this time.

"It's a tough one. I think Joshua could go for him and we've seen Usyk's face after the first fight, pretty marked up and it wasn't as physical as it could have been.

"So if Joshua does go for him, he could get rid of him."

Muhammad Ali is one of the most renowned heavyweight champions in sports history. He reserves the record of being one of the few boxers to have won the World Heavyweight Championship title three times, in 1964, 1974, and 1978, and this is what Joshua would be hoping to emulate today.

Joshua is expected to earn about $75 million, plus the fight bonus, about $119 million because sponsorships, while Usyk is expected to earn the same $75 million.



Manchester City defensive midfielder Rodrigo Cascante tries to halt Newcastle Joelinton de Lira's move when both sides met last season at St. James' Park

Can Newcastle Halt Man City's Perfect Record?

Manchester City are just one of the two clubs yet to drop a point in the 2022/23 Premier League and that record would be put to test tomorrow at St. James'Park as the Citizens visit a tricky Newcastle side. Pep Guardiola heads to St. James Park this Sunday to take on Newcastle United in the Premier League, with the Blues in search of a third straight win to remain unbeaten in the young season.

Guardiola's side have been mightily impressive in their first two games of the campaign, dispatching West Ham United and Bournemouth 2-0 and 4-0 respectively.

In both outings, the Premier League champions controlled the tempo and smothered their opposition.

As a result, City have only conceded two shots on target across the 180 minutes of Premier League action so far.

While some questions were raised about how summer signing Erling Haaland would fit into City's system after Guardiola's side played without a recognised striker for nearly two seasons, the Norwegian has already cemented himself as a key figure in the side, with two goals and an assist in the first two league outings.

Without getting his name amongst the goals against Bournemouth last weekend, the striker has received some criticism for his perceived lack of involvement in the match.

However, Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne hit back at the criticism after his side's beating of the Cherries.

"It's hard being that focal point in the system," De Bruyne told The Independent. "We have 11 people behind the ball pretty much all the time so in these however many touches, he was dangerous.

"You don't need a lot of touches to be dangerous. He helps the team in many aspects and he didn't complain, he was still helping and giving assists so it's fine."

With momentum on their side, City will travel to the north east to square off with a revitalised Newcastle United side, hoping to pick up all three points and remain top of the Premier League.

The Magpies have also begun their campaign unbeaten, beating Nottingham Forest 2-0 on the opening weekend and drawing 0-0 with Brighton at the weekend.

Newcastle's steady resurgence has been plain to see, coming off the back of an extremely wealthy Saudi-based ownership group taking over the club midway through the previous campaign.

The Tyneside club brought in former Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe along with a host of new signings.

Kieran Trippier, Callum Wilson, and Bruno Guimarães are just three of the quality signings the club have made in the past eight months and the new faces have seen Newcastle slowly work their way up the table.

After a late-season push saw the Magpies secure an 11th place finish last season, Howe's side will be in the hunt for a top-half finish this time around.

And while Newcastle are a new-look outfit thanks to new investment, Guardiola's men will be brimming with confidence ahead of the game, as City have won the last five Premier League meetings with Newcastle by a combined score of 20-3.

After failing to secure the arrival of Harry Kane from Tottenham last summer, City retained the Premier League in the absence of a natural striker last term and signed Haaland to bolster their attacking ranks for the new season.

Haaland has hit the ground running in sky blue colours, netting on his City debut in a pre-season win against old rivals Bayern Munich in the United States.

Despite struggling in City's Community Shield defeat to Liverpool, the 22-year-old bagged a clinical brace on his Premier League debut in a 2-0 win away at West Ham on the opening day of the season.

He followed on a five-star display at the London Stadium by settling up IIkay Gundogan for the opener in Manchester City's 4-0 rout of Bournemouth at home last Saturday.

The spotlight has been largely on the young attacker and how he will fare in leading the line for a star-studded side that has operated without an out-and-out centre forward for the best part of two years.

Haaland is again expected to make the starting XI on Sunday.

Speaking in an interview with Four Four Two ahead of the clash, the Leeds-born striker spoke about the role Guardiola played in his move.

"Well, Pep (Guardiola) didn't have to sell the club to me, that's for sure. He didn't have to sell anything," Haaland said.

"For starters, he's a special trainer and that was so important to me. We all know what he has done for his clubs, but also for players and for the game in general.

"That's something I want to be part of. I think we can have a lot of fun together."

Just short of two decades on from when his father Alf-Inge represented City, Haaland has explained why he was so keen on returning to the east side of Manchester this summer.

The young forward said: "It (the club) is huge. The facilities around us, the staff, the people around the club, it's a huge organisation.

"It's a very professional club, it does everything in a good way to help the players which I really like."

To assess City's performances across the first two weeks of the new season as 'strong' would be an understatement.

The defending Premier League champions moved past a threatening West Ham side to open the season, before they breezed past the recently promoted Bournemouth in their home opener.

However, when reflecting on his team's performance in the first two weeks, Guardiola praised his defenders who have limited their opposition's attacking chances resulting in two consecutive clean sheets.

"The fact we conceded one shot on target against Bournemouth and in the game against West Ham, apart from Michail Antonio with the header and Declan Rice, we didn't concede much," said Guardiola.

The Catalan manager also discussed how important it is to succeed in the early parts of the season, with the points from the early fixtures helping out later on in the season when the schedule can become more congested.

Guardiola recounted Manchester City losing in the opening weeks of the season which came back to bite them later in the season as they lost their title race with Liverpool during the 2019/20 season.

"But we cannot forget three seasons ago when Liverpool won the Premier League, we lost five points in the first five games," explained Guardiola.

Despite the Blues' early season success, the manager knows that they still have a full season ahead of them which will be full of different challenges for them to overcome.

"We are not champions of the Premier League yet, that's for sure."

"There are more than 100 points to play but I have no complaints, especially zero goals conceded," said the 51-year-old.

One of those challenges will be the upcoming World Cup in Qatar, which will coincide with an international break period, going from late-November to mid-December.

This break has the potential of harming Manchester City according to Guardiola, as the break falls when the club is usually in the swing of things, winning game after game.

"Always in this period (early season) we drop points, then after we make maybe 12, 13, 14 games in a row winning," said Guardiola.

"This year that isn't going to happen because when we are strongest - October, November, December - this is the World Cup."

With the World Cup 94 days away, yet still looming, the Catalan's squad prepares for their clash with the Magpies as they travel to Newcastle with the hopes of making it three straight wins.

Premier League

TODAY
Tottenham v Wolves 12:30
Crystal Palace v Aston Villa
Everton v Nott'm Forest 15:00
Fulham v Brentford 15:00
Leicester v Southampton 15:00
Bournemouth v Arsenal 17:30

SUNDAY
Leeds Utd v Chelsea 14:00
West Ham v Brighton 14:00
Newcastle v Man City 16:30

MONDAY
Man Utd v Liverpool 20:00

LaLiga

TODAY
Osasuna v Cádiz 16:30
Mallorca v Real Betis 18:30
Celta Vigo v Madrid 21:00

SUNDAY
Bilbao v Valencia 16:30
Atlético v Villarreal 18:30
Sociedad v Barcelona 21:00

MONDAY
Elche v Almería 19:00
Girona v Getafe 21:00

Serie A

TODAY
Torino v Lazio 17:30
Udinese v Salernitana 17:30
Inter v Spezia 19:45
Sassuolo v Lecce 19:45

SUNDAY
Empoli v Fiorentina 17:30
Napoli v Monza 17:30
Atalanta v AC Milan 19:45
Bologna v Hellas Verona 19:45

MONDAY
Roma v Cremonese 17:30
Sampdoria v Juventus 19:45

GLOBAL SOCCER



Kamaru Usman and Leon Edwards



Taiwo Esepo Agbaje poses with his Mojisola Ogunsanya trophy and his one million naira dummy cheque for the GOtv Best Boxer prize

Usman, Edwards Go for Broke in UFC Welterweight Title Fight

Pound-for-pound king and current welterweight champion, Kamaru Usman (20-1) will tomorrow night take on Leon "Rocky" Edwards (19-3, 1 NC) in the welterweight title.

This shot for Edwards comes after he's gone 9-0, 1 NC in his last 10 fights. To be fair, the one No Contest was a fight that he was dominating against Belal Muhammad. His last fight came at UFC 263 where he put on a clinic against Nate Diaz. Granted, he did get hurt badly in the final minute of the fight.

The last man to defeat Edwards is the man that he's meeting tomorrow night. Usman used his wrestling to stifle Edwards in their first fight. That win was one of many that led Usman to the UFC welterweight title.

Usman has been perfect inside the octagon and he's looking for his sixth title defense tomorrow night. The last time we saw the champ was at UFC 268 when he had a hard-fought win over Colby Covington in their rematch.

Three of the top contenders in the welterweight division are Leon Edwards, Colby Covington, and Jorge Masivdal. If Usman wins tomorrow night, he will be 6-0 against those three men. Usman is on his second lap in the welterweight division.

That's how good he's been. He continues to look better and better and that's why he's ranked atop the pound-for-pound list in the UFC. However, if there's one man that can give him trouble given the overall skillset, you have to look at Edwards.

Edwards has really tightened his game in terms of his grappling defense. He's extremely well-rounded on the feet and he's dangerous everywhere. He has good kicks, rangey shots, and good elbows. While he doesn't have the power of the champion, he's still very dangerous.

The champion has a few advantages in this one. Power is definitely in the corner of The Nigerian Nightmare. Wrestling and championship experience also weight heavy here. Usman has been there and done that multiple times.

Usman and Edwards are both extremely well-rounded martial artists that prepare for each fight with fresh strategies. This typically results in fights that go to decision, which has transpired across 20 of their combined 29 UFC appearances.

Nigeria Not Seeking Revenge against Ghana in CHAN Clash – Yusuf

Super Eagles B Head Coach, Salisu Yusuf has stated unequivocally that the mission of the team was not to avenge the defeat of Nigeria by Ghana on the road to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The coach who took the Eagles B to a silver finish in 2018 in Morocco, said his current team was more concerned about qualifying for Algeria 2023 rather than aim for a 'revenge.'

"I won't say we are seeking to get revenge against Ghana because of what happened with the last game on the road to the Qatar World Cup. We want to win and qualify for the final stage of the competition in Algeria next year. That is basically what we are pursuing.

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

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

FA Hands Tuchel One-match Ban, £35,000 Fine for Conte Spat

Chelsea boss, Thomas Tuchel has been handed a one-game touchline ban following his fracas with Antonio Conte in the aftermath of Chelsea's draw with Tottenham.

The German has also been fined £35,000 by the Football Association for improper conduct after breaching FA Rule E3, while Conte has been fined £15,000 after both managers admitted improper conduct in a series of touchline clashes in Sunday's 2-2 draw at Stamford Bridge.

Tuchel's touchline ban has been suspended temporarily though, pending the full written reasons for the decision - allowing the Chelsea manager to take his place in the dugout for Sunday's Premier League clash at Leeds.

Tuchel and Conte were involved in a series of altercations throughout the fiery derby, with both managers squaring up before being booked during the game and sent off at full-time by referee Anthony Taylor.

The FA's separate investigation into Tuchel's post-match media comments in relation to this fixture remains ongoing.

"An independent regulatory commission has today ordered that Thomas Tuchel be fined £35,000 and banned from the touchline for one match, and Antonio Conte be fined £15,000 after they respectively breached FA Rule E3," an FA statement read.

"Thomas Tuchel and Antonio Conte admitted that their behaviour after the final whistle of the Premier League game between Chelsea FC and Tottenham Hotspur FC on Sunday, August 14, 2022, was improper, and both managers requested a paper hearing.

Man Utd Agree £70m Deal to Sign Casemiro

Manchester United have reached an agreement with Real Madrid to sign Brazil midfielder Casemiro in a deal worth up to £70m.

The 30-year-old has been with Real since 2013, winning three La Liga titles and five Champions Leagues.

The fee is an initial £60m plus £10m in add-ons and Casemiro will sign a four-year deal with the option of one more.

United are bottom of the Premier League and host Liverpool at Old Trafford on Monday.

Casemiro is set to become one of the United's top earners once he completes his move, and will be United's fourth signing after midfielder Christian Eriksen, full-back Tyrell Malacia from Feyenoord and defender Lisandro Martinez.

After talks to sign Juventus' Adrien Rabiot collapsed over the player's demands, United have turned their attention to Casemiro as they look to address weaknesses in Erik ten Hag's midfield.

This deal almost certainly spells the end of Manchester United's pursuit of Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong.

Whilst the club are not completely ruling out signing the Dutchman at some point in the future, they admit it is highly unlikely they would get De Jong and Casemiro in the same window.

Lagos Agog for GOtv Boxing Night 26

After fans in Ibadan witnessed the last edition of the GOtv Boxing, the competition returns to Lagos and the country's economic capital is already agog as fans look forward to witness another boxing showpiece billed for the Molade Okoya-Thomas Indoor Sports Hall of Teslim Balogun Stadium, Surulere, today.

Top on the card is the international featherweight challenge bout between London-based Taye "Esepor" Agbaje against Ghana's Emmanuel "Agogo" Mensah.

Agbaje has indeed declared his excitement ahead of the fight and says he is in a killer mood as he gets ready to fight in Nigeria for the first time in three years.

The boxer, who has had fights in Bolton and Liverpool, said since his recent return to Nigeria, his fans have clamoured that he fights on GOtv Boxing Night bill.

"I can tell you that I'm happy to have this opportunity to fight at GOtv Boxing Night. I'm really excited and in a killer mood. I do not care who Emmanuel Mensah is. I will be victorious, and my victory will be a reward for my fans, who have expressed desire to see me at GOtv Boxing Night. GOtv has been good to boxers. I urge my fans to come to the venue of the show," he said.

Esepor also said he is out to win the N1million attached to the Mojisola Ogunsanya Memorial Trophy again. If he does, he will not be the only one cash prize winner on the night, as the organisers have introduced a N500,000 prize for the runner-up to the best boxer.

GOtv Boxing Night 26 will also see the return of two famous names, Abolaji Rasheed, former WABU middleweight champion, and policeman Prince Nwoye who, respectively, will fight "Tanko" Suleiman and Funsho Moshood in the super welterweight and lightweight bouts.

The lightweight division will also see Samuel Adebayo face Bartholomew Abuchi, while Ayobami Azeez will take on Sodiq Oyakojo.

Stephen best boxer at the last edition, will take on Muritador Monyashau in a cruiserweight bout.

In the light welterweight category, Kabiru "KB Sniper" Salawu will try Yusuf Ogunbunmi for size, while the super bantamweight division has a pairing of Tosin "Soja Boy" Osaigbovo and Tajudeen Amusa. The show will be broadcast live on Supersport in 50 African countries.

Meanwhile, fans at the venue of the GOtv Boxing Night 26 stand the chance of going home with GOtv decoders.

The decoders which will come with a one-month subscription, provided by sponsors of the event, GOtv Nigeria, will be won via lucky dips to be held between bouts. This was disclosed in a statement issued by the show organisers, Flykite Productions.

According to the organisers, the decoders are the sponsors' gesture of appreciation for the support the boxing fans have given the event since it debuted in November 2014.

"GOtv Boxing Night is the biggest ever intervention in the sport domestically and it has yielded results, providing boxers with a regular outlet for their skills, exposure to foreign boxing audiences, including promoters, and avenue for development.

"These results would have been impossible without the support of the fans, who troop out to cheer boxers and provide atmosphere at the various venues," the statement said.

NFF Electoral Committee Indicates Readiness for Task Ahead

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

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

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

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

Chelsea vs Leeds, Madrid vs Celta Vigo Live on DStv, GOtv

Chelsea will visit Elland Road to take on Leeds United for Matchday 3 of the 2022/23 English Premier League season.

Both teams will be hoping to bounce back from the disappointment of the previous week, after they settled for one point each against Tottenham and Southampton respectively.

The tie is on SuperSport Premier League (DStv channel 203) and Go Football (GOtv channel 31) at 2:00pm on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Patrick Viera's Crystal Palace will test their strength against Steven Gerrard's Aston Villa at the Selhurst Park, the match goes live on Saturday at 3:00pm on SuperSport Variety (DStv channel 207) and Go Football (GOtv channel 31).

In the La Liga, reigning champions Real Madrid will pay a visit to Celta Vigo for their second game of the campaign. The tie will be showing on SS LaLiga Channel (DStv Channel 204 and GOtv Channel 32) today at 9:00pm.

Barcelona will take on Real Sociedad showing in SS LaLiga Channel (DStv Channel 204 and GOtv Channel 32) on Sunday at 9:00pm

To enjoy the new football season, customers can download the MyDStv and GOtv apps to subscribe or upgrade or set up Auto-Renewal to stay connected without interruptions. Customers can also dial *288# to recharge.



Destiny Udogie signs a five-year deal with Tottenham

Destiny Udogie
Premier League Dream on Hold

Tottenham Hotspur on Monday unveiled Destiny Udogie as their seventh signing of the season and the Lilywhites new buy says it's a dream come true to play in the Premier League as he has always craved to play in the English top flight. That dream is however on hold as Italian-Nigerian has been loaned back to Serie A side, Udinese and his performance this season would determine if he would join Antonio Conte's side next season to fulfil his Premier League dream

Destiny Udogie was unveiled by Spurs after putting pen to paper on a five-year contract that will see him stay at Tottenham until the summer of 2027, in a deal understood would cost around £15m, with a potential extra £3m in add-ons.

Udogie was at Hotspur Way on Monday to undergo a medical and finalise the deal before heading back to Udinese for training on Tuesday. He has since returned to England for the official unveiling.

"We are delighted to announce the permanent signing of Destiny Udogie from Udinese," Spurs posted on their social media account. However, the young defender is expected to spend the rest of the 2022/2023 season back at Udinese on loan.

Meanwhile, the 19-year-old spoke to the Tottenham media in his first official interview with the Premier League side following his move.

Speaking on the move, Udogie said it is a dream come true to move to the most difficult and competitive league in the world.

"It's a big honour for me to be here in this big team, this big club with big history," the 19-year-old told the club.

"The Premier League is the biggest in the world, the most difficult and I like challenges, difficult challenges. So, I am excited to start and for me, playing for Tottenham, as well, I think it's a big dream come true."

"It's an honour to play under a big coach like Antonio Conte," he added. "I think he knows football very well and I am going to grow a lot with him."

Speaking on his style of play, Udogie, who played 35 matches last season for Udinese in the Serie A, scoring five goals, says he loves to attack and dribble but can defend, too.

"I like to be close to the action in the second post. So, I try to enter on the opposite side as much as I can. I can attack and defend. I like to show my quality, attack, one on one, to go against my opponent and dribble."

"It is a big honour for me to be here in this big team, a big club with a big history," he said. "I always knew football was inside me. It was always my dream since a child. I started when I was four years old. I lived in Verona – 20 minutes from the centre.

Udogie joins Ivan Perisic, Fraser Forster, Richarlison, Yves Bissouma, Clement Lenglet and Djed Spence in signing for Spurs this summer.

"I'm very happy," he told TuttoMercatoWeb. "It's a good feeling to go to the Premier League, work with Conte, and sign with Tottenham.

"I am convinced that with Mr. Conte I will be able to grow further. For now, however, it is also important to return on loan to Udinese, I want to have a good season."

Udogie began his career at Hellas Verona, coming through the youth ranks at the club and breaking into the first team. He made his debut in November 2020 and then moved on loan to Udinese in 2021.

The Serie A side made Udogie's temporary deal permanent in 2022 and he became a regular in the team at the Dacia Arena, helping the team finish in 12th place in the table last season.

On his style of play, he explained: "I love to attack, I love to attack. I have a very good physique, so I attack with my physique," he explained. "Also, with my feet I like to dribble, skill and some pace. I think these are my best qualities."

Despite strong links with the Nigerian senior football team-Super Eagles, 19-year-old Udinese defender, Destiny Udogie has always reiterated his desire to play for the Azzurris, most especially after playing for Italy at all age-grade competitions.

Udogie was born in Italy to Nigerian parents and even though he has represented the European country at youth level, he is still eligible to play for the Super Eagles.

He has always expressed his desire to represent Italy at senior level and is determined to keep working hard in order to achieve his objective in spite of not having been called up.

"I will do everything to make myself appreciated by the coach, it is a goal that I particularly care about," the youngster told Tuttomercatoweb.

The 19-year-old wing-back is looking to settle his international and club future after he was recently snubbed by the Italian national team coach, Roberto Mancini despite his brilliant season.

Udogie has been a part of the Italian youth system from the U-16 to the U-21, giving the European nation a significant advantage over his allegiance.

But the versatile young defender remains eligible to represent three-time African champions, Nigeria, through his parents.

The young defender, however, makes it clear that he shares a relationship with his Nigerian father and still listens to his instructions, which are helping his development.

"My father always tells me to stay calm, to enjoy the moment, to play carefree and not to freak out because I'm still young," he said.

"I try to follow these tips. I try to enjoy Serie A and the moment because I'm still young."

It however remains to be seen if senior Udogie's tips would prove enough to improve Destiny to meet the cutoff at Spurs and eventually achieve his dream of playing in the Premier League.

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Chummies

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Hey Chummies!!!

How are you?

I hope you had a good week!

We have a lot in store for you on today's page!

Have a great weekend, continue to read and be good to your parents!



Do you want to attend THE WRITING ACADEMY - LAGOS this August ?

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Thank you!

Do you want to come to the United Nations in New York in March 2023?

Then, ask mum or dad nicely to reach me so you can join us on a trip to New York to attend the 49th edition of the NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE in March 2023.

To register, you have to be between 13 and 16 and you must be in high school.

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Some delegates in front of the United Nations building when we attended the NHSMUN 2020 Conference

Chummies On the Run

Story-telling, telling stories

Chummies on the run is now podcast on APPLE, GOOGLE, SPOTIFY!
It's free! Ask mum or dad to download and you can listen to me tell African stories!!





DID YOU KNOW

A snail can sleep for 3 years?

Nairawise Chummies

Don't spend it all. Slot it in!

Dear Pab,
Do you know that you too can be an inventor? There is still a lot to invent. Like I wish that someone could invent a gadget that could sense mosquitoes as they come near and just slap them dead! Well, I guess that first of all we need to look at inventing some machine that could sweep dirty gutters without supervision! Seriously, you need to start taking things seriously and making a mark.
Do take care.
Aunty Maero
08053069365



PENNYWISE MAN

I love potato chips. Do you? I read about the man who created potato chips and it is a fascinating story. His name is George Crum he invented it in 1853.

In the summer of 1853, Native American George Crum was employed as a chef at an elegant resort in Saratoga Springs, New York. One dinner guest found Crum's French fries too thick for his liking and rejected the order.

Crum decided to annoy the guest by making the fries too thin and crisp to skewer with a fork. But, Yummy! The plan failed! The guest was so happy over the browned, paper-thin potatoes, and other diners began requesting Crum's potato chips. I can hear them thank George! I wonder if he was happy.

Small Business idea!!

You may ask mum or dad nicely to buy you special ink from an art shop. The ink is ink that you may use on glass. Try painting messages on glass, mugs or plates. It won't come off and you could make some good bucks! Remember that you must as mum or dad before you do anything or sell anything. If they do not want you to start yet, you have to wait!

THE 11 YEAR OLD INVENTOR -Frank Epperson!!

One day in 1905, Frank Epperson mixed some soda water powder and water and left the mixture on the back porch overnight with the stirring stick still in it. The temperature dropped to a record low that night and the next day Frank had a stick of frozen soda water to show his friends at school. Later he began a business producing Epsicles in seven fruit flavors. The name was later changed to the Popsicle.

Eighteen years later-in 1923- Frank Epperson remembered his frozen soda water mixture and began a business producing Epsicles in seven fruit flavors. The name was later changed to the Popsicle. Popsicle Industries say the general flavor favorite through the years has remained "taste-tingling orange".

AUTO WORLD

Bennett Oghifo
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The new Mercedes-Benz EQE SUV

New Mercedes-Benz EQE SUV Interior

The EQE SUV is the multi-purpose variant of the EQE executive saloon, available just like this latter model with the key innovations of the EQS yet at the same time more dynamic than the EQS SUV. In terms of headroom and legroom, as well as elbow room, the five-seater EQE SUV is one of the most spacious representatives of its class. The EQE SUV celebrates its world premiere on 16 October 2022.

The EQE SUV is based on the large electric platform from Mercedes-EQ. On top of this it boasts an interior that has been consistently digitalised. The optionally available MBUX Hyperscreen implements this to impressive effect. The entire instrument panel is one ultimate widescreen.

The high-resolution screens merge seemingly seamlessly under a single glass cover.

The dominant outer vents have a turbine design. They deliberately play on the theme of hyperanalogue through the contrast between high-tech precision mechanics and digital, glass display world.

The front section of the centre console joins the instrument panel and is free-standing in space. The vent band from the cockpit is visually continued in the front doors. A floating control cluster with integrated door opener and seat controls takes over the functional interpretation of formerly purely decorative elements.

Avantgarde as well as traditional materials and colours give the interior a special atmosphere. Five co-ordinated colour combinations underscore the generous sense of spaciousness. The EQE SUV is immersed in a progressive and luxurious world of colour comprising warm and cool tones (e.g. the warm, modern balao brown combines with technoid-looking neva grey and biscay blue/black).

A hybrid trim element brings together the warmth of wood with the technical coolness of real aluminium.

The trim in an anthracite 3D relief-look finish, on the other hand, features fine metal pigments. The laser-cut trim element backlit with the Mercedes-Benz pattern also creates a special ambience.

TIPS OF THE WEEK

How to Brighten Your Car's Yellowing Headlights

Are you having trouble seeing your headlights on a dark road? That yellowing on your headlights is Plastic/Polycarbonate oxidation. Start with Step 1 for two different methods to bring new life back into your old headlights.

Make a trip to your local auto parts store and pick up a headlight lens restorer.

Start off by washing the headlights and drying them. This should be done in the shade.

Apply the restorer in a small amount to a cotton towel and work it in deep small circles in a small area of your lens.

It should dry as you keep working it in.

repeat the process in the same spot and as it is dry, use a clean spot of the towel to buff away all remaining compound.

Now that you like the results, repeat the process to the entire headlight, keeping your working area small.

If you were not happy with the result, you have to move on to method 2.

Get what you will need. Method 2 requires wet/dry sandpaper (800grit & 1500grit), a spray bottle filled with clean water, dry cotton towels, and a clear coat spray paint that offers UV protection.

Wash your headlights. Once clean, spray a mist of water on the 800 grit paper and start working in a light/soft slow circle motion on one headlight. *keep the paper wet at all times and spray the lens to clear off the mess.

Repeat the process on the same lens with the 1500 grit paper. Wash the lens off and let it dry. It will look even worse than before. Once its fully dry, spray it in an even light coat of the clear spray paint following the instructions on the can. Remember to cover your car's paint and all areas that may get paint overspray on them. Once the clear is dry, you can compare your brighter lens to your old one. Everyone says to just repeat the process on the other lens, but this is your chance to compare and decide if you want to replace or restore. It also gives you the bragging rights and ability to show loved ones the difference and what you can do.

(Source: Wiki How)

MINI Concept Aceman: First All-electric Crossover Model

MINI presents a study previewing a new vehicle concept for the premium small car segment: purely electrically driven, chrome- and leather-free and with an entirely new design. And on top of all that, new digital features to enhance your experience.

The new MINI family is taking shape. The British brand presents the MINI Concept Aceman, an initial preview of its future model generation's new design. In this concept car we can see design-based and technological innovations from MINI that outline the brand-typical driving pleasure of the future. The first MINI crossover model for the premium small cars segment is striking, with purely electric drive, a clear and pared-back design language that has been dubbed "Charismatic Simplicity", a new digital interior space experience and a material concept which uses absolutely no leather or chrome.

In the next model generation the MINI Cooper in the iconic three-door body shape, which has been reinterpreted time and again over its entire 60-plus-year history, will be joined by a crossover model for the first time. "The MINI Concept Aceman provides an initial glimpse of a completely new vehicle, bridging the space between the MINI Cooper and the MINI Countryman in the model family's future," says Stefanie Wurst, Head of the MINI Brand. "This concept car reflects how MINI is reinventing itself for its all-electric future and what the brand stands for: an electrified go-kart feel, an immersive digital experience and a strong focus on a minimal environmental footprint."



The MINI Concept Aceman

The beginning of a new MINI design era.

"The design language of the MINI Concept Aceman heralds the beginning of a new design era for MINI," explains Adrian van Hooydonk, Head of BMW Group Design. Design features typical of the MINI brand have always been unmistakable, Hooydonk goes on to say. "We are returning to these now, but at the same time consistently combining them innovative technology." With this approach we are redeveloping the MINI design icons, with all their analogue strengths, for the digital future.

Along with the clear and reduced exterior and interior design, the holistic user experience of light, movement, interaction and sound also combine to define this style. Surfaces constructed from knitted recycled textile with fresh colour contrasts combine with seamless digital controls with a new OLED display as the central interface.

This all creates a unique interior experience that remains unmistakably MINI. The all-electric models of the next generation are also given an independent sound design for the first time, providing emotionally compelling drive sounds and an authentic background for the new Experience Modes.

Creative use of space reinterpreted.

Everything about the appearance of MINI Concept Aceman expresses agility and a self-confident presence. This merges distinctive features of the brand's two most successful models, the MINI Cooper and the MINI Countryman, to create a modern interpretation of a crossover model.

"The purely electric vehicle concept means the design can again be geared more towards MINI's traditional basic values, in terms of the principle of using space creatively," says Oliver Heilmer, Head of MINI Design. "This creates models that take up little space on the road while offering even more comfort, more versatility and more emotion on the inside than ever before."

A functional two-box design with short overhangs creates the maximum of space for occupants and luggage on a minimal surface area. The MINI Concept Aceman has four doors and a large boot lid with interior seating for five.

It also has the proportions you would expect of the brand with an exterior length of 4.05 metres, a width of 1.99 metres and a height of 1.59 metres, all in a particularly contemporary form. The classic three-way division of body, all-round window graphics and roof is reinterpreted. A flush transition between the vehicle body and glass surfaces makes the most of the aerodynamic properties.

AUTO WORLD

2022 Toyota Tundra i-FORCE MAX, New Breed of Hybrid

An electrified pickup truck once seemed like an anomaly. But when Toyota set out to design the 2022 Tundra i-FORCE MAX — the brand's all-new powerful hybrid-electric pickup — it knew that challenging expectations would be the only road to success.

Winning consumers over on hybrids has never been an easy feat. Toyota knows this firsthand because the automaker accepted the challenge years ago.

The Birth of Hybrid Vehicles

A little over two decades ago, Toyota released the first mass-produced hybrid vehicle. The Prius ("before" in Latin) introduced people across the globe to a car that could function the same as the standard compacts they were used to – but with the added benefits of improved fuel economy ratings and lower emissions. But even as the Prius became popular, few could have predicted how popular these vehicles would become just 20 years later.

Jay Sackett, executive program manager in product development at Toyota Motor North America (Toyota), helps illustrate the role engineers have played: "We are now offering our fifth generation Toyota Hybrid System (THS). Each generation has built off that first Prius."

For years, hybrid vehicles were primarily confined to small-car segments. The common thinking was that hybrids were an easy way to help save money on gas and reduce your carbon footprint – they were not known to be able to match the power and speed of a full combustion engine. So, as a collective understanding that carbon emission impacts climate change, the decision by Toyota to electrify its vehicle fleet became less of an "if" and more of a "when." That left individuals, families and businesses that rely on full-size vehicles, like minivans and pickup trucks, wondering if electrification would catch up to their mobility needs. Toyota, always innovating to meet customer needs, saw this as an opportunity. The company now offers an electrified option in every category (sedan, minivan, SUV and truck).



The 2022 Toyota Tundra i-FORCE MAX

BMW Begins Concept Testing for All-electric High-performance Models



BMW All-electric

First test drives with a prototype for innovative drive and chassis control systems commence. Four electric motors and an integrated driving dynamics control system enable an extremely emotional driving experience in future high-performance sports cars.

BMW M GmbH is opening the next chapter in its transformation towards electric mobility. With the first test drives of a so-called concept test vehicle for innovative drive and chassis control systems, a multidisciplinary team of developers is now putting to test the hardware and software solutions designed for future fully electric high-performance cars. The concept testing focuses on a four-wheel drive system comprising four electric motors and an integrated driving dynamics control system, which together provide an unprecedented level of performance and experience.

With the completely new drive concept, BMW M GmbH is underscoring its development expertise and, therefore, also its ability to transfer the essence of the letter M into the world of locally emission-free mobility. The purely electric drive system is combined with innovative control systems to redefine the combination of dynamics, agility and precision that is characteristic of BMW M automobiles in a high-performance sports car.

Fifty years of BMW M GmbH: The future begins in the anniversary year.

Exactly 50 years after its foundation, BMW M GmbH is in the midst of a transformation process towards electric mobility, which not only preserves the unmistakable performance characteristics of its models, but at the same time enriches them with new facets. The anniversary year has already seen the market launch of the all-electric BMW i4 M50 performance car (combined power consumption: 22.5 – 18.0 kWh / 100 km according to WLTP; CO_2 emissions: 0 g / km; data according to NEDC: –) and the BMW iX M60 (combined power consumption: 24.5 – 21.9 kWh / 100 km according to WLTP; CO_2 emissions: 0 g / km; data according to NEDC: –). And the BMW i7 M70, the first BMW M automobile based on an all-electric luxury sedan, is to follow as early as next year.

"On our anniversary, we are not only looking back, but above all also looking forward," says Franciscus van Meel, Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW M GmbH.

Time to Review Seat Belt Usage and Penalty (2)



SAFE DRIVING

with

Jonas Agwu

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

Kayode Olagunju is my senior colleague. He was the Sector Commander in 2003. As Sector Commander, Lagos, he bore a bigger chunk of the burden of ensuring the success of the seat belt campaign. Lagos, then and now account for over 30 per cent of vehicular volume in the country. These I mentioned last week.

I am therefore compelled to express my gratitude to him for his role before and during the takeoff. I am also grateful that after reading last week's piece, he gave me a thumb's up. How I wish, he followed his commendation with at least a dollar to bruise my ego.

Besides his thumb's up, he took me down the memory lane by sharing his experience as Sector Commander, Lagos as stated in last week's publication. He also embellished my memory with two editorials which I hope to share with you as I strive to raise the discourse on the need for a post mortem on the level of compliance.

I pray that this effort will drive the dire need to build on what we have achieved collectively as a nation instead of dropping the ball midway. I do hope you enjoy his personal experience and the follow up editorials before I continue with my viewpoint on the need to speed up the process by commencing enforcement on rear seat passengers.

Let me now share his testimony; 'I remember the commencement of the enforcement at exactly 12:01 am on January 1, 2003. The Corps was afraid of the backlash and I remember we were asked to postpone the enforcement. We tactically ignored the directive in Lagos and started arresting those returning from crossover church services. We were even labelled mean and ungodly, piling pressure on people on the New Year day. That was seen as wickedness- by 7am all our offices were filled with impounded vehicles and the media stormed my office.

Kayode went further to state that the media concern and massive coverage assisted in raising awareness that we were serious. The news was everywhere. And like you said, since the motorists needed not to buy anything but just to strap, the level of compliance was huge. I remember Oye dashing me 50k, a huge sum then as he was shocked with the level of enforcement.

He summed up by noting that, "If it had backfired, we would have been punished too. I remember discussing with you that before the directive postponing the enforcement formally got to us, we would have commenced the enforcement. We both believed there was no need to postpone the enforcement again after the initial 6month extension. That was why we started by midnight of 31 Dec 2002 to "ambush" motorists coming from church and also preempted the postponement circular.

Prior to this time as testified by him, the media was awash with the campaign deadline which raised safety consciousness among the motoring public as a plank to ensuring its successes. Kayode was again helpful in providing two newsy materials from the News Agency of Nigeria of Dec 30, 2002 and an editorial by Vanguard of 13 January 2003. The Vanguard editorial was captioned: MOTORISTS AND SEAT BELT USE ORDER and it read; "Nigerian motorists on January 1, 2003 woke up to the reality of Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), order on the compulsory use of seat belt by drivers and front passengers plying our roads.

This order was consequent upon a five-month media enlightenment campaign embarked upon by the FRSC on the benefit inherent in the use of seat belts. The seriousness exhibited by the FRSC and the Police Force personnel in the enforcement of the order have led to the rush for seat belt purchase in the market by those whose cars lack this life saving facility.

This was followed by one from the News Agency of Nigeria with the caption… MANDATORY SEAT BELT USE-"the use of seat-belts by motorists will be enforced unfailingly from January 1, 2003, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has reiterated.

"We are not going back on it. As from January 1, it will become an offence for any driver not to use his seat-belt while driving," Mr kayode Olagunju, Lagos State Sector commander of the FRSC, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the weekend in Lagos. Strangely.

Like I stated, the media support was instrumental to the success recorded. Years later when we attempted rear seat passenger enforcement, Thisday in 2016 published a beautiful and interesting piece captioned: FRSC and the Rear Seat Belt Enforcement…The Federal Road Safety Commission Establishment Act 2007, part 2, section 10 (4) (ee) mandates members of the Corps to arrest and prosecute persons reasonably suspected of having committed any traffic offence including driving a vehicle not fitted with seat belt or where fitted, not wearing same while the vehicle is in motion. The National Road Transport Regulation 2012, part XII 126(1) stipulates that every vehicle shall have fitted in the front and REAR SEAT, seat belt and child safety seat which shall be securely won by the driver and the other occupants of the vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.

Is Nigeria running ahead of others? Are we leaving substance to pursue shadows? I do not think so. Is the United Kingdom not enforcing back occupant seat belts? And how has this affected crash fatalities? A study shows that while drivers and front passengers fatalities fell by 21% and 28% respectively, fatalities for non-seatbelt wearing rear passengers rose by 16%. Countries all over the world are looking for ways to entrench safety in all facets of community living, and traffic safety happens to be one that every country is given optimum attention to. Data gathering all over the world attest to this. In the United Kingdom, out of the 1,432 car occupants killed in 2007, 34% had not belted up. An estimated 565 people were not using their seat belts when killed in 2005. 370 would have probably survived if they had been properly restrained in Canada, the insignificant 7% of people not wearing seat belt account for almost 40% of fatalities in crashes."

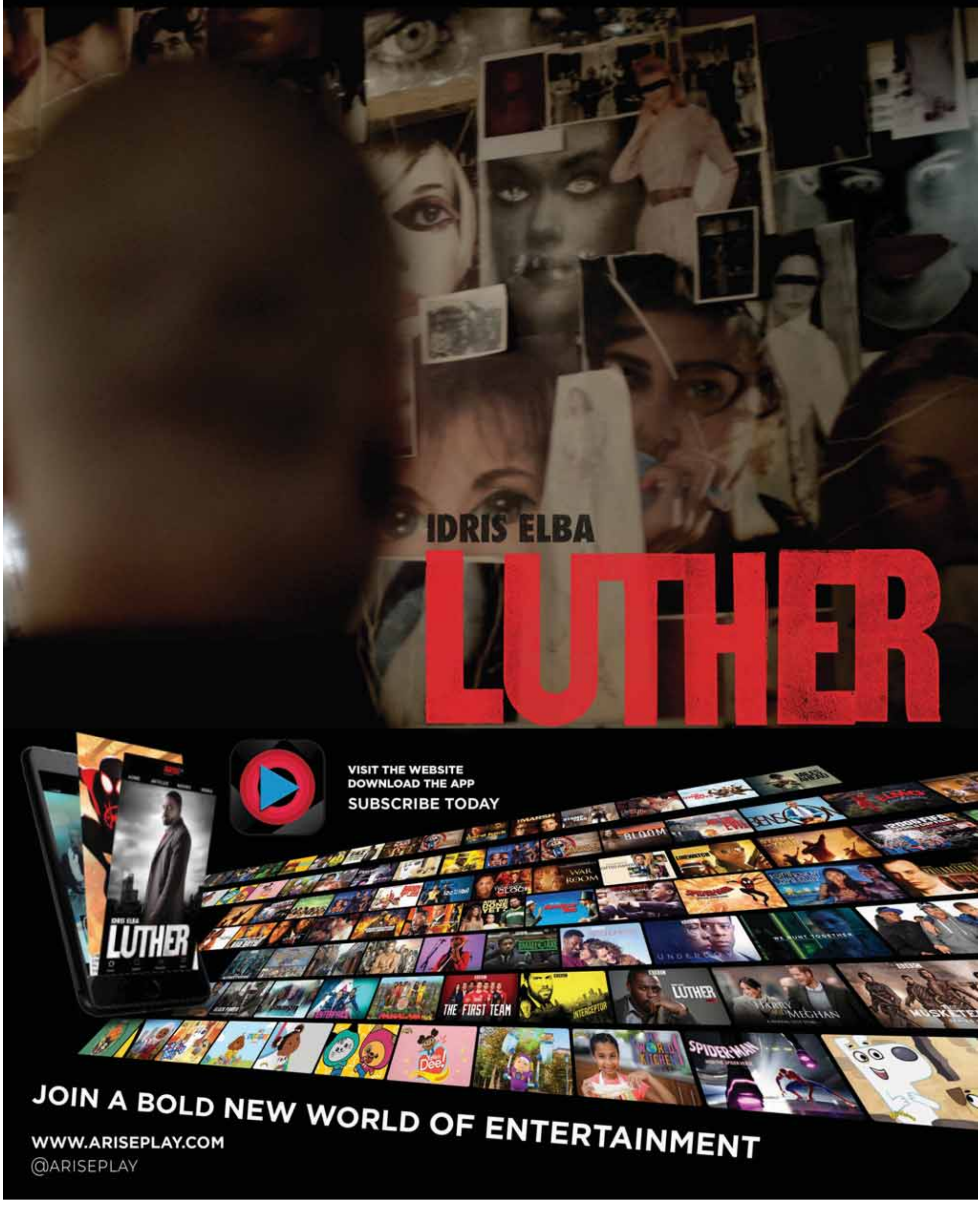
Since we commenced the enforcement, as well as in 2014 when I was privileged to again issue a statement on a proposed enforcement of rear seat belt, the reactions have always been witty and sometimes lamentable. In fact, a few days after the 2014 announcement, I received calls, text messages, tweets and other sundry contacts on the issue ranging from outright condemnation, passive inquiry, passionate outcry and a few commendations on the issue. Just like it was when we started, the reaction in 2014 was the same; mixed feelings with most of these based on pure ignorance.

Here are some of the reactions; Yahaya Usman says, "I would rather sell my car than to go for seat belt construction. Sir make una fear God oh and know the kind of policy you are giving us! He continued, "if you want to save lives, you know where to go. But if you want to inflict pain on us it is not a new thing. We are used to many pains! Tall (Tallyjena007) said FRSC did not finish with number plate (sic) issue, now is back with seat belt, they should think before making this policies while Akin Raphael Akinsipe maintained that the intention is money making, noting that having lived in the UK for over ten years, he knows that wearing seat belt for back seat passenger is only compulsory for a child less than seven years.

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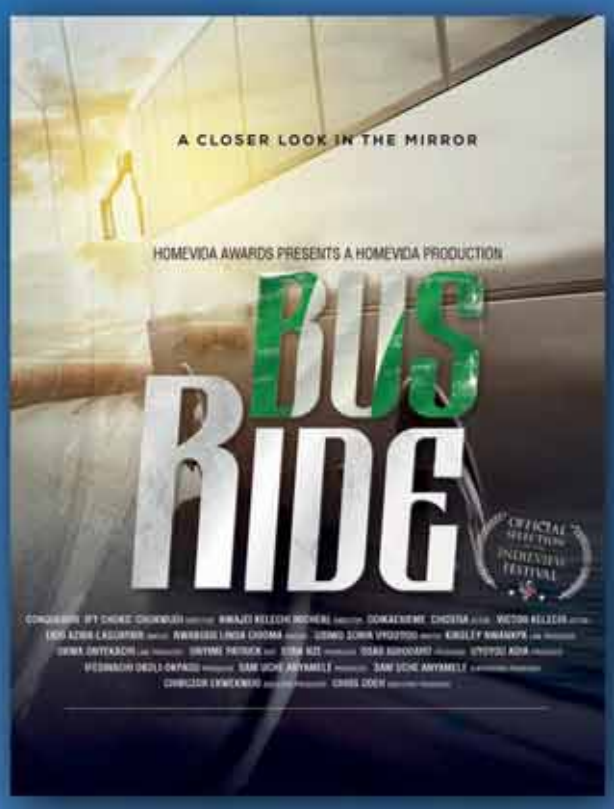
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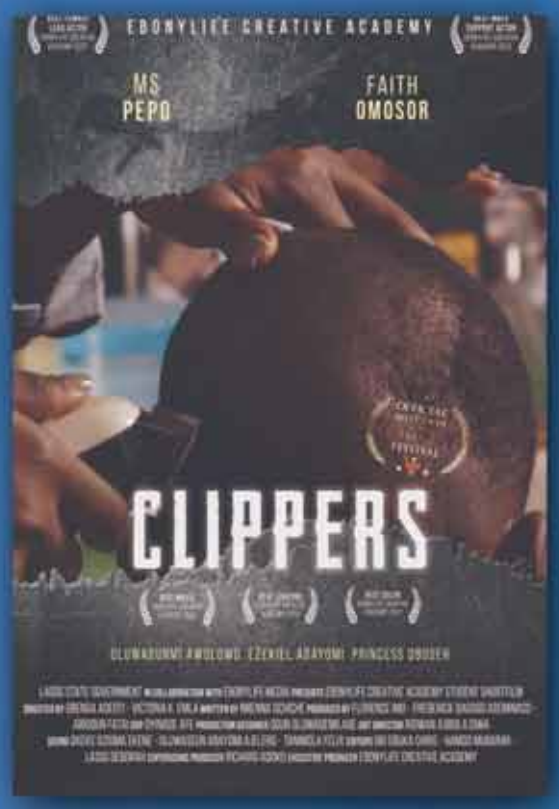
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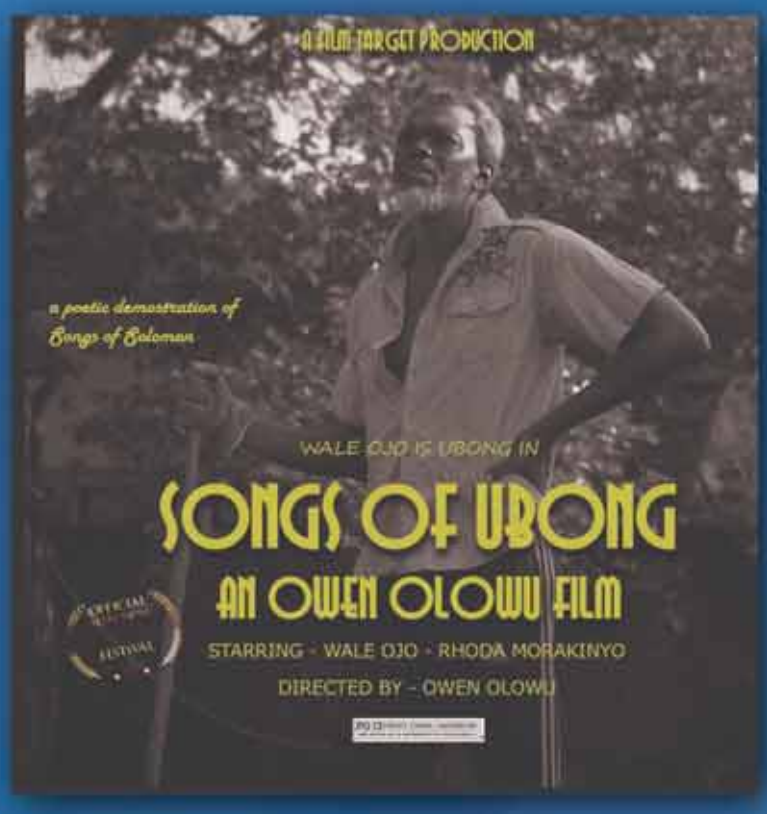
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IDRIS ELBA
LUTHER













15 TO 21 AUGUST 2022: CRIMINAL MINDS

This week's episodes of the five-season British psychological crime thriller television series Luther challenge the audience with a question: "Are you on the Devil's side without even knowing it?" Despite his success as a very good detective, John Luther has troubled personal life and strong attraction to ruthless murderer Alice. During their relationship, they become both nemesis and ally.

LUTHER – BBC SERIES

Neil Cross wrote the 2010 British crime thriller television series Luther starring Idris Elba as DCI John Luther. Since series one, the show and Elba's performance have been consistently positive. "Luther is a gripping drama anchored by Idris Elba's powerful performance". Idris Elba is an English actor and DJ. He was signed by Luther in 2009. His role as detective Luther was a career highlight. The brilliant, flawed detective won a Golden Globe in 2012. His looks and powerful presence made him a star. Moreover, Idris Elba is just as determined as his TV detective character. Seeing a film version of the popular cop show would be an important step towards racial inclusion on television and in movies, according to the star. He is encouraging more black, Asian, and minority ethnic actors to succeed. Idris addressed diversity and stereotyping in 2016 in Parliament. Oscar-winning black director Steve McQueen named Luther one of the few shows with positive diversity.

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MARKET PLACE

with Omolabake Fasogbon... 08155131874

Foodco Expands Reach, Open 16th Outlet in Ikoyi

Foremost indigenous omnichannel retail platform, FoodCo has expanded its footprint in the Nigeria burgeoning retail business with its 16th outlet opened in Ikoyi, Lagos.

The Ikoyi outlet is coming just months after the organisation extended its operations to Abeokuta, the Ogun state capital, and gradually spreading its tentacles to reach consumers across Nigeria.

The 16th store located at the newly completed Ikoyi Plaza, would make shopping easily accessible to shoppers in the vicinity, and also guarantees an exciting and convenient shopping for customers.

Speaking at the launch, Managing Director of FoodCo Nigeria, Ade Sun-Basorun stated that the new store was a fulfillment of the brand's commitment towards bringing the lifestyle advantages of modern retail closer to the people.

He said: "This milestone is the continuation of a journey that began 40 years ago when our first store opened its doors to customers from a cornershop in Bodija, Ibadan. Till date, we can proudly say that the brand has successfully maintained its promise of delivering top quality at an affordable price, which has been one of the strong pillars of our growth.

"When we opened our first store, our motivation was to offer middle-class families a clean and convenient environment where they could shop for fresh fruits and vegetables. This motivation has since crystallized into an enduring mission to bring convenience and superior customer service that modern retail offers to our communities."

He added that the Ikoyi store would house the organisation's flagship supermarket, bakery, butchery, restaurant, grill and creamery under one roof.

He said, "It will stock a rich assortment of products including groceries, fresh and packaged foods, fruits and vegetables, toiletries, cosmetics, apparel and other household products.

"Customers are also guaranteed the choicest cut meats handled under strict quality assurance conditions. Our loyals who also prefer to shop from the comfort of their homes or offices can do so via any of our digital media channels or WhatsApp, while our dedicated FoodCo Delivery Service ensures that their items are dropped off right where they want it."

Foodco's Area Sales Manager, Ayodele Adio reiterated that the new store still retains the distinct attributes of the brand at ensuring value proposition to clients, offering best price as well as variety of products on a spot.



L-R: Deputy Director, Brand Management, X3M Ideas, Vivian Obiano; Group CEO, X3M Ideas, Steve Babaeko; Senior Brand Manager, X3M Ideas, Oluwadamilola Audu and General Manager, X3M Ideas Southern Africa, Adenike Odutola at the X Party in celebration of X3M Ideas' 10th anniversary in Lagos...recently



L-R: Managing Director, Synced Integrated Services Limited, Mr. Donald George; Managing Director, Jagun Associates and 1st Fellow of International Facility Management Association (IFMA) in Africa, Mr. Stephen Jagun; President, Nigeria Chapter, IFMA, Segun Adebayo; Executive Secretary, Lagos State Technical and Vocational Education Board (LASTVEB), Ms. Moronke Azeez; and Managing Director, Alphamead facilities Limited, Wole Olufore, at the maiden edition of employment engagement with the graduating students of Government Technical Schools in Lagos State and IFMA Nigeria Chapter in Lagos... recently

Tourism Firm Commended for Adopting Best Practices

Delta based tourism outfit, Park Vega Waterpark has been commended for adhering to best practices in line with global industry requirements.

Park Vega Waterpark is an indigenous privately-owned waterpark endorsed by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) and World Waterparks Association (WWA).

The state government, through its Smart Delta Media team gave the commendation while on facility tour of the tourist centre.

The team is assigned to investigate and perform checks on the state's tourism sites such as resorts and amusement parks, as well as showcase the state's tourism strength and creativity to visitors.

The government team was led by the firm's supervisor, Anthony Ogadi, who took them round the facility for assessment.

On completion of the assessment tour, the team sampled the opinion of guests and customers to have hands on feedback on their experience with the site.

When approached, one of the customers on ground for relaxation, Lucy Okemem asserted that the organisation has lived up to its claims.

"Their offering is a boost to Nigeria tourism profile. I am so glad we have something like this in Nigeria, especially in Delta, which is the tourism capital of Nigeria. No doubt, the facility here can compete with counterparts across the globe."

In her rating, one of the guests who was spotted at the Swim-up bar, Whitney Okefielem described the facility as refreshing, adding that there are rooms for improvement.

"It's a place you can cool off your head after work or home stress. You can sure you will soon forget your challenges and get more focused so solve them. I urge tourist enthusiasts visiting Delta state to visit the site for a lifetime experience. Their facility is top notched, the environment is friendly and the services are homely," she said.

At the end of the exercise, Ogadi expressed appreciation to the team, noting that efforts will be intensified to improve customers experience while also sustaining the brand's record.

LEAP Africa, Dow Partner to Drive Youth Engagement

Indigenous Youth Development organisation, LEAP Africa has restated its commitment to youth development through its Pan African 'Youth Day of Service (YDoS)' campaign.

The third edition of the campaign is in partnership with Dow, to commemorate International Youth Day. Dow is coming in as headline partner for the programme.

The YDoS campaign is a youth-led social impact campaign with the theme – 'Youthful and Useful'.

According to the organisation, The Youth Day of Service is a week-long event that seeks to foster the spirit of service to the community and volunteerism among the African youth population, with a focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while inspiring them to be active social change agents.

Speaking on the campaign, Executive Director of LEAP Africa, Femi Taiwo stated that programme is geared towards building transformative leaders in the country.

He said, "We are committed to supporting and nurturing the agency of young people across the continent with skills and tools to enable them to become transformative leaders in their sphere of influence.

"The YDoS provides an enormous opportunity to engage the hands and hearts of individuals, the third sector, and public and private stakeholders to actualise the SDGs. Our partnership with Dow in this year's edition will support our vision to sustain our wide reach on the continent."

Speaking further, Managing Director of Dow Northern & Western Africa, Sami Mainich said, "Dow has always envisioned a better world built on human creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. Over 25 years ago, we embarked on a sustainability journey initially focused on improving our operational footprint. Now, we are expanding our scope by applying blueprint thinking which drives us to collaborate to change entire systems to achieve transformative change.

First E&P Loads out Oilfield Platform to Boost Crude oil Production

FIRST Exploration and Petroleum Development Company Limited (FIRST E&P) has announced the completion of Madu Conductor Supported Platform (CSP), an oilfield platform that would boost crude oil production in the country.

Managing Director of FIRST E&P, Ademola Adeyemi-Bero stated that the new platform would increase crude oil production by 20,000 barrels of oil per day (BOPD) to Nigeria offshore production.

Adeyemi-Bero who was speaking at the official Load-Out of the new platform stated that it was built locally by Dorman Long Engineering Limited, adding that the CSP is a critical and integral infrastructure for the next phase of growth within the OML 85 Asset.

On his part, Group General Manager of National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS), Mr. Bala Wunti said the development was a demonstration of federal government's commitment to grow local economy and boost local content.

According to him, the project will jerk up total crude oil production capacity to approximately 60,000 BOPD and reduce gas flaring in Nigeria.

He said that the platform, which is phase 1B of Anyala-Madu Field development project, was a deliberate effort of government being initiated in 2019 to unveil NNPC to the world.

"We are proud of the feats we have achieved with the First E&P Joint Venture. From the successful delivery of the phase-1A scope of Anyala-Madu Field development project during the uncertainties of the Covid-19 pandemic, to sustaining offshore production operations in a safe and sustainable manner.

"We are committed to supporting the JV to yet again deliver remarkably on the Phase-1b. The Madu field development will raise the total JV production capacity to approximately 60,000 BOPD and facilitate the elimination of gas flaring."

Chairman of Dorman Long Engineering Nigerian Naval Dockyard, Dr. Timi Austen- Peters listed the benefits of the project as domestication of expenditure, employment for Nigerians and development of youth capacity.

SUPER SATURDAY

Bella Salami

My Ideal Man is the Full Package; Everyone Likes the Good Things of Life

Stunning actress, Bella Salami, is a face everyone would instantly fall in love with on screen. Young, chic, and with a perfect rendition of her roles, you can't but admire her prowess. In this interview with **Chinedu Ibeabuchi,** the fast-rising actress and filmmaker talks about her career, personal life, and filmmakers' pain



Bella

Was acting your childhood dream?

Acting was something I have always wanted to do, although I dabbled into other things like pageantry and video vixen, which was a stepping-stone for me to becoming the actress I have always wanted to be. So, yes acting has always been one of my childhood dreams.

As an actress what makes you unique?

As an actor, what makes me unique is me, who I am, and how I interpret any role given to me. I am unique in my own way and that is my power.

So, what's your dream role?

My dream role would be playing a heroic role like a superhuman. I like challenging roles that go with different characters. I am sure I can always fit into any role because that is why I am an actor.

What is your opinion generally about the Nigerian movie industry?

The Nigerian movie industry, which is the second largest film industry in the world, is growing but crippled by bad economic policies, and lack of infrastructure. This is alarming for a country ranking 27th in GDP. That factor alone contributes to the biggest problem the industry is facing today. Yes! The future for Nollywood is certainly bright, as it has great potential to produce high-quality, brilliant films in an array of genres. With opportunities to be making professionally produced movies with skilled actors, Nollywood can surely find its way towards the top of the ladder, especially with streaming services like Netflix which opens up opportunities to young filmmakers.

What would you say is your greatest sacrifice to become an actress?

Sacrifices are made every day. There's nothing like a specific greatest sacrifice because the moment you decided to be an actress, a screen goddess, a celebrity, or a model to people, you have just given your privacy away and that is enough sacrifice.

Don't you think pretty also comes with its own baggage?

Being 'anything' whether pretty, not so pretty, slim, thick, or fat comes with its own baggage. It's how you manage this baggage that really matters. This 'being pretty' baggage may sometimes be a good thing in the sense that some things come relatively easy to you. On a lighter note, your social media is popping with great and pretty pictures (who don fine, don fine abeg) and can also be a bad thing because people can easily discredit your hard work and tag it with 'fine girl privilege'… that 'it's because she is fine that's why she got the role', thereby putting to the back pedal your nights of putting in the work. So, the bottom line is managing everything that comes your way.

How did your background contribute to what you do today?

For someone whom the community really liked (churches and school), they saw the great potential in me and would always applaud or get thrilled by my display of talent and would always encourage me to not let it go to waste. I was someone they are always proud of; to always represent in certain competitions in the areas I was good at. Knowing

I Like to Mind My Business But I'm Also a Social Butterfly

that I was loved, gave me much joy to push further and embrace the future and become the actor I have always wanted to be. I am glad to say I am making them proud.

What memories of your childhood days do you love the most?

Every moment of my childhood was memorable and cherished, especially those days when I get to put my school or church on a map by representing them in competitions and always bringing the best results (winning), getting scholarship from representing my school well in debates, quiz, etc. Those are moments one can never forget.

There have been a lot of stories about sexual harassment in the film industry, what is your experience?

Sexual harassment happens every now and then; it's no news that some people experience this in the movie industry. I personally haven't experienced such. I believe in my talent and it will make a way for me, which it did. Sex for roles is a no-no for me, except you as a person don't know your worth and don't believe in your craft or talent.

Is acting paying your bills?

Yes! acting is paying some of my bills as an up comer and of course, you don't have to rely on just one payroll because there are days where scripts don't come your way or days you get to shoot like back-to-back, so on those days, you aren't shooting what do you do. So, I will always encourage people to dabble in other things in case of rainy days.

When a man succeeds, they say its hard work, but when a woman attains success, she uses bottom power. What is your view on this notion? And how do you think women can change the narrative?

Sadly, in this industry and generally, in most work environments, women get discredited a lot, people tend to trivialize women and their hard work. If she is successful, oh she must have slept her way up the ladder, or she has a sugar daddy backing her. What exactly is she doing to be this successful? How many films she don act wey she take buy car and build a house? And so on. What people don't know or talk about is the number of sleepless nights these women put into their craft. I for one, know how many nights I won't sleep trying to go through my lines just to see it's perfect, spending hours unending on set, leaving set late and entering another in the same day, as well as running a business on the side. All this background work will not be acknowledged by most people but as soon as they see you blossoming that's when they talk, the backbiting and the looking down starts. I can say boldly that women work hard, sometimes even harder than their male counterparts, just to get the work done or get the same accolade, especially knowing that there are people out there who are quick to laugh and mock you if you do not succeed. To all my fellow hard-working women out there, I say keep being you, keep putting in the work, and soon society will come around. Let's not give them reasons to keep spreading the narrative, let's support one another, and together we will get there.

How do you want to be remembered?

I want to be remembered as someone who lights up every space she's in positively in all ramifications of her life. If sunlight, rain, and moonlight were a person, that should be me.

When you are not on set, how do you spend your time?

When I am not filming, I am in my house or my space rejuvenating, trying to get my glow back from the previous set stress, which is very much needed, and then sometimes hang out with my friends either on date level, spa, karaoke, etc so long we are outside.

Who is your crush in the movie industry?

Do I have a crush in the Nigerian movie industry? Hmmm, I don't actually or I wouldn't call it crush let's just say I admire their talents, women inclusive (Ramsey Noah, Nseikpe Etim, Genevieve Nnaji, Sola Sobowale, RMD, etc).

How would you describe your style?

My style is simple and classy.

How would you describe your love life? Who's your ideal kind of man?

My love Life is private and would like to keep it that way. My ideal man is the full package. Everyone likes the good things of life.

What's your philosophy of life? How would you describe your social life?

My philosophy of life is 'never let the fear of sticking out keep you away from playing the game.' My social life is good although I like to mind my business but, I am also a social butterfly

What's your favourite food?

I love healthy foods and I also do love swallow and okra soup

Do you see a future in entertainment or do you plan to delve into/ combine another area of business soon?

Entertainment is where I am and want to be. But I have other businesses. Entertainment will always remain my first love.

As an executive producer, what's the biggest challenge you face in the movie business?

The biggest challenge is putting money into the business and having an immediate return.

We all know how difficult things have been. So you raise funds for productions, and then immediate returns are not guaranteed. One would have to patiently wait partly because your film would have to go through processes of screening and vetting which take a lot of time. One can't just go into production without knowing the standards each platform would want. So you have to trade carefully and do your findings in other that your long wait for positive returns is not in vain.



Bella

POLITY

Globacom and 19 Years of Technological Revolution

Chidiebere Nwobodo

*"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." — **Buckminster Fuller***

Over a century ago, when Scottish inventor cum scientist, Alexander Graham Bell, was experimenting in his laboratory, he thought he was testing the validity of an idea that raced through the neutral pathways of his brain, little did he know that he was birthing an innovation that would later alter human existence, positively.

In 1876, Alexander Graham Bell's hitherto thoughts became reality. The Scottish engineer delivered to the world the first patented telephone transmitter which changed communications in the face of the earth and beyond. He stepped it higher, co-founded American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) in 1885, that commercialized his invention for larger benefit of humanity.

Similarly, Dr. Mike Adenuga, Jr., can be likened to Alexander Graham of Nigeria. Though he is not an inventor but an investor that joined the relay race, took over the baton from the pathfinders and pushed further the idea of getting the world connected, by pioneering a telecommunication revolution that ensured that GSM services was not only democratized but made available and affordable to everyone in Nigeria and beyond.

In August, 2003, when Adenuga, Jr., sailed the ship of Globacom Limited as the first indigenous mobile operator to take a dive into the ocean of telecommunication industry, like Alexander Graham Bell, he thought he was only coming to break the duopoly of older mobile operators—MTN and Econnet Mobile, and give Nigerians better option, little did he know that his bold moves and sterling ideas would serve as catalysts that would herald telecommunication revolution in the continent.

Before the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) anchored on the shores of Nigeria in 2001, the nation's telecom sector was in a quagmire and trapped in doldrums of stagnation with only 400,000 active telephone lines. Imagine the biggest economy in Africa, the most populous black nation with then population of over 150m people, left to grapple with a mere 400,000 active lines.

Even with the deregulation of the industry and subsequent GSM licensing of two foreign companies, two years down the road, mobile telephony services remained very expensive, limited and exclusive status symbol of the rich cum elites. Lines (SIM cards) were sold for as high as N45,000 each and calls charged at N50 per a minute. Nigerians complained bitterly and asked mobile operators to reduce the cost of SIM cards and change the billing system to "per second", they argued that it was impossible.

Legacy mobile operators, enjoying duopoly then, kept insisting that the idea of per second billing system was not feasible. They argument that they spent millions of dollars to get the licences and still needed to spend hundreds of millions of dollars (if not billions), for effective rollout of GSM infrastructure across the country. Nigerian consumers yearning for cheaper mobile telephony services resigned their fate to prayer, hoping that a saviour would show up and make things easier.

God answered their prayers. Like biblical Moses, God sent Dr. Mike Adenuga, Jr., to come to the rescue of Nigerians. The quintessential investor beckoned to the clarion call, assembled crew of experts, descended into the cockpit and took off the flight of Globacom Limited on 29th of August, 2003. Despite the turbulence and volatility of the weather—operating environment, The Bull, as he is fondly called, being the pilot in charge of "Flight Globacom", began working miracles in the telecom industry.

Globacom made things that older mobile operators deemed "impossible" possible. The first indigenous mobile operator under the eagle-eyed visionary leadership of Dr. Mike Adenuga, Jr., brought fierce competition in the industry. Glo began selling cheaper lines which awakened the consciousness of hitherto unconnected Nigerians to join the global village of interconnectivity. It also introduced Per Second Billing (PSB) which became a game changer in the industry.

And followed it up with massive and unprecedented level of rollout of telecom infrastructure across cities and villages of the country, with improvement in GSM technology. Glo was the only operator in Africa, at that time, to launch its operations on the superior 2.5G network which enabled the convergence of voice, data and multimedia technologies. This development intensified the competition and gave subscribers better quality of service than what was obtainable before Globacom was born.

Other mobile operators became rattled yet The Grandmaster of data, The Bull—Dr. Mike Adenuga, Jr., was not shaken, rather he switched the gear and took the technological chess game higher from 2.5G to 3G. While other operators played catch-up, Glo introduced 4G LTE network in Nigeria, thus putting the country in the league of nations where Long Term Evolution (LTE) continued to gain ground. 4G LTE has fast-paced broadband penetration with unmatched highest data speed and reliability.

You cannot talk about broadband revolution vis-a-vis internet penetration in Nigeria and beyond, without properly highlighting the impact of Glo 1 and its magical possibilities. Globacom was the first mobile operator in Africa to build and launch an international submarine cable. In addition to boosting the provision of services to telecom end users, the facility is



Adenuga

currently providing the much needed connectivity to critical sectors of the economy such as oil and gas, manufacturing, banking, commerce, education, health, etcetera.

Globacom was the first mobile operator in Africa to launch gateway switches outside the continent to carry international voice and data traffic. This milestone positioned it as a leading provider of telephone hubbing services for the rest of the world. Glo has invested massively in the expansion of telecom infrastructure in the past nineteen years of existence, running into billions of dollars.

In the foregoing quest to boost its infrastructure, not too long ago, Glo signed a collaborative deal with Eutelsat Communications, a global leader in satellite communications. Signed in the presence of the French President, Emmanuel Macron, in Paris, was a multi-year, multi-Gbps wholesale capacity contract that would enable the firm to extend its coverage beyond the reach of its terrestrial infrastructure, leveraging the Eutelsat Konnect satellite.

With this deal, a new dawn beckons for the industry. It means that Nigerians in the far-flung areas with difficult topography, will no longer be left behind. Anyone from every nook and cranny of this country will be connected to the ecosystem where data is the new oxygen.

– Chidiebere writes from Abuja via chidieberenwobodo@yahoo.com

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

Ekwenye: Bashmoh is Providing Affordable Homes for Low Income Earners

General Manager of Bashmoh Homes, Ifeoma Ekwenye, gives an insight into the housing deficit problems in Nigeria, and how her firm is helping to bridge it. She speaks to **Bennett Oghifo**

Tell us about your journey in the sector and how it has inspired your achievement in business?

The critical thing for me is to work hard. If you are close to me, you'll know that I log in a lot of time. It takes time for you to get things done, and it requires a lot of patience and tenacity. I recommend that young people understand that nothing comes easy, so when you see a successful person, know that the person has worked hard to get there. I have watched with keen interest the housing problems in the country, and how people had to pay through their noses to secure a decent accommodation. So far so good. It has really been a beautiful, wonderful experience and seeing that we are actually helping people to own their homes through affordable payment. I'm always happy when a customer is satisfied. That is what gives me joy at Bashmoh Homes. I will say it has really been a wonderful and a beautiful experience. And if you ask me, Bashmoh Homes wants to do more for the people.

Mortgage in the country has always been an issue for both developers and homeowners. How do you finance all your projects?

Nigeria's unattractive mortgage system has been a key theme in its residential market for decades. With a housing deficit running into tens of millions, homeownership rate at 25% and a mortgage financing requirement conservatively estimated between 15-20 trillion naira, there is a great deal of work to be done. Housing is typically capital intensive in Nigeria due to the high cost of construction, surging land prices and excessive financing costs. The high capital requirement of housing has made long-term financing critical in driving affordability; particularly for lower and middle-income groups. However, at Bashmoh Homes, our target are the low income earners. We tried as much as possible to bring the price down since our major focus is building affordable homes for the masses.



Ekwenye

The major key to increasing prices of building materials and difficulty in accessing mortgage facilities is the Federal Government. No country can boast of economic advancement without the joint effort of the government and private sector. Government must put in simplified policies that will make mortgage facilities more accessible to the people, and by partnering with private players in the industry.

What unique service are you offering that will differentiate Bashmoh Homes from other real estate firms in the country?

Bashmoh Homes is different from its competitors because our focus is low income earners. In essence we're not building high rise buildings in Ikoyi or Banana Island for the super-rich, but we concentrate on bringing smiles to the faces of civil servants, and many other Nigerians who wish to have a decent home over their head. With N3.5m people can actually get a home from us, move in within a 12-month period, and then spread the balance in the next three years. We also have payment plans that accommodate exigencies for our clients. We have several semi-detached buildings, semi-finished houses that are beautiful and well laid to encourage people to invest in and also take care of their retirement. We are actually expanding and we are building more to make sure it goes round.

What informed your strategy to target that segment of the market?

For us, that's where the market is but the challenges too are enormous in serving those kinds of people especially with the kind of funding structure we have available. They have to bring money from their pocket and they don't have so much because it's not as if what we are selling is any cheaper, that's the truth, we are just trying to make it as affordable because there is no support to make it cheaper.

What informs the choice of the locations you go to do your development and how does that affect the marketability and affordability of your projects in the long run?

What we generally look at is where development is going, not where it is already. We try to follow sometimes as much as possible the Growth Pole Theory in Real Estate so you find us in axis like Ibeju, Epe, Ikorodu, Atan, Simawa, Mowe, Shagamu, Abeokuta, Ibadan. We also have properties in Delta and Abuja. We try to follow the growth pole where there are things that can attract and bring people there except if we have enough money (when we start having such money) to now create the pole itself and make people come there.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

POLITY

Time to Re-invent Govenrment



THEFRONTLINES

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President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia is a man after my heart. This has nothing to do with any earthshaking policy he has implemented that Is transforming the lives of Zambians. My fascination for the Zambian President has more to do with his exemplary leadership style demonstrated through his words matched by action.

In a video clip that has gone viral, Hichilema was captured during a special meeting for local authorities chastising them and telling them to stop pretending to be who they are not and stop craving for what they can not afford. He specifically asked participants why would they want to buy a V8 car that cost $200,000 using tax payers money when they know they can not afford one by themselves? "If you want to drive a V8 buy your own", he challenged them.

According to him, rather than wasting tax peyers' money on self aggrandizing escapades, such money could be used to provide toilets in all the markets in the constituencies. He told his audience that since his swearing in, he had not bought a new vehicle for his use. He explained that it was not as if he was not approached by civil servants who encouraged him to buy new vehicles that would have cost tax payers $1.8m for his own use. The reason, according to them was that his predecessor also bought new cars when he came in. He said he asked them if those cars were moving, had wheel and were and were readily available for use, they answered in the affirmative. He told them he would use those same cars because he was conscious of the $1.8m that would have been used was not his money and that if he needed any cars, he would buy with his own money not that of tax payers. He enjoined them to imbibe prudence and cost control in running government business and to stop profligacy.

Let us juxtapose the Zambian example with what obtains in Nigeria where our leaders, politicians and civil servants live off tax payers' money with reckless impunity. In Nigeria, every new President and governor buys new vehicles for his use and these vehicles are Armoured plated meaning that they are bullet proofed. All outgoing Presidents and governors go with the vehicles they used while in office. That is not all. Today, we hear of governors' severance packages comprising of humongous sums of money, houses built or bought in choice places and a retinue of staff without forgetting Medicare for life to the bargain.

In addition to these outrageous severance packages, it is mandatory to replace these cars every three to five years depending on what you agreed with the state assembly and topped by a monthly pension. All for being governor for either a term or two. Regrettably, civil servants who serve meritoriously for 35 years, hardly get both their miserly gratuities or pensions as and when due. Our politicians care very little about cost and the word prudence sounds like Greek to their ears. It has become clear that the clamour for public office by politicians in this country is purely to pursue their self aggrandizing interest and has nothing to do with serving the people.

Every election cycle throws up new candidates who promise to take Nigeria to the moon.

And listening to them make these grandiloquent grandstanding, you would think they truly understand the diversity of the country as well as the deep rooted problems besetting it. Once in power, the same ladder through which they used to climb to power is discarded till the next election cycle. And the people? They also never learn their lessons from past mistakes. It is always so easy for politicians to promise heaven and earth yet, when it comes to delivery, it becomes excuse galore.

Take President Muhammadu Buhari for instance. Here is a man who failed in his three attempts to wn the presidency. After resigning himself to fate by retiring from politics, providence smiled at him and he won the presidency. During his campaign, Buhari criticized almost everything under the sun that former President Goodluck Jonathan was doing. He condemned Jonathan's handling of insecurity and especially the Boko Haram insurgency and the kidnap of Chibok girls; his handling of the economy where he promised to bring the naira to dollar parity; end insurgency in three months and sell off presidential fleets; provide uninterrupted power supply etc.

Today, the presidential fleet has 28 aircraft more than some national carriers all for the use of the presidency alone while Nigerians are groaning in abject poverty and hunger. The annual food budget for the presidency runs into several billions of naira. Is it to talk of the budget for state house clinic which does not even have a pain killer? Even with such humongous budgetary allocation, the President and his family are permanently on medical tourism. Shortly after his inauguration, the President's vehicles were replaced with brand new amour plated vehicles, massive renovation was carried out in his office and residential quarters at the expense of the tax payers. What value has Buhari added to the polity in almost eight years now?

Now that Nigeria is broke as it is bleeding from oil theft, corruption, lack of electricity, biting inflation and stagnation as a result of lack of production, it is a wake up call for Nigeria to shape up before it is too late. It was heart warming to read recently that former President Olusegun Obasanjo said he was groaning under the high cost of diesel which has skyrocketed from N350 to over N800 today. What is currently unraveling is truly time for reality check. If Obasanjo were to be in power today, the commonwealth would be at his mercy. He would never know the cost of diesel because both his residences and farms would have been adequately supplied with all the needed petroleum products at tax payers' expenses.

All Nigerian politicians live off government, from their residences, vehicles, fuel, food, clotting, security, water supply, you name them, are all financed by government in the entire duration that they remain in office. This explains why to most of them, aspiring to public office is a do or die affairs. It is unimaginable that the same Obasanjo who was military head of state and returned as civilian President for two terms did not fix the four refineries that would have solved our problem of importing petroleum products from the proceeds of crude oil sales. There is no oil producing country today that still sells crude oil in crude form without refining it. The late Umaru Yar'Adua who revoked the sale of the refineries could not turn them around before he died and Jonathan too did not fare any better.

There was therefore high expectations that Buhari with his messianic message which resonated with Nigerians would clean the Augean stable in no record time. So what has Buhari changed with his change mantra? As we reminisce over this question, there is a greater implication of Obasanjo's lamentation if we intend to reverse our downward slide as a nation. It is about time we put a stop to wanton profligacy by our leaders, politicians and high ranking privileged public servants. It is about time we adopt a solution more drastic than what Labour Party candidate Peter Obi said he adopted while in office.

Let us begin from running government strictly as a business. The presidential fleet should be converted to our national carrier and the President and all Nigerians should patronize the airline. The Aso Villa should be pro rated with the President as a tenant. The use of Presidential vehicles for leisure should be paid for each time the President takes a ride in it. The annual budget for food, diesel, generators in the Presidency should be scrapped for the President to cater for himself. The presidency must pay for each trip it embarks on the national carrier. The current practice whereby the President flies Airforce One and parks the plane at an hangar until he is done with his medical tourism accruing charges for tax payers has to stop. It is senseless, condemnable and profligate.

What Muslim/Muslim Ticket Are We Even Talking About?

Jesutega Onokpasa

I do not know the precise religious demographics of All Progressives Congress, APC, Presidential Candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's family but I know it's a Christian/Muslim mix. Nevertheless, it is most likely to be the case that Bola Tinubu goes to bed at night in his own house and, yet, he went to bed surrounded by Christians.

Needless to say, the same Bola Tinubu will wake up the next morning in a house in which he is probably the only Muslim on that particular occasion! Is this really the sort of Muslim candidate, somebody seriously expects us, as Christians, to oppose on the basis of religion?

I do not joke with my Lord Jesus Christ neither the religion I practice in His Most Holy Name. Indeed, the man, person, personality, spirit or force that should be able to entice, persuade, hoodwink or intimidate me out of Christianity does not exist, has never existed and can never exist. I will remain Christian and proclaim the Kingdom till Jesus comes! That is how fierce and utterly unshakable I am in my religious persuasion.

Now, a precept of my Jesus is that "by their fruits, you shall know them". Indeed, even if many Christians might not be aware of it, this dictum of Our Lord is the basis of the Christian theological approach to the definition of the concept of the faithful of God, in other words, the Children of God.

If we are to discard the intrinsically misleading labels and woefully false tags we have become most unfortunately and rather miserably hostage to, I would say Bola Tinubu is, at least, as good a Christian as my humble self, if not, indeed, a better one. In fact, be it from the point of view of personal morality or public conduct, family background and life experiences, world view or approach to life, I cannot, in any honesty, see the basis upon which I might legitimately discriminate against someone like Tinubu other than on the completely untenable ground that he is a Muslim! And, if I were to do so, I would be going directly against the dictates of Jesus, my Saviour.

If law has taught me anything, it is to go beyond the surface to ascertain what truly lies underneath. If politics has taught me anything, it is to assess others on the basis of their achievements, attainments and stewardship. If activism has taught me anything, it is to judge everyone on the basis of the content of their character and not in accordance with some shameful paradigm such as the colour of their religious persuasion! If Christianity has taught me anything, it is not to judge lest I be judged.



Shettima



Tinubu

Yes, Bola Tinubu is a Muslim and his running mate Kashim Shettima is also a Muslim but labelling, usages and nomenclature aside, I cannot, in any good conscience, see how the Tinubu/Shettima ticket is actually a Muslim/Muslim ticket for, in reality, it is practically no different from a Christian/Muslim ticket, if we are to tell ourselves the truth. Tinubu is a Yoruba man for God's sake! If, as Christians, we would discriminate against a Yoruba Muslim, what sort of Muslim should we ever be able to get along with in the whole world?

I support the ticket knowing that a man who could not convert his own wife nor compel his own children to his religion cannot possibly endanger my religion in any way. I support Tinubu because he is by far the undisputed and indisputable number one performer in public administration since our return to democracy in 1999, if not in the entire history of this country.

I support Shettima for being able to keep Borno afloat, while bringing dividends of democracy to the people, even in the midst of the height of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East of our country. I cannot see how Peter Obi, as Governor of Anambra, despite all that may be said in his favour, surpasses even Kashim Shettima as Governor of Borno, much less Bola Tinubu as Governor of Lagos! Peter Obi certainly never encountered, in Anambra, the sorts of challenges Shettima had to face in Borno, and yet delivered in spite of all the odds stacked against him. As for comparing him to Tinubu as Governor of Lagos, titan of the South-west and phenomenon of Nigerian politics, Obi is at best still a learner, if not a complete nonstarter, I am sorry but must say.

Regarding Atiku Abubarkar, he is certainly not going to be Nigeria's President for he cannot steal the turn of the South and expect to have a country to rule if he were to win.

There is a subsisting consensus for power to rotate between North and South and it exists and is maintained for national cohesion and the unity of this country. To violate it is to treasonously threaten our corporate existence as a nation. Perhaps it would not be a bad idea for Atiku to now consider running for President in Cameroon, for a change.

I therefore stand with Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. He is, indeed, a Muslim but when I look beyond the labels and take a closer look at him, he easily emerges before me as also my best Christian candidate for President in 2023! I cannot discriminate against a man who practices his religion with an enlightenment indistinguishable from the one with which I practice mine. I will not, in servitude to inanities, discriminate against a man, who, by the verifiable and readily ascertainable evidence of his accomplishments in governance, will make and leave my country a much better place than he will meet it as President. Asiwaju Bola Tinubu is the best man running for President and, for our own good and the good of this nation, that is a fact we simply cannot afford to ignore.

Onokpasa, a lawyer, writes from Warri.

POLITY

FCT Monarch Backs Drug Test for Intending Couples, Honours Marwa

First class monarch, the Ona of Abaji and Chairman, Federal Capital Territory, FCT Council of Chiefs, Abuja, Alhaji Adamu Baba Yunusa has directed the immediate implementation of drug integrity test policy that will ensure intending couples present certificate of fitness before being joined in holy matrimony.

The royal father gave the directive to the Chief Imam of Abaji and his Council of Chiefs when the Chairman/Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) paid him a War Against Drug Abuse, WADA, advocacy visit.

Marwa had in his remarks congratulated the monarch on his 25th anniversary on the throne and upholding the tradition and culture of his kingdom. He commended the royal father for his unflinching support for NDLEA and the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in the country.

The NDLEA boss said, "the traditional institution is a very important stakeholder because the traditional institution exists across every part of our society; all the way to the grassroots. It is for this reason, we would like to appeal to His Royal Highness who already has been in the forefront of tackling drug abuse to continue and intensify these efforts to set up a WADA committee in Abaji kingdom that will report directly to him and down to the small communities. In the small, small communities, you all know those selling drugs and those families and youths that need help.

"I would like to also appeal that due to increasing cases of women suffering from domestic violence fuelled by drug abuse by their husbands and vice versa, that we embrace drug test for intending couples the same way they do HIV/AIDS and genotype tests eventhough there are no laws making that compulsory. This is why we say both husband and wife should also show drug free certificate before being joined and if any of them tests positive, he or she can be taken for treatment before the wedding is done to avoid unpleasant incidents that we see in recent times."



Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. MB Marwa (Rted), presenting NDLEA Today magazine to HRM the Ona of Abaji, Alh. (Dr) Adamu Baba Yunusa MFR when the latter paid a courtesy visit to the former's palace in Abaji, FCT…yesterday.

In his response, the Ona of Abaji said prior to Marwa's assumption of office, drug menace in Nigeria had become a huge problem ravaging "many of our young men and women including couples who were supposed to be enjoying their marital lives. Your coming on board as the head of NDLEA has brought some succour."

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

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

30,000 Register for TRCN's Annual Teachers' Conference

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

No fewer than 30,000 professional teachers have so far indicated interest to participate fully in this year's annual conference of registered teachers in Nigeria.

The virtual conference, organised by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), will also attract tens of thousands of viewers from across the world.

This was made known by the Registrar/Chief Executive of TRCN, Professor Josiah Olusegun Ajiboye, in a statement in Abuja yesterday.

According to the TRCN boss, the teachers' conference- the second in series, which will hold virtually on Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd August, 2022, would be declared open by Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu.

Ajiboye said the annual conference had been institutionalised in fulfillment of TRCN's mandate, adding that the theme of this year's edition is "Strengthening Teacher Capacity for More Resilient, Transformative and Inclusive Education System."

"The 2022 annual conference of registered teachers is the second edition of the conference and over 30, 000 participants have registered online, about 9,000 followers are expected to follow on our social media handles such as Facebook streaming live.

" Similarly, over 10,000 others will view the programme live on UNESCO social media handles.

" A couple of others will be viewing the programme in set up viewing centers across three states - Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna, " Ajiboye said.

According to the registrar, apart from UNESCO, this year's conference is also being supported by PLANE and Save -the- Children- International (SCI) as well as some government agencies such as National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National Teachers' Institute (NTI).

Recall that the first edition of the conference was held January 26th and 27th, 2021, with thousands of registered/ professional teachers in attendance.



L-R: Big Brother Naija Season 5 winner, Olamilekan Moshood Agbeleshe (aka Laycon); Marketing and Innovations Director, Guinness Nigeria, Mark Mugisha; Big Brother Naija Season 5 1st runner-up, Dorathy Bachor, and Guinness Brand Ambassador, Prince Nelson Enwerem at the briefing session held for the winners of the Big Brother Naija competition ahead of the commencement of The Home of Guinness Heritage Tour set to take place in Dublin, Ireland at Guinness Nigeria PLC headquarters in Lagos…yesterday



L-R: Head of Division, East, Guinness Nigeria Plc. Adesanya Olusanya; Ebi I of Umuebie, Ugirinna Isiala Mbano, Eze Leo Mike Enwerem; his Wife Lady Ugoeze Catherine Chika Enwerem; Legendary musician, Onyeka Onwenu; and brand Manager, Guinness Trademark, Cynthia Ufele, after an electrifying performance by Onyeka Onwenu at the Guinness August Meeting, sponsored by Guinness Nigeria PLC in Umuebie, Owerri, Imo State recently.



Chairman Chicason Group of companies, Chief Sir Alexander chika okafor gave out daughter Miss Goodluck Mmesona okafor in traditional marriage to love of her life Adeniyi Oyewole. held at harbor point Victoria island in Lagos… recently.



L-R: SpaciaL Assistant to the Director General, National Agency for food and drugs administration (NAFDAC), DR.Gbenga Fajemirokun; Superintendent Pharmacist, Pharmadeko PLC, Dr. Oluwatosin Johnson; Non-Executive Director, Pharmadeko, Collins Chikeluba: ; Director General, (NAFDAC), Professor Mojisola Adeyeye; Non-Executive Director, Pharmadeko, Professor H.A.B Coker: Director, Registration and Regulatory Affairs, NAFDAC, Dr. Monica Eimunjeze; and Managing Director, Pharmadeko Plc, Ishola Olukayode, during the board members of Pharmadeko PLC courtesy visits to NAFDAC office in Lagos recently

NEWS XTRA

Terror Leader Moves to Forcefully Marry 21-Year-Old Train Abductee

• *Four more victims freed*

John Shiklam in Kaduna

The leader of the terror group that abducted some of the Abuja-Kaduna train passengers have threatened to forcefully marry 21-year-old train abductee, Azurfa Lois John.

This is as another set of four of the remaining 32 abducted Abuja-Kaduna train passengers have been freed by their captors.

One Tukur Mamu, a media consultant to Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, a Kaduna-based Islamic cleric, yesterday revealed that he gathered from reliable sources that one of the top commanders of the terrorists was planning to marry her any moment.

Mamu had been in the forefront for mediating for the release of the victims before he later withdrew.

To save the 21-year-old from being forcefully married out, Mamu called on the federal government and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), to take urgent steps to ensure the release of Azurfa Lois John.

"This is to alert the federal government and especially the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) that I can confirm through credible information at my disposal that if urgent action is not taken to immediately secure the release of the youngest victim of the train attack, a 21-year-old Azurfa Lois John, the abductors as they have done in the case of Leah Sharibu, are planning to marry her any moment from now.

"One of the top commanders is said to be in love with her. This important information should be treated with the urgency it deserves," Mamu revealed.

He said further that, "Even though I know that releasing this information will not only unsettle her immediate family and loved ones, but Nigerians as a whole, it is necessary to do so to avoid the repeat of Leah Sharibu's case.

"I advise CAN in particular not to politicise this issue or reduce it to mere press releases as I have seen in the past but to work closely with relevant authorities to engage the abductors on her case as soon as possible before it is late.

"I pray that in view of the uncertainties which are becoming alarming, the federal government will also act very fast to ensure the release of all the remaining victims."

The four released victims, which include a 90-year-old woman and her 53-year-old daughter, were released yesterday.

Mamu, who confirmed the release of the four abducted passengers in a statement, said "I can confirm that earlier on Friday (yesterday), four additional victims of the train attack were released by their abductors.

"The four released victims just left my office. They said they came collectively to thank me for the past efforts I made to mediate on their behalf and for convincing their abductors to drop the threats of executing them and to plead for all stakeholders especially the federal government to intensify efforts as the condition of the remaining 23 victims they left at the forest is pathetic," the statement said.

According to him, among those released were "the oldest victim, a grandmother, Mama Halimatu Atta, 90 years old and her daughter, 53-year-old married woman, Adama Atta Aliyu."

He said others include Mohammed Sani Abdulmaji (M.S Ustaz) and a Sokoto indigene, Alhaji Modin Modi Bodinga.

With the release of the four victims, 28, other victims are still being held by the terrorists.

On March 28, the terrorist attacked an Abuja-Kaduna bound passenger train, killing eight people while abducting 62 passengers. Several other passengers also sustained injuries during the attack.

FG to Evacuate Stranded Nigerians in UAE

The Chairman, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, Abike Dabiri-Erewa has said that Nigerians in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) affected by the mass deportation of illegal aliens are being profiled for evacuation.

Dabiri-Erewa, who briefed journalists yesterday about the development said, "Immediately, the attention of the Nigerian Consulate in Dubai was drawn to the issue, Nigerians there are being profiled. Some of them have passports and some do not. "There are some children that do not have any form of identification. Some do not even remember the names with which they entered the country originally. So they need to be profiled. It is also important to ensure that some have not committed a crime and they are just running.

"So, what the consulate is doing now is profiling everybody at the holding centre. Initially, at the airport, there was a fake WhatsApp message sent to everybody that there were flights that led to the rush to the airport. There were quite a lot of Africans.

"It is after the profiling that the consulate will make a decision on the next step to take. The consulate and the embassy will brief the federal government on the next step to take."



PARTNERING FOR DEVELOPMENT...

L-R: Director of Finance/Admin, Esso Properties Limited, Ofortube Amaka-Uzodigwe; Chairman, Amuwo Odofin Local Government, Valentine Oluwaseyi Buraimoh, and the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Esso Properties Limited, Dr. Smith Ezenagu, during the courtesy visit to Buraimoh at the local government secretariat in Festac Town...recently.

Bauchi Govt Rescues 69 Persons Abducted By Bandits, Raids their Hideouts

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

The Bauchi State Government has disclosed that no fewer than 69 persons that were abducted by bandits have been rescued by a combined effort of security agents and vigilantes, after raiding the bandits' hideouts and intensifying patrols on their routes.

The State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Alhaji Abdulrazaq Nuhu Zaki, disclosed this yesterday while fielding questions from journalists on infiltration of bandits, kidnappers in Toro, Alkaleri, Tafawa Balewa, and Ningi local government areas of the state.

According to him, the administration of Governor Bala Mohammed took the bull by the horns by leading the battle against the activities of bandits when he visited the affected areas, adding that after commiserating with the people, the governor encouraged them to resist the kidnappers.

"The governor equally boosted the morale of the council chairmen, vigilantes, traditional rulers, security personnel and all stakeholders. With the backing of the state government, we mobilised ourselves along with the security and vigilantes and stormed the forests fearlessly. We confronted the bandits and they fled but our men continued to advance towards them.

"The council chairmen reported to us that the total number of people abducted by the kidnappers are 69 and all of them were rescued. Many of them were brought and kept in Bauchi by their abductors, but we were able to secure their release and they have united with their families," he said

Insecurity: FCTA Swoops on Gwarimpa Rail Corridor, Arrests Drug Peddlers

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) Joint Task Team and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), yesterday, arrested two suspected drug peddlers and three criminals at the Gwarimpa rail corridor.

The Nigerian Army, the Nigeria Police Force, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigeria Immigration Service and the Department of State Services were also part of the raid.

The Senior Special Assistant on Monitoring, Inspection and Enforcement to the Minister of FCT, Ikharo Attah, said the NDLEA of the Command and Control JTF team under the Commissioner of Police, FCT, Babaji Sunday and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bernard Iwe, arrested the people suspected to be carrying illicit drugs.

The police also followed suit by arresting three suspected criminals on the railway corridor.

The team accompanied by the officials of Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) stormed the rail corridor unannounced to commence demolition of shanties, market and batchers defacing the satellite town.

Buhari: Stability of Chad, Other Neighbouring Countries in Nigeria's Interest

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has stressed that the stability of Chad and other neighbouring countries to Nigeria is in the overall interest of the nation.

The President, who spoke on the virtues of good neighborliness yesterday at State House, Abuja, while receiving a Special Envoy from the Transitional President of Chad, General Mahamat Idris Derby, posited that "common sense makes it extremely important that we be interested in the stability of Chad Republic, as it is in our own interest.

"We are genuinely concerned, and I am sincerely impressed with the leadership of the country in stabilising the polity.

"It was the belief in good neighbourliness that made me first visit Chad, Niger Republic, Cameroon, and Benin Republic when I came in 2015. The more exclusion we create, the more we endanger present and future generations of our countries."

President Buhari said relations between Nigeria and Chad transcended that of neighbours, as the late President, Marshal Idris Derby Itno "kept me constantly briefed on developments in the country."

He said he would "keep an ear to the ground, monitor developments closely," as Chadians hold the National Dialogue, and offered the support of Nigeria in any form required.

Chad holds a Sovereign National Dialogue on August 20, 2022, and according to the Special Envoy, Mr. Brah Mahamat Dallah, "the outcome would be respected, and not tampered with."

The Special Envoy, who is also the country's Minister of Public Works, extolled the long relationship between Nigeria and Chad, and indicated that over 99 per cent of Chadians were interested in, and taking part in the National Dialogue, including main rebel groups.

North-east Crisis: UN Says 5m People Got Humanitarian Assistance in 2021

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The United Nations (UN) has revealed that humanitarian assistance was delivered to five million people in North-east Nigeria in 2021.

The world body however lamented that since 2016, the crisis in the region had claimed 35 aid workers, and left 22 others injured with another 28 kidnapped. Delivering a tribute to aid workers on the frontlines in troubled North-east Nigeria to mark the World Humanitarian Day (WHD), the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria, Mr. Matthias Schmale, said, "Today on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day, the humanitarian community in North-east Nigeria honours all aid workers stepping up to respond each day to the crisis in the region by providing life-saving assistance to millions of women, children and men."

Schmale explained that this year's theme #ItTakesAVillage is built upon the metaphor, "It takes a village to raise a child," at an event yesterday commemorating World Humanitarian Day.

He said, "Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a whole community to help people in need; to provide urgent health care, shelter, food, protection, transportation, security, water and much more."

He noted that the humanitarian 'village' in North-east Nigeria proudly includes volunteers and paid staff from civil society, national and international non-governmental organisations, government, the United Nations and crisis-affected people themselves, adding that the vast majority of aid workers in Nigeria – including those who are exposed to the most risk – are Nigerians.

ECOWAS Parliament Calls for Implementation of 30% Affirmation for Women in West Africa

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The Chairperson, Committee on Social Affairs, Gender and Women Empowerment of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, Ayamba Laadi Ayii, has appealed to West African presidents to ensure the 30 per cent affirmative action in governance.

Addressing journalists at the sideline of the ongoing delocalised meeting of the Joint Committee on Political Affairs ,Peace and Security and APRM Legal Affairs and Human Rights Social Affairs, Gender and Women Empowerment in Banjul, Gambia with theme: 'Community Texts Relating to Peace, Security, Democracy and Good Governance: Challenges in their Implementation and the Oversight Role of ECOWAS Parliament', she said there is urgent need for presidents of members states to set modalities on how to achieve 30 per cent affirmative action plan to allow more women participation in governance across the region.

According to her, presidents in the region should be deliberate about implementation of the policies as women stand a better chance to promote security in the region.

Ayii, who is also a co-Chair at the ongoing delocalised meeting of the joint committee, however, stated that there was gradual improvement of women participation in some countries like Senegal, Benin Republic and Mali.

She also stated some of the impediments to the 30 per cent affirmation process in the ECOWAS region.



MY CONDOLENCES…

Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun condoling with the widow, Mrs. Yetunde Ayanlaja at the final burial ceremony of Mr. Olatunji Ayanlaja, SAN, at Esure, Ijebu Imushin in Ijebu East local government area of Ogun State …yesterday.

Buhari Charges Military to Halt Crude Oil Theft in Niger Delta

Rules out review of workers' wages due to shrinking revenue

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

Barely 24 hours after President Muhammadu Buhari gave a marching order to security agencies to take the battle to the hideouts of insurgents in the North-east and eliminate them, he has again directed the military to immediately put a stop to theft of the nation's crude oil by criminals and vandals in the Niger Delta region.

The President, who gave the directive yesterday at the State House, Abuja, while receiving in audience the Central Working Committee of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN), stressed that his administration will not allow a few criminals to have unfettered access to the nation's crude oil supply, "hence I have directed our security agencies to speedily bring to a halt the activities of these vandals in the Niger Delta."

He stated that criminal activities on the high seas, where large vessels seek to hide in neighbouring countries would be checked, adding that "there should be no hiding place for such criminals, and our cooperation with neighbouring countries in halting these crimes is being strengthened and tightened."

The President explained that investment in security assets had been at a huge cost, after several decades of negligence.

President Buhari emphasised that his confidence in the Nigerian Armed Forces is unshaken, adding that he has charged the Chief of Defense Staff, General Lucky Irabor, and his service chiefs to take the war to the criminals who have made life difficult for many Nigerians.

He said, "Recent reports have shown the message is now being heard and the dividends of our seven years of investments are now maturing. I implore our forces to continue with the current effort and determination until we rid our land of these miscreants."

The President also said the public service remained the engine room of government, and should attract the "best and brightest" that would fuel policies with fresh ideas, while assuring that the Orosanye White Paper Report would be implemented, after review.

Navy: No Drop of Crude Oil Stolen by MT Heroic Idun

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Nigerian Navy said yesterday that the suspected rogue vessel, MT Heroic Idun, which veered into Nigerian waters with the intention to load oil illegally could not do so before it was accosted by Nigerian Navy Ship, Gongola at the Akpo Oilfield Terminal.

At a media briefing in Abuja, the Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Awwal Gambo, said the vessel only spent 12 hours on the Nigerian waters and barely 20 minutes at the oilfield.

Gambo, who was represented by the Chief of Policy and Plans (CPP), Rear Admiral Saidu Garba, reiterated that there was no piracy attack on Nigeria waters in the last one year, affirming that the vessel had not commenced loading at the said oil field before the Navy Ship Gongola accosted it for interrogation and ordered it to Bonny Anchorage.

"On August 7, 2022, it was observed that a very large crude oil carrier MT Heroic Idun entered the Nigerian maritime environment and headed for Akpo field without any form of authorisation or clearance. MT Heroic Idun (IMO: 9858058) is registered in Marshall Island with an overall length of 336 metres and capacity of three million barrels.

"The vessel arrived Akpo field midnight of August 7, 2022 with obvious intention of lifting crude oil within the field. This was, however, spotted by the Nigerian Navy Maritime Domain Awareness facility which probed the legitimacy of the very large crude carrier's presence in the total SA operated by Akpo field.

Army Chief Charges Commanders to Promote Synergy of Security Forces

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. Gen. Faruk Yahaya, yesterday charged military commanders to promote synergy and cordiality with other security stakeholders as they battled security challenges bedeviling the nation.

Gen. Yahaya made the clarion call while delivering a lecture titled: 'Military Strategic Leadership: My Perspective', to participants of Course 8/22 of the Nigerian Air Force War College in Makurdi, the Benue State capital.

The army chief stated that it was the responsibility of all commanders as leaders in the military to ensure interoperability, integration and synergy with other services, security stakeholders, as well as Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA).

He added that synergy and cordial working relationships with all stakeholders in the security sector was essential for operational success and attainment of the common goal of defending the nation.

In his remarks, the College Commandant, Air Vice Marshal Shayo Olatunde, noted that training in military strategic leadership was critical to capacity development of participants of the college, whom he described as military leaders of the future.

NAFDAC Begins Nationwide Clampdown on Illicit Herbal Intoxicants

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) said it has commenced immediate mop up of illicit herbal aphrodisiac and alcoholic bitters in the country.

The agency said that in one of its enforcement drives, it impounded the following "dangerous herbal aphrodisiac at some Islamic Herbal Medicines shops in Zaria, Kaduna State: Gagare Man Power, Minister for Man Power, Almenjou for Lazy Men in Bed, Nisan Zango Karfin Maza Shagalin Ka Man Power, Dakan Jia Man Power enhancement, Wuff Male Sexual Performance and Afafata for Sexual Drive."

It said that so far one of the illegal factories involved in the production of such unauthorised products had been shut down and the owner arrested.

It also said that medical research findings showed that these illicit substances when abused can be harmful to the body organs such as the brain, kidney and liver.

United States Coast Guard Ship, Cutter Mohawk Arrives Lagos

Segun James

The United States Coast Guard ship, Cutter Mohawk has arrived at the Nigerian Naval Dockyard in Lagos for a scheduled port visit.

During the visit, Mohawk officers will meet with Nigerian Navy leadership at the Western Navy Command Headquarters in Apapa, as well as host ship tours for Nigerian government and military officials.

During the port visit, Mohawk will conduct two days of at-sea engagements with the Nigerian Navy to promote maritime security cooperation.

The US Consul General, Will Stevens, welcomed the ship's arrival, and noted, "the United States is committed to supporting the Nigerian Navy in its efforts to both secure its own territorial waters and those of the greater Gulf of Guinea. Cooperation and the ability to operate together in the maritime domain are necessary to enhance Nigeria's capacity to counter piracy, oil bunkering, illegal fishing, and other sea-based illicit activities."

Shortly after the ship's arrival, the Consul General, Stevens and Commander Andrew Pate, Mohawk's Commanding Officer, met with Rear Admiral Yakubu Wambai, the Flag Officer Commanding of Nigeria's Western Naval Command, to discuss the United States and Nigeria's shared commitment to a safe and secure Gulf of Guinea.

House Invites Ahmed, Emefiele, Sirika as Emirates, Other Foreign Airlines Mull Flights' Withdrawal

Udora Orizu in Abuja

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, has directed the relevant House committees to invite the Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed, Central Bank Governor, Godwin Emefiele, Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, and other stakeholders to meet and deliberate on solutions to the notice of withdrawal of services recently issued by Emirates and some international airline operators in the country.

Middle East airline Emirates had announced that it would suspend all flights to Nigeria from September 1, 2022, if their trapped funds are not repatriated. THISDAY learnt that other foreign carriers might soon withdraw their services, unless the federal government opens a discussion with them.

Gbajabiamila in a statement signed by the House Clerk, Dr. Yahaya Danzaria, while noting that date of the meeting should be communicated to all the concerned stakeholders, urged all parties in the matter, and specifically, the Emirates Airlines to suspend any action and await the outcome of the meeting.

The statement read in part, "Gbajabiamila has therefore requested the Chairman House Committee on Aviation (Hon. Nnoli Nnaji) and House of Representatives Management to immediately set a date for a meeting with all stakeholders in the aviation sector and the executive arm of government to find urgent solutions to the issues in contention. Specifically, the Hon. Speaker has directed that the following be invited for the meeting: Minister of Finance, CBN Governor.

2023: Obi, Soludo Hold Closed Door Meeting

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Mr. Peter Obi and the governor of Anambra State, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, yesterday met in Awka.

The meeting which was held behind closed doors at the Anambra State Governor's Lodge in Amawbia, Awka South Local Government Area lasted for about two hours.

The reason for the meeting was not made known to journalists, as both leaders declined press interviews at the end of the session.

It was however believed that their meeting had to do with the presidential election of 2023.

Just a week ago, Soludo had in an address accused Igbos of playing politics with the heart, rather than the brain every four years. He said it was high time Igbo people came together to build a synergy with other parts of the country, if they must take a shot at the presidency.

Some political watchers had interpreted the speech to mean that he was opposed to the presidential bid of Obi, but yesterday's closed door meeting left everyone guessing.

Ashimalowo Hosts Gathering of Champions Conference

The annual Christian conference tagged 'International Gathering of Champions' hosted by Pastor Mathew Ashimalowo of the Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) begins on Wednesday, August 24.

The five-day meeting at the KICC Prayer City in London will feature other seasoned Christian leaders like; Dr. Bill Winston – Founder, Bill Winston Ministries, Pastor, Living Word Christian Centre, Pastor T.D. Jakes – Founder, The Potters House Church, Pastor Dr. Mensa Otabil – Founder of International Central Gospel Church headquartered in Accra, Ghana and Bishop Tudor Bismark – founder and senior pastor of New Life Covenant Church, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Other ministers of God expected at the teaching programme in Pastor Jerry Eze – Senior Pastor of Streams of Joy International, Rev. Biodun Fatoyinbo – Senior Pastor of the Commonwealth of Zion Assembly (COZA) and Dipo Oluyomi – Chief Executive Officer/ Senior Management Team KICC.

Bakut: Nigeria's Cultural Diversities Key to National Development

Charles Ajunwa in Abuja

The Director General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Dr. Bakut Tswah Bakut, has said that the rich cultural diversities in Nigeria have the capacity to bring about the much needed national development in the country.

Bakut, who disclosed this yesterday during the investment forum of the 15th International Arts and Crafts (INAC) Expo with theme: 'Networking Nigerian Crafts To The World' held at Ladi Kwali Hall, Sheraton Hotels and Towers, Abuja, said Nigeria's culture when properly harnessed has the capacity to end the present insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and other violent crimes ravaging most parts of the country.

The Institute director general, who was the keynote speaker in his presentation titled 'Culture, Peace and National Development', said the timing and topic for the forum were both apt and relevant considering the current challenges bedeviling Nigeria and most parts of the world. Baku, who was represented by the Director, Research and Policy Analysis, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Dr. Joseph Ochogwu, said "We need to be very conscious and deliberate in our programmatic designs as agencies of government in mainstreaming culture across our development efforts. We need to build a national culture which specifically targets our national peace and development. While violent actors are trying to create disorder in our midst using our diversities, we must through our works use our God-given diversities to promote peace and national development. This can be done by popularising several works of music, art and craft that directly speak to peace and national development in our society. Our cultural diversities should be harnessed for our common good for it to translate to national development.

"Building a culture of peace in our society is the most viable option and way to go. Peace is an investment; the peace of today not only allows for production and consumption today, but also creates expectations and culture of peace for tomorrow. As we strive to build a culture of peace, we must build a national culture that is derived from our Constitution, National Anthem and National Pledge 'in order to ensure national development which benefits the rich and poor, rural and urban population, reverse the increasing inequality gaps and promotes equity, fairness and justice for all.



PDP PEACE MERCHANTS…

L-R: Hon. Adamu Waziri, Hon. Eyitayo Jegede, former governor of Gombe State, Dr. Ibrahim Dankwambo; former governor of Ondo State, Olusegun Mimiko; Governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri; former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adoki; former governor of Cross River State, Donald Duke and Senator Olaka Nwogu at the Government House, Port Harcourt ...yesterday

Olu of Warri's Wife Urges FG, Delta Govt to Promote Health Care for Riverine Children

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

Olori Atuwatse 111, wife of Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse 111 yesterday challenged the federal government and the Delta State Government to promote health care focused on children in riverine communities.

Olori Atuwatse 111 gave the admonition at Koko commission in Warri North Local Government area of Delta State during the third edition of her medical outreach as part of activities to mark the first coronation anniversary of Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse 111.

One of the highlights of the medical outreach was issuing of birth certificates to children born in Koko and surrounding communities in the council area.

She said, though other health issues would be attended to, her focus this time is to issue birth certificates to children who hitherto never had any form of identification.

"When we decided to do the medical outreach in celebration of our king's first coronation anniversary, we felt it important that we do it with a difference. It is to my knowledge that most of our children or old born don't have an identity.

"Internationally, it is their rights to have identification. What do I mean by not having identify? The children are born with no birth certificate to correspond or lodge with necessary authorities to say they were born the day they were born and their names", said.

BPE, Indian Group Work out Modalities for Investments in Nigeria

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and a leading global player in steel, mines and infrastructure, Jindal Steel & Power Limited (JSPL), a member of India's OP Jindal Group, have set up a joint committee to fashion out modalities for investments in Nigeria.

The BPE Director General, Mr. Alex Okoh, has already assured that his agency will collaborate with JSPL in its areas of interest to invest in Nigeria.

Consequently, a joint committee to work out modalities has been set up with the Director, Industries and Services, Mr. Yunana Jackdel Malo heading the BPE's team while Mr. Mukesh Sharma will head the JSPL's team.

Speaking when he received a delegation from the Indian group, led by its Vice Chairman, Mr. V. R. Sharma, which was on a courtesy visit to his office, Okoh said there were a lot of potential in the country in areas of interest for the group.

The BPE, in a statement said Okoh cited among others, the planned concession of the Zungeru Power Plant which has the capacity to generate about 700 megawatts (mw) of electricity when operational, adding that already, the federal government had procured the services of a transaction adviser for its eventual concession.

Okoh revealed that the planned concession of the Zungeru Dam would be modelled after that of Kainji and Jebba Dams' concession and that the successful concessionaire would handle it for a period of 30 years.

On another area of interest for the group (steel), Okoh noted that although the three steel rolling companies in the country - Jos, Katsina and Osogbo had been privatised, they were not living up to expectation and that any effort to rev up the sector would be supported.

He also informed the investors that power, which is their main strong hold, has openings in the country as the federal government was at the verge of privatising five of its 10 National Integrated Power Plants (NIPPs) which have the combined capacity to generate between 2,300-2,500 megawatts.

On the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Okoh said despite the unbundling of the power sector by the federal government in 2013, resulting in 11 power distribution companies (Discos) and six generation companies (Gencos), TCN was still being retained by the federal government, although plans were underway to unbundle it for more efficiency.

YABATECH Unveils N50b Endowment Fund Logo

Funmi Ogundare

Ahead of the launch of Yaba College of Technology N50 billion endowment fund scheduled to hold on September 15 at the Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, the 75-year-old institution, unveiled its logo.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, in Lagos, the Rector, Mr. Femi Omokungbe, noted that the idea of the endowment fund was to provide a consistent and permanent funding source to support students, departments, research and programmes for generations to come.

According to him," the endowment fund was conceived out of our desire to address the challenges of infrastructure deficit, obsolete and non-functional equipment confronting the college."

He said it was imperative for the institution to continue to fulfill the mandates of its founding fathers through ensuring that its students are globally competitive, adding that the government alone can no longer fund education adequately.

BuyLetLive Expansion, Names New COO

Mary Nnah

Leading Online Real-Estate platform, BuyLetLive has expanded its team with the latest appointment of a new Chief Operations Officer, Modupe Agbolahan, to its management team.

An astute leader with business acumen in real estate and property marketing, Agbolahan brings onboard a wealth of experience in building sustainable stakeholder partnerships and brand loyalty.

Until recently, she was the Assistant General Manager at Realhouse Communications Limited where she delivered rapid market adoption of Castles Lifestyle Magazine and grew the portfolio to N100M Annual Recurring Revenue. Agbolahan led the team to achieve excellent customer service to over 10,000 real estate practitioners earning the title "Nigeria's premier real estate magazine".

Emenike's Candidacy Well Timed for Abia Redemption, Says Ex-Labour Minister

Emanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

The former Minister of Labour and Productivity, Chief Emeka Wogu, has said that the choice of Chief Ikechi Emenike as the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abia State has finally provided the main opposition party the formula to enter Government House.

He stated this at meeting of APC stakeholders of Aba federal constituency which he hosted at his home in Aba, saying that there was no stopping the main opposition party from dislodging the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from Abia Government House come 2023.

Prunedge Wins 2022 Africa's Most Outstanding Technology Company Award

Prunedge has been announced as Africa's Most Outstanding Technology Company of the Year 2022 at the recently held African Brands Leadership Merit Awards yesterday.

Joel Ogunsola, the CEO of Prunedge reacting to this development said, "This award recognises our entire team for their efforts in building Prunedge and establishing it as an industry leader in a highly competitive market. One of our culture phrases is innovation, this award confirms the brand's commitment and unrelenting drive to deliver solutions that improve the efficiency of day-to-day processes. For us, excellence is a watchword that characterises every aspect of our business, and this is what we are projecting to the world."

Accord Guber Candidate Berates APC, PDP for Failing Nigerians

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The Katsina State governorship candidate of the Accord Party, Dr. Mohammed Bara'u Tanimu, has disclosed that it will be preposterous for Nigerians desirous of development to vote for the All Progressives Congress (APC) or the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the forthcoming 2023 elections.

Tanimu, who made the assertion yesterday at a press conference in Katsina, said the leading political parties have failed Nigerians and have nothing new to offer that will curtail the nation's myriad of security and economic challenges.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **OMOJI UJAH MERCY**, now wish to be known and addressed as **IBIRONKE MERCY UJAH.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **FAITH NJIDEKA EZEKIEL**, now wish to be known and addressed as **FAITH NJIDEKA OKEKE.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **OKEKE UJU SIMON**, now wish to be known and addressed as **CHINWUBA UJU ANGELA.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS LILIAN CHINYERE AKPILOLO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS LILIAN CHINYERE AKOKO.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.



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MISSILE

Fayemi to Malami

"We do believe the Attorney-General of the Federation is acting in personal, selfish interest that will ultimately become clear when this matter is fully addressed in the law court." *–Chairman, Nigerian Governors Forum, Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State chastising the Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, on $418m fees to Paris Club refund consultants.*

THISDAY 27 years OF ROBUST JOURNALISM SINCE 1995

UZOR MAXIM **UZOATU**

GUEST COLUMNIST



Biyi Bandele who Came in from the Back of Beyond

He started out as Biyi Bandele-Thomas, and shocked the literary world with his amazing precocity. He was admitted to my alma-mater Great Ife (University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University) after I had graduated from the school where Prof Wole Soyinka was our Head of Department. The fire of creative arts burnt in him relentlessly, and he was from the beginning determined to conquer the world of literature.

He won the International Student Playwriting Competition with his play "Rain", and travelled to London to receive the prize and did not return to his studies at Ife. He then in 1991 published his first novel, ***The Man Who Came In From The Back Of Beyond***, that featured the younger brother of my classmate and friend, Owei Lakemfa, as the fictional protagonist named Lakemf. His play, ***The Female God and Other Forbidden Fruits***, was in 1991 broadcast on the BBC World Service.

In his second novel, ***The Sympathetic Undertaker And Other Dreams***, there is the story of the First Lady Mamagee of a country called Zowabia who poses for a photograph with a group of monkeys only for the editor of ***Zowabia News*** to write the caption thusly: "In the picture above, the Lady Mamagee is standing third from right."

The poor editor was beaten to a pulp by irate State Security people for stating that "the Lady Mamagee – First Lady for short – was standing third from right or even right from third in a picture which she took with monkeys, and to wit, in a picture in which she happened to be the only human being!"

He was in 1992 awarded the coveted Arts Council Bursary in Britain to support his creative writing drive. He extended his frontiers to screenplay writing when he penned ***Not Even God is Wise Enough*** produced by the BBC.

Born in Kafanchan in 1967, Biyi Bandele has made a great career of publishing novels, writing and directing plays, shooting still photography, and making movies.

He earned plaudits for his theatrical work on Chinua Achebe's ***Things Fall Apart***, the filmic renditions of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's ***Half Of A Yellow Sun***, the 2015 London Film Festival masterpiece entitled ***Fifty***, a season of the MTV drama season Shuga, the first Netflix Nigerian Original series ***Blood Sisters***, and a Yoruba language adaptation of Wole Soyinka's ***Death And The King's Horseman entitled Elesin Oba – The King's Horseman*** scheduled to premiere at Toronto International Film Festival this year.



Bandele

It was such a shock hearing of the death in Lagos on Sunday, August 7, of the all-round man of the creative arts I fondly called Boy Biyi.

We always had our animated discussions on all aspects of the arts in the Surulere, Lagos home of our mutual friend Adewale Maja-Pearce.

I once invited him to join us at a made-for-television discourse on JP Clark's work but he could not make it due to the exigencies of Lagos.

While in Lagos he devoted time to street photography that he always posted on his Facebook page.

I met him in London when I went to take a BBC short story prize, and he wondered cheekily that I was so unassuming unlike other Nigerian writers who printed "Writer" on their complimentary cards! He published my work in Homeland News that the venerable journalist Tunde Fagbenle founded in London.

Biyi passed away aged only 54, but he did enough work in his lifetime to ensure that he will never die. The Biyi Bandele truth is that he came ahead of his time, and ensured he covered all the lanes before his early departure.

As an Egba man from Abeokuta in Southwestern Nigeria, born in Kafanchan in the North, Biyi Bandele earned the distinction of becoming the citizen of the world. An intensely private person, he let his prolific work do the talking for him without ever veering toward self-promotion in any way

As an Egba man from Abeokuta in Southwestern Nigeria, born in Kafanchan in the North, Biyi Bandele earned the distinction of becoming the citizen of the world. An intensely private person, he let his prolific work do the talking for him without ever veering toward self-promotion in any way.

He won the respect of the world in his self-effacing manner as he devoted all his time to creation of timeless works. He could comfortably fit into any part of the world but retained an eternal love for Lagos, the city he eventually died in.

London, England is another city that looms large in the Biyi Bandele oeuvre as exemplified in his 1999 novel, The Street, in which the eccentricity within the multi-racial assemblage finds meaning in the expression: "people reaching out to one another, searching for love."

His 2008 novel, ***Burma Boy***, tells the horrific story of the Second World War in which his father fought in, but Biyi brings to the story of the fourteen-year old protagonist, Ali Banana, humour and humanity transcending madness.

What is striking is that Biyi reaches out to all beyond any borders of paternity, maternity or consanguinity. Discrimination does not rank in his lexicon. Humour is his veritable vehicle, and he shares with me a love for the folkloric hero of the fictions of the Muslim world, Mullah Nasruddin, who in one of his stories told his wife not to put a stone slab on his grave when he dies because he would not want to knock his head against the stone when ascending to heaven!

In announcing his death on Sunday August 7, Biyi's doting daughter, Temi, broke not a few hearts, thusly: "Biyi was a prodigiously talented writer and film-maker, as well as a loyal friend and beloved father.

He was a storyteller to his bones, with an unblinking perspective, singular voice and wisdom which spoke boldly through all of his art, in poetry, novels, plays and on screen. He told stories which made a profound impact and inspired many all over the world. His legacy will live on through his work."

Biyi Bandele was the quintessential global citizen, at home in all the continents of the world. It is indeed astounding trying to understand how Biyi found the time to do all the work of his considerably short span.

It suffices to celebrate the fact that Biyi Bandele was a believer who stayed the course of breaking borders and building lasting bridges.

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