

War against Terrorists: British Military Trains 150 Nigerian Special Forces Called Panthers, Set for Deployment

Our Correspondents

A British Military Advisory Training Team, in partnership with the Nigerian Air Force,

has trained 150 Advanced Special Forces operatives to be deployed to troubled areas to help in tackling security challenges in the country.

The Special Forces, known as Nigerian Air Force Panthers, graduated yesterday at the Regiment Training Centre Annex, Special Operations

Command of the Nigerian Air Force, Bauchi. Speaking during the graduation ceremony, after the Advanced Special

Operations Course 1/2022, the Air Officer Commanding, Ground Training Command, Air Vice Marshal Ibukunle Daramola said 285 personnel

were nominated for the training. Daramola said: "Out of the

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N250

Osinbajo Takes Campaign to Ibadan, Upbeat about Becoming Next President

● Says God does not make mistakes and has prepared him for president

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan
Vice President and Presidential aspirant on

the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Yemi Osinbajo, yesterday, in his first trip after declaration,

took his campaign to Ibadan Oyo State, where he met with the Olubadan of Ibadan, Oba Lekan Balogun

(Ali-Iwo Okunmade II) and thereafter interacted with APC stakeholders in the state.

On arrival in Ibadan, the Vice President received a rousing reception right from the airport and on the streets

by excited residents. Coming after Osinbajo

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2023: Under Pressure Jonathan Hints at Contesting, Tells Supporters to 'Watch out'

'I cannot tell you I'm declaring; the political process is ongoing'

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

Former President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday in Abuja came under intense pressure from his supporters, urging him to contest for president in 2023 and he did not disappoint, telling them that "the political process is ongoing; just watch out. just watch out."

The supporters, comprising largely women and youths, stormed the Jonathan Foundation's Abuja office, chanting his name, forcing him to come out to address them.

The former president acknowledged that youths wanted him to contest for President in 2023, but told the supporters that he could not, for now, tell Nigerians whether he would be contesting and that his final decision would manifest very soon.

Jonathan said: "I cannot declare because some processes are still ongoing. Yes, you are calling me to come and declare for the next election. I cannot tell you I'm declaring, the political process is ongoing. Just watch out. The key thing you must do is to pray that Nigeria gets somebody that carries young people along, somebody that can also work very hard to see that some of the problems raised are tackled.

"I sincerely appreciate the youths of Nigeria. For you to come this morning in this manner shows clearly that the youth are interested in politics.

"We have always wanted the youth to get involved in politics. And luckily, the Not Too Young to Run Act has made it very clear that young

Continued on page 5



DANGOTE AT THE VILLA...

L-R: President/Chief Executive Officer, DANGOTE Group, Aliko Dangote presenting a plaque to President Muhammadu Buhari during the courtesy visit of the Board of the Group to Buhari at the Presidential Villa, Abuja...yesterday.

GODWIN OMOIGUI

Court Orders Ex-Speaker Dogara to Vacate Seat over Defection... Page 5

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Court Orders Ex-Speaker Dogara to Vacate Seat over Defection

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Justice Donatus Okorowo of the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court has ordered the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Yakubu Dogara to vacate his seat as a member of the House of Representatives for defection.

Justice Okorowo ordered the immediate sack of Dogara who represents Dass, Tafawa Balewa and

Bogoro Federal Constituency of Bauchi State for defecting from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressives Congress (APC).

The judge held that Dogara cannot continue to occupy the seat in the ninth Assembly because his defection violated Section 68(1) (g) of the constitution.

Okorowo in a judgment in the suit seeking the removal of Dogara over his defection agreed with the submission

of the PDP (plaintiff) that by defecting from the party that sponsored him to the ninth National Assembly before the expiration of his tenure, Dogara ought to vacate the seat as he was no longer qualified to partake in the activities of the lower chamber.

The judge, who held that the action of the lawmaker is prohibited by law, agreed that the aim of Section 68(1) (g) was to check political prostitution among the

legislators.

"The judgment is therefore given in favour of the plaintiffs I hereby granted the reliefs sought by the plaintiffs," he declared.

PDP and one of its members in Bauchi State had, in a suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1060/20, sued Dogara, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

and the APC as 1st to 4th defendants respectively.

Justice Okorowo had, earlier in another judgment, dismissed the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/883/30 and filed by Incorporated Trustees of United Global Resources for Peace Organisation against Dogara and five others on the grounds that the group lacked locus standi to institute the matter.

Judgments, in the two separate suits filed against Dogara, were stalled due to

the FHC's Easter vacation which began on April 8 and will end April 25.

The PDP and the group had asked the court to remove Dogara as member representing Dass, Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro Federal Constituency of Bauchi State, over his defection to APC.

Dogara had, on July 24, 2020, defected from the PDP to the APC when he submitted a resignation letter to the Chairman of the Bogoro 'C' Ward in Bauchi State.

WAR AGAINST TERRORISTS: BRITISH MILITARY TRAINS 150 NIGERIAN SPECIAL FORCES CALLED PANTHERS, SET FOR DEPLOYMENT

285 personnel nominated for the course, only 150 were found fit after a series of medical and physical screening and inaugurated to commence the course.

"At the end of the course, 145 personnel, comprising three officers and 142 airmen will be graduating today (yesterday) and they have been found worthy in character and learning to qualify as Advanced Special Forces Operatives, also known as Nigerian Air Force Panthers."

The AOC, Ground Training Command said that the Special Forces operations are characterised by speed, precision, destabilising shock effects and perseverance of forces which require that these Special Forces operations are painstakingly selected to ensure the attainment of desired effects and outcomes.

He adds: "The kinds of effects that Special Forces operations are able to deliver are very critical at this material time, considering the fact that present threats to our national security are from violent non-state actors waging terrorist and insurgent campaigns against the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

As such, these newly bred operatives would be employed as part of our offensive to ensure normalcy and calm are restored to restive communities within Nigeria.

"Ground Training Command remains resolute in ensuring qualitative training to enable us to have the best quality, as well as the right numerical strength of personnel to prosecute the fight against terrorism and insurgency working in synergy with sister Services and other security agencies."

According to him, in equipping them for the task ahead, some of the curricula of the Advanced Special Operations Course entailed counter improvised explosive devices training, air-to-ground integration, remotely piloted aerial systems training, close quarter battle drills, among others, emphasising that, "as expected, the course was intentionally made tough to ensure that our trainees can withstand the gruelling physical conditions of ground operations."

In his speech, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, expressed optimism that the graduating students have imbibed the necessary

skills, tactics, techniques and procedures required to conduct special operations pursuant to achieving the operational objectives of the Nigerian Air Force.

Amao, who was represented by the Chief of Policy and Plan, Air Vice Marshal Charles Ohwo, said that in furtherance of his vision of enhancing and sustaining critical airpower capabilities required for joint force employment in pursuit of national security imperatives, the Nigerian Air Force has so far trained about 5,000 Regiment and

2,000 Special Operations Forces personnel.

Amao said the 150 graduating students of the Advanced Special Operations Course 1/2022 are however the first set of personnel to undergo in-Country Advanced Special Operations training, adding that the NAF's ability to train this large number of personnel at a reasonable cost was possible because the training was conducted in Nigeria."

Also speaking, the Commander, British Military Advisory Training Team, Col.

Rory Shannon, described the United Kingdom's relationship with Nigeria and with its military as "deep-rooted and very strong."

Shannon said, "At the Security and Defense Dialogue that was held between the United Kingdom and Nigeria's Armed Forces and other Agencies in January of this year, our Chief of Defense Staff Spoke reiterating a desire to strengthen links between our militaries including in this particular area.

"The Nigeria-UK relations is hugely important. The

deployment of what we've conveyed here will help save lives and defeat a common enemy. So, I know that there are continuing close cooperation, we will continue to contribute to improving the security situation."

The Advanced Operatives Course has helped develop the foundation, building on previous training, and setting participants and students up for much more effective counter-violent extremists operations in North-East Nigeria, the Lake Chad Basin and other troubled areas.

2023: UNDER PRESSURE JONATHAN HINTS AT CONTESTING, TELLS SUPPORTERS TO 'WATCH OUT'

people can contest almost every position in the country. So, we continue to encourage you to get involved in the political process."

Jonathan noted that the country was facing challenges, saying that some of the challenges started a long time ago, stressing that he believed in the interest of young people and that the challenges would be dealt with.

The supporters, who demanded the return of Jonathan as President in 2023, arrived in four buses

and displayed placards at Jonathan's Taraba Close, Maitama office.

Some of the placards read, "Goodluck declare now"; "We are sorry, Goodluck don't abandon us, come back"; "Goodluck please come"; and "Goodluck we love you", among others.

A spokesman for the supporters, Mayor Samuel, who is also the convener of the Youth Compatriots of Nigeria, said, "We were deceived and brainwashed by those who claimed they could do it in 2015.

"Now, we know better, under Jonathan the minimum wage could buy one or two bags of rice. What do we have today? We are begging President Jonathan to forgive us, we have realised our mistakes, we want him back to complete what he started."

Samuel admitted that they were deceived to believe that the administration of Jonathan was bad and that they were out in their numbers to seek Jonathan's forgiveness.

He noted that they had

realised their mistake and that the "saboteurs" that came after him were empty.

Samuel adds: "We are here to say sir, forgive us, come and lead us again. We are calling on you to come and take the mantle of leadership in 2023. Nigeria is in comatose. Please answer this call, the youth are here, the women are here, the children are here, pregnant women are here, please hear their cry.

"We are here to call on our former president. Nigeria is in a state of no return, it is in a state of comatose, which is why we are here calling on him to declare.

"All we need is a leader that will not discriminate, a Nigerian that will work for the South-South, South-east, South-west, and the north.

"The Transformation agenda was working until the saboteurs came to deceive us, to brainwash us. Now we have realised that those that deceived us are empty and have nothing to offer.

"We want Jonathan to run under the Nigeria Peoples Party. Any party that gives a ticket to Jonathan is a party of the masses, the party of the downtrodden and that's the party we will support."

One of the women speakers, Ms. Angela Obi said they were tired of the administration of President Buhari and called on Jonathan to come back.

She said: "We are dying, hunger wants to kill us, we are tired, please come back, we are suffering, we have no food to eat, we have no water, we need you back."

Also speaking on behalf of women, Ms. Ngozi Okafor said since the former president left office in 2015, both men and women had been suffering.

She said, "Children are dying, we are tired. We have turned to beggars, women are begging, children are begging. We don't need Baba Buhari again. Our children are no longer going to school."

OSINBAJO TAKES CAMPAIGN TO IBADAN, UPBEAT ABOUT BECOMING NEXT PRESIDENT

declared his intention to contest the 2023 presidential election on the platform of the APC last week Monday, the vice president intimated the Monarch of his intention to run for president.

He told the Olubadan that Nigeria needed leaders who deeply care about the common man and the progress of the nation.

The Vice President said: "I have followed you very closely. I think that one of the most important things is that the country needs people, those who have feelings for the common person; people who deeply care about the common man."

While praising the Olubadan for always being a lover of the common people, even before he ascended the throne, he said: "no matter in whatever shape of form, even as Kabiyesi, you are still going to be the Kabiyesi of the common man, Kabiyesi of the people."

According to the vice president, the people of Ibadan are not only blessed with an intellectual but one who cares for the people.

Osinbajo said: "As the Olubadan, Your Royal Majesty, you are a great gift to the people of Ibadan and also to us as a nation. I pray that your years will be very long and that all the people of this great city,

kingdom will feel the impact, and that they will all know that you are someone who cares about them.

"As you know, on April 11, 2022, I declared my intention to run for the presidency of our great land under the flag of our party, the great party, the All Progressives Congress. I did so while taking into account the fact that our country needs all of those who are willing to serve to the best of their capacity and knowledge.

"With great humility and sincerity, I come to your majesty, that after serving about seven years as Vice President, and also as acting, under our President, President Muhammadu Buhari, who truly gave me every opportunity; he opened up doors in a way that most deputies may not have experienced, and entrusting a lot to my care, including very sensitive positions.

"After all of that, I felt that it would be the right thing to do, to make that experience available to the people of our country. By the grace of God and the will of the people, if I am voted in as the President come 2023, I believe that there is so much to do. The desire of our hearts is that our country will be much greater and will be

able to attain all of the great potentials of our people."

Describing the monarch as a "father of all," Osinbajo thanked him for the warm reception, noting that he will always covet the Olubadan's "prayers and good wishes all the time."

He added: "You can be sure that wherever I am and in whatever situation I am, I hold you in the highest esteem, I will always continuously support whatever it is that you want to do, either for yourself or the great people of Ibadan."

The Olubadan described the Vice President as "a wonderful human being, a wonderful person,

"Hopefully, in God's name, you will be President of Nigeria," he told the VP, adding that "may Allah grant you success on what you have in mind, may Allah support you. I can spend the next two hours just praying for you."

Ibadan High Chiefs present also expressed their support for the Vice President's aspirations, declaring that "we are with you."

Meeting with APC Stakeholders

Osinbajo later departed the palace to interact with APC leaders and delegates in Oyo State at an impressive

event where his speech was often interrupted with singing as the audience kept bursting out in festive renditions of different political lyrics welcoming the VP's emergence and expressions of support for him.

He said: "In the seven years that I have been involved, because the President considered it the right thing to do and, in his generosity, and openness, he gave me every opportunity to serve, including sensitive international assignments.

"As you know, I also acted as President during certain periods when the President was away and everything I learnt as acting President has prepared me to run as President of our country.

"God doesn't make mistakes. God is deliberate in everything He does and by giving me all of these opportunities to understand governance for myself at the highest level of our country, all of it was not just so that I can sit down and write a memoir, no, it was to come handily one day and I believe the time has come.

"I believe that the time has come and I have the responsibility to my country, to you, to all our children and the coming generations to give all of what I have learnt, everything I have

learnt, all of the services to be able to give it to our country. To serve our country faithfully and honestly is my intention.

"One advantage I would have is that on day one, I can hit the ground running because I know what it takes."

Other speakers at the event included Senator Teslim Folarin, Chief Niyi Akintola, Chief Jacob Tilley-Gyado and the APC Chairman in Oyo State Hon. Isaac Ajiboye Omodewu, who all expressed support for the Vice President's aspiration.

According to Akintola, "When it comes to the candidacy of Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, there are no factions at all."

The Vice President, who travelled with a number of National Assembly members from Abuja, was received by the Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Engr. Rauf Olaniyan at the Ibadan airport. The Deputy Governor also joined the vice president for the visit to the Olubadan.

Members of the National Assembly with the Vice President besides Folarin, included Senator Adamu Bukkachuwa, Kola Balogun, Fatahu Muhammad, Odeunmi Olusegun, Shehu Saleh Rijau and Karu Simon.

Niger State Wants More Military Operations in LGs Dominated by Terrorists, Pleads with FG

Laleye Dipo in Minna

The Niger State Government has appealed to the federal government to direct

more military operations in terrorists infested local government areas of the state.

The state government named the affected local

government areas as Shiroro, Munya and Rafi.

The Commissioner for Local Government and Internal Security, Mr. Emmanuel Umar, in a statement made available to journalists yesterday said that more military operations would lead to the elimination of the terrorists, thereby making it easy for the villagers to return to the farms from where they have been

sacked by the terrorists.

Umar, who expressed delight that the previous operations led to the neutralisation of many terrorists while many arms and ammunitions were recovered, said many people who were kidnapped were rescued by the joint military operation during the exercise.

"The efforts of the joint operations have yielded a lot of success which the state

is happy about as many bandits and terrorists have already been eliminated in the affected LGAs.

"While the state government appreciates the victories recorded during these operations, it also looks forward to a sustained operation to eradicate bandits from the state. These efforts will no doubt restore confidence in the communities within the area, which will

enable them return back to their farms," the commissioner said.

Umar, however, disputed the claim that during one of the ground operations by the security forces some civilians were killed saying "to the best of the knowledge of the state government, there are no civilians resident in these areas for some time now due to the infiltrations and activities."

2023: Sanwo-Olu Tells Political Appointees with Ambitions to Resign

Segun James

As the 2023 general election date draws near, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has asked all political appointees including Commissioners, Special Advisers, and others in Lagos State seeking elective offices next year to resign.

Also directed by the governor to tender their resignation letters to the Secretary to the State Government (SSG) were appointees seeking to be delegates for party primaries for elective offices in 2023.

The governor's directive which was contained in a circular issued by the State's Head of Service, Hakeem Muri-Okunola, also ordered all appointees and civil servants eyeing elective offices and aiming to participate in party primaries as well as other political activities should resign before April 19th, 2022.

As stated in the directives released on April 14th, 2022, anyone aiming to contest for elective offices during the 2023 general election and still in office may be disregarding the governor's directive.

Although the E-document with Ref No: CIR/HOS/'22/Vol.1/017 was made public on April 22nd, 2022, the governor stated that the move was in compliance with Section 84 (12) of the Electoral Act 2022, signed by President Muhammadu

Buhari, which provides that political appointees aspiring to contest elections must resign their positions before the conduct of political party primaries.

"No political appointees at any level shall be a voting delegate or be voted for at the Convention or Congress of any political party for the purpose of the nomination of candidates for any election," the section states.

Some of the appointees who may be resigning are Commissioner for Wealth Creation and Employment, Yetunde Arobieke, Special Adviser to the Governor on Transportation, Toyin Fayinka, Commissioner for Tourism, Uzamat Akinbile-Yusuf, and others who have indicated their desire to contest for elective offices.

According to the circular: "It is hereby notified for general information, in line with the recently amended Electoral Act and provision of rule 040524 of the Lagos State Public Service Rules (2015), that Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the governor of Lagos State, has approved the release of all political appointees who are delegates to the state House of Assembly, House of Representatives, Senate, Governorship and Presidential primaries election, including those who are holding positions in the party as well as public servants who may wish to engage in partisan political activities or seek elective offices."

Police Rescues 15-month-old Baby, Mother Abducted By Terrorists in Katsina

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The officers of the Katsina State Police Command have rescued a 15-month-old baby and her 30-year-old mother, Hama Sanusi after successfully repelling terrorists' attack on Tsamiya Gamzako Village in Kafur Local Government Area of the state.

The police operatives also killed two terrorists and recovered one AK-47 rifle with four rounds of 7.62mm ammunition and two locally fabricated pistols with six rounds.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Gambo Isah, while displacing the corpses of the terrorists before journalists in Katsina, said the terrorists invaded the village at the wee hours of Thursday.

He explained that the monsters earlier abducted the nursing mother and her little daughter, but after an extensive fierce gun duel between the gallant officers and the criminals, they were rescued unhurt.

He said, "Thursday at about 0400hrs, a distress call

was received that terrorists in their numbers, armed with AK-47 rifles, attacked Tsamiyar Gamzako Village, Kafur LGA and kidnapped one HaMa Sanusi, 'f', aged 30yrs and her little daughter, Aisha Sanusi, 'f', age 15 months.

"Consequently, a combined team of police and vigilante groups were alerted. The team blocked and engaged the hoodlums into a fierce gun duel.

"The team successfully repelled the terrorists and neutralised two of them. The kidnapped victims were rescued alive unhurt."

The superintendent of police assured members of the public that the police in the state under the watch of CP Idrisu Dabban Dauda, will continue to deal decisively with recalcitrant terrorists until they are all brought to book.

Consequently, he called on residents of the state to continue to cooperate with security agencies by giving out useful information on the movement and whereabouts of criminals in the state.



YOU'RE WELCOME ...

L-R: Former Chief of General Staff, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe (rtd); Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma and Chief Onyema Ugochukwu, at the Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport, Owerri...yesterday.

Delta Court Adjourns Olu of Warri's Missing Crown Case to June 1

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

The Chief Magistrate Court 2 sitting in Warri, Delta State, has adjourned till June 1, the case instituted against the embattled Ologboser of Warri Kingdom, Chief Ayiri Emami, by the state government over the alleged missing crown of Olu of Warri Kingdom.

Chief Magistrate Ejiro Diejomo (Mrs.) adjourned the case, with suit number: No. MW/175/C/2022 yesterday after listening to arguments from both the prosecuting lawyers led by Prof. Abiodun Amude-Kannike (SAN) and defence lawyers headed by Chief Victor Otomiewo over application for stay of proceedings filed by the prosecuting counsels.

Prof. Abiodun Amuda-Kannike (SAN) is the lead prosecutor's counsel having been granted fiat by the Delta State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Isaiah Bozimo, to prosecute the matter on behalf of the state with Chief Robinson Ariyo, Jolone Ikomi and FJ Atie, as co-applicant counsels.

While Chief Victor Otomiewo, a former Delta State Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice, is the lead defence counsel with Chief Emmanuel Uti, Warri NBA Chairman; Presley Okojie, E. F. Akporuvweku, O. Edowe, E. S. O. Ogholaja and M. K. Ighomre appearing as the co-defence counsels.

At the resumed hearing, the

lead counsel to the prosecutor, Amuda-Kannike, cited Section 304 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, (ACJA) 2017 while praying for stay-of-proceedings of the matter by the court, a motion, which was vehemently opposed by the lead counsel to Chief Emami, Chief Otomiewo, quoting Section 36 of the 1999 Constitution.

Chief Otomiewo described the Interlocutory application brought by the prosecutor as "incompetent", saying there's no provision for interlocutory appeal.

The prosecutor's counsel had filed the interlocutory application for stay of proceedings after the court ruled against a motion for the court to recuse herself from the case based on a

letter written by Warri Council of Chiefs over allegation that the magistrate was biased.

The lead defence counsel cited Section 477 which forbids interlocutory application adding that the law has taken care of the motion already brought before the court and noted that the response by Amuda-Kannike wasn't same with the prayers filed in his motion.

Otomiewo further argued that "There's nothing like Ayirimi as he then was" maintaining that when an Appeal has been entered, no lower court can make further order. He therefore urged the court to dismiss the stay-of-proceedings as sought by the applicant.

Society Has further Disabled Us, Lament Persons Living with Disability

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) have decried the conditions they have had to live with in Nigeria and other West African countries, insisting that there are so many physical and psychological hindrances that are present in the region to further incapacitate them and add to their disability.

Speaking in Abuja during the week at the opening of a three-day regional meeting of disability inclusion experts in West Africa, the Executive Secretary National

Commission for Persons with Disability, Mr. James Lalu, called for removal of barriers hindering the inclusion of persons with disability in the scheme of things in Nigeria and the rest of West Africa region.

He said that persons with disabilities are known to be faced with various social challenges including marginalisation in employments as well as discrimination by the society, and it is against this backdrop that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) gathered

experts from the sub-region to review disability inclusion laws, policies and programmes in its member states, and to identify gaps and levels of compliance with international standards.

According to him, key findings of the study to be considered by the experts will provide evidence-based data for policy makers to utilise in mainstreaming disability issues into development policy and programming.

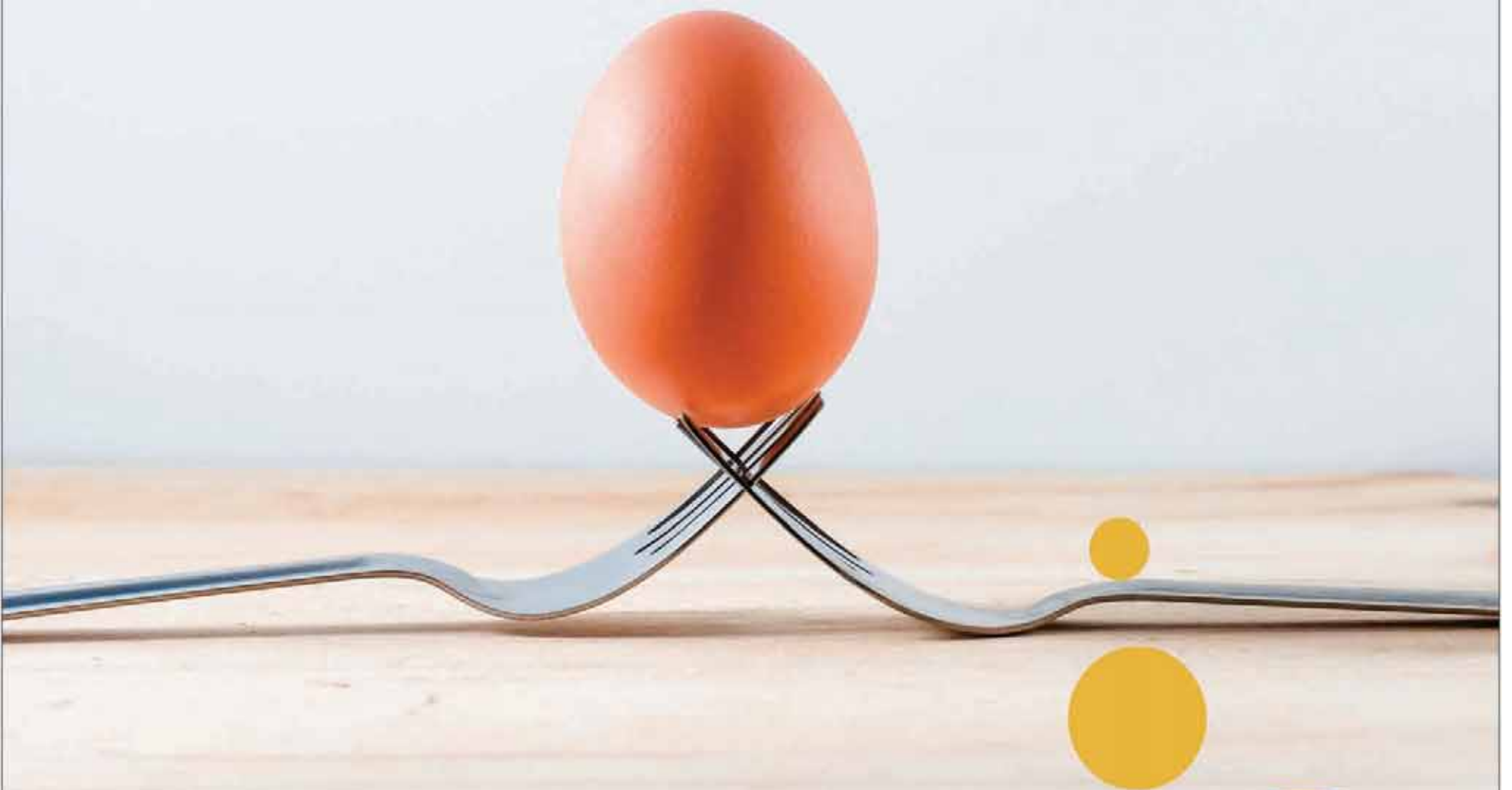
Represented by his Technical Assistant, Mr.

Yusuf Iyodo, the Executive Secretary National Commission for Persons With Disabilities in the Sub-region, said they would now have a voice if the recommendations of the study are implemented.

ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Dr. Siga Fatima Jagne, said the commission would continue to encourage member states to create an enabling environment under which the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities are addressed in every sector.



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NEWS

Aregbesola: Correctional Facilities Now Impregnable

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, has said the nation's correctional facilities are now impregnable to attacks, insisting that the federal government has taken all needed measures to secure them against intruders.

The minister made this assertion yesterday in Abuja while fielding questions from journalists during the 2021 third and fourth quarter review of the performance of the ministry and its paramilitary agencies.

Many correctional facilities in the last few months have been attacked with prisoners let loose which has called for worries among Nigerians.

Aregbesola while responding to allegations that some high profile inmates at the Kuje Custodial Center in Abuja, are being lodged in nearby hotels and not in the correctional facility, said: "I have said it repeatedly that all that we must do to make our correctional facilities impregnable were done, however the allegations you raised are so worrisome that I want to even appeal to the press to investigate when you hear anything."

He assured Nigerians that correctional facilities across the country are well secured and it is near impossible to lodge any inmate in any hotel instead of correctional facilities.

He asked: How is it possible for an inmate in the correctional facility to live in a hotel? It is simply impossible so the answer is that that allegation is false and it is

almost impossible."

The minister while admitting that urbanisation have brought development of settlement close to some correctional centres including that of Kuje, noted that: "there is a minimum setback between all correctional centres and any human development and I want to believe that is observed even in the Kuje Correctional facility and in all of our other facilities and where for whatever reason that is not yet fully enforced, we are going to enforce it."

Aregbesola, while giving a scorecard on the performance of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), said it is the most performing paramilitary agency as it has introduced a number of innovations and strategies that have yielded results in protecting the public and critical infrastructure in the country.

He commended the establishment of the Corps' Female Squad which he said has buffered security across schools against kidnapping.

He also assured all of better service delivery in passports processing by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), saying most of the challenges and problems faced during passport processing emanated from the applicants because of faulty data imputation and other errors.

He said: "The operations of the Federal Fire Service (FFS) grew from 14 states and FCT before this administration to all the 36 states of the federation, all of them equipped with modern fire-fighting

equipment."

In his speech, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Dr. Shuaib Belgore, said the quarterly review is

conducted by the ministry to identify gaps, challenges and areas of improvement through an assessment of its performance and that

of agencies under it using key performance indicators provided by the federal government for internal security.

He said "The discussions at this meeting will further identify gaps of implantation of programmes and policies that are being implemented."



HEALTHY COLLABORATION...

Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd) (m) flanked by L-R: Kennechi Nnoruka, Coordinator, External Affairs; Sunday Zirangey, Director, Intelligence (both of NDLEA); Antonio Hubbard, former Assistant Director for Africa; Robert Bascoe, in-coming Head of Lagos Country Office; Channelle Wallace, out-going Head of Lagos Country Office and Patrick McDarby, Assistant Director for Africa, all of United States Drug Enforcement Administration when the DEA top officials visited the NDLEA chairman for talks on areas of collaboration at the Agency's National Headquarters in Abuja at the weekend

Strike: FG-NASU Renegotiation Deadlocked As Union Stage Walkout

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

A meeting of the Renegotiation Committee of the federal government and the Non Academic Staff Union of Universities and Allied institutions (NASU) on the 2009 agreement with the Universities and Inter-University Centres scheduled for yesterday failed to hold.

A statement signed by the Chairman of the Joint Action Committee of SSANU and NASU, Mr. Adeyemi Peters, said that the meeting could not be

held because the government side was not ready.

He said the NASU renegotiation team was at the National Universities Commission (NUC) venue of the meeting but it did not hold.

"NASU went to the venue of the meeting at the National Universities Commission (NUC), Abuja full of high hopes that this very important renegotiation meeting is a process that will bring peace to the University system.

"Unfortunately, the Govern-

ment Team of the Renegotiation Committee led by Prof. Nimi Briggs, the Pro-Chancellor of Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State was not ready for any renegotiation.

"This was very obvious from the moment the meeting commenced looking at the first item on the report of the Sub-committee of the Renegotiating Committee," it said.

Peters said the meeting of the federal government and NASU renegotiation committee

chaired by Dr. Wale Babalakin, SAN, the then Pro-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, held on Friday, 10th August, 2018 set up a Sub-committee comprising members of Government Team and NASU in the Renegotiation Committee to examine the Memorandum of Demand (MOD) of NASU and identified issues that were contentious, non-contentious and those that required further clarification in order to facilitate the renegotiation of the issues involved.

Kenya's Ex-president, Mwai Kibaki, Dies at 90

Former Kenyan President, Mwai Kibaki, who led the East African country for more than a decade, has died, his successor Uhuru Kenyatta announced yesterday. He was 90.

"It is a sad day for us as a country. We have lost a great leader," Kenyatta said in an address on state television.

He ordered a period of national mourning until sunset on the day Kibaki is to be buried, with all flags to be flown at

half-mast.

Kibaki served as Kenya's third president, from 2002 to 2013.

"As a leading figure in Kenya's post-independence history... Kibaki earned the bidding respect and affection of the people of this nation," Kenyatta said.

"President Kibaki will forever be remembered as a gentleman in Kenya's politics. A brilliant debater whose eloquence, wit and charm won the day time and time again."

Adebayo, SDP Presidential Hopeful, Purchases Form

A presidential aspirant on the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Prince Adewole Adebayo, yesterday purchased his expression of interest and presidential nomination forms at the party secretariat for N33 million.

Adebayo, an international lawyer and businessman, after purchasing the forms, told journalists that he was in the presidential race to eradicate poverty.

He said Nigeria has all it takes to ensure farewell to poverty and insecurity once and for all, adding that justice in every sphere of our national affairs must be enthroned.

Adebayo said: "We must implement Chapter 2 of the Nigerian Constitution to make Government serve the people in the interest of the people", the presidential hopeful stated.

"Today I took the leap of faith to invest in our future by obtaining the expression of Interest and presidential nomination forms of the only credible alternative.

"History shall record this as the moment the fortunes of Nigeria and Nigerians turned around".

Adebayo, who campaigns using the slogan *HopeAgain2023*, thus joins the rank of leading aspirants to have purchased their presidential forms.

Nigeria Needs Urgent Rescue, Obi Tells Former Ministers

If Nigeria is not urgently rescued from the dangerous path she appears to be inexorably marching towards, we may not be able to contain the implosion that will become inevitable, which all patriotic Nigerians, including all of you gathered here and my humble self pray against every day.

These were the words of former governor of Anambra State and a frontline presidential aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mr. Peter Obi, when he met with the Forum of Past

Ministers of Nigeria in Abuja yesterday.

Speaking to over 50 former federal ministers, Obi said that the condition of Nigeria should agitate all men and women of goodwill that had the interest of the country at heart.

To buttress the suffering and agony in the land, Obi said that all food items had doubled in their prices in the last year and wondered how Nigerians survive.

"Today, Nigerians spend over 100 per cent of their salaries on feeding, that they scarcely save

for other exigencies. In addition, we painfully have over 90 million Nigerians living under poverty and millions are jobless, especially youths in their productive years

Explaining further how the country has deteriorated, Obi said: "In 2014 unemployment rate was 10 per cent, it is now 33 per cent, which clearly shows that we are moving from worse to worst, or as some say, from 'flying pan to fire.' What is lamentable is that it is the same with all other indicators."

To make matters worse, Obi

said, "In the midst of the suffering, Nigerians are confronted by the worsening security situation, erosion of those centripetal forces that should keep us together, as well as unbridled borrowing that will end up enslaving Nigerians."

Obi, who admitted that what is happening was not restricted to Nigeria, said that one of the solutions other countries had embraced was electing their best, those with track record of excellence and knowledge of the economy to lead them at this critical time. For him, that is what Nigeria needs today.

Chrisland Schools: NAPPS Seeks Public Caution over Comment on Sex Video

Funmi Ogundare

National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS), yesterday, appealed to members of the public to refrain from making unsavoury comments over the sex video involving some students of Chrisland Schools, who represented their school at the World School Games, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The association said the

move would go a long way in ensuring the mental well being of the minors involved.

The association also called for the introduction of a Lagos State Monitoring and Supervisory Committee among the school management team pending the conclusion of the investigation.

The National President, Chief Yomi Otubela who made this appeal in a

statement made available to THISDAY, stated that the acts portraying moral decadence are not exclusive to schools, as the issue cuts across every aspect of the society.

According to him, "Since children are a reflection of the society they live in, it, therefore, shows that a concerted effort will be needed to nip the malaise in the bud. Sadly, moral decadence has eaten deep

into the moral fabrics of the society and the result is what we are witnessing today in the society including our educational institutions."

He expressed concern that parents are shying away from their responsibility of shaping their children's future through inculcating morally acceptable behaviour in them, adding that they prefer to shift the responsibility to the schools.

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NEWS

APC Directs Six Directors to Proceed on Compulsory Leave

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

Sequel to the submission of the report by the Transition Committee, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has directed six directors of the party to proceed on compulsory leave with immediate effect.

The party in a letter dated 21st of April, 2022 and signed by the National Secretary, Otunba Iyiola Omisore, directed all the directors to go on leave and hand over their departments to the most senior person.

The letter sighted by THISDAY also revealed that the Head of the Legal Department was also affected by the directive.

Recall that the National Chairman of the party, Senator Abdulahi Adamu, had set up the committee after he assumed the leadership of the party to know the state of finances of the party and to study the handing over note of the defunct Caretaker/Extraordinary Convention Planning

Committee (CEPC) and other sundry matters affecting the National Secretariat of the party.

"We want to know where the party is exactly so that we don't get taken by the exuberance of winning an election and just plunge into the pond pool or not know how deep or the temperature of the water. As for you, the director of admin, you have no hiding place. We will count on your loyalty to the party," Adamu had hinted.

However, THISDAY gathered that the decision of the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party to send the directors on leave was informed by the recommendation of the Transition Committee.

A reliable source told THISDAY that, "that the directive was in furtherance of the move by the National Working Committee (NWC) plan for the reorganisation of the National Secretariat of the party."



WE'RE WITH YOU...

Zonal Woman Leader, South-west, Hon. Mrs. Yetunde Shakirat Adesanya, and APC's Presidential Aspirant, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, during Zonal and State Women Leaders' visit to Asiwaju Tinubu in Asokoro, Abuja.. yesterday

Customs Approves Re-opening of 4 Additional Border Posts

Idiroko, Jibiya, Kamba, Ikom

James Emejo in Abuja

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) yesterday announced the reopening of four additional land borders across the country.

The move followed President Muhammadu Buhari's December 16, 2020 directive which granted approval for a phased reopening of the borders including Mfum,

Seme, Illela and Maigatari.

However, the customs in a circular issued by the Deputy Comptroller-General (EI&I), EI Edozhe, dated April 22, 2022, further announced that the Idiroko border post in Ogun State, Jibiya in Katsina, Kamba in Kebbi and Ikom in Cross River had all been approved for immediate reopening.

The statement also directed customs formations and joint

border patrol teams to take note and ensure that the proper manning takes place in compliance with extant operational guidelines.

The federal government had in March 2020 has announced the total closure of all land borders that were hitherto partially closed in order contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secretary to the Government

of the Federation SGF and Chairman of the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Boss Mustapha, had further announced measures approved by the government to protect the civil servants.

Earlier in 2018, the federal government had also approved the closure of the borders with its neighbours to check rice smuggling into the country.

Pharmacists Urge FG to Deal with Rot in Medical Practice

The Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACP/N) has called on the federal government to pay attention to the rot in medical practice in the country.

The National Chairman of ACP/N, Mr. Adewale Oladigbolu, who described as hypocritical, a recent statement by the Registrar of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), Dr. Tajudeen Sanusi, calling on regulatory bodies in Health to wake-up to their responsibility of regulating, monitoring, evaluating and punishing the behaviours of their erring members.

In a document signed by Dr. Oladigbolu he referred to Dr. Sanusi's prescription of disciplinary actions against Medical Officers caught "toying with the lives of their patients by being negligent, corrupt and in some cases, showing gross incompetence while managing

their patients," ACP/N accused MDCN of guilty of ineptitude in enforcing discipline on its erring members.

"Contrary to the insinuations of the Registrar of the MDCN that it punishes the behaviour of its erring members, we have never seen this happen to bigwigs in the medical profession in Nigeria.

"The ACP/N recalls an incident when late President Musa Yar'Adua ordered the EFCC to arrest a sitting Physician-Minister of Health who was accused alongside others for mismanaging unspent funds of the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) in the preceding year's fiscal budget.

"All that the medical professionals offered through the Nigeria Medical Council (NMA) was to regret this development while giving the impression that its members had integrity."

UNICEF: Children Still Being Denied Basic Rights in Nigeria

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has bemoaned the continued neglect of the rights of children in most states of the country despite domestication of the Child Rights Act.

It said that 30 out of the 36 states in the country, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have so far domesticated the Child Rights Act since its passage into law.

The UN body argued that for Nigeria to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the plight of women and children's rights must be taken very seriously.

According to experts at a workshop on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a two-day workshop organised by the UNICEF in conjunction with the Child Rights Information Bureau of the Ministry of Information and Culture in Enugu yesterday, the neglect of women and children has contributed a

lot to the poor performance of Nigeria in the world ranking for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

They said that while children are being denied their rights to education and adequate health-care, women are incapacitated economically.

Delivering a paper titled 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) As Child Rights', a Lecturer at the University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Dr. Chidi Ezinwa said that most of the SDGs were about child rights, adding that the goals cannot be attained when children are denied rights to survival, education, good health, freedom and others.

He said Nigeria domesticated the Child Rights since 1993 but have still not gotten it right in the area of protecting children's rights and full attention to their educational and health needs.

14 Political Parties Notify INEC of Primaries

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Fourteen political parties out of 18 political parties have notified the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of their readiness for the presidential, governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly primaries.

This was disclosed yesterday by the Chairman of INEC, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, during a meeting with all the 37 Resident Electoral Commissioners in Abuja.

The commission however did not mention the four political parties that have not notified the commission of their primary elections.

All the political parties are expected from May to June 4 to have started and completed their primary elections.

The commission further told the political parties that they must present the hard and soft copies of their membership register 30 days before each primary election.

According to the INEC chairman, "The next activity under the timetable is the conduct of party primaries by political parties. So far, 14 parties have submitted their notices and schedule of primaries to the Commission.

"As required by law, the Commission shall monitor the primaries in the constituencies where the parties intend to field candidates. This means that the state offices will be heavily involved in the exercise. I urge you to exercise our monitoring responsibility with absolute neutrality. There are sanctions for violation of the law and you should know this and warn our staff accordingly."

Prof. Yakubu further stressed, "Let me also seize this opportunity to remind political parties that by the provision of Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2022, each party is required to maintain a membership register in hard and soft copy and to make such register available to the Commission not later than 30 days before the date fixed for primaries, congresses and conventions. So far, only one political party has complied.

"It is a mandatory requirement of the law and all parties are required to comply. Doing otherwise is like going into an election without the register of voters. There can be no credible primary or general election without a credible register of voters," he stated.

Again, Another Bomb Blast Rocks Jalingo

Wole Ayodele in Jalingo

Four days after a bomb blast killed six people at Iware cattle market in Ardo Kola Local Government Area of Taraba State, another bomb blast yesterday rocked Jalingo, the state capital.

The blast occurred at exactly 8.00p.m. at a local drinking spot behind the old Catholic Church in Nukkei area of the metropolis.

Though no life was lost in the blast, two people (a woman and a child) sustained serious injuries and have been taken to the Federal Medical Centre, Jalingo, for treatment.

A resident of the area, Dan Azumi told THISDAY that the bomb exploded shortly after those drinking at the spot dispersed to their various homes. According to him, "The

explosion occurred at the burukutu joint close to the house of the Mai Angwar, Chief John Awoshiri and it was not up to five minutes after the people at the joint dispersed when the bomb exploded.

"We thank God that nobody died but two people sustained injuries while a motorcycle that was parked close to the joint was destroyed including the fence of the next building," he stated.

All efforts to speak with the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Ibrahim Usman, proved abortive as he did not respond to calls to his mobile line.

A bomb that exploded a burukutu spot at Iware cattle market on Tuesday had killed six people and left several others injured.

Bolaji Idowu Calls For Unity amongst Ministers as ISM Begins

Lead Pastor, Harvesters International Christian Centre (HICC), Bolaji Idowu, has called on church leaders and ministers to be united for the expansion of the gospel of the kingdom.

The pastor made the call yesterday during the announcement of the fourth edition of International School of Ministry (ISM) Global Ministers Classroom (GMC) conference in Lagos.

The programme slated for April 29 and April 30, 2022, initiated by the founder and president of LoveWorld Incorporated, also known as Christ Embassy, Chris Oyakhilome, is a conglomeration of ministers of the gospel: Pastors, Bishops, Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets and Ministry leaders. Speaking on the programme,

Idowu said so much is happening in the world and it has become imperative that ministers of the gospel come together in the unity of the faith, to strategically plan the expansion.

"This year is the 4th edition of this historic classroom with Pastor Chris and it will be a very transforming and transformative time for ministers of the gospel," he said.

He added that they are therefore filled with great excitement, anticipation and joy for all that the Lord will accomplish in their lives as ministers of the gospel as they participate in this global classroom from around the world and in particular, ministers of the gospel here in Nigeria.



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COMMENTARY

YUSUF NUHU'S STERLING EXAMPLE

Kene Obiezu commends the Emir of Agaie for rescuing two young girls from going into forced marriages

Whatever history or biology has said about the inferiority of women to men or the superiority of men to women continues to do a great disservice to humanity. In a world wracked by challenges which require people everywhere to row in the same direction, there is no doubt that whatever excludes anyone who can make a meaningful contribution is bad for business.

Women contribute a lot to national development in spite of the many hurdles placed on their path to full and equal participation in national life. And there is no doubt that if given the chance, women can do even more to contribute their quota to national building.

To get these chance means removing many barriers to women fulfilling their potential. One of these barriers is that of child marriage or early marriage or whatever it is it chooses to be called.

Thus, sometimes, against their clearly stated will, girls are married off to men who see them as nothing more than trophies to be collected and kept.

The Emir of Agaie in Niger State, Mr. Yusuf Nuhu recently described to newsmen how he rescued two girls from their parents who were forcing them into marriage against their will. Mr. Agaie spoke during a sensitization campaign against gender-based violence in his community.

Mr. Yusuf Nuhu also disclosed that he had refused to release the girls to their parents ever since. His actions provide a worthy example of how to protect women, an example befitting royalty. His sterling example is especially poignant given that it is coming from the heart of the traditional institution which has sometimes acquiesced to some of the worst treatments meted out to women anywhere.

In Nigeria and in many other countries of the



HIS ACTIONS PROVIDE A WORTHY EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PROTECT WOMEN, AN EXAMPLE BEFITTING ROYALTY. HIS STERLING EXAMPLE IS ESPECIALLY POIGNANT GIVEN THAT IT IS COMING FROM THE HEART OF THE TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION WHICH HAS SOMETIMES ACQUIESCED TO SOME OF THE WORST TREATMENTS METED OUT TO WOMEN ANYWHERE

world where women largely bear the brunt of discrimination dressed in religious or traditional garbs, the traditional institutions have in many cases served as the persecutor and not the protector.

Many a times, citing their duty to uphold the customs and traditions of their people, they allow women under them to be subjected to the most horrific forms of abuse all in keeping with traditional practices which have become antiquated by all measures.

Many of those who marry off girls that should still be upon their mothers' knees usually know to craft attractive arguments to mask their pedophilia. From arguments about protecting girls from promiscuity to ones about their religions not just allowing it but also instructing it as a matter of virtue, they know how to mask their true intentions.

However, the kernel of the question whenever justice is sought for a woman who has been abused, or proactive and preventive measures considered to preclude those abuses from happening at all, must be whether the rights of the woman or girl has been fully respected in each case, and not just the rights prescribed by municipal laws which may be inadequate, but rights as recognized by international instruments, and as observed and respected by the international community.

To build a country where everyone can feel safe and secure enough to contribute their two kobo to national conversation and national development, every institution in the country and everyone working in such institutions must ensure that the protection of vulnerable groups in the society is given supreme consideration.

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THE HIGH PREVALENCE OF MALARIA

A lot of lives can be saved by observing basic hygiene standards, writes Daniel Ighakpe

A recent walk down the street somewhere around my neighbourhood revealed a large crowd of people gathered around the 'Agbo' seller, each waiting to buy a dose of the herb - a popular concoction usually used for treating malaria and other maladies like Haemorrhoids, Typhoid fever; and others. Many people who cannot afford the high cost of malaria drugs regularly visit the 'Agbo' joint to get a dose of this herbal concoction. Even many others who have been taking prescribed malaria medications, but whose symptoms keep recurring, come to visit the 'Agbo' joint.

Agbo is a herbal concoction native to Yoruba tribe and is slowly penetrating communities across Africa. It is made by boiling leaves, roots, and/or barks of specific trees in water or infusing them in alcohol. Malaria is a preventable and treatable disease that continues to have a devastating impact on the health and livelihood of people around the world. In 2020, there were an estimated 241 million new cases of malaria and 627 000 malaria-related deaths in 85 countries. More than two thirds of deaths were among children under the age of five living in the WHO African Region.

World Malaria Day is observed annually on April 25, to bring global attention to the efforts being made to bring an end to malaria, and encourage action to reduce suffering and death from the disease. World Malaria Day 2022 will be marked under the theme "Harness innovation to reduce the malaria disease burden and save lives." The World Health Organization (WHO) is calling for investments and innovation that

bring new vector control approaches, diagnostics, antimalarial medicines and other tools to speed the pace of progress against malaria.

What is malaria? Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Its symptoms include fever, chills, sweats, headache, body aches, nausea, and vomiting. The symptoms may sometimes recur every 48 to 72 hours, depending on the type of parasite involved and how long the person has had the disease.

Malaria is one of the major health issues affecting many countries around the world. Most malaria cases and deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa. And Nigeria, the most populous Black country, is one of the countries most affected. Therefore, this year's World Malaria Day reminds us of the need to protect ourselves against mosquito bites by using insecticide treated mosquito nets, wear clothes that cover most parts of the body, and use insect repellent on exposed skin.

Children under five years of age are the most vulnerable group affected by malaria. Statistics have shown that each year in Nigeria, an average of 300,000 children are killed by malaria. The disease is similarly responsible for 11 per cent of all maternal deaths. What is disturbing is that a vast majority of these deaths are linked to highly-preventable causes, such as basic healthcare, hygiene, homelessness and sanitation practices. Most of these deaths were also fuelled by poverty and a lack of awareness in the general

populace.

In view of the foregoing, creating awareness on the need to keep our environment clean can be very helpful. All stakeholders, including government, health practitioners, corporate organisations, and NGOs, can get involved in creating such awareness on malaria prevention and control.

Another method that can help in malaria control is surveillance. This entails tracking of the disease and programmatic responses, and taking action based on the data received. Countries with a high burden of malaria such as Nigeria require effective surveillance at all points on the path to malaria elimination. Therefore, stronger malaria surveillance systems are urgently needed to enable a timely and effective malaria response in endemic regions, to prevent outbreaks and resurgences, to track progress, and to hold governments and the global malaria community accountable.

Although a lot of progress has been made in efforts to control the malaria scourge, there still remain some serious issues that threaten the progress that has been made thus far. What are some of these issues? One of them is the emerging resistance to insecticides among Anopheles mosquitoes. According to one World Malaria Report, 68 countries reported mosquito resistance to at least one of the five commonly-used insecticide classes in the period 2010-2017. Among these countries, 57 reported resistance to two or more insecticide classes.

There is therefore an urgent need for new and improved tools in the global response to malaria. The WHO also

underscores the critical need for all countries with ongoing malaria transmission to develop and apply effective insecticide resistance management strategies.

Yet another serious issue undermining malaria control effort is the issue of antimalarial drug resistance. Resistance to antimalarial medicines is a recurring problem. Protecting the efficacy of antimalarial medicines is critical to malaria control and elimination. Regular monitoring of drug efficacy is needed to inform treatment policies in malaria-endemic countries such as Nigeria. It also helps to ensure early detection of, and response to, drug resistance.

Government can support prevention of malaria by ensuring there is good environmental sanitation to prevent breeding of mosquitoes that transmit malaria. It is also important to provide preventive tablets and mosquito nets to pregnant women, under-five children and their mothers, to prevent the disease. Government must ensure that testing kits are readily available at all health facilities, so that people can get tested before treatment to prevent resistance to the current drugs for treatment.

What steps can individuals and families take to protect themselves against malaria? It is good to note that malaria is both preventable and curable. A lot of lives can be saved by simply observing basic hygiene standards. It is important that people keep their environment clean and clear drainage to avoid stagnant water where mosquitoes live.

Ighakpe writes from Lagos

INSIGHT



What is happening?

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's Expensive Democratic System

The nature of the Nigerian political system is such that breeds thieves and corrupt sets of politicians right from the process of primaries to the campaign itself and down to electoral victory. I came across a report where it was revealed that to win a presidential election in Nigeria requires nothing less than N250 Billion (which is not guaranteed). This is why the system isn't friendly to those with genuine intentions to work, but instead favorable to those who have pocketed the resources that belong to the people. I wasn't surprised with the recent news of the price for APC PRESIDENTIAL ticket which is fixed at N100m.

If a candidate can go to the extent of spending that huge amount of money to get a slot to the primary level, sit down to calculate how much he'll still use to buy the delegates at the Primary to win the party ticket. When the campaign starts proper, he'll have to tour the 36 states of the federation and the FCT to buy the favors of the godfathers, the electorate (market women, thugs, students, amongst others). After scaling through these, there's still another set of money to spend on the D-Day (the day of the election) to buy votes before you can stand a chance to win at all. Whoever that will emerge in the election will pass through the same sad process of our political system. Can you see how the system breeds thieves and corruption?

It is logical to see corruption in the land because the system of our politics favors such circumstance and it gives such politicians the opportunity to steal from the land because the very first thing that preoccupies their mind when they win election is how to recover such huge investment in the electoral process. Can you now see why I tagged the Nigerian politics an investment? This is why when they get to office, they become so desperate to recover the huge expenses in the process of primaries and campaigns before their time elapses. Nigerian political system is a money making machine that needs to be fixed; this is why anyone who cannot play to the tune will be left out.

Most of them gradually start to deviate from their plans because the first thing they have to do is to recover those debts. A politician that toured mosques, market places, churches, shrines just to beg for your favors suddenly disassociates himself from the structures that gave him victory and begins to rule like warlord.

There's a fundamental difference between a politician when he's seeking office and when he gets the office. It's a case of Idealism vs Realism. Do you blame him? While he was aspiring, he says many things he knows nothing about until he gets to that office. Many of them believe it will

be juicy when they get to office and until they get to power, they see the sad reality. Little by little, he starts playing to the gallery and his behavior begins to change.

Some of you wonder why some academics fail in politics. This can be logically argued.

There's a clear difference between theory and reality. The way our education system works pay more attention to theories that are situational and very far from the reality when you go to the real world. A student of Economics and Management Sciences that cannot use his knowledge to manage his own life and be successful at running such or Lawyers who are good at telling lies to win cases? Many of the electorate care less on what you have on your head but instead the stomach infrastructure. So, what do you expect when you get elected?

Until we fix the lacunas in our political system, nothing will change and we'll keep rotating the same sets of individuals in power. Are you ready for a paradigm shift to change the system? We cannot continue to do the same thing in the same way and expect a different result. I look forward to the time when what you have upstairs determines who we elect in office and not how much you can use to settle the boys or the people before you can get the chance. This is my dream for a new Nigeria.

Adelakun Tufayl Olamilekan, adelakuntufayl79@gmail.com

In Praise Of Ibrahim Ijah

Whatever is used as measurement of success would see the Executive Chairman of Tafa Local Government, Niger State, Hon. Ibrahim Mami Ijah, qualified as excellent. He is an achiever and a performer. Ibrahim Ijah, has performed beyond the expectations and imagination of the masses. He has managed the little resources effectively by providing the basic necessities of life to the people of the local government. He has also given hope to the hopeless by donating textbooks, exercise books, mathematical sets and other essential items to students of the council.

Many roads in the Tafa Local Government were not motorable before he assumed office as Executive Chairman, but he put smiles on the faces of the road users by constructing roads, building schools equipped with computers in furtherance of the reality that the world is a global village. He also built health care centres for the masses, recreation centres and free uniforms for students in the area.

He is sensitive to security issues, providing the people with a new lease of life after years of living in fear of moving from one place to another. He also provided jobs for the youth in the area; he purchased both GCE and NECO forms for the students, built modern markets at affordable prices for market women and men in the council.

Ibrahim Ijah has proven a capacity to do everything humanly possible to help the needy and the destitute. He is widely admired for his vision and mission and indeed his capacity and ability to deliver.

Anjorin Adeolu, Abuja

THE SATURDAY NEWSPAPER

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NEWS



ROYAL BLESSING...

Frontline governorship aspirant in Abia State on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mayor Lucky Igbokwe (middle), receiving blessing from the traditional rulers from Ohuhu clan led by the Chairman of Ohuhu Traditional Rulers Council, HRH Eze Nnamdi Ofoegbu (Diawa of Umudiawa), at his palace...recently

Tambuwal Rejects Saraki, Mohammed as Northern PDP Consensus Candidates

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

A group led by the former Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Prof. Ango Abdullahi, yesterday, claimed that the former Senate President, Bukola Saraki and Governor of Bauchi State, Alhaji Bala Mohammed, have been shortlisted by Northern leaders as the two Northern presidential consensus candidates on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

But this is as the Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, yesterday, said that Abdullahi's claim was not true as the "consensus drive failed."

Tambuwal, who reacted to the report from Abdullahi through the Tambuwal Campaign Organisation (TCO), said he was not part of agreement claimed by Abdullahi.

According to Abdullahi, the northern leaders in a report titled 'Report of Consensus Efforts Among Four Northern Aspirants In The Peoples Democratic Party

(PDP)', urged the Governor of Sokoto State, Tambuwal, and investment banker and economist, Mohammed Hayatu-deen, to drop their ambitions as presidential aspirants.

"For the purpose of this exercise, it is hereby resolved that Governor Bala Mohammad from the North-east and former Senate President Bukola Saraki from the North-central be presented as the Northern consensus candidates for the moment.

"It was resolved that a leading aspirant from the North-central and one from the North-east are to be presented as Northern presidential candidates.

"The two would in turn be required to make further concessions so that in the end one of them would be presented as the consensus candidate, out of the four that presented themselves from the North."

Abdullahi further said they followed due processes before arriving at the recommendations.

"It should be recalled that four major presidential aspirants in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have met and decided to limit the number of aspirants from Northern Nigeria by forming a consensus among themselves. The candidates that presented themselves for the consensus are: Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, Governor Bala Mohammed, Dr. Bukote Saraki and Mohammed Hayatu-deen.

"This was indeed a commendable development and huge sacrifice for the love of country and the Northern region in particular on the part of the four aspirants. Consequently all the four aspirants visited the former military president, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida and gave him the mandate to lead the process for a consensus and agreed to abide by the outcome of the decision."

The statement signed by Director Organisation and Mobilisation for TCO, Nicholas Msheliza, said "The attention of Tambuwal Campaign Organization (TCO)

has been drawn to a news item that former Senate President, Bukola Saraki and Governor Bala Muhammad of Bauchi State have emerged as consensus candidates from amongst the four of us announced at a meeting in Minna, Niger State.

"This is, to be candid and forthright, not correct.

"The correct situation is that the team met on Wednesday 20th April, 2022, at Bauchi Governor's Lodge in Abuja and had a review meeting; and, unanimously agreed that the consensus arrangement was not working.

"The team further agreed that Senator Saraki should come up with a draft statement on how to communicate this decision to the Nigerian public. This was the last time that members of the team sat and mutually agreed on anything. The proposed meeting to review and vet the statement scheduled for 10 pm of the same day was aborted unilaterally by Senator Saraki via a WhatsApp message.

Isu-Aniocha Killings: Police Declare 12 Suspects Wanted in Anambra

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Nigeria Police yesterday declared 12 suspects wanted over their involvement in murder, acts of terrorism, kidnapping, among other crimes.

A statement issued by Force Headquarters said the suspects were declared wanted in connection with a case of conspiracy, murder, armed robbery, act of terrorism, kidnapping, cultism and unlawful possession of firearms, house breaking, burglary, malicious damage, and conduct

likely to cause breach of public peace in Isu-Aniocha, Awka North LGA of Anambra State.

The statement listed the suspects to include Edward Okoye (a.k.a Stone), Donatus Okeke, Onyemazi Ngini, Onyebuchi Nwekeizu Okoye, Nonso Eboh and Chukwuka Onyibor.

Others are Chukwujekwu Anaekokwu, Chuka Ildigwe, Chinedu Nwoye Okoye, Nonso Awusionwu Obinna, Cosmos Okonkwo and Chukwujekwu Okoye.

It said "the police had earlier

secured a court order to declare wanted the suspects, all male of Igbo extraction with ages ranging from 25 years to 55 years old, natives of Isu-Aniocha, Awka North LGA of Anambra State with heights between 1.5m to 1.7m."

It said Edward Okoye (a.k.a Stone), had in conjunction with others shot two men dead - one Ifeanyi Anazoba (a.k.a Ichafu) and one Chukwuebuka Amodo (a.k.a Mutum) at a burial function in Umuzuocha Town Hall, Awka South of Anambra State on 19th

January, 2019, beheaded them and burnt their bodies beyond recognition; kidnapped two others, and vandalised two properties valued at over N1.2 billion.

"The suspects also attacked and brutalised some mobile police officers detailed to restore calm to the community.

"The Nigeria Police, therefore, urges all well-meaning members of the general public to assist the police with useful information which would facilitate their arrest and ensure they are brought to justice," he said.

Kwara Gov Lauds Emir of Ilorin's Commitment to Peace as Monarch Turns 82

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Kwara State Governor, Alhaji AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, has lauded the Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari, on his strong commitments to security, peace, harmony and general well-being of the people.

In a statement issued yesterday on the occasion of the 82nd birthday anniversary of Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Sulu-Gambari signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Rafiu Ajakaye, Governor AbdulRazaq

stated that the Emir has continued to demonstrate his uncommon leadership traits and fatherly disposition to all sons, daughters and residents of the Emirate, resulting in phenomenal growth and unity of the ancient town.

The governor said, "On behalf of my family, the government and good people of Kwara State, I celebrate the Mai Martaba and Chairman of the Kwara State Council of Chiefs Dr. Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari on his 82nd birthday anniversary.

Stakeholders Charged to Eradicate FGM

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

Civil society organisations and media practitioners have been charged to step up their advocacy to end the practice of female genital mutilation in Osun State.

The circumcision of the female girls became illegal and punishable under Section 335, the Criminal Code of Osun State which stated that any person who is guilty of the felony is liable to imprisonment for seven years.

To have zero practice of female

genital mutilation in all 30 LGAs and one Area Office of Osun, Hacey Health Initiative organised a three-day of capacity building workshop for stakeholders on Female Genital Mutilation, Policies, and Laws in Osogbo, Osun State capital.

Speaking at the workshop, Director of Legal Drafting, Ministry of Justice, Osun State, Barrister Kayode Titiloye, said that female genital mutilation or cutting is grievous bodily harm to the private part of the victim that is against the consent of the victim.

Cleric Warns World Governments Against Legalising Immoral Acts

Mary Nnah

The General Overseer of the Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries, Pastor Lazarus Muoka, has sent a strong warning to world leaders that there will be no solution in sight for economic and political problems if they don't embrace God and stop legalising immoral acts.

Speaking during an Easter retreat titled 'God's Covenant of Peace and Blessings' at the Revival Ground of the International Headquarters of the church at Ijesha, Lagos, Muoka said, "This generation more than any other has provoked God beyond measure. In our very eyes all over the world, various kinds of abomination is being legalised, the world is calling on God to destroy them by their sin."

For world leaders, Muoka emphasised that their solutions to economic and political problems will not work if they don't embrace God.

"Men sleep with their daughters, prostitution is being legalised; abortion is being legalised, prostitution, gay marriage,

killings, shedding of blood, they have provoked God to anger. Men can now marry men and women can marry women. This was the kind of sin that made God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah when they provoked the righteous God to anger."

He said that there is a cry in Africa, America, Europe, and Asia, with the ways governments manage the economy, while on the other hand evil is everywhere.

According to him, there will be no solution when people commit evil, commit murder without provocation.

"Men indulge in killing, kidnapping, cultism, terrorism, while governments of the world stand and watch, that, God is angry."

He stressed that God will judge the unrighteous noting that whether they are kings, presidents, priests, bishops, popes, or whoever refuses to repent from wickedness, the anger of the Lord awaits such a person.

"They will never go unpunished," he said, while calling on them to surrender to Jesus as the only remedy.

Shepherd Hill Unveils Foundation to Combat Sexual Harassment

Hamid Ayodeji

As part of efforts to tackle the increasing rate of sexual abuse within the society, Shepherd Hill Baptist Church, (Sanctuary of Grace and Glory) Ikorodu, has announced the launch of its United Against Sexual Abuse (UASA) foundation, which is aimed at assisting sexual abuse victims and sensitising individuals on sexual violence acts.

The Church revealed this recently in Lagos during the 25th wedding anniversary of Its lead Pastor, Dr. Israel Kristilere and Dr. Mary Kristilere, as well as the book launch of Reverend, Dr. Israel Kristilere.

According to the Founder, United Against Sexual Abuse, Pastor Mrs. Mary Kristilere, the primary focus of the foundation

is to fight and prevent sexual assault in the community.

She said, "As a family and as a church, we should protect our own so that we do not fall into the hands of paedophiles.

"It is not enough to just talk about these things in the home, thus, I wanted my life to be used as a platform to stop it from happening to others.

She explained that one of the reasons the act is still in prevalence is that some members of the society commit to blaming games and shaming victims which discouraged victims of sexual harassment to speak up.

"Nigeria needs to get to a point where victims are not shamed. Most of the time in cases of sexual abuse is that we shame the victims and play the blame game.

Foursquare Church Sets to Hold International Conference

Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria has announced plans for its 2022 edition of International Conference for Ministers and Leaders (ICML).

According to the Chairman of the Conference's Organising Committee, Rev. David Adetomiwa, the programme will be hosting ministers and leaders from the West African Sub-region between 25th to 30th April, 2022 at the church camp along Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

Adetomiwa in a statement revealed that participants from other churches and ministries from within and outside the country will also be attending the conference which is themed, 'Building Capacity for Relevance'.

He said that the conference theme was taken from Mark 9:17-19 in the holy book, adding that the programme was an opportunity to build upon the foundation that had been laid in times past.

"It will be a time of intentional development of personal capacity for ministerial and societal influence. Leading a team of highly sought-after conference speakers

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as FAITH STEPHEN, now wish to be known and addressed as FAITH IJEBOR. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as OSEKITA IYABODE FUNMILAYO, now wish to be known and addressed as ODUMOSU OLUWAFUNMILAYO YETUNDE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as OGUNJUIGBA HEZEKIAH AYOMIKUN, now wish to be known and addressed as OGUNJUIGBE HEZEKIAH AYOMIKUN. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.



Bishop Kukah is Correct, Buhari Has Ruined Nigeria

If President Muhammadu Buhari is truly interested in amending his prejudiced ways, he would withdraw to his inner chamber and spend quality time reading the 2022 Easter Epistle of the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Sokoto, Matthew Kukah. Our dear President should also call for the audio recording of the interview the Sokoto Bishop subsequently granted Arise News and deeply listen to the Kukah message. This is what is expected from a genuine patriot. But I doubt if it would ever happen. I very much doubt if Buhari is interested in amending his unpatriotic ways. He can't claim to love Nigeria so much, yet encourages frightening insecurity, corruption and division in the country. Our dear President deliberately bungled Nigeria's diversity.

For me, the heavy criticism of Buhari by Bishop Kukah is just and nationalistic. He spoke for millions of voiceless and worried Nigerians. Kukah, a man that truly loves this country is heartbroken by a failed President. Nigeria is broken. Seven years of the Buhari Presidency have broken this country. Kukah is right! Every aspect of life in Nigeria has been destroyed while corruption is enthroned. We have never been this broken as a country. I often shed tears for my broken country.

Inconsolable Kukah remarked: "With everything literally broken down, our country has become one big emergency national hospital with full occupancy. Our individual hearts are broken. Our family dreams are broken. Homes are broken. Churches, Mosques, and infrastructure are broken. Our educational system is broken. Our children's lives and future are broken. Our politics is broken. Our economy is broken. Our energy system is broken. Our security system is broken. Our Roads and Rails are broken. Only corruption is alive and well."

As I pen this piece, 68 abducted train passengers are languishing in the dungeon of terrorists. This is the broken security Kukah talked about. These innocent Nigerians, a pregnant woman and five children inclusive, are today 27 days old in the forest, with the terrorists pummeling them. These extremists derailed a train, killed eight people on the spot and abducted scores of people, all without consequences. They even made a video mocking everybody. Our Commander-in Chief has failed these people. The Nigerian state has never been this weak. What a country!

Under Buhari, terrorists are roaming freely in the North-west, maiming and killing. Criminal herders and kidnappers continue to maul Nigerians. Boko Haram terrorists have also become emboldened under the Buhari government, expanding territories with intense carnage. In Borno State, the epicenter of Boko Haram, 20 of the 27 local governments are unsafe. Last Wednesday, Boko Haram ransacked Geidam, Yobe State, killing 11 people. They also set ablaze the Government Science and Technical School in Geidam.

This country's economy is in shreds, and

Those around Buhari won't tackle him on slanted appointments. They are largely bread and butter politicians/aides who merely deliver propoganda and insults to Nigerians. They persistently abuse well-meaning Nigerians who disagree with these skewed appointments. Mr. President, these hawks are not winning friends for you. Rather, they are helping to grow the rank and file of Nigerians who genuinely hate you

under Buhari, continues to suffer, with no hope in sight. This is the broken economy Kukah talked about in his Epistle. Thousands of businesses are gasping for breath. Many have closed shop. At one point, inflation was almost at an unparalleled 18.72 per cent. Note that Buhari, in 2015, inherited an inflation rate of 8.7 per cent.

The waning economy has pushed millions of Nigerians below the poverty line. Joblessness has worsened with millions losing jobs in the last seven years. The sad news is that Nigeria has surpassed India as the country with the largest number of people living in life-threatening poverty in the world. This is an insignia of disgrace that should task Buhari. Regrettably, he is untroubled.

The Naira, our symbol of nationhood, is now in tatters. Yesterday, it was trading at N590/\$ in the real market. This is the same Naira Buhari inherited at about N220/\$. Manufacturers are puffing for survival, while providing their own electricity, water, road and security. Power supply is still one big mess. This is the only country in the world where the national grid often collapses like a house of cards. Buhari promised to increase generation to 10,000MW within his first term. Seven years after, this is still a mirage.

What about Buhari's war against corruption that has turned out to be a scam? This is what Kukah affirmed by saying "only corruption is alive and well" under Buhari. The United States' 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices gives a ready answer to this Buhari incongruity called war against corruption, by avowing massive sleaze in Nigeria under Buhari's watch. This report only emphasised what many of us had

always known about Buhari's anti-corruption scam. I persistently point out the flaws, with a long list of untamed sleazes - NNPCgate, Maihajagate, Mainagate, Barugate, Yusufgate, Babachirgate and the rest of them.

In this country, a serving army chief under Buhari bought a \$2 million property in Dubai and shamelessly defended it with impunity. What about the re-looting of recovered Abacha loot under Buhari's watch? Despite outcry, dubious fees amounting to \$17 million were allegedly paid to two lawyers for the recovery of \$321 million stolen by former military ruler, Sani Abacha.

Money gobbling has been the name of NNPC's game under Buhari. The memo written by the former Minister of State for Petroleum, Ibe Kachikwu on sleaze at the corporation remains fresh in my memory. Expenses on the provocative School Feeding Programme of the Buhari government are likewise dizzying. Spending on the N-Power Scheme, another arm of FG's Social Investment Programme, has also been puzzling. This scheme gulped N421 billion between 2016 and 2020.

For me, the biggest sin Buhari has committed against this country within his seven years as President is the division created with his frightening clannishness. This is what Kukah described as the greatest challenge facing Nigeria, adding, "Here, the Buhari administration, sadly, has divided our people on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and region, in a way that we have never witnessed in our history. This carefully choreographed agenda has made Nigerians vulnerable and ignited the most divisive form of identity consciousness among our people. Years of friendships, cultural exchange, and collaboration built over time have now come under serious pressure from

stereotyping."

No doubt, Buhari has spent seven years stoking our fault lines, with no respect for Federal Character in his appointments. The crooked appointments of heads of military and para-military agencies of his government have been most infuriating. Our dear President fully understands the importance of Section 14 (3) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), and has chosen to persistently mock it. As a reminder, this section states that "the composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few State or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies."

Skewed appointments have been responsible for the hatred across our country with unprecedented ethnic and religious divides. This is certainly not the Nigeria of our dream.

Kukah rightly declared: Nepotism is horrible; it is evil because it denies you as a leader an opportunity to hear other voices. So, you end up in an echo chamber where all of you are speaking the same language and think the same way."

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo's remark about Buhari's clannishness in the early days of his government is instructive here. He said: "At no time in our history, except probably during the civil war, has Nigeria been so fractured in the feeling of oneness by the citizenry."

We need to quickly look at facts and figures to understand the extent of Buhari's nepotism in appointments. In Buhari's Nigeria, most of the key federal government departments and agencies are headed by people from a section of this country. I am talking about big agencies like Customs, NPA, Pencom, NNPC, NMDPRA, FIRS, NCC, NBC, TETFund, SEC, CAC, UBEC, NIMASA, NPHCDA, FAAN, NDIC, AMCON and NUC. Buhari evidently cares less about the unity of this country.

I can safely say that under Buhari, 90 per cent of heads of military/para-military agencies are people from just a section of the country. Take away the Chief of Defence Staff, Lucky Irabor and Chief of Air Staff, Isiaka Amao, and you will understand what I am saying. This is what we have: Director-General, Department of State Security, Yusuf Bishi; National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno; Chief of Army Staff, Faruk Yahaya; Chief of Naval Staff, Awwal Zubairu Gambo; Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Customs Service, Hameed Ali; Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Mohammed Buba Marwa; Comptroller-General, Nigeria Immigration Service, Isah Jere Idris; Commandant, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Ahmed Audi; Inspector General of Police, Usman Alkali Nigeria Baba; Director General, National Intelligence Agency, Ahmed Rufai Abubakar and the Controller-General, Nigerian Correctional Service, Haliru Nababa.

Does this list smell pan-Nigeria? It is bad enough that the heads of these military and paramilitary agencies are all from the core north. It is even worse that they are all Muslims. In a country where religion remains an issue, concentrating the security apparatus in the hands of one tribe and one religion is a betrayal of trust of Christians and an affront on the Nigerian Constitution. Buhari evidently lacks the capacity to manage Nigeria's diversity.

Those around Buhari won't tackle him on slanted appointments. They are largely bread and butter politicians/aides who merely deliver propoganda and insults to Nigerians. They persistently abuse well-meaning Nigerians who disagree with these skewed appointments. Mr. President, these hawks are not winning friends for you. Rather, they are helping to grow the rank and file of Nigerians who genuinely hate you. Whoever wants you to succeed must persistently tell you the truth.

Terrorists Killing Abductees in Angwan Bulus

For those not following the heart-wrenching story, here is a quick recap. Angwan Bulus community in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State is persistently attacked by terrorists, who kill and main residents. Precisely 24 days ago, the terrorists again invaded Angwan Bulus and abducted 26 people. They followed up with a demand for N20 million ransom from the community, with a threat to kill the abductees if the payment was not made quickly.

Last Monday, while the community was struggling to raise the money, the terrorists killed three of the 26 abductees. The bastards called and told them to go to a particular location at Dutse village along the Kaduna-Abuja highway to pick up the three persons killed due to failure to pay ransom placed on their heads. They have also threatened to kill more victims especially women if their

demands are not met. The N7 million so far raised and offered by the community was rejected.

A community leader in Angwan Bulus laments: "Right now, we are confused. We don't know what to do. We have sold all we ever worked for to appease these people but they want more. We are appealing to the federal and state governments to come to our rescue to save the remaining people in captivity."

This is the level Nigeria has deteriorated. For how long shall killings and abductions of innocent people persist in Nigeria? Loquacious Governor Nasir El-Rufai has been silent on the tragedy in Angwan Bulus. Terrorists are in touch with relations of the abductees and Angwan Bulus community leaders with GSM phone; yet security agencies can't smoke them out. The situation across Nigeria is manifestly hopeless.



El-rufai

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EPISODE 1: "SELLING SHIRTS"



EPISODE 2: "NEW FRIENDS"



EPISODE 3: "OCTOPUS SITUATIONS"



EPISODE 4: "INTERNATIONAL BREAK"



EPISODE 5: "PINTS OF SORRY"



EPISODE 6: "UPHEAVAL"

THE FIRST TEAM

18 TO 24 APRIL 2022: THE FIRST TEAM

The First Team is a six-episodes BBC Studios comedy series about a fictional Premier League football team. It is a humorous and touching portrayal of life as a young footballer in a high-pressure job, and an examination of masculinity and insecurity in sports. It is a Series that feature guest appearances by popular footballers like Ian Wright, Alan Shearer, Jurgen Klopp and Gary Lineker to name a few.



EPISODE 1: "SELLING SHIRTS"

Look out for Gary Lineker and Alan Shearer in this episode where Mattie Sullivan (played by Jake Short) arrives from Kansas City to join the football team, Hard-man Petey Brooks (Theo Barklem-Biggs) dislikes Mattie. Mattie develops a bond with Benji, portrayed by Shaquille Ali-Yebuah, and they agree to help the timid number 16 Jack Turner out of an embarrassing situation.



EPISODE 2: "NEW FRIENDS"

Look out for Jurgen Klopp in this episode where a quest to improve team spirit leads Mattie to befriend Carlos Velez, the star midfielder, but he is not what Mattie expected. Meanwhile, Jack (Michael McMullen) meets a girl he spotted online, and Petey is up to some pranks on the squad. A Malaysian businessman approaches Benji.



EPISODE 3: "OCTOPUS SITUATIONS"

Mattie, Benji, and Jack head out for the afternoon determined not to get into trouble, and meet a friendly woman (Anna Morris as Nicola) who wants them to meet her son Stuart. This will soon lead to a misunderstanding. Mattie and others take Stuart to the training complex to calm him down after he threatens to go public with his version of events. Petey refuses to participate.



EPISODE 4: "INTERNATIONAL BREAK"

Petey announces that he will host a barbecue while the rest of the team is on international duty. Mattie, Benji and Jack are the only guests. Jack's dad posts club business on social media, endangering Caesar's job as manager. As the story continues, Mattie tries to meet Club Chairman Mark Crane, but the meeting doesn't quite work out as planned.



EPISODE 5: "PINTS OF SORRY"

Look out for Ian Wright and Gary Lineker in this episode where a caretaker manager is appointed. Chairman Will Arnett apologises to fans for the team's loss and disappointing start to the season. In response to the opening loss, Benji hires a social media manager. As the episode progresses, it becomes clear that the recently appointed sports psychologist is incompetent.



EPISODE 6: "UPHEAVAL"

Petey plots to sabotage coach Chris' methods even though they are working on the team. As Jack (Jack Michael McMullen) prepares something for his new girlfriend, Benji (Shaquille Ali-Yebuah) becomes impatient with his social media manager and is ready to fire him. Mattie tries to protect Chris from a shocking revelation.

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SHOWBIZFLAIR

'Blood Sisters' Explores Rich Versus Poor in Nigerian Context

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

As the executive producer, creative producer, and producer, respectively of the Netflix's first Nigerian original series, 'Blood Sisters', EbonyLife Studio's team of Mo Abudu, Heidi Uys, and Temidayo Makanjuola talk about casting choices, characterization focus, and the thematic concerns of the four part series action thriller which premieres on May 5.

On the casting process for this limited series, Temidayo revealed that the team worked together on a long list of talent, who were asked to partake in virtual readings. According to her, "We were still in a pandemic and had to limit the number of people we saw physically. A number of the producers and directors noted their favourites. They were then invited to a closed physical reading. We matched up different actors with each other to get a feel of their dynamics and chemistry. We even gave some actors new roles to read.

"At the end of the process, Timeyin (Genoveva Umeh) was the only character we hadn't found. Genoveva was recommended by a director and she read alongside a few others, but after her performance, we all knew she was the right choice."

A product of EbonyLife Creative Academy, the breakout star, Genoveva, the producers noted, was fearless in becoming the role of a young rich girl in serious dire straits.

Temidayo also cited instances on Ini Dima-Okojie and Nancy Isime (Sarah and Kemi) who appear to have connected greatly on screen. "In the casting, it was clear as day that both Ini Dima-Okojie and Nancy Isime have this special bond of 'sisters forever' on

and off the screen. The choice was clear and we were riveted from the very first read."

Heidi, speaking on the character choice of Ini and Nancy, said both Nancy and Ini swapped and swapped again, and Ini's emotional vulnerability as against Nancy's 'defender' spirit was just the perfect combination. "Both had to bring an immense physicality to their roles and it was incredibly taxing for the girls being challenged mentally, spiritually and physically on set."

Another character whose role was worth mentioning is Kate Henshaw who plays a much older woman in the 'Blood Sisters'.

Heidi stated: "There simply was only one person who could bring the family matriarch Uduak to life and that is the epic Kate Henshaw. She's strong and has tremendous emotional range to have brought in instant tears of sorrow and the cruelty of a woman who must rule, to screen. She also had to endure some SFX make-up on set to age her but as for the performance, she did it all from ageing her voice to how she carried herself as an older woman."

On the thematic concerns which dealt with a number of societal issues, the casting decisions and the plot, Abudu said the rich versus poor in the Nigerian context had always been a core theme of the story.

Abudu explains further: "But, what really influenced the plot is the question - what's the worst thing that could ever happen on your wedding day? The story centres around two best friends, who accidentally kill the groom on the day of his wedding engagement and their attempts to cover it up."

"What a brilliant inciting incident to a 'girls on the run' plot line. A Nigerian 'Thelma and Louise', but so totally authentic to Nigeria and



Mo Abudu

what it means to be two sisters bound in blood. Also very relevant, was the global narrative that puts the spotlight on gender equality, and freedom from patriarchy and its systemic abuses. This series also sheds light on the fact that, women are also abusive to each other. Our young ladies on the run have incredible odds stacked against them. Is this sisterhood strong enough to survive? We'll wait and see. 'Blood Sisters' is an action thriller, with heart and grit, like you've never seen before.

"We were aware of the immense complexities

that the abusive themes of the series would bring to characters, as well as the challenges the actors would face in bringing the characters to life. We were thorough in selecting actors with heart and grit, who could reach into their souls, to bring these notes to the screen. Our cast did precisely that - they brought truth and believability to their roles. The vibe between the ensemble mattered hugely and they really bonded. The intensity of their performance will rip at the hearts of our viewers and keep them on the edges of their seats."

Matilda Lambert Celebrates Birthday at Orphanage

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Nollywood actress and producer, Matilda Lambert recently celebrated her birthday. And as part of events marking the special day, the thespian resolved to give to charity as usual and put smiles on the faces of the less privileged.

This she did by visiting Jesus Orphanage Home at Elenwo, Port Harcourt where she had a wonderful time celebrating her special birthday with the children. Lambert revealed that she felt elated seeing smiles on the faces of the children.

It was a beautiful sight to behold and refreshing as the 'Unroyal' star prayed and danced with the kids: "I visit the orphanage homes every three months to show them love. And when my birthday came, I felt it's one place I must go to first, to celebrate before any other event for the day. I feel extremely joyful seeing beautiful smiles on the faces of the children each time I visit. And there's this inner fulfillment and excitement I get each time I visit them."

For the University of Abuja graduate of Philosophy, visiting the orphanage on her birthday and dancing with them was the highlight of her day. "One of the happiest moments of my day was cutting my 1st cake with these special kids at Jesus Orphanage home. Amazing children... The prayer session was so refreshing," she shared in a post on her Instagram page.

She further noted: "My excitement was extreme when they said each of the kids will challenge me for a dance. Am like how? Had to replace me with my little cousin so they won't win us... My joy was full... What a day!"



The celebrant, Matilda Lambert with the children at the orphanage



Matilda Lambert

The day ended with an award presentation at her office by the Rescue Nigeria Future Leaders Initiative group in recognition as the Global Rescue Ambassador for her distinct personality, exemplary leadership character, and humanitarian spirit. Known for her compassion for under-

privileged children, the philanthropist believes in setting time and resources aside to give back to society through her CSR and social impact activities organized by her not-for-profit organization, Tilda Goes Green (TGG) Foundation.

On how she feels being able to celebrate her birthday, the Port Harcourt based actress said "I am most grateful for life because it's the biggest gift anyone can have."

"When there's life, there's hope. I am also grateful for how far God has brought me, his divine protection, undying love, inexplicable blessings, and unmerited favours and how much God pampers me like an egg. I am also grateful for my family, career, business etc.," she said. "Lastly, I am super grateful for my foundation TGG on how God has used it to bless souls and put smiles on their faces. I will forever be grateful to God for his immeasurable blessings."

Damilare Kuku, Toyin Abraham, Sandra Okunzuwa Star in 'The Wildflower'

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

VSL media has unveiled the official trailer for its forthcoming feature film, 'The Wildflower'. The gender-based screenplay by Niyi Akinmolayan and Mannie Oiseomaye, explores sexual violence. Starring Damilare Kuku in the lead role alongside Toyin Abraham, Sandra Okunzuwa, Deyemi Okanlawon, Zubby Micheal, Etinosa Idemudia, 'The Wildflower' follows three women faced with different experiences of sexual assault from the men in their lives.

Produced by Vincent Okonkwo and directed by Biodun Stephen, the movie will premiere in cinemas on May 27, 2022. Speaking on the film, Okonkwo said: "it tackles sexual violence and explores how different women face trauma and assault in different forms and how they can easily bond over this. It aims to educate young women and men about the psychological effect of assault and the importance of speaking up."

The film also stars Nosa Rex, Imoh Eboh, Kiki Omeili, Eso Dike, Angel Unigwe and Rachel Emem Isaac. "One woman's courage will shatter every table. Get ready to witness the most powerful story ever told. #TheWildflower is coming to cinemas from May 27", Okonkwo posted.



Damilare Kuku

SHOWBIZFLAIR

Banji Adesanmi

'Strangers' Inspired By True Events That Cut Across Decades

If you follow the programme *Sharing Life Issues* on Inspirational FM, some of the true-life events shared on the programme are feeds from Inspaya TV production. Banji Adesanmi is the executive producer of Inspaya TV. He is also the President of Inspaya productions, the media arm of Banji Adesanmi Ministry. On 29th April, Adesanmi's first movie, *Strangers*, will hit cinemas. He speaks on the inspiration behind the movie and his plan for the industry with **Chinedu Ibeabuchi**

You have been passionately involved in media broadcasting and now movie production. Tell us the motivation behind this?

This comes from my experience in life generally and also in human relationships. I have discovered that it is easier to counsel people and challenge life issues when you tell stories. When you give examples and testimonies, people grasp the theory behind a point or a discussion or a line of thinking faster and better. Jesus has a reason for using parables to explain what he says. Sometimes when people just hear a parable or story only, it resolves the issue. I've always known that. Even though a businessman for a while, I've also been a preacher since my teenage years while in school and I have discovered over the years as an itinerant evangelist that when you want people to grasp the point, just use a story or an example. That was what led to starting the Inspaya TV show in 2016. Inspaya then was a documentary where we record people's inspirational stories and testimonies. People become "inspayalised" because when they watch, they just open their mouths like "Really, did that happen? Somebody went through that?" That is my passion. We paused due to covid and its attendant effect on support and funds. We were on three TV stations. We produced over a hundred and ten episodes; each one was for thirty minutes. By extension, movie production is just another way of doing what we were doing now to the mainstream where everybody can benefit and also be entertained! Looking forward to greater platforms in the future is the motivation behind it.

Tell us more about Inspaya TV?

As I said, when we started the Inspaya programme on TV, we also decided to domicile all our stories on the website, so if anyone goes to Inspaya.tv, you would find all the stories that we have there. One of the off-shoot of that program too was that there was a time we partnered with Inspiration FM on their sharing life issues programme where people call in and we discuss life issues, particularly in the area of life, relationships, goal settings and we use some of the stories and examples from Inspaya.

Is *Strangers* your first movie?

Yes! This is my first solo movie as an executive producer and it means a lot to me because I believe this is a story that was well told, high-quality production, using the best cast that is available out there in the industry.

Why did you choose that storyline among other true-life events?

Like Bolaji Ogunmola puts it in one of her interviews, this story is authentic and everyone can relate to it! I chose this particular one as the first one out of the many that we are still going to do because it's a story I love so much. It's a story about perseverance that cuts across decades; and it's a story that fits everybody, the whole family must come and watch the movie.

What are the take-home lessons from this movie?

Hope! We themed it, "Reach for the Stars." It basically encourages you that it is never over! Teaches perseverance, and development of character and the story also says, it doesn't matter where you are from, you can become anything even beyond what you desire to become. It also talks about the sovereignty and providence of God in that God can help anybody. It doesn't matter the setbacks you have in life, or how difficult or how bad it is, there is always hope. You can reach for the stars!

What informs your choice of cast for the movie?

When we set out for this, I first made up my mind that if I am going to tell this story at all in a full-length movie, it has to be top-notch. The quality of production has to be very high, both in terms of cast, crew, and general production. Having Lateef Adedimeji was a no-brainer. He does what he does best; he interprets



Banji Adesanmi

his roles very well. So he was a no-brainer as our main actor. For the lead female too, Bimbo Oshin was it! In fact, she injured herself while interpreting the role in one of the scenes where she fell down, out of expressing the zeal of a mother. The Yoruba call it "Itara" – the heart of a mother towards her son. She had a cut on her knee.

We had Bolaji Ogunmola. And the good thing about some of the cast is that this is their first cinema shoot, at least – as at the time we recorded. They are very proud of it. We also had Veterans like Chris Iheuwa. There was a part where we needed someone who

also could speak a foreign language and he could speak French, and his wife in the movie was acted by an actress we brought in from Cameroon, Ndamo Damarise, who did an excellent job. I saw her act in a movie on Netflix and I saw the way she interpreted her role. So, I just told the Director – Biodun Stephens, that I believe that this actress could interpret this role well.

On the set, Ndamo was almost in every scene. We also had veterans like Taiwo Ibikunle, who did an excellent job too. We had Baba Peter, Fatomilola who came in from Ife and played the role of a herbalist

in the movie; and we had Debby Felix, a very good actress; Others are Jide Kososko, Bimbo Akintola, Femi Adebayo, etc. We just wanted the best for the movie. Whether it was one day on set or for ten or twelve days on set, these people did an excellent job.

The location looks real. How did you go about this?

For the location, we went to a remote village in Oyo State. Even from Oyo town, we had to drive every morning and evening for almost an hour to get to the set – we just kept going into the bush, because we needed a stream or a river to interpret it. Anything to make sure we did an excellent job. I'm sure people will not be disappointed with what we did and of course, the director – Biodun Stephens – that woman a "winch". She is very good, she would always retake the scene as many times as she wants – Perfection Personified! I am grateful to all of them.

After this, what's next for you as a producer?

We're going to do much more. I see Inspaya productions growing and I already know what our next project is likely to be. Or what our next two projects are going to be. I know if the script is good, if the passion is there, and if you get a good cast and production, it will really be acknowledged.

Accolades?

This particular movie coming to cinema has already started winning awards – two Film Awards festivals had already selected it as part of their official selection. At one of the festivals that was concluded earlier in the month of April, *Strangers* already won the gold winners award for Directing. Another festival at the time of this interview has it as a semi-finalist in their festival. The one where it won The Gold Winners award, was at the International Independent Films Award in Los Angeles. The idea is – that it is not about churning quantity. It is about Quality. That is the way to go!

How do you see yourself in the movie business in the next five years?

I'm trusting God that the synergy will increase. We'd find more partnerships, particularly internationally! And we can also tell more stories that appeal to people internationally and in five years, we would have done a minimum of 3-4 more movies that would have won awards, and ultimately maybe that can even lead to other programmes, maybe online shows, radio shows or TV shows that just help people be who they can be.

How do you unwind?

Preaching, traveling! I love preaching. It's just a passion. I love teaching, preaching, saying things, impacting people, counseling, and helping people with whatever it is they are facing in life. I just want to encourage everyone to watch this movie – *Strangers*! It's going to be in cinema in Nigeria on the 29th of April.

The Village Headmaster Returns

Tosin Clegg

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) has announced the return of *The Village Headmaster* – the iconic Drama Series, to TV screens across the country. This new production of *The Village Headmaster* is being actualised through a ground-breaking partnership between Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Wale Adenuga Productions (WAP).

The programme, produced in line with the best international standards, contains the right amounts of drama, comedy, culture, romance, suspense, action and other elements of a great TV series and stars some of the original cast, including

Dejumo Lewis (Kabiyesi), Ibidun Allison (Amebo), Dan Imodu (Chief Dagbolu), Dele Osawe (Teacher Fadele), Melville Obriango (Teacher Oghene), Kate Adepegba (Folake), and Lara Akinsola (Doyin).

It also parades a diverse list of artistes from across Nigeria, including Chris Iheuwa, Rachael Oniga, Jide Kosoko, Mr Macaroni, Funky Mallam, Yemi Shodimu, 9ice, Monica Friday, Mr Latin, Eric Obinna, Adekunle Salawu, Deborah Anugwa, Henry Arnold, Jide Alabi, Jumoke Odetola, Kristy Imanlehin, Rykardo Agbor, Ronke Oshodi Oke, Babatunde Aderinoye, Mide Martins, Sam Uche Anyamele, Omo Ibadan, and others.

Starting on 24th April 2022, this new production of *The Village Headmaster* TV Drama Series, powered by GLO, would air weekly on three top TV Platforms which are available across Nigeria and several parts of Africa.



Chris Iheuwa

SHOWBIZFLAIR

Boy Spyce, Newest Addition to the Mavin Records Family

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Boy Spyce, the latest addition to Mavin Records is perceived a talent with a clear brand direction. He has been buzzing with freestyle videos in the Nigerian music underground before he was grabbed by MAVIN due to his iconic voice and qualities deployed on top songs covers of his. He joins label mates Rema, Ayra Starr, Ruger, Ladipoe and others. Tiwa Savage, Wande Coal, Reekado Banks and Iyanya are among Mavin's notable artistes of the recent past.

Born Ugbekile David Osemeke, Boy Spyce rose to fame after his freestyle video for Wizkid's hit song "Essence" featuring Tems went viral. His silky, searing vocals likened to Victory's, Buju's or Fireboy's, and described as an evolution of Highlife and Apala singers. To a music journalist and critic, the beauty of his voice type is that when he sings, there is a leftover melody hanging behind his cadences, and vocal exertion.

In addition to his natural talent, he

underwent an intensive training under the tutelage of Don Jazzy, the record label owner.

When then he was activated on the 14th of April, 2022, the legendary Nigerian music producer said "After being trained in the Mavin Academy by the best in the game, world please help us welcome and follow the newest addition to the Mavin Records family." He revealed that he has kept a close watch on the promising talent since 2019.

"Most people are just looking for one quick viral moment instead of going through proper artist development. We could have rushed and activated prematurely when he had this moment but he showed great restraint and chose to stick to his training. He has been recording judiciously since I first messaged him on Christmas Day 2019," the iconic producer expressed.

An excited Boy Spyce took to his Instagram to express appreciation. "A long-time dream that has been backed with hard work, patience, dedication and consistency is born. I feel blessed and elated to be going on this journey with you by my side," Spyce said. "Thank you Don Jazzy and the Mavin



Boy Spyce

Records family and everyone who has been a part of my journey."

The newest addition comes with a genre-hopping 5-song eponymous EP and accompanying lead single "Nobody", a feel-good and bouncy romantic ballad and the music video.

The rest of the EP sees the Lagos-born and raised artist juggling light guitars, afro-fusion beat work, and R&B elements. Boy Spyce's self-titled debut EP discusses love, life and sex, and is available for streaming and download across all major digital platforms.

Biodun Stephen: 'Strangers' Inspired by True Events

The press and movie critics got a foretaste of the awarding winning movie, *Strangers*, on Thursday at the Genesis Cinemas, Maryland Mall, Lagos.

Adjudged as a story of resilience, hope, and heroism, *Strangers* is inspired by true events. The movie directed by prolific filmmaker Biodun Stephen will hit cinemas from Friday, April 29.

Strangers has already won the Gold award for Directing at International Independent Film Awards held in Los Angeles.

The story follows the life of a remote village boy, untamed by civilization, but hit by calamitous events that changed the course of his existence.

The screening was attended by the executive producer, Banji Adesanmi; director, Biodun Stephen, alongside cast like Lateef Adedimeji, Chris Iheuwa, and Taiwo Ibikunle, media critics, and students of Doregos Private Academy, among others.

A first-person narrative, *Strangers* is an emotional and inspirational story excellently rendered by a selection of actors who have proven their mettle in acting. *Strangers* features A-list actors like Lateef Adedimeji, Bimbo Oshin, Bolaji Ogunmola, Debbie Felix, Femi Adebayo, Ndamo Damarise, Chris Iheuwa, Jide Kosoko, Bimbo Akintola, Mide Glover and Nonso Odogwu, among others.

Though a thoughtful movie, it was lightened up with comic synergy from the characters, sending waves of intermittent laughter across the cinema hall. *Strang-*



L-R: Veteran Actor, Chris Iheuwa; Executive Producer, Banji Adesanmi; Director, Biodun Stephen; and Taiwo Ibikunle at the press screening of *The Strangers* movie at Genesis Cinema, Maryland ... Thursday

ers is another classical example seen in Nollywood lately of telling a story in its raw form.

From a rich blend of indigenous culture, colourful transition from one decade to another, and character morphology, the director was very apt in creating a narra-

tion that evokes a sensory nostalgia in the mind of the viewers.

Banji Adesanmi, the Executive Producer of the movie said he was inspired to put the story into play because of the resilience of the characters involved in the true-life events: "*Strangers* chronicles a series

of despairing events with miraculous outcomes. It is a story that is sweet to hear, I decided to adapt it into a screenplay and joined forces with notable figures that can translate it into a captivating motion picture. The international recognition for the movie is a testament to this."

Pepsi to Refresh DStv Premium Golf Day with Storm Band, DJ Xclusive

Pepsi will refresh the second edition of the DStv Premium Golf Day with top-tier music ensemble, Storm Band, and crack disc jockey, DJ Xclusive. The DStv Premium Golf Day will be held at the Ikeja Golf Club, Lagos, today.

The decision of the leading soft drink bottlers was announced in a statement released on Wednesday by Flykite Productions, organisers of the event.

Storm Band, according to the statement, is Nigeria's finest and fastest-growing band, providing the best of live music across a vast array of genres that include Naija hip-hop, juju, highlife, fuji, old school jams as well as rhythm and blues.

DJ Xclusive (real name Rotimi Alakija), one of the biggest names on the music and jockeying circuit. He has performed with top acts like Ne-Yo, Rihanna, Mario Winans, Brick and Lace, Nas and Fat Joe.

He won the World's Best DJ Award at the 2010 Nigeria Entertainment Awards held in the United States and was nominated for Best DJ at the 2011 edition of the BEFFTA Awards. He was also featured at the 2013 Big Brother House Party.

The musical support offered by Pepsi, said Flykite Productions, according to the organisers, promises to add a generous splash of colour to the event by providing a confluence

between music and golf and reflects the soft drinks company's commitment to the promotion of Nigerian music and sports.

Segun Ogunleye, General Manager, Marketing (Beverages), Seven-Up Bottling Company, Pepsi's parent company, described Pepsi's support for the DStv Premium Golf Day as an extension of its contribution to sports and entertainment in Nigeria.

"Pepsi is proud to partner with DStv on the DStv Premium Golf Day and happy to refresh the many golfers participating in the competition," Ogunleye said.

Over 100 golfers from clubs across the country, to be chosen from about 600 regis-

trants, feature at the event where they will play with only four clubs and a putter. Winners will emerge via a stroke play format.

As previously announced, exciting prizes will be awarded to the best three golfers at the event, with the star prize being a business class flight ticket to Dubai for a weekend stay at a five-star hotel. The second prize is a business class ticket to Kigali, Rwanda, for a weekend stay at a five-star hotel, while the third prize is a weekend stay at a five-star hotel in Lagos.

At the maiden edition in 2020, Dr. Ogunbiyi Ogunbanjo of Ikeja Golf Club, Messrs. Remi Olukoya and Rasheed Adebisi won the first, second and third prizes respectively.



Notice of 9th Annual General Meeting of Seplat Energy Plc

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 9th Annual General Meeting of Seplat Energy Plc (the "Company") will hold at 16A Temple Road (Olu Holloway), Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria on Wednesday, 18 May 2022 at 11:00am to transact the following business:

Ordinary business:

1. To receive the Audited Financial Statements of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2021, together with the Reports of the Directors, Auditors and the Statutory Audit Committee thereon.
2. To declare a final dividend recommended by the Board of Directors of the Company in respect of the financial year ended 31 December 2021.
3. To re-appoint PriceWaterhouseCoopers ("PWC") as Auditors of the Company from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next general meeting of the Company at which the Company's Annual Accounts are laid.
4. To authorise the Board of Directors of the Company to determine the Auditors' remuneration.
5. To elect/re-elect the following Directors¹
 - a. To approve the appointment of the following Directors:
 - i. Prof. Fabian Ajogwu, SAN (Independent Non-Executive Director);
 - ii. Mr. Bello Rabi (Independent Non-Executive Director);
 - iii. Dr. Emma FitzGerald (Independent Non-Executive Director);
 - iv. Mrs. Bashirat Odunewu (Independent Non-Executive Director);
 - v. Mr. Kazeem Raimi (Non-Executive Director); and
 - vi. Mr. Ernest Ebi (Non-Executive Director),
 - b. To re-elect the following Directors who are eligible for retirement by rotation:
 - i. Mr. Basil Omiyi (Senior Independent Non-Executive Director) (please see note 7); and
 - ii. Dr. Charles Okeahalam (Independent Non-Executive Director).
6. To disclose the remuneration of managers of the Company.²
7. To elect the shareholder representatives of the Statutory Audit Committee.

Special business:

8. To consider and, if thought fit, to transact the following Special Business, which will be proposed and passed as an Ordinary Resolution:
 - a) To approve the Remuneration Section of the Directors' Remuneration Report set out in the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021.
9. To consider and, if thought fit, to transact the following Special Business, which will be proposed and passed as Ordinary Resolutions:
 - a) That the Company be and is hereby authorised to take all steps necessary to comply with the requirements of Section 124 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 and the Companies Regulations 2021, as it relates to unissued shares forming part of the authorised Share Capital of the Company, including the cancellation of the unissued ordinary shares of the Company.
 - b) That the Company be and is hereby authorised to take all steps necessary to ensure that the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company are altered to comply with Resolution 9(a) above, including replacing the provision stating the authorised share capital with the issued share capital of the Company.
 - c) That the Company be and is hereby authorised to enter into and execute agreements, deeds, notices or any other documents and to perform all acts and to do all such other things necessary for or incidental to giving effect to Resolution 9(a) above, including without limitation, appointing such professional parties, consultants and advisers and complying with the directives of the regulatory authorities.
 - d) That the Company be and is hereby authorised to perform all acts and to do all such other things as may be necessary for or incidental to giving effect to the above resolutions, including without limitation, complying with the directives of the regulatory authorities.

That, the Board be and is hereby authorised to take all necessary steps to give effect to the above resolutions.

Copies of the Annual Report and Accounts for Seplat Energy Plc for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 will be mailed to the shareholders and will be available on the Company's website: www.seplatenergy.com. Printed versions can also be obtained by contacting DataMax Registrars in Nigeria at 2C Gbagada Expressway, by Beko Ransom Kuti Park, Gbagada, Lagos/+ 234 1 7120012; or Computershare in the UK on +44 (0) 370 703 6101.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD.

Mrs. Edith Onwuchekwa
FRC/2013/NBA/00000003660
Company Secretary
Dated 21st April 2022

Notice of 9th Annual General Meeting of Seplat Energy Plc

Notes:

1. PROXY:

In line with the guidelines of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) on the conduct of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Public Companies by Proxies and taking advantage of Section 254 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020, the Company shall obtain the approval of CAC to hold the AGM with attendance by proxies. Further, in the interest of public safety and having regard to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Mass Gatherings in Nigeria and the restrictions on public gatherings by the Lagos State Government, only persons indicated to be selected as proxies on the Proxy Form shall attend the meeting physically while the other members may participate online through a live streaming of the AGM.

In compliance with the above guidelines, members who are entitled to attend and vote at the AGM of the Company are hereby advised to select a proxy from the following selected proxies to attend and vote in their place:

- (a) Dr. A. B. C. Orjiako (Chairman, Board of Directors)
- (b) Mr. Roger Brown (Chief Executive Officer)
- (c) Sir Sunny Nwosu
- (d) Mrs. Hauwa Umar
- (e) Mr. Amatare Oki
- (f) Mrs. Ngozi Osuzoka
- (g) Mr. Matthew Akinlade
- (h) Dr. Anthony Omoniyi Omojola
- (i) Mrs. Adebisi Oluwayemisi Bakare
- (j) Alhaja Ayodele Sarat Kudaisi
- (k) Mr. Olalekan Agunbiade
- (l) Mrs. Adenike Omoroga
- (m) Mrs. Nwamaka Iloh
- (n) Mr. Charles Ifediba

For the appointment to be valid for the purposes of the meeting, the Company has made arrangements at its cost for the stamping of the duly completed proxy forms which must be deposited at the office of the Registrar, DataMax Registrars Limited, 2C Gbagada Express Way, by Beko Ransom Kuti Park, Gbagada, Lagos or at the head office of the Company, marked for the attention of the "Company Secretary" or by email to proxy@seplatenergy.com, not less than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting. For convenience purposes, a blank proxy form is attached to the 2021 Annual Report and Accounts, both of which are available at the Company's website:

www.seplatenergy.com and at the Company's head office:
16a Temple Road (Olu Holloway), Ikoyi, Lagos.

2. CLOSURE OF REGISTER:

The Register of Members and Transfer Books of the Company (Nigeria & UK) will be closed on 6 May 2022 in accordance with the provisions of section 114 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020, to enable the Registrars to prepare for the Annual General Meeting.

3. PAYMENT OF DIVIDENDS:

If the dividend recommended by the Directors is approved by members at the Annual General Meeting, the dividend will be paid on or around 25 May 2022, to shareholders whose names appear in the Company's Register of Members at the close of business on 5 May 2022.

4. E-DIVIDEND MANDATE:

Shareholders are kindly requested to advise DataMax Registrars Limited of their updated records and relevant bank accounts, by completing the e-mandate form. The e-mandate form can be downloaded from DataMax Registrars Limited's website at <http://www.datamaxregistrars.com>. The duly completed form(s) should be returned to DataMax Registrars Limited, at No. 2c Gbagada Expressway, by Beko Ransom Kuti Park, Gbagada Phase 1, Lagos.

5. UNCLAIMED DIVIDEND:

Shareholders are hereby informed that a number of dividends still remain unclaimed. The list of all unclaimed dividends will be circulated with the Annual Report and Financial Statements. Any member affected by this notice is advised to write to or call the office of the Company's Registrar, DataMax Registrars Limited, at No. 2c Gbagada Expressway, by Beko Ransom Kuti Park, Gbagada Phase 1, Lagos or through any of these numbers: 07064000751, 07064000752, 07064000758, 0700DATAMAX. The list of unclaimed dividends can be accessed at the Registrars' office or via the Company's website: www.seplatenergy.com.

6. NOMINATION FOR THE STATUTORY AUDIT COMMITTEE:

In accordance with section 404(3) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, the Audit Committee shall consist of five (5) members comprising two (2) Non-Executive Directors and three (3) representatives of the shareholders of the Company. Any shareholder may nominate a shareholder as a member of the Audit Committee. In accordance with 404(6) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, such nomination should be in writing and should reach the Company Secretary at least twenty-one (21) days before the Annual General Meeting and any nomination not received prior to the meeting as stipulated is invalid. The Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 and the Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance 2018 stipulate that, members of the Audit Committee should be financially literate and at least one member must be a member of a professional accounting body in Nigeria established by the Act of the National Assembly and be knowledgeable in internal control processes. Thus, a detailed Curriculum Vitae confirming the nominee's qualification should be submitted with each nomination to the Statutory Audit Committee.

7. RE-ELECTION OF DIRECTORS AGED 70 YEARS OR MORE:

In accordance with Section 282 of CAMA, a special notice is hereby given that Mr. Basil Omiyi attained the age of 70 years in 2016 and will be proposed as an Independent Non-Executive Director for re-election at the meeting while Mr. Ebi also attained the age of 70 years in 2020 and will be presented for appointment as a Non-Executive Director on the Board of the Company.

8. ELECTRONIC ANNUAL REPORT:

In order to improve efficiency and delivery of the Annual Report, shareholders who wish to receive the Annual Report of Seplat Energy Plc in an electronic format should provide their email addresses to the Registrars for processing. In addition, Annual Reports are available online for viewing and download from the Company's website at www.seplatenergy.com.

9. RIGHT OF MEMBERS TO ASK QUESTIONS:

In line with Rule 19.12© of the Listing Rules of the Nigerian Exchange Limited, shareholders have a right to ask questions not only at the Annual General Meeting, but also in writing prior to the Meeting. Questions submitted prior to the Meeting should be addressed to the Company Secretary and must reach the head office of the Company no later than seven (7) days before the date of the Meeting (being 11 May 2022) or by email at AGMQuestions@seplatenergy.com.

10. LIVE STREAMING OF THE AGM:

The Meeting will be streamed live online to enable shareholders and other stakeholders who will not be attending physically to follow the proceedings. The link for the live streaming of the Meeting will be made available on the Company's website at www.seplatenergy.com and will be streamed live on the YouTube social media channel.

IMAGES

Engr. Daniel Folorunso Adebola, celebrated his 50th birthday in a grand style on Saturday 12th of March 2022 at Tyttlo Event Centre, CMD Road, Magodo GRA Extension, in Lagos. Here are the faces of some dignitaries that graced the occasion

PHOTO: **SUNDAY ADIGUN**



The celebrant, Engr. and Mrs. Daniel Folorunso Adebola



Dr. Mrs. Victoria Oginì; and Mrs. Funmi Komolafe



Mr. and Mrs. Adeniyi Olukoya



Mr. and Mrs. Adesina Adeyeba



L-R: Mrs. Kola Amodu; and Mrs. Shade Adelakan



L-R: Mrs. Monisola Popoola; and Mrs. Nike Ogunye



Pastor and Pastor Mrs, Moses Ikotun



Pastor and Pastor Mrs. Bisi Olowoyo



L-R: Pastor Mrs. Lola Osipitan; and Pastor Mrs. Bukola Kolajo



L-R: Pastor Mrs. Stella Afilaka; and Pastor Mrs. Kalejaiye



L-R: Pastor Oladipo Okuwobi; and Pastor Mrs. Fadeke Olugbemi



L-R: Rev. Sunday Awe; and Pastor Kasali Adunola Akinade

POLITY

Gov Abiodun Delivering Dividends of Democracy

Femi Ogbonnikan

The time has come for governments at all levels to begin to take a comprehensive audit of their performances in the last three years and give the electorate real value for their votes. As it is well known, one of the banes of good governance in Nigeria is the lack of basic social capital. That is the trust and confidence that exist between the government and the people. For most parts, there is a huge deficit of public trust for the leadership in power due to the experience of disappointing expectations and unfulfilled electoral promises. But as they say, "a people deserve the kind of government they get."

Thus, the wise people of Ogun State must have seen the hope of a better tomorrow in the candidacy of Prince Dapo Abiodun before they overwhelmingly voted for him in the 2019 election even in the face of the vehement opposition of his predecessor, Senator Ibikunle Amosun. And since he assumed the mantle of leadership on May 29, 2019, he has kept an abiding faith with his electoral promise to change the narrative and rebuild the confidence of the hitherto disillusioned state workforce as well as distrusting populace.

In spite of the antics of his political adversaries, he has continued to blaze the trail in the delivery of dividends of democracy. Abiodun is doing so to the chagrin and disappointment of his detractors who are bent on slowing down the hands of the clock. Under his leadership, Ogun has continued to witness unprecedented development in the areas of the economy, infrastructure, housing, healthcare service delivery, agriculture, education, and youth empowerment, among others. With the onset of another session of politics and the attendant campaign of calumny, there is no better time than now to take a sincere review of the performance of the governor in the last three years of his administration vis-à-vis the resources available in an era of COVID-19 pandemic. That is the very least minimum a responsible, responsive and accountable government could do to justify the mandate of the people and also earn the trust of the electorate who will decide on who they want as the governor in the coming 2023 general elections.

Putting the cards on the table, no one can be blind to the remarkable transformation that has happened to road network infrastructures dotting the vast landscape in the state. These include Ijebu-Ode-Mojoda-Epe Road, reconstruction of Siun-Sagamu, the newly commissioned 14Km Ijebu-Ode-Mojoda-Epe toll road, ongoing construction work on the 24km Ikenne-Ilishan-Ago Iwoye Road, Raypower, Navy-Osi-Ikola roads (Ado-Odo/Ota LGA), Fajol-Ajgunle-America Junction-Alogi road and American Junction-Unity Estate road, which cut across Abeokuta South and Odeda Local Government Areas.

Others are Ejirin-Mobalufon- Oluwalogbon road (Ijebu-Ode LGA) and Ilaro-Owode road (Yewa South LGA), Joju road (Ado-Odo/Ota LGA), Lantoro-Elite-Idi-Aba road (Abeokuta South LGA), beautification of NNPC Mega Station road (Abeokuta South LGA), Somorin-Kemta-Idi Aba Road (Odeda LGA), Imasayi-Igan Okoto-Ayetoro Road (Yewa North LGA), sectional rehabilitation of Papalanto-Ilaro road (Ewekoro LGA), the asphaltting of Lafenwa-Rounder road (Abeokuta North LGA), palliative works along Sango junction-Ojuore road (Ado-Odo/Ota LGA) and the construction of City Gate monument at Sagamu Interchange (Obafemi-Owode LGA).

Work is also steadily progressing on the construction of Journalists' Estate, Arepo (Obafemi Owode LGA), the internal road linking Ifo General Hospital, renovation of Ifo Fire Station, rehabilitation of both Olowomore-Sanni, Olowomore-Brewery roads (both in Abeokuta North LGA) and a 2.1 kilometres Lantoro/Idi-Aba road, in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Abeokuta. As an administration that believes in an inclusive approach to governance, every effort is made to ensure that no community in the three Senatorial Districts is left out in the distribution of these projects and



Governor Abiodun

without compromising the standard of the work done.

Indeed, so impressed was President Muhammadu Buhari with the quality of these infrastructures that he declared the roads and the housing estate at Kobape (Abeokuta) world-class projects during his recent official visit to the state to inaugurate some landmark achievements of the administration.

Most important of them all is the Agro Cargo Airport which has become a reference point among the enduring legacies of the present administration. The Cargo Airport is set to be delivered in November this year as scheduled, while the intermodal bus transport system is about to berth in the state. To underscore the priority accorded the project, the Governor has given assurance that it would be completed before the end of this fiscal year.

He gave the assurance in his speech in Ijebu-Ode during the recent meeting of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the Ogun East senatorial district. According to him, the construction of the airport, which commenced in March 2022, would probably be the fastest constructed airport on the continent. For that reason, the project has continued to draw accolades from concerned stakeholders in the agro-allied industries for the anticipated dawn of a new era.

When completed, it will advance the agriculture value-chain in the state, which is very crucial as a choice of location for the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone Programme (SAPZ) by the Africa Development Bank (AfDB). It will also boost employment generation, and as well enhance self-sufficiency in revenue generation. According to projection, the cargo international airport would provide no fewer than 25,000 jobs for the people of the state. "The impact of the agro cargo airport will affect positive effects on hotels and warehouses being constructed in the area. Nigeria Customs and the Nigerian Air Force are coming there. We estimate that in the first eighteen (18) months, we will create a minimum of twenty-five thousand jobs in that airport," Abiodun said.

In addition to all this, the project will also open up the state, deepen the development process, and also provide an alternative to the congested Lagos port facilities.

In order to further strengthen the security architecture of the state, the discussion is already ongoing between the Nigerian Air Force and the Ogun State government to establish an Air Force base at the Cargo Airport to complement the law enforcement for the safety of lives and property in the State. As part of the outcome of the discussion with Air Marshal Isiaka Oladayo Amao, Chief of Air Staff, the plan has been concluded for the groundbreaking work on the construction of the Air Force Base.

In the same vein, the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) has also indicated interest to establish its presence at the cargo airport. This followed the recent visit of Governor Abiodun to the Comptroller-General of Customs, Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali (Rtd) in his Abuja office where they had a fruitful discussion on how to effectively collaborate on matters of security of investors.

Similarly, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has commended Abiodun on the progress and quality of work already carried out in the Agro Cargo Airport project situated at Ilishan-Remo. The team of Civil Aviation Authority led by a director in the agency, Engr Olugbenga Taiwo, while assessing the quality of work on the project, commended the State government for a job well done, stressing its impact on the citizens through employment generation, wealth creation and industrial growth.

The Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, who received the team at Ilishan site, Ikenne Local Government Area of the state, Engr. Ade Akinsanya, explained that the Airport would improve the status of the State on the economic map of the country, assuring that the government would not relent in its infrastructural drive, especially on the project and the network of roads.

Akinsanya expressed optimism that the runway, airflow, laying of asphalt, and control tower would be nearing completion before the onset of the rainy season, while the terminal plaza would commence soon.

The plan is equally underway to set up a Naval Base at the Olokola seaport. Governor Abiodun gave this indication when he received the Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Command, Apapa, Lagos, Rear Admiral Yakub Wambai, who recently paid him a courtesy. "Very soon, we will be announcing the commencement of our seaport. To that extent, you will be receiving a letter requesting a full Naval Base in Ogun State and we will do everything to support the establishment of that base. Because if we are creating a port, it is also important for us to ensure that we have a significant naval presence," he said.

This is in addition to the ongoing dialogue with the federal government on the need to put in place infrastructure in Tongegi Island, Ipokia (Ogun West) to make the residents of the oil-rich Island feel development as Nigerians.

He dropped the hint while informing Wambai of his desire to visit the Island to see things for himself.

"I have discussed with Mr. President the condition of the people on the island when he came here to commission some of our projects. I have also discussed with the National Security Adviser (NSA) and other relevant stakeholders on the need for Nigeria to make a strong presence on the island, especially with the activities of our neighbouring country (Republic of Benin).

"Though the island can only be accessed through the water, I will visit the Island very soon to see things for myself," he assured.

The healthcare delivery services of the administration cannot also be glossed over. When Governor Abiodun assumed office in 2019, the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH), Sagamu, was in deplorable condition due to several years of neglect. It was in a complete state of disrepair, with collapsing structures as well as obsolete equipment. Among others, CT scans, echocardiography machines, MRI, mobile x-ray machines, peak flow meter, spirometry, dialysis machines, C-arm for orthopedic cases, and operating tables, were all dysfunctional as the management had to grapple with the challenge of underfunding and inadequate training, culminating in brain-drain.

Ogbonnikan wrote from Abeokuta, Ogun State

[Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com](http://www.thisdaylive.com)

Ipesa-Balogun: I will Commit My Pay to Constituency Development

Godwin Ifijeh

A Lagos aspirant to the House of Representatives has said that he would take no pay for personal use but for the development of his constituency if gets the mandate to represent the Oshodi Federal Constituency 1, of Lagos State.

Hon. Afeez Ipesa-Balogun, who is a former Chairman of the Oshodi/Isolo Local Government, made the vow recently while declaring to vie for the ticket of the constituency under the All Progress Congress (APC).

Ipesa, also a former member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, said he would set up a Constituency Trust Fund to which his salary and allowances would be paid into and then applied to all areas of the constituency if he gets the ticket to run for the Oshodi Federal Constituency 1 and gets elected into the house.

The eloquent Honourable, who was listened to and welcomed in wide jubilation at the occasion held at his No. 9, Balogun Street, Oshodi, Lagos, said his last child was right now into the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and that he was not seeking to serve for reasons of acquiring wealth for any private use.



Ipesa-Balogun

Eulogised as "Ipesa, Like Nelson Mandela", he said it was long he left office as council chairman but he had lived, worked hard, take good care of himself and solved all necessary problems, including adequately training his children, stating that he does not need to chase money for personal use any longer.

Ipesa-Balogun promised to enliven the constituency with progress and development, taking care of the health of the elderly, widows, potholes on all roads, attending to schools and health centre problems in the constituency, using the Constituency Trust Fund that would be administered by well dedicated men and women of honour if offered the ticket and voted in to represent the Constituency.

He enjoined the people to ensure that they voted and their votes count, tasking them to endeavour to have a good representative that would care for them and cater for their problems and interest.

Ipesa-Balogun left the gathering in high honour with people singing, dancing and praising him for his past, particularly his easy accessibility and commitment to perpetual stay in Oshodi irrespective of his position and person.

POLITY

Dan'Iya Joins Sokoto Gov Race

As the race to succeed Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State gathers momentum, **Onuminya Innocent** writes that the cap fits incumbent Deputy Governor, Muhammad Manir Dan'Iya

With the 2023 elections gathering momentum, Sokoto, the seat of the Caliphate in particular is becoming agog with activities. The race for the next governor is particularly hot, with incumbent deputy governor and Walin Sokoto, Muhammad Manir Dan'Iya of the PDP leading the pack. Some concerned personalities of Sokoto origin, feel it's of paramount importance to amplify reasons why the deputy governor is the right candidate for the governorship ticket of the PDP.

According to them, the trajectory of Sokoto politics has been characterised by certain beliefs and actions that a sitting deputy governor from the same party has never succeeded his boss. Today, there is a cordial and chummy relationship between Governor Aminu Tambuwal and his deputy. Facts have also shown that between 2019 to date, no governor in the whole of 36 states of the federation has had a good, loyal and cordial relationship with his deputy like that of Tambuwal.

This unquestionable loyalty exhibited by the Walin Sokoto to many political watchers is unparalleled in the history of governor / deputy relationship in Nigeria.

To justify why the cap fits the Walin Sokoto more than any of the contestants, those rooting for the deputy governor to succeed Tambuwal have challenged any of the contestants and their supporters to come up with narratives that will equal or surpass the achievements of Walin Sokoto.

It's a globally acceptable norm in every political process that the electorate are enlightened about what individual politician could offer and this is hinged on the politician's history and stewardship over the years.

In seeking the support of the electorate, politicians showcase and market themselves which enable the voters to make wise decisions on why they are better than others and as such should be elected.

Looking at the background and experience of the deputy governor, he stands out in many respects. He holds the traditional title "Sardaunan Kware" until 29 October 2020 when the revered Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, conferred on him the prestigious traditional title of "Walin Sokoto". This title is a plus for the deputy governor, who many consider as a loyal public servant.

The Walin Sokoto started his Qur'anic education at the age of four and memorised the Holy Qur'an in the early

80s during his primary school education at Magajin Gari Primary school.

He proceeded to Government Science Secondary School Farfuru Sokoto and graduated in 1989. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education / Economics from Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto in 2014.

He also has a Higher Diploma in Accounting and Finance, Professional Diploma in Accounting and Auditing and a Certificate in Local Government Administration, these professional certificates were obtained at the then Abdu Gusau Polytechnic and Sokoto State Polytechnic, respectively.

He served as a civil servant in various capacities under the Sokoto State Local Government Service Commission.

Dan'Iya joined politics in 2003 and was appointed Sole administrator of Kware local government and subsequently elected as Chairman of Kware Local Government Area.

In 2011 and 2015 he served as Special Adviser to the then Speaker of the House of Representatives,

Aminu Tambuwal. He later came back to Sokoto and was appointed as the Commissioner for Local Governments and Community Development.

He became the deputy governor in 2018, a position he holds till date. Another thing going for the deputy governor is that he is a grassroots politician, having interfaced with the people as a public servant in the local government and subsequently, as a caretaker chairman and also as an elected executive of the local government.

With his credentials, other contestants are challenged to show their resume in their respective capacities as public servants or engagements with the rural or local dwellers for comparative purposes. Their confidence was borne out of the fact that the deputy governor had passed through the thick and thin of Sokoto politics and they see him as somebody who is more of a grassroots democrat.

His experiences cut across both the legislative and executive domain, as a special adviser to the Speaker of the House of Representative, later became a member of the state executive council and now the number two personality in the state. None among the contestants "has attained such a high profile trajectory in politics" posited supporters of Dan'Iya.

His experiences shows the magnitude of his political structure as the son of the soil who impacted positively on the lives of the people educationally, socially and economically.

There are many foundations, as well as other community services and scholarships that are in existence courtesy of Walin



Dan'Iya

Sokoto. "We challenge the other contestants to showcase their resume in terms of how they impacted on the lives of people in the state," say his supporters.

As part of his philanthropy, Dan'Iya has made a duty to give quarterly assistance to less-privileged, low income earners and youths who could not afford marriage including provision of housing accommodation to less-privileged. Many within Sokoto and beyond have given their testimonies to this gesture.

Dan'Iya has established a foundation charged with the sole responsibility of providing succour to the less-privileged in the society. Thousands of beneficiaries of this kind gesture are scattered all over the state.

Through his Walin Foundation, several mosques and other religious centres were reconstructed and new ones built by him especially the Almajiri school converted to accommodate modern and Islamic knowledge in Kware L.G.

The Walin Foundation also gives a monthly token to Ulama and religious preachers who run some selected Almajiri schools, this is meant to assist them in cushioning the effect of their efforts in teaching at the selected learning centres.

The foundation also in many instances offset medical bills of less-privileged at occasions when the need arises. Through human milk of kindness thousands have benefitted and are still benefitting from such gestures.

The deputy governor is also involved in educational interventions in form of cash to deserving youth who aspire to continue their education. For example, in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, records have it that no political office holder has personally contributed to the development of education like the Walin Sokoto. Several beneficiaries have graduated under his scholarships and many in their hundreds are still enjoying the gesture.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

Saliu Mustapha, Buhari and the Price of Loyalty

Babatunde AbdulRahman

In politics, especially the Nigerian variant, loyalty is one of the rarest virtues. Politicians change positions and convictions as the season and moments demand, even when such changes clash with the ideals of their allies and benefactors. Across party lines, selfish interests often cloud loyalty to causes and people. And so, whether it is to a personality, an ideology, or a cause, loyalty is therefore considered worthy of being cherished when exhibited by any politician.

As the 2022 National Convention of the All Progressives Congress successfully comes to a close, one aspirant whose commitment to the progressive cause and the Buhari phenomenon was put to an unprecedented test was Saliu Mustapha, the Turaki of Ilorin.

In the minds of many pundits, Mallam Mustapha exemplifies the quintessence of a loyal politician whose commitment to the progressive ideals are built on principles and trust.

Apart from his youthful personality, his clean public records, his widely acknowledged integrity, as well as his bridge-building efforts as a loyal party man, Mustapha also represents that rare species of a loyal political disciple through and through. This is the reason why, among all of the leading chairmanship aspirants of the ruling party, he is considered the most loyal to the vision of President Muhammadu Buhari and the APC. Unlike others, he has stayed with the retired general from his days in the ANPP through to the CPC and finally the APC.

First, between 2001 - 2002, he was the National Publicity Secretary of the Progressive Liberation Party (PLP) and a little further in 2003, worked with likeminds to register and form the Progressive Action Congress (PAC), where he served as National Publicity Secretary. Shortly afterwards, President Buhari conceived the idea of coming back into public service as a civilian President and Saliu Mustapha keyed into the vision, becoming a pivotal member of The Buhari Organisation (TBO) and the Buhari Campaign Organisation (BCO) respectively for several years.

Since then, he hasn't looked back in his loyalty to the Buhari cause and, by extension, the entrenchment of progressive governance in Nigeria—a commitment for which he has paid numerous prices in vilification, disappointments, maltreatment, injustice, etc. But not once has he showed any sign of



Saliu Mustapha

weakness in his loyalty to these causes, despite the turbulence.

For instance, after the failed attempt by President Buhari to assume the presidential seat in 2003, Saliu returned to Ilorin to revive the ANPP structure in Kwara State ahead of the 2007 general elections at a time it was not fashionable to do so. Determined to build the winning structure for President Buhari, he funded the party in the 2007 general elections and even contested for an House of Representatives seat, amid a climate of fear and bullying of opposition figures.

Undeterred by the result of the 2007 elections, Saliu moved to the Congress for Progressive Change in 2010 ahead of the 2011 elections. Due to his commitment to the party's ideology and progressive philosophy, he became the CPC National Deputy Chairman and practically ran the party due to Momoh's ill health at the time. He stood strong and solid with Buhari all through his court cases in 2007/2011 standing as witness, coordinating witnesses and guiding the legal team.

In Kwara, where the late Olusola Saraki called the shots as the kingmaker, Saliu Mustapha installed the CPC structure and made it the biggest opposition party next to ACN and ACPN. These structures were nurtured and allowed to grow into what later metamorphosed into the APC alliance ahead of the 2015

general elections.

In the historic 2015 Presidential election, Mustapha played a leading role in ensuring that President Buhari emerge winner. He also worked for the success of the party in the state.

It was a big test of Mustapha's loyalty that when President Buhari came into government, he and his supporters were left in the cold. But as a loyal party man and disciple of President Buhari, he never complained. Assuring his supporters that all was well, he also ensured that the party grew in leaps and bounds ahead of bigger challenges.

In 2019, he declared interest in the governorship seat of Kwara state but was mischievously disqualified from the race. His disqualification was greeted with a loud protest at the time and he was asked to seek redress in court. But as a loyal party man, he envisaged that the move could lead into intra-party conundrum and subject the party to what it suffered in Zamfara State, he declined. The party would later apologise to him in a written letter by its former chair, Adams Oshiomole.

Despite discontent among his supporters who were angered by the 'illegal disqualification', he rallied round the party's candidate and now governor of the state, standing solidly behind the party when things were tough.

When the campaign became intense, he funded and worked tirelessly with likeminds to spread the gospel of the Ologe campaign and it is a testament to his loyalty to party development that he even donated his campaign secretariat to Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, the party's candidate in that election. Despite the support and loyalty, he was not considered for anything and he hasn't complained. Rather, he has been a pillar of support for the party both in the state and at the national levels. In Kwara, where things have become quite polarised, he has been a unifying figure. Despite the disagreement between Governor AbdulRahman, Alhaji Lai Mohammed and other leading figures of the party, he has remained neutral, insisting that as a founding father of the party in the state, he can't afford to support any faction but ensure the crisis was resolved for the sustenance of one, indivisible party.

Babatunde AbdulRahman writes from Ilorin, Kwara State.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

Grooming Center's Stories of Impact: Real Women, Real Lives

Manny Ita

The numerology number 30 represents highly creative and social energies. It is an effective communicator and resonates with optimism, creative expression and encourages them in others.

Grooming People for Better Livelihood Centre, an NGO offering microfinance assistance to Nigerian women, recently featured the lives of 30 women transformed by its business of giving microcredit to women at surprisingly low interest rates, in a 132-page photo book titled, Stories of Impact – Real Women, Real Lives, Real Impact.

Admittedly, while it would be difficult to tell all their stories in one swoop, Whether the decision by the NGO to feature just 30 women, who, on their own are visionaries chasing dreams, building businesses, and changing lives, out of the over 700,000 impacted by its loans is by design or default, it sublimely infers the 30 'numerologic'.

Beyond that however, these stories of impact, which essentially highlight 30 women, many of them widows, who surmounted personal and business challenges to record great successes in their personal lives and businesses, speak in the clearest terms the vision of the NGO to promote financial inclusion among women in the lowest rung of the income bracket, and the truth that it is walking its talk.

The daunting odds that stood against these women and their determination in forging on to breakeven and profiteering is both insightful and inspiring, underpinning the resilience and industriousness of women as factors that hold great potential in economic growth if adequately exploited. And why not?

The book demonstrates strongly also the impact of micro-finance in realising and fulfilling potential. It is instructive to note that most of the women who had been struggling to run their businesses, some for up to 40 years and over or unable to start one are today employers of labor, adding immense value to their families, society and socio-economic development of the country.

Reflecting the challenges faced by women and the depth of poverty in the Nigerian society, the stories in the book highlight the resilience and industriousness of women, their great potential in economic develop-



Scholastica Ugwuanyi

ment and points to a strong recipe to driving stability in homes, stem societal vices, especially among youths and effectively check domestic violence- usually an outfall of financial constraints.

Worthy of commendation is the deliberate effort of the GC towards holistic development of women and its community, not just stopping at granting loans but also going the wider hog of providing healthcare and educational opportunities for its members, with astounding testimonies following.

Elizabeth Ezuma, Fashion Designer/Omuma, Abia State

"I grew up in Uturu, here in Abia, and I attended secondary school here. After secondary school, I got married and moved to Kaduna with my husband but we had to leave Kaduna in 2001 because of the Kaduna Riots. Our lives were in danger, so we moved here. Since then, I have been doing business. It was a second chance for me. I started this business with N1,000. I was selling bread, going from door to door. Today, by the special grace of God, I have my own shop. I've had this shop since 2003 and since then I've

been selling bread and also doing the fashion business. I am satisfied with what I have, and when I see people wearing clothes I made, I feel so excited and happy."

Augustina Njoku, Decorator, Caterer/Nkpor, Anambra State.

"For the past 10 years, I have been making bridal accessories and decorating weddings, birthdays, and other celebrations. I learnt for three years at Awka Road, and then I rented a shop and started my own decoration business. In the beginning, I did not borrow any money to start the business; I used what I had to start small. In 2014, I was approached by some people who told me that Grooming Centre gives loans, so I joined them and started by taking a loan of N40,000. Since then, our group has grown to about 30 women. I really appreciate the Centre because their loans have helped me to do more business."

Scholastica Ugwuanyi, chemist/Karu, Abuja

"I went to School of Health and also studied chemistry. When I came out and had no job, I opened this shop. I chose to empower myself. My work in this community is to give primary healthcare. People often come to me first and I give them the drugs I can based on their symptoms. When I see people that I've helped passing by, because I've been in this community for 17 years, I feel very happy and I thank God for using me as an instrument to help them come out of their sickness."

Throughout the course of the photo book, it is obvious that women are good or perhaps better managers of funds and not easily distracted from their business focus, almost all of them engaged in two, three or more other successful businesses. Suffice to say the human angle slant of the story deservedly appraises GC for its compassionate approach to soft loans for SMEs and the ripple effects of success story of the company can only portend good for many generations."

Recommended to everyone, especially aspiring SMEs entrepreneurs, the book is a small business masterpiece with stories that touch the heart. Stories of Impact – Real Women, Real Lives, Real Impact, is scheduled for launch in Lagos April 28, 2022.

-Ita is a public commentator, brand writer and social analyst resident in Lagos.



L-R; Brand Manager, Mouka Yemisi Obadina; Assistant Coordinator, Magnificent Therapy Services, Oluwatoyin Jaiyesimi; and National Sales, Manager, Mouka, Ladi Alabi during Mouka's donation of 20 Comfy mattresses to Magnificent Therapy Services, for Cerebral Palsy, at Mouka Head Office in Lagos... recently



L-R: Category and Brand Manager, PZ Wilmar Ltd, Oluwatoyin Popoola-Dania; Assistant Brand Development and Activation Manager, PZ Wilmar Ltd, Tunde Ojo; Hollywood Actor. Kunle Remi; Brand Development and Activation Manager, PZ Wilmar Ltd, Bidemi Adepoju; and, Assistant Brand Manager, PZ Wilmar Ltd, Mandela Ajuebor at the King's Fest Easter Edition held in La-



L-R: Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, Dr.Yerima P. Tarfa; the Inductee, Dr. Chris N. Ngige; President/Chairman, Governing, Council, Institute of Leadership Entrepreneurship and Corporate Governance (INSLEC), Prof. Gabriel Emecheta; and the Registrar,INSLEC, Mrs. Onajiyoma Agubo, at the induction ceremony of Dr. Chris Ngige as a Distinguished Honorary Fellow of INSLEC in Abuja recently



Ogun First Lady, Mrs. Bamidele Abiodun with the Children at the Easter Children's Party held at the Civic Centre, Iperu Remo, Ogun State ...recently

EXPRESSION

'Riff-raff' Uncountable

PLEASE note that 'reopening' abhors hyphenation. It is not automatic that any word with a prefix must go with a hyphen, except where there is a vowel replication. For instance: re-entry, but readmit, readjust, etcetera.

"Legislators, oil chiefs parley on industry enhancing issues" Imagine the classical excellence a hyphen between 'industry' and 'enhancing' would have conferred on the headline.

"I said these are (were) beggars and I told my wife I better (I had better) get money ready for them."

"... the grassroots population of our people will remain the lifewire of the UBE scheme." Adult literacy: livewire.

"The remains of the Ovie, sources in the town revealed, was (were) later tied..."

"And just last Friday, it was reported that the police has (had) arrested the APC governorship candidate..."

"The meetings were about some developments alright..." 'Alright' (non-standard) is unacceptable for 'all right' in formal settings.

"My suggestion, therefore, is that our National Assembly members should tow (toe) the line of reason."

"... especially those public officers who remain suspect with regards (regard) to their qualifications and credibility to hold public offices" Alternatively, as regards their qualifications...

"The nation has (had) in the past pardoned and forgiven it's (sic) past leaders and citizens who committed one offence or the other (or another)!"

"Such citizens had since been integrated back (reintegrated) into the system."

"A recent summit in Kaduna on education in the northern states provided the appropriate forum to revisit, once again..." 'Revisit' cannot co-function with 'again'.

"Gone are the days when government can (could) go it alone."

"Infact (In fact) every loving parents..." Parent-

age: either every loving parent or all loving parents
"In the agricultural sector, the two countries can learn a lot from one another (each other)."

"... who was arraigned on a 34-count charge bothering (bordering) on the diversion of..."

"We assure Your Excellency that this confidence reposed on (in) our former Senate Leader is well placed and will manifest without probation."

"CSR: NLNG invests N200m on (in) 10 Nigerian postgraduate scholars"

For the first time since 2013 when this column birthed, we continue this edition with an advertisement: "Salt Spring Resort has been redefined and renovated to provide excellent service." A refreshing experience of paradise; provide an excellent service or provide excellent services

"We are poised (poised) to deliver uncompromised (uncompromised) quality product that will ultimately satisfied (satisfy) our esteemed customers. Come lets (let's) give you..." What do we do with the sub-literacy of advertisement copies?

"Anger, protests, as deceased's friends point fingers at lawmaker" Get it right: point the finger at lawmaker

THE NATION ON SUNDAY of April 17 endangered the English language on two occasions: "In most cases, the necessary environment does not exist for meaningful importation (impartation) of knowledge."

"Matters are not helped by students who are now distracted by things that have no bearing to (on) their studies."

"Gov. Aminu Tambuwal, appears set to take the bull by the horn (horns) by declaring his interest in the 2023 presidency..."

"Students of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, are to cough-out (no hyphen and, of course, two words) a total of N5 million for repairs of damages (damage) they perpetrated during a demonstration in July last year." 'Damage' admits an inflection only in reparative matters.

"Now, It is the turn of the teachers, in the race for the coveted seat of vice-chancellorship, and boy, are the learned dons falling over themselves

(one another) to out do (one word) each other (one another)?" When two fellows are concerned, we use 'each other', but if it is more than two, it becomes 'one another',

"Secret cult in the campuses" Always on campuses

"Kano Pillars in trouble... yet to sign-on players" 'Sign on', a phrasal verb, does not require hyphenation.

"Thus, cargo that have been certified okay here..." I certify that 'cargo' is singular.

"Inconsistent government policies is globally disturbing..." Concord is one of the simplest things in grammar: Anybody who lacks this rudimentary knowledge has no business contributing to the most authoritative newspaper (name withheld!) in Nigeria. You must develop your communicative skills first.

"Banks impose a lot difficult conditions on exporters and even charged (sic) some 'hidden' fees before the disbursement of these loans are (is) done..."

"CPC to clampdown on illegal microfinance banks" Phrasal verb: clamp down (two words).

"An acknowledged scholar, a distinguished statesman and a team leader per excellence" Get it right: leader par excellence.

"New trends in electioneering campaigns" Politics Today: just electioneering or political campaigns. 'Electioneering campaign' is sheer verbiage! 'Electioneering' encompasses campaign and other related electoral issues.

"Some countries have taken tobacco manufacturers to court for the damages their products cause." The will to die: damage, again, is uncountable, except in reparative applications for indemnity.

"... what happened was that somebody filed a writ of summon." This way (singular): a writ of summons; plural: summonses.

"It is the Federal Board that is always guilty of that, because it is them who take riff-raffs as welfare officers!" 'Riff-raff', just like 'stuff', is uncountable.



MEDIAGAFFES

EBERE WABARA

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"Modern technology has reduced the world into (to) a hamlet where the inhabitants are their brothers' keepers." This way: brother's keeper (fixed idiom), irrespective of the number of people involved.

"The coincidence in the timing of all those sleazy gossips in soft-sell magazines and the beginning of his fashion parade..." 'Gossip', in this context, is uncountable.

"More overaged players for youth soccer" Get it right: overage players.

"Residents of some of the troubled spots in Libya in disarray" Witness to lexical mayhem: trouble spots.

"... rummaging all the bags and ransacking every nook and corner." Stock expression: nook and cranny.

"The police requires (require) a redeemer who can uplift the Force from the battering it (they) suffered during the long years of militarization."

"I inquired from those that appear to know and they said that the president is (was) roaming the country in the name of campaigns."

"There is (are) no electricity, no security, no water, no roads, no health facilities in Nigeria!"

"Foreign companies will be falling over themselves (one another) to come and invest here if we get the 2023 elections right!"

"... given the lame-duck posture of the opposition parties, the PDP simply held sway from the onset (outset)!"

"Reactions on (to) the Pope's visit, however successful, were mixed in Egypt, a country inhabited by a predominantly Muslim population!"

"Prior to the Pope's visit, Egyptian Catholics have (had) opted out of the..."

"The first part was published last week Friday." Monday politics: either last Friday or Friday, last week.

"Vigilante (Vigilance) groups, committed to..."

Did you know that 'twice' and 'thrice' are outdated entries for two times and three times?

Final Perspectives On 'Perceptions 2023'

Eventually, we have reached the last set of sundry perspectives and diverse reactions to our series of articles on perceptual excavation of notable, and not so notable, presidential aspirants for the 2023 elections. Here we go...

ON ATIKU ABUBAKAR - PUBLISHED MARCH 12:

This is a damning review of Atiku's persona that's even unnecessary for he himself knows all of these codified accumulated verdicts at one time or the other that he ought to have deeply reflected upon realistically before making this voyage of his, especially at this material time... He deserves some sympathy in inverted commas!!!

- Dele Ogundele

To me, Atiku Abubakar has been a half-hearted contestant all along. Always laid back and allowing others to swindle him about campaigning for him. He has very good credentials and pedigree to become Nigeria's president. All those talks about skeletons in his cupboard and other personal shortcomings are not different from those that have led us in this country in one form or the other. Atiku has never run any strong campaign and his political minders have not been strategic and do not communicate well to the public. He cannot win an election in Nigeria with that kind of structure.

- Denja Abdullahi

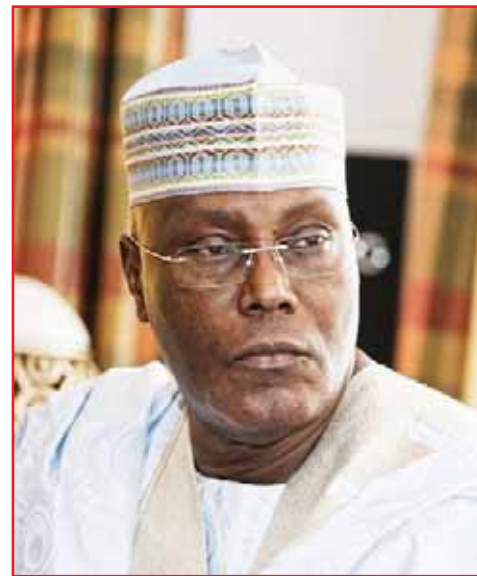
That is what you get when a politician doesn't have political ideology, but follows any ideology just for the sake of getting the political power they desire. Americans don't just jump from one party to another... they stick with the ideology they believe in even for their whole life. This man Atiku may never even rule Nigeria...

- Chris Obi Moses

His irritant arrogance and ill-perceived larger than life posture eventually sentenced him to political oblivion. Sadly, he has tragically missed his opportunity. Had he been 100% loyal to Obasanjo... nothing would have stopped him from taking his shot at presidency after OBJ... and that was the plan... but his inordinate ambition shot him down... Am afraid, he had long ago lost it.

- Samuel Kunle-Oluwatobi

Atiku can't be president of NIGERIA. He has been an errand-boy for the military during their years in



Atiku

govt. They know his capacity of being very good at doing the dirty jobs for them. Therefore, the military generals won't allow him to become NIGERIA's president. Therefore, I think he should go and rest. Atiku can't be a benevolent president.

-Wale Otubusin

Winning the presidential election is never a one time business. There are many examples to show that persistence and determination are the keys to winning. PDP wants to get power and the only candidate that is very close to winning for the PDP, as of now, is Atiku. And this confused write up is coming up this time because some people don't sit down and analyse party politics and the opportunities for winning elections. Whatever fault lines Atiku has, let's compare him with another candidate in terms of contact, resources, influence, national spread and ability to mobilise politically. When igbos were given the VP slot in 2019, they refused to go and vote, thereby producing nothing more than 1.5 million votes, from the whole of South East. And they want to be president! Who do they want to make an Igbo president with low political participation and low voter turnout?

- Musa Musa

ON YEMI OSINBAJO - MARCH 19:

Thanks Femi for this great write up. I had the opportunity to meet and even have him study legal documents for a project with Lagos State Government. The problem is when you serve for two terms in a failed administration under a non-performing President and you are not able to interfere, (it) means you are not capable to run the affairs also. It's time for an IGBO president. Nothing else is acceptable in 2023. There is a successful banker, administrator called Peter OBI! Why don't we all rally around him? We don't need a Tinubu or Osinbajo. They had their term.

- Tee Mac Omatshola Iseli

The vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, despite his impressive credentials, does not possess the requisite 'Madness' to run this country at this point in Time. Except by consensus, all political actors agree to let him run the country or the highest authority in the matter decrees it, please be assured he won't be President of Nigeria.

- Sighetu Edubane Edeke

Thanks bro, for this very balanced analysis. The real challenge for comparatively "better" candidates, like the VP, will always be lack of "political structure" to drive their dream (that is if they have such a dream, in the first instance).

I pray a day will arrive in our political firmament, where men and women of proven competence can aspire for and get high political office, on their own merit alone. I do believe that if God tarries, that day shall come in our lifetime.

- Sola Adesokan

I think it was the Vice President to President George W. Bush (the senior) that had a similar problem. When he contested for the Presidency, he was asked, 'Where were you?' during his principal's tenure. Osinbajo will definitely have a Herculean task explaining how he can make a difference, especially under APC. If you ask me, those who belonged to ACN meant well for Nigeria. However, the CPC (especially) and the other parties that came to form the APC schemed the ACN elements out.

- Matthew Simpa

With all his education, it takes the ASIWAJU OF NIGERIA to rescue him from the jaw of academic redundancy after retirement, like Professor Akin



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Oyebode, the senior colleague of Osinbajo at the University Of Lagos.

- Adegbamigbe Bamisebi

ON PERCEPTIONS 2023 IN PERCENTAGES - MARCH 26:

Jejune, arrant and nonsensical calculations.

- Shuaib Shitho

Well done FAJ. This is your ivory tower reality rating of the presumed contestants, but what of the unschooled masses that care less of the politician's track records? Atiku and Tinubu will get more followers in percentage if the influence of stomach infrastructure are included in the ratings.

- Gbenga Akeju

Thanks FAJ for this great job...if only Nigerians would eschew tribalism and support who'd turn things around, lives will be better for all. One major clog against Obi is that his people want Biafra. And in line with that rating will Oshibajo still continue as VP...just in case?

In all, you did a very good & commendable job. If only Nigerians would read between the lines and do the needful, Nigeria go better.

- Aluko Olú Isaacs

With utmost respect for the effort and work put into this research, a TAX EVADER cannot in all conscience have the highest ratings.

- Jumoke Abayomi

I have followed this piece from the very start. Beautiful! Interestingly, none of all of them may feature in the real show in the next few weeks/months. Particularly in the APC.

- Shofoyeke Adeniyi SA

I can't believe someone like Yaya Bello wants to rule Nigeria.

- Abdullateef Balogun

Ratings and analyses of personalities are almost faultless... Except, former Gov. Peter Obi should have been rated a bit higher, going by the obvious political atmosphere of Nigeria now!

- Festus Oyeromi

GLOBAL SOCCER



TOP-FOUR BATTLE

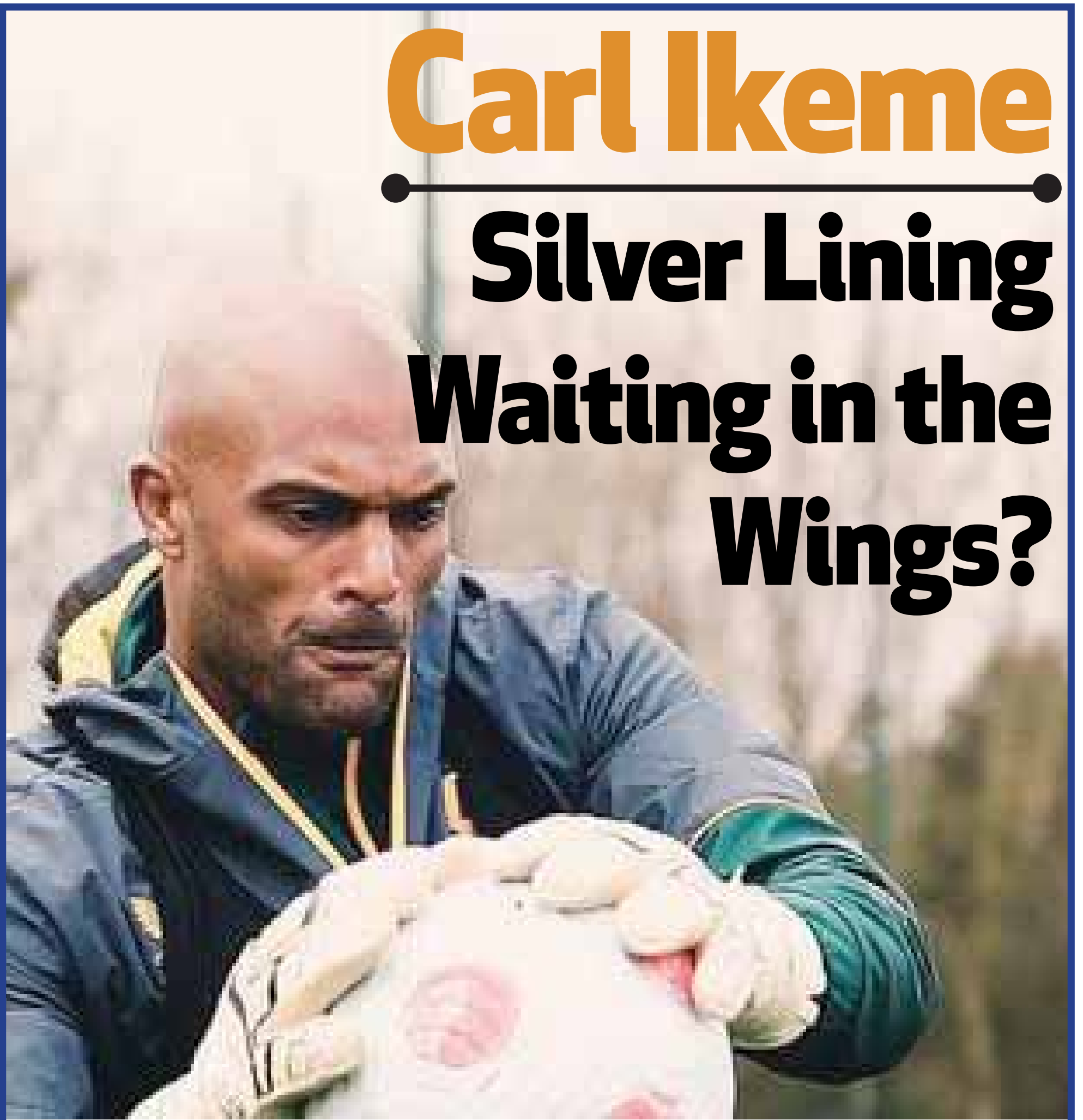
A **THIS DAY** WEEKLY PULL-OUT

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Carl Ikeme

Silver Lining
Waiting in the
Wings?



GLOBAL SOCCER

Carl Ikeme

Silver Lining Waiting in the Wings?

When in the summer of 2017 Super Eagles' safe hand, Carl Ikeme was diagnosed with acute leukaemia, which led to his retirement from football, he felt his world had come to an end. Miraculously, the former Wolverhampton Wanderers FC number one choice returned to training last week, almost five years after he suffered the life-threatening ailment. The big question, however, remains if he can ever return to his old self between the sticks



Carl Ikeme (l) with Wolves' fourth goalkeeper, Jose Sa after his training session with team last Saturday

In July 2018, former Super Eagles' number one goalkeeper, Carl Ikeme, announced his retirement from football after the Wolverhampton Wanderers FC safe hands was diagnosed with acute leukaemia. On entering into complete remission, Ikeme had announced on his twitter handle: "After a tough year and intense chemotherapy treatment

I would like to let everyone know I am in complete remission. I still have hurdles to get over to be cured but I can hopefully now move forward with some normality. "I would like to thank my family/friends, to start with who have gone above and beyond for me. The support I have received from Wolves/Nigeria, the football world and from people

from all over the world has been hard to put into words. I can't thank everyone at the Christie and Heartlands Hospital enough for their care!!! What next who knows...I'm just taking it a day at a time." Ikeme, however, emotionally returned to football last week Saturday, when he resumed at the training ground of Wolverhampton Wanderers

for the first time since he was diagnosed with Leukaemia in 2017.

The 35-year-old shot-stopper has been battling cancer, which halted his 18-years footballing career at Wolves for the past four years.

The former Super Eagles goalkeeper, on his return, went on a tour of the Wolves' Compton Park training ground and met old friends and faces in the team.

Ikeme was shown around the training ground by another goalkeeper, John Ruddy, as he was introduced to the new technical crew of the team and other officials of the Premier League side.

In the video shared on the club's YouTube page, which has since gone viral, the Nigerian star was seen exchanging hugs and pleasantries with England defender and Wolves captain, Connor Coady.

He also met and greeted his African compatriot, Ivorian defender Willy Bolly before going on to the pitch to join others for the training session.

Meanwhile, former Super Eagles coach, Sunday Oliseh who gave Ikeme his first international breakthrough has described former Nigerian international goalkeeper as a "lovely human being".

Oliseh said this while reacting to the goalkeeper's return to English Premier League side Wolves training for the first time in four years.

Reacting, in a tweet via his Twitter handle last Saturday, Oliseh wrote: "Same here Mimi. Such a lovely human being."

Recall that Ikeme was invited to Wolves training a few days ago and was in high spirits as he joined the rest of the squad for their training session.

The 35-year-old had an emotional return to the Compton Park training ground of the team and met his teammates of old.

During his training with Wolves on his return, Ikeme showed impressive reflexes and looked sharp like he never left.

However, it is not yet clear if the former Super Eagles star, who was seen by many football lovers as Nigeria's best goalkeeper after Vincent Enyeama, has fully returned to action.

Oliseh, in 2015, gave Ikeme his first national team bow in a goalless draw against Tanzania.

Ikeme, who spent all his professional career on the books of Wolves, went on to have 10 caps for the Super Eagles.

He was in goal when Nigeria defeated Zambia in Ndola in a 2018 World Cup qualifying fixture before he was soon diagnosed with Leukaemia.

Ikeme announced his retirement from football in 2018 following his battle with Leukaemia.

GLOBAL SOCCER

Arsenal, Man Utd Test Resolve for Top-four Spot

In a behemoth of a match that could potentially make or break both sides' top-four chances, Arsenal and Manchester United renew hostilities today lunchtime in the Premier League at the Emirates



Arsenal's Takehiro Tomiyasu battles Manchester United forward Jadon Sacho

The Gunners reignited their Champions League bid with an enthralling 4-2 success at Chelsea in midweek, while Ralf Rangnick's side capitulated in a 4-0 defeat to Liverpool.

It took Eddie Nketiah all of 50 minutes on Wednesday night to equal Alexandre Lacazette's Premier League open play goal tally for the entire season, as the 22-year-old led the Arsenal charge in a phenomenal spectacle at Stamford Bridge to end their three-game losing run.

Handed another opportunity to impress from the off after Lacazette's COVID-19 recovery, Nketiah took advantage of Chelsea's defensive lapses to register his first Premier League brace alongside strikes from fellow Hale End graduates Emile Smith Rowe and Bukayo Saka - the latter banishing his Euro 2020 penalty woes with a confidently-taken spot kick right at the death.

Finally rediscovering their magic touch against a Chelsea side who were all over the shop defensively means that fourth spot is still technically in Arsenal's hands, with Mikel Arteta's side only behind Tottenham Hotspur on goal difference ahead of what will seemingly be a pivotal North London derby on May 12.

A spate of devastating injuries and failure to bolster the attacking ranks in January seemed like it was going to prove costly for the Gunners after losses to Crystal Palace, Southampton and Brighton & Hove Albion, but Arteta's side produced in the big game on Wednesday and will see no reason why they cannot boost their top-four hopes at the expense of United's this weekend.

Despite suffering back-to-back home losses to Liverpool and Brighton, Arsenal's tally of 32 points on familiar territory is still the third-best record in the division, and the Gunners have all the motivation they need to avoid a run of three straight home defeats for the third season in a row.

Whether Erik ten Hag was watching on Tuesday night we may never

know, but the Manchester United manager-elect would have certainly got a good image of the task at hand awaiting him at Old Trafford, as the Red Devils were simply torn to shreds by Liverpool on Merseyside.

Luis Dias, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane all carved their way through the United defence in what was frankly an embarrassing display from Ralf Rangnick's men, and the German was the first to admit that the squad is in dire need of a significant overhaul after the full-time whistle.

United legends Roy Keane, Gary Neville and Paul Scholes also made their feelings known on the night as the 20-time English champions dropped below Arsenal into sixth on goal difference, and defeat at the Emirates would leave them six points adrift of their North London rivals having played a game more.

Man United travel to the Emirates having posted a mere two wins in their last seven Premier League matches - as well as losing each of their last three away from home - and Rangnick's side are still waiting for their first Premier League clean sheet on rival turf since the turn of the year.

The Red Devils' chances of ending such a miserable streak are seemingly rather slim at the Emirates, where Arsenal are unbeaten in three against their top-four rivals, but Michael Carrick did oversee a 3-2 win for Man United in front of the Old Trafford faithful earlier this season.

Meanwhile, Manchester City will be looking to move four points clear at the top of the Premier League table when they welcome Watford to the Etihad Stadium this afternoon.

The Citizens will enter the contest off the back of a 3-0 win over Brighton & Hove Albion on Wednesday, while Watford suffered a 2-1 loss to Brentford in their last match on April 16.

Man City returned to the top of the Premier League table on Wednesday evening courtesy of a 3-0 success over Brighton.

The Citizens are again one point clear of second-placed Liverpool and will have the chance to move four points clear on Saturday, as Liverpool

are not in action until Sunday, when they face Everton in the Merseyside derby.

Pep Guardiola's side lost to Liverpool in the semi-finals of the FA Cup last weekend, so they are now fighting on just two fronts, aiming for success in the Premier League and Champions League, and Real Madrid will visit the Etihad Stadium for the first leg of their European Cup semi-final next week.

Man City will then take on Leeds United at the end of April before travelling to Real Madrid for the second leg of their Champions League semi-final, and it will be fascinating to see how the campaign finishes, as the club could win two trophies, one or potentially zero, with Liverpool aiming for a quadruple.

The Citizens have been strong in front of their own supporters in the league this season, picking up 38 points from 16 matches, but Watford have actually been much better away from home than at Vicarage Road, with 15 of their 22 points coming on their travels this term.

Watford are far from down and out, but there is no getting away from the fact that something special will need to happen in the final weeks of the campaign if they are to survive.

The Hornets are currently 19th in the table, seven points behind 17th-placed Everton, who have a game in hand, but they have some winnable matches coming up.

Indeed, Roy Hodgson's side have a gigantic home game against Burnley at the end of the month before taking on Crystal Palace and Everton in back-to-back fixtures, while their final two matches of the campaign are against Leicester City and Chelsea.

Watford picked up an impressive three points away to Southampton on March 13 but have lost their last three league matches against Liverpool, Leeds United and Brentford, conceding seven times in the process.

The Hornets have also lost each of their last 14 games against Man City in all competitions, including a 3-1 defeat in the reverse match at Vicarage Road earlier this season.

Premiership Table

Man City	32	55	77
Liverpool	32	61	76
Chelsea	31	39	62
Tottenham	32	18	57
Arsenal	32	10	57
Man United	33	4	54
West Ham	33	9	52
Wolves	32	5	49
Leicester City	31	-4	41
Brighton	33	-11	40
Newcastle	33	-18	40
Brentford	33	-8	39
Southampton	33	-16	39
Crystal Palace	32	2	37
Aston Villa	31	-4	36
Leeds	32	-30	33
Everton	31	-19	29
Burnley	32	-17	28
Watford	32	-32	22
Norwich	32	-44	21

Premier League

TODAY
 Arsenal v Man Utd 12:30
 Leicester v Aston Villa 15:00
 Man City v Watford 15:00
 Norwich City v Newcastle 15:00
 Brentford v Tottenham 17:30

SUNDAY
 Brighton v Southampton 14:00
 Burnley v Wolves 14:00
 Chelsea v West Ham 14:00
 Liverpool v Everton 16:30

MONDAY
 Crystal Palace v Leeds Utd 20:00

LaLiga
TODAY
 Barcelona v Valleciano 20:00

Serie A
 Torino v Spezia 14:00
 Venezia v Atalanta 14:00
 Inter v Roma 17:00
 Verona v Sampdoria 19:45

SUNDAY
 Salernitana v Fiorentina 11:30
 Bologna v Udinese 14:00
 Empoli v Napoli 14:00
 Genoa v Cagliari 17:00
 Lazio v AC Milan 19:45
MONDAY
 Sassuolo v Juventus 19:45

Hot Shot

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

Head to Head

- 21-12-02 Man Utd 3-2 Arsenal
- 21-01-30 Arsenal 0-0 Man Utd
- 20-11-01 Man Utd 0-1 Arsenal
- 20-01-01 Arsenal 2-0 Man Utd
- 19-09-30 Man United 1-1 Arsenal
- 19-03-10 Arsenal 2-0 Man Utd
- 18-12-05 Man Utd 2-2 Arsenal
- 18-04-29 Man Utd 2-1 Arsenal
- 17-12-02 Arsenal 1-3 Man Utd
- 17-05-07 Arsenal 2-0 Man Utd
- 16-11-19 Man Utd 1-1 Arsenal
- 16-02-28 Man Utd 3-2 Arsenal
- 15-10-04 Arsenal 3-0 Man Utd
- 15-05-17 Man Utd 1-1 Arsenal
- 14-11-22 Arsenal 1-2 Man Utd
- 14-02-12 Arsenal 0-0 Man Utd
- 13-11-10 Man Utd 1-0 Arsenal
- 13-04-28 Arsenal 1-1 Man Utd
- 12-11-03 Man Utd 2-1 Arsenal
- 12-01-22 Arsenal 1-2 Man Utd

GLOBAL SOCCER



Awoniyi

Awoniyi's Premier League Return Gets Big Boost as West Ham Target Nigerian

If reports by German transfer expert, Christian Falk, is anything to go by, Super Eagles and Union Berlin striker, Taiwo Awoniyi will be playing in the Premier League next season after West Ham's interest in the Nigerian was confirmed.

David Moyes admitted West Ham have been on the hunt for a backup for the injury-prone Michail Antonio 'for over two years'. They seem now, to have finally settled on the Nigerian striker Awoniyi.

Awoniyi only left Premier League giants Liverpool in the summer and has quickly settled into new surroundings in Berlin,

notching 13 goals in 27 games in the Bundesliga this season. Liverpool still hold a 10 per cent sell-on clause in the Nigerian, according to the Daily Mail.

With the Hammers looking likely to at least achieve Conference League football this season, West Ham will be an attractive project to the young Nigerian who recently told German outlet Kicker that:

"The Premier League is my dream. Everyone knows that, including here in the club. If I lived in England, it would be easier for my wife and child, just by myself because of the

language. Also, my sister and a brother live on the island."

Awoniyi is the sort of how hard-working, robust player that David Moyes loves to build his teams around. Unfortunately for the East enders, they are not the only team interested.

While Antonio has been molded successfully into a striker, he still has many habits that'd you'd typically associate with a winger.

He drifts out onto the wing, he looks to run the line, and sometimes, he forgets to make the important runs into the box that you would expect from an out-and-out number 9.



L-R: Former Super Eagles captain, Austin Okocha, former AC Milan midfielder, Clarence Seedorf and former Nigerian international, Daniel Amokachi

Glitz, Glamour of Heineken Champions League Trophy Tour

The last time a Nigerian player lifted the prestigious Champions League trophy was over 10 years ago when John Obi Mikel emerged victorious with Chelsea.

However, this past week will remain ever fresh in the minds of many Nigerians; especially those in Lagos and Abuja who were opportuned to be part of the 2022 Heineken UEFA Champions League trophy tour.

Aside from the glitz and glamour that was the hallmark of the trophy tour, Heineken through its loaded two-day activities also passed some salient lessons that would encourage Nigerian youth to aspire to achieve laudable set goals that can be likened to lifting the most-coveted trophy in global club football.

Clarence Seedorf, the trophy tour ambassador as well as Nigerian legends Austin Jay Jay Okocha and Daniel Amokachi who are all history makers in their own right shared experiences that highlighted that there is no shortcut to success except for hard work and dedication.

For the trio, achieving something as great as lifting the UEFA Champions League trophy needs a lot of hard work, discipline, and perseverance among other qualities which if imbibed will also help in other spheres of life outside football.

Seedorf who is one of the most successful players in UEFA Champions League history and the first and currently the only player to have won the trophy with three clubs shared his inspirational experience that will definitely resonate with everyone that came in contact with him during his short stay in Nigeria.

The Dutch legend had his first experience of lifting the Champions League trophy as a 19-year-old playing alongside the Nigerian duo of Finidi George and Kanu Nwankwo at Ajax Amsterdam.

But while the 1995 triumph

was the only one for most of his Ajax teammates, Seedorf went on to lift three more titles, the last coming 12 years later in 2007 with AC Milan.

While in Nigeria, Seedorf said he was happy to be back 'home' with the trophy that meant a million things to him.

"We have the opportunity to bring this trophy close to those who never imagined or dreamt about getting close to the trophy. It's beautiful to send that message to dream big, work hard, stay away from drugs and be a person that believes in himself and this is how I came to realise my dream." the football legend stated while addressing reporters in Lagos.

For Emmanuel Oriakhi, Marketing Director Nigerian Breweries PLC, he succinctly captured the importance attached to the Heineken Champions League trophy tour which remains one of the biggest events on the calendar of the international premium beer brand.

He said: As always Heineken has something spectacular for Nigerians and once again we are doing this. A lot of people argued that maybe the timing would have been more perfect concerning the disappointment Nigeria suffered a few weeks back. "But we are resilient as a people and we are always positive and believe tomorrow will be better. For those of us still disappointed not qualifying for the World Cup we have the UEFA Champions League.

"The UEFA Champions League is one of the best sporting events in the world and Heineken has been partners with UEFA for quite a while and in Nigeria, we have been activating this for a very long period.

While this is not the first time the UEFA Champions League trophy will be coming to Nigeria, there were a couple of fresh innovations that made this 2022 edition even more

worthwhile.

One of such was the faceoff challenge that pitched Team Davido against Team Seedorf in an entertaining and exhilarating five-a-side football contest.

Team Nigeria was made up of Okocha, Amokachi, Taribo, popular Nigerian Artist Dare Art Alade, MI and Davido who was the captain and the team was coached by former Super Falcon star Rita Nwadike.

For Team Heineken Seedorf wore the armband and former Falcons midfielder Maureen Mmadu was the coach.

With 14 goals scored in the fun-filled match, fans and loyal Heineken consumers present at the Landmark Event centre had an unforgettable experience.

This set the tone for the extra special match viewing experience in which Chelsea almost recorded one of the biggest comebacks in Champions League football history against Real Madrid.

Unfortunately for the Blues, they came quite close to securing a berth in the semi-final but were undone by the extra time strike by Karim Benzema.

While Chelsea had a good beginning but a sad ending, it wasn't the same for the fans and loyal Heineken consumers present at the Landmark Event centre.

What had already been a fun-filled day perfectly climaxed with two of Nigeria's best hip-hop artistes; Reekado Banks and Davido taking the center stage and dishing out their hit songs to the admiration of the lovely passionate fans who were united through the night regardless of which of the clubs they support.

After the befitting climax in Lagos, the next point of call was Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory where the Champions League trophy and the Heineken team made a grand entry into the city aboard a customized aircraft fully branded and displaying the splendour of the international premium beer.

Over 150 Golfers for Captain's Inaugural Tourney

Golf rivalries will be rekindled today at the golf course, Sapele Athletic Club 1897 for the Golf Section Captain's Inaugural Golf Tournament.

This becomes necessary as golfing friends and associates of Okakuro Gilbert Aghogho, Captain of the golf section will storm the ancient Sapele Town for his inaugural tournament.

The golf event which will tee-off today, will attract golfers across Nigeria to the oldest golf club in the country.

About 150 golfers have already indicated interest to honour the golf tourna-

ments, and to enjoy the club hospitality in the ancient town.

Similarly, the tournament is to officially usher in the captain, Aghogho, whose charismatic nature is already changing and redefining the oldest golf course in Nigeria.

The captain appraised the immense contributions and innovation embarked upon across all sporting sections by President of the club, Professor Nyerovwo Tonukari.

He described the president as a man with big vision.

While responding on the

schedule of the tournament, he stated that men's and ladies event as well as guests will be on course today, after then will be presentation of trophies, various prizes and dinner party.

Similarly, the tournament is to officially usher in the captain, whose charismatic nature is already changing and redefining the oldest golf course in the country.

The captain appraised the immense contributions and innovation embarked upon across all sporting sections by President of the club, Professor Nyerovwo Tonukari.

Arsenal, Man Utd Live on DStv Yanga, GOtv Jolli

DStv and GOtv customers on the lower packages; DStv Yanga and GOtv Jolli can now look forward to the English Premier League match between Arsenal and Manchester United today.

Top English Premier League matches usually air on the higher DStv and GOtv packages, so this is definitely a

great treat for the Gunners or Red Devils fans on the lower packages.

Both teams are in a three-way race with Tottenham Hotspur for the final Champions League berth - the fourth position on the league table.

The winner of this crunch tie at the Emirates Stadium showing on SuperSport Foot-

ball (DStv channel 205 and GOtv channel 31) at 12:30pm will get a significant boost in the top four race as the season draws near to a close.

To view this game, download the MyDStv or MyGOtv apps to subscribe, upgrade or set up auto renewal to stay connected without interruptions. Customers can also dial *288#

MTN, NPFL, La Liga Announce Partnership for Grassroots Football

MTN Nigeria, the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) and La Liga have announced a partnership to support the development of grassroots football in Nigeria, through the establishment of the NPFL/La Liga U-15 Youth League.

The announcement was made at a press conference on April 21, at Ikenne, Ogun State, with representatives of MTN, NPFL, La Liga and ValueJet in attendance.

The partnership will ensure the continuous local and international exposure for Nigerian youth football, capacity building for players and coaching talents, which

ultimately contribute to the advancement of developmental football in the country.

In addition to making the youth league more attractive, there will be a one-week coaching seminar which will see seasoned La Liga coaches interact with their local counterparts on modern youth coaching techniques ahead of the tournament.

Forty NPFL coaches, national team coaches as well as other youth coaches across the country will benefit from the seminar.

According to Shehu Dikko, Chairman of the League Management Company

responsible for the management of the NPFL, the tournament creates an opportunity to grow grassroots football in Nigeria.

"We are extremely delighted to have MTN as the Elite Partner and supporter of the NPFL/La Liga U-15 youth league which has been going on since 2017. It is worthy to note that this year's (2022) edition is the fourth. Some of the players who participated in the first and second editions have been called to play and captained the U17-national team and the U-20 national team, whilst others ply their trades abroad, which has been a great source of revenue for our participating clubs."

DStv Premium Golf Day Holds Today

Over 100 golfers from clubs across the country will be in action today at the Ikeja Golf Club, Lagos, for the second edition of the DStv Premium Golf Day.

The event, supported by soft drinks giants, Pepsi, is billed as a fusion of golf and music, with famous live musical group, Storm Band, and star disc jockey, DJ Xclusive, billed to perform.

The participating golfers, selected from over 600 registrants, will play with only four clubs and a putter, with winners emerging through a

stroke play format.

The best three golfers at the event will go home with various prizes. The star prize is a business class flight ticket to Dubai for a weekend stay at a five-star hotel. The second prize is a business class ticket to a five-star hotel in Kigali, Rwanda, for a weekend stay, while the third-best golfer is entitled to a weekend stay at a five-star hotel in Lagos.

The maiden edition of the event held in November 2020, with Dr. Ogunbiyi Ogunbanjo of Ikeja Golf Club winning the star prize. The second prize

went to Mr. Remi Olukoya, while Mr. Rasheed Adebisi won the third prize.

The entertainment leg of the event is driven by Pepsi, which has a reputation of supporting Nigerian sports and music. Storm Band is famous for live performances of musical genres such as Naija hip-hop, juju, highlife, fuji, old school jams as well as rhythm and blues. DJ Xclusive's portfolio includes performances with top acts like Ne-Yo, Rihanna, Mario Winans, Brick and Lace, Nas and Fat Joe.

Emmanuel Dennis

Solace at Elland Road

With Watford almost Championship-bound after failing to swim out of relegation waters despite change in the dugout, Super Eagles forward, Emmanuel Dennis may however still be plying his trade in the Premier League after Leeds United have shown interest in signing the former FC Brugge winger



Emmanuel Dennis

With Leeds United close to securing their top-flight status and are looking to rebuild an attack that failed to flourish this term transfer insider, Dean Jones claims that Whites could potentially look to sign Watford forward Emmanuel Dennis ahead of next season.

Leeds have not been entirely woeful on their return to the English Premier League, with the Yorkshire-based side likely to retain their top-flight status with two wins from their remaining six league games.

But it has not been an enjoyable ride for the Whites in their first season back in the elite division.

Aside from having the worst defence, Leeds possess a lame attack that has only outscored seven other teams in the division, with only Brazil's Raphinha managing double figures of goals.

The top priority for the club's chiefs when the transfer window opens will be strengthening the defence and attack, and transfer expert Jones believes Dennis is one player Leeds could make a move for to boost their output in the future.

The Nigerian international, who only joined Watford in the summer, has enjoyed a decent start in England, scoring 10 goals and adding another five assists for relegation-threatened Watford.

Dennis can play anywhere in attack,

is fast, tricky, and was recently crowned the nutmeg king in the Premier League.

The Super Eagles star costs Watford only €4 million when switching from Club Brugge, but he is already valued at twice that amount following his brilliant showings.

The Super Eagles striker joined Watford from Club Brugge last summer on a five-year deal worth £4.5m and with the Yellow Army currently placed 18th in the Premier League table with 22 points from 29 games and just three points off safety the 24-year-old Nigerian may be looking elsewhere at the end of the season.

The former Cologne star has taken the Premier League by storm this season, scoring nine goals and registering five assists in 27 league matches, directly involved in almost half of Watford's goals this term.

Indeed, his performance has caught the eye of a number of big clubs, including Spanish LaLiga side, Villarreal, according to a report on Daily Mail.

The club will consider offloading several players if they are unable to avoid relegation in a bid to lower their wage bill and will demand for a fee of £25m for the Nigerian international.

Dennis has emerged as one of the bargain signings of the summer transfer window, with Watford paying four million euros to Club Brugge to sign the striker.

West Ham captain Mark Noble had labelled Dennis' early strike in the Ham-

mers' 4-1 rout of Watford a great goal when the Hornets suffered their fifth successive loss in the Premier League despite their Nigerian talisman giving them the lead.

Dennis fired a rising shot into the top corner to break the deadlock after evading the challenge of Craig Dawson, taking his tally in the top-flight to eight goals in the process.

Speaking to BBC Sport post-match, the Hammers captain said: "They started with a great goal from Dennis but then I think we controlled the half and deserved to go 2-1 up."

Only Liverpool's Egypt winger Mohamed Salah has had more goal involvements than Dennis in the Premier League so far this season.

Indeed, Arsenal icon Ian Wright has highlighted the importance of Dennis to the Watford side after the red-hot striker scored again in a 4-1 loss to West Ham United in a Premier League clash at Vicarage Road.

With his strike against the Hammers, the Nigerian international has been directly involved in 10 goals in his last eight Premier League games for the Hornets (six goals, four assists), having a hand in 66.7 per cent of the goals Watford have scored in these games.

Statistically, those numbers clearly show Dennis' importance to Watford, who could be without their talisman for at

least three matches in the coming weeks.

Speaking on Premier League Productions' Premier League Wrap, Wright said: "At the start Tim Sherwood mentioned that Dennis is the one if anything could happen it's probably going to come from him."

"That's beautifully taken, composure, he's not rushing that."

GLOBAL SOCCER

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DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR

ISRAEL IWEGBU

Chummies®



Aunty Maero

Hello Chummies!! How are you all doing? I was away this weekend. I needed a break from all the hustle and bustle of city life! Lagos can be quite noisy. I like to have some peace and quiet some times. Don't you?

Take care
Aunty Maero
08053069365

DO YOU KNOW THAT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE MADE UP THESE WORDS?



William Shakespeare wrote books like Macbeth, Julius Caesar and many more.

All the words following were created by him, never having existed before he put them into his works.

Verbs:

bet, blanket, cake, cater, champion, compromise, cow, dialogue, dislocate, divest, drug, dwindle, elbow, film, forward, gossip, hobnob.

Nouns:

accused, addiction, alligator, amazement, assassination, backing, bandit, bedroom, bump, buzzers, courtship, critic, dawn, design.

Animation

It is a special way of drawing cartoons for television like Tom and Jerry. The drawings are usually on a material called acetate and they are done in such a way that you will think that

the objects are moving. To be an animator, you will need to go to art school.



When was the last time you read a book!



I looked into a book today when I was waiting in the queue at a bank. I love to read but sometimes, I feel so stressed and tired, I can hardly pick one up. This is the reason that I like to go away to a quiet place sometimes. Now that you are young, you have all the time in the world to enjoy a good book!!

CHUMMIES ALARM



Watch the games you play!

you could hurt yourself

CHUMMIES IDIOMS!!

If something comes in **drips and drabs**, it arrives little by little, in small amounts or numbers.

"Instead of the crowd that was expected, people arrived in dribs and drabs."

If **you have forty winks**, you have a short sleep or rest, generally during the day.

"Dad likes to have forty winks after a game of golf."



GOVERNMENT OF ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA

Lion Building, Government House, Independence Layout, Enugu



His Excellency
Dr. Samuel Ortom
Governor, Benue State

Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi
Governor, Enugu State

ENUGU STATE IS IN THE HANDS OF GOD.

AUTO WORLD

Bennett Oghifo

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Mercedes-Benz AMG interior

Four Mercedes-Benz AMG 35 Models Infused with Exquisite Equipment

Mercedes-Benz AMG celebrates its 55th birthday - and customers can share in it with exclusive special models. The automaker said in a statement that following the "Edition 55" based on the G-Class, "Edition 55" versions are now available for the compact class: A 35 4MATIC Compact Saloon (WLTP: Fuel consumption combined 8.8-8.3 l/100 km, CO2 emissions combined 201-188 g/km)[1], A 35 4MATIC Saloon (WLTP: Fuel consumption combined 8.5-8.0 l/100 km, CO2 emissions combined 194-182 g/km), CLA 35 4MATIC Coupé (WLTP: Fuel consumption combined 8.6-8.1 l/100 km, CO2 emissions combined 195-183 g/km) and CLA 35 4MATIC Shooting Brake (WLTP: Fuel consumption combined 8.8-8.3 l/100 km, CO2 emissions combined 201-189 g/km). Exclusive foiling in the design of the AMG crest is a reminder of the history of the sports car and performance brand. Other features such as the 19-inch AMG

light-alloy wheels, the AMG fuel filler cap in silver chrome with "AMG" lettering and the trim element in dark aluminium "Edition 55" Design set strong accents and emphasise the individuality of the special models. The anniversary models can be ordered now until November 2022.

The "Edition 55" models are characterised by their lavish equipment. At first glance, the elaborate AMG Aerodynamics Package generates attention. It includes a front apron with enlarged front splitter and additional flics, an AMG rear wing, side spoiler lips on the rear apron's optical air outlets and the Blade diffuser, all in high-gloss black. The component parts developed in the wind tunnel improve the driving characteristics at high speeds and lay the foundation for even more driving performance. The fixed AMG rear wing is a clear statement of the desire for uncompromising driving dynamics.

The AMG Night Package and the AMG Night package II also enhance the dynamic appearance of the "Edition 55" models. The

front splitter and trim elements on the louvres in the outer air intakes, the inserts in the AMG side sill trims, the side sill trim strip, the window line trim strip and the exterior mirror housings are finished in high-gloss black. In addition, there are tailpipe trims in black chrome and heat-insulating dark tinted glass. Lamellae of the AMG-specific radiator grille and type badges on the boot lid and wings, each in high-gloss black, complete the exclusive appearance.

Other distinguishing features of the "Edition 55" special models for the compact class include the paint finish in cosmos black metallic or digital white metallic. The colour scheme of the paintwork on both sides of the vehicle with the traditional AMG emblem and suggested AMG rhombus runs from grey to transparent to match. The 19-inch AMG multi-spoke light-alloy wheels with a matt titanium grey paint finish and a high-shine rim flange provide an exciting contrast. The AMG fuel filler cap in silver chrome with AMG lettering also demonstrates great attention to detail.

T-bobo Launches e-hailing ZoomRyders in Lagos

An upwardly mobile company, T-bobo has launched a new e-hailing system known as ZoomRyders, a transportation app that can be downloaded for rides in Lagos, for now but will be extended to other cities in future.

The Chief Executive Officer, T-bobo, Olatunde Balogun, said their initiative would provide comfortable journeys, as it was designed to fill in the gaps inherent in present day e-hailing rides.

The chief executive officer who was represented by Mr Olusanya Falusi said, "T-bobo is an e-hailing company and has come in to fill the gap and ensure the safety of commuters and also help the stakeholders who are the drivers that will be working for us.

"One of the major reasons why we are coming in is to make sure that the safety of both the commuters and drivers are ensured. In a way, we ensure all our vehicles have cameras to instil confidence in our services."

"We want to ensure that whenever you are riding, you have the confidence to some extent that you are safe."

To join T-bobo, he said the firm ensures that it screens its drivers to ensure they have necessary documentation to drive and have no criminal record.

"Once we get them on board, we are going to have inspection centres where they will ensure their cars are at good and motorable conditions. We will



L-R: Actress, Idowu Phillips (Mama Rainbow); Kayode Akanle of Danlight Consulting; and Actor, Muyeideen Oladapo (Lala), at the ZoomRyders multinational stakeholders' meeting for T Bobo Rider in Lagos... recently

ensure we bridge the gap in service provision."

He said the firm has further plans to expand its services because it has capable hands within and outside the country in transportation.

Speaking on the payment options, the Head Digital

Payment, Fidelity Bank, Victor Moumonwe, said, "We power payment processing back end. We are going to replicate it for T-bobo such that if a rider gets on a ride, at the end of that journey, we are able to debit that customer successfully.

TIPS OF THE WEEK

How to Keep Your Radiator Fan Running

The radiator fan in your car is a critical component. Together with other components, it helps to keep your engine running safely and efficiently. How does it do that? If you're looking to understand the car cooling fan, read on. This first section will help you learn the following: radiator fan definition, the types of car radiator fans, their working, and the cost to buy a new fan, among other things.

Starting with the definition, let us see what the fan in car cooling systems means and where to find it.

What is a Radiator Fan?

The radiator fan is the cooling fan for car or truck engines. It's usually used in vehicles with water-cooled engines and mounted between in front or behind the radiator. The car fan then pushes (or pulls) air through the radiator core, helping to cool the fluid circulating in the radiators tiny tubes.

Radiator cooling fans help to regulate engine temperature during specific situations. These include times when your car is moving slowly (below 25 mph) or when the engine is idling. The fans are, therefore, classified among the parts that make the engine cooling system.

Car radiator fans differ in many ways such as material, construction, and capability. The material can be metal or plastic. Molded plastic radiator fans are common, with the fan assembly being a one-piece plastic. Some, like the flex types, feature a steel frame and flexible plastic vanes or blades.

In terms of design, the cooling fan for car engines is identified by the number of blades, their length or pitch, and the type of hub. Fan capability, on the other hand, depends on the construction and size, among other factors. One of the most important abilities is the amount of air that a fan can move or CFM rating. The higher the CFM, the more powerful the fan.

To help you understand the radiator fan assembly better, here is a look at the parts that make it.

Radiator Fan Parts

The car cooling fan is a simple device with only a few parts. Although designs vary, the typical fan for car and truck engines is a hub and blade assembly. Here are the parts explained.

Central hub- this is the part that contains the fan's drive components and, in some types of the fan, the clutch assembly

Fan blades- these are the arms that project from the hub. They are specially engineered to move air in the most efficient way possible

Support bracket- the bracket supports the fan assembly. It also allows for its mounting

Clutch- found in older versions of the car engine fan, the clutch helps to engage and disengage the fan depending on the engine cooling demands. It can be thermally or electronically operated. Most are thermal

Motor- this part is only found in an electric radiator cooling fan. Its function is to power the fan. The cooling fan motor is usually rated 12V and the Direct Current type

Shroud- some radiator cooling fans contain a shroud or housing around the blades and drive assembly. The housing helps to direct air for a more efficient cooling action

Now that you know what is a cooling fan in a car, let's have a look at the different types of the fan and how they work, including the advantages of each.

Types of Cooling Fans

There are several different types of cooling fan for cars. The fans can be mechanical or electrical and single or dual. There are also the universal radiator fans which are obtainable under that name. The type of fan that your car uses depends on the car type, model and year of make if a stock model. If it's an upgrade fan, the type will depend on your car engine cooling demands. Let's now see how each works.

Mechanical Radiator Fan- Mechanical fans are engine-driven and normally mounted on the water pump pulley. The mechanical radiator fan is available in two major versions; clutch-based and flex. The clutch type uses a thermostatic clutch to engage and flywheel. The flex type, on the other hand, uses flexible blades that flatten at higher engine speeds or rpm to vary the amount of air blowing through the radiator.

(Source: mzwmotor)

AUTO WORLD

Toyota to Launch All-new bZ4X BEV Next Month

Toyota is striving to achieve innovation in all areas including the interior, styling, driving sensation, and performance with the aim of creating exciting cars where all passengers can share an enjoyable time and space.

A BEV-dedicated platform, a first for Toyota, was developed with Subaru based on the e-TNGA philosophy to achieve attractive, smooth, intuitive driving performance, not just for a BEV, but for any car, as well as the off-road performance of an authentic SUV, said a statement by the automaker.

Pursuit of the safety and peace of mind of a BEV. The new bZ4X offers superior power efficiency performance (128 Wh/km²) and sufficient cruising range for practical driving (559 km²). In addition, development was conducted with a target of achieving a world-leading battery capacity retention ratio (90% after 10 years*3) in the pursuit of a BEV that can be used for an extended period with peace of mind. In addition to seeking a high level of safety for the battery itself, Toyota Safety Sense, Toyota's latest active safety package, as well as a body structure that can respond to collisions from all directions, a battery pack that contributes to ensuring protection performance in the event of a collision, and other safety features have been adopted in the pursuit of a BEV that can



All-New Toyota bZ4X BEV

be driven with peace of mind.

Leasing to eliminate customer concerns and contribute to achieving carbon neutrality (CN). All vehicles will be available for lease to eliminate customer concerns regarding residual battery performance, BEV maintenance, and residual value. Also to

contribute to the achievement of CN, battery management will be implemented for all vehicles by using batteries without waste through the 3Rs (Rebuild, Reuse, Recycle).

Provisions for individual customers will be through a bZ4X exclusive KINTO subscription service*4 plan. A maximum 10-year term with

guaranteed battery performance. Monthly payments decrease in stages starting from the fifth year with no early cancellation fees. Connected service use and various other fees are included in the monthly fees. Measures will also be taken to improve leased bZ4X vehicles in conjunction with technological innovations.

Nigeria Transport Awards Picks Chery, Higer for Recognition



Chery

The newly unveiled Chery auto brand by Kaduna based PAN Nigeria Limited, will soon get a boost, following its selection for recognition by the famous Nigeria Transport Awards, to be presented during the forthcoming 9th edition coming May 19th in Abuja.

The Nigeria Transport Awards is an a segment of the famous Nigeria Transport Lecture, which also features Lectures and Exhibitions.

According to Transport Day newspaper, organizer of the event, the Chery auto brand was selected for recognition because of its impactful presence, making a grand re-entry into the Nigerian market.

Transport Day Editor, Frank Kintum, stated that the Awards Board was convinced that the new brand is coming out with models that will meet the expectation of auto patrons in various economic strata of the country. The Chery is just one of the few selected transport brands up for recognition on that day.

The Chery and Higer brands would also be displayed during the event.

Aside the Awards, the lecture which is

billied to hold earlier in the day, will be on Nigeria's Transportation for Development: Sectoral Achievements, Prospects and Challenges. This year's topic will be delivered by Ambassador Anthonia Ekpa PhD, a former federal Permanent Secretary.

Already, key industry players like the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN); Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA); Nigeria Institute of Transport Technology (NITT); Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) among others have identified with this year's edition.

Some others are Julius Berger, Toyota Nigeria Limited, PAN Nigeria Limited, Association of Aircraft Maintenance Organisation of Nigeria (AAMO); Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA); among others.

Kintum, stated that the year's edition will offer an opportunity to review the progress made so far in developmental transport infrastructure.

According to him, "on the 19th of May, we shall all gather at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre in Abuja to x-ray issues concerning transport infrastructure as it concerns all the sectoral modes."

Thoughts on Autonomous Cars

Since the heavens started pouring its blessings on residents of the Federal Capital Territory, as well as other parts of the country, I have on several occasions pondered on my usual guide during the rainy seasons. However, while I was contemplating another piece on driving during the rains, the thought of sharing a piece I stumbled on crossed my mind. I was fortunate to see a beautifully crafted piece by Simone Pettigrew, a Professor of Psychology on driverless cars and thought it would make for good reading if I shared the piece which I must confess was culled and published the way she crafted it without attempting to rephrase or paraphrase any portion of the write-up.

I do hope you will spare time to read through and join the bandwagon as we await the full operation of driverless cars which are vehicles that are self-driving and able to navigate the environment without requiring a human. They are also referred to as autonomous cars, robotic cars, and self-driving cars. Driverless cars promise many benefits for the future of driving including health and safety benefits, especially an improvement in safety. The deployment of this technology is projected to reduce the number of accidents that occur on roadways.

The projection is that driverless cars will no longer be subject to the numerous bad behaviors that hu-



SAFE DRIVING

with

Jonas Agwu

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

man driver's exhibit. Currently, over 80 percent of road traffic crashes are attributable to human error. In contrast, once assuming the driver's seat, there would be fewer road rage incidents as well as reduce or no insurance costs that are associated with damage among and several other benefits that could reduce overall driving times.

There are numerous other benefits which I hope I will have time to share on this page. While we await that time, I do not know what your thoughts are about driverless cars. Do you have reservations about this new wave of travelling experience? Are you aware that research findings show there are people who are still not aware of possible benefits? That is why I have today chosen to share a publication from the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. I am sure you will be amazed to know that almost two thirds (63%) of the 1,624 people surveyed had

neutral or negative attitudes towards driverless cars. Strangely men were more positive than women about driverless cars. There was some but little change in response depending on the age of people surveyed. Please enjoy the findings as I also did.

Interestingly, more non-drivers (46%) than drivers (37%) had a positive response to driverless cars (though drivers represented the majority (96%) of the total people surveyed). When asked to explain their feelings, very few people surveyed appeared to be aware of the substantial social benefits that may be the likely outcomes of the wide-scale use of autonomous vehicles.

Some (21%) thought there would be fewer crashes, but others (13%) predicted more accidents on our roads. Virtually no-one mentioned increased mobility for the elderly and disabled, emission reduction or stress reduction. Not a single respondent reported that cyclists would be safer.

The driverless future -Yet driverless cars are coming, and they're going to change our lives. For some of us, the changes will be enormous and liberating. Once fully implemented, autonomous vehicles are projected to prevent more than 1,000 deaths and 30,000 hospitalizations each year in Australia and save the economy more than AS16 billion a year in crash-related costs alone.

But their effects will be much greater than just preventing accidents. Autonomous vehicles have the

potential to greatly reduce traffic emissions, cyclists will likely be safer once cars can carefully monitor their movements, road rage will be less likely, and those who can't drive will have unprecedented freedom to move around.

We are fascinated by these new forms of technology, and a bit terrified as well. The few accidents to date have received massive coverage, despite more than 1.25(1.35 as at 2022) million people dying on the roads globally each year with little notice.

But how much do we think about the positive aspects of a world where cars (and potentially buses) come to us and deliver us to our destinations while we work, rest, or play during transit?

Attitudes change with information-The picture looks very different when people are invited to contemplate the likelihood of specific social benefits of driverless cars. In the same survey, we found people's attitudes changed once they were asked to consider the various positive outcomes, and were prompted with specific examples.

Around half of the respondents then agreed autonomous vehicles are likely to result in fewer accidents, reduced stress levels while in transit, lower emissions, and greater safety for cyclists. Of note is that the figure was much higher for belief in the benefits for the elderly and disabled. Almost three-quarters of respondents agreed enhanced mobility for these groups was a likely outcome.

JOE/FEATURES

A Govt in Perpetual Denial



THEFRONTLINES

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The purpose of any democratically elected government in power all over the world is to protect the sacred trust or mandate handed over to the elected representatives by the people. In other words, the people form a government and also have the right to remove the government and vote in a new one. No government exists on its own without the people. Therefore, in exercising that sacred trust, the representatives of the people who form the government must do that with all sense of responsibility and selflessness.

According to English philosopher and political theorist, John Locke in his treatise on government, "a Government existed, among other things, to promote public good, and to protect the life, liberty, and property of its people. For this reason, those who govern must be elected by the society, and the society must hold the power to instate a new Government when necessary."

In the last seven years since President Muhammadu Buhari came to power, we have seen how virtually every value, opportunities and sanctity of lives and property and all that United the country have gradually been eroded paving ways to the cliff hanger or precipice on which Nigeria hangs today.

To say Nigeria is bleeding would be the biggest understatement, the country is asphyxiated and seriously gasping for breath. Regrettably, those to whom the sacred mandate has been handed to continue to live in denial deluding themselves that all is well and Nigeria is on the part to prosperity.

Worried by this drift and the possible consequences, the Northern Elders Forum (NEF) issued a statement calling on Buhari to resign. It cited the heightened level of insecurity precipitated by killings and kidnappings by bandits and kidnapers across the country and Buhari's inability to provide solutions as reasons for the call.

According to NEF spokesperson, Dr. Hakeem Baba-Ahmed "The administration of President Buhari does not appear to have answers to the challenges of security to which we are exposed. We cannot continue to live and die under the dictates of killers, kidnapers, rapists and sundry criminal groups that have deprived us of our rights to live in peace and security.

"Our Constitution has provisions for leaders to

voluntarily step down if they are challenged by personal reasons or they prove incapable of leading.

"It is now time for President Buhari to seriously consider that option, since his leadership has proved spectacularly incapable of providing security for Nigerians. Our Forum is aware of the weight of this advice, and it is also aware that we cannot continue to live under these conditions until 2023 when President Buhari's term ends," it said.

It will not be the first time NEF is calling on Buhari to step down for sleeping on the job. Two years ago, on December 1, 2020, NEF called on Buhari to resign for failure to combat increasing insecurity in the country after the beheading of over 67 farmers in Zabarmari village, Jere Local Government Area of Borno State, declaring that the Federal Government had breached Section 14 (1), which made security and welfare the sole purpose of its existence.

Speaking during the Inclusive Security Dialogue Retreat jointly organised by the Global Peace Foundation and Vision Africa recently, apparently frustrated by the inertia exhibited by Buhari to proffer lasting solutions to the spate of killings, other eminent Nigerians, which included the President of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Samson Ayokunle and the Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar, weighed in on the call by NEF and warned that widespread insecurity across the country is the greatest threat to the 2023 general elections. They also warned that there might be no election in 2023, if the current spate of insecurity in the country is not checked.

The Bishop of Sokoto Catholic Diocese, Matthew Kukah also buttressed the position of the NEF during his Easter celebration homily argued that "Any government that is incapable of protecting the lives of its citizens has lost the moral justification of being there in the first place...our humanity is being eroded and that erosion is becoming a new normal.

"Similarly, the Northern Elders Forum, NEF, and the House of Representatives have finally called on the President to resign since, in their view, it is now clear that he cannot protect his citizens. This has come three years after the Catholic Bishops' Statement issued on April 26th, 2018 made the same call that was greeted with cynicism," Kukah reiterated.

In its reaction, the Presidency which accused the Bishop of spreading hate speech and disliking Buhari

stated that Easter was not a time for religious leaders to play politics, or politicians to play religion, rather the statement said It was a time, as in Titus 3:9 to "avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless."

Senior Special Assistant to the President Mallam Garba Shehu advised Kukah to leave government to the voters and the politicians they elect, while he concentrates on his job, as it is expressed in James 1:27: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

Not one that would allow such attacks to go unanswered, Kukah dismissed the President's media and information team as inefficient, lacking in depth knowledge of what needs to be done and engaging in the poor job of second guessing what the President would say because they have no contact with him.

Kukah described the President's media and information team as "the only spokesmen that have spent a lot of time buying photocopying paper and simply typing away texts. They have been involved in all kinds of writing of the poorest quality, never talking to the issues. So, first thing is to show you their inefficiency. It is that they are used to writing statements as opposed to taking to Nigerians about policies."

Furthermore, Kukah accused the President's media team of executing their job poorly and claiming to know how the President's mind works when in actual fact, they have no access to him and are basing whatever they say on guesswork.

Hear him: "What this tells you is that 99.99% of what they write are imply second-guessing what the president's mind is. They have no contact with the president, they have no contact with government policies and all they are doing is writing on behalf of the president. There is no where in the world where the job of this nature is being done an has been done so poorly!"

The Bishop ended by throwing a challenge to the President's media and information team for a public debate to talk about Nigeria. He said "I have made an offer to them and still make the offer that they can choose the venue, choose the time and just let me know. I would like to sit down with the three of them beginning

with their honorable minister and both of them. Let us sit down together and talk about Nigeria. I'm ready, I will pay my way, I still repeat that offer to them."

It has become the modus operandi of the presidency to always put a spin to even the most glaring and evidential issues dogging the policy. To them, the administration has done extremely well and they are unperturbed even with the spate of killings and kidnapping for ransoms by criminal gangs who have transformed the country to a jungle of killing fields.

This is not surprising given the success record in their exploits during the 2015 presidential campaigns when they succeeded in cobbling lies, half truths, outright falsehood and misinformation garnished in German's Joseph Goebbels style propaganda to hoodwink the masses to support a born again democrat, Buhari.

Seven years on and barely two years to the end of the administration the President's media and information machine are yet to distinguish between propaganda and the dissemination of the government's key policies to the people who voted them to power.

Any dissenting view is viewed as opposition and all sort of laws and bar are being put in place to limit freedom of the press and expression by the people; if not, what is the meaning of hate speech? What constitutes hate speech? Does it mean people can no longer express their opinion freely even if they are critical of government policy?

If previous government had led the country with such dictatorial high handedness and intolerance like the Buhari government has exhibited since 2015, would Buhari had the opportunity of seeking the presidency? Would he not have been behind bars today?

It is very convenient for this administration to harass and assault the sensibilities of Nigerians for calling on Buhari to resign forgetting that in 2011, Buhari led a group of Civil Society Organizations on a protest calling on former President Goodluck Jonathan to resign.

Did Jonathan order his arrest? Nigerians yearned for new leadership when it became apparent that the Jonathan government had lost its way. In choosing a Buhari who was repackaged as a born again democrat, Nigerians were banking on him to lead the country on a new trajectory.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

NYSC Member Faith Onoriode Still Missing

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

It's been exactly a month and two days and the fate of Miss Faith Onoriode, who was heading to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation camp, still hangs in the balance. But for the misfortune which befell her, the young lady would have been through with the three weeks course mandated for all NYSC members at the beginning of the scheme and possibly would have resumed at her place of primary assignment.

Her tale has remained a serious course for concern to the public as Miss Onoriode who was abducted on her way from Delta state to resume for the batch A NYSC camp in Jigawa state where she was posted to, is still in the den of her captors who had demanded a ransom of N40 million. Her kidnap around the axis of Regania Community on the Abuja-Kaduna Road since March 21 has left not a few worried.

And as such a nightmare to her mother who has appealed to the NYSC and the federal government to help secure her release. A widow, the mother, Mrs. Roseline Onoriode in a report lamented the kidnap, saying they had reported the incident to the authorities of the NYSC Abuja and also NYSC Jigawa state. She also made available the call up number of her daughter who read Biology/Microbiology at the Delta state Polytechnic, Otefe, Oghara.

"The mother said the kidnapers demanded payment of N40 million ransom when they contacted the family", adding that "She is a call member batch A, that was posted to NYSC Jigawa

orientation camp. She boarded a vehicle from Sala's Global Motor's Effunrun Warri to Kano, from Kano to Jigawa NYSC orientation camp. She was kidnapped along Abuja Kaduna Road at Regania community some few kilometers to Kaduna state, on the 21st March, 2022."

"The incident was reported at the NYSC headquarters Abuja and also NYSC Jigawa and even reported at the state command police headquarter at Kaduna but nothing has been done for her release.

The family tried to negotiate with the kidnapers, the ransom they are calling is N40 million for her release."

"She has been with them for over one month two days with the kidnapers. NYSC has not even done anything to release my daughter, not even a call from them. Please NYSC and federal government I am soliciting for your assistance for her release. I am the mother of the kidnapped girl am begging the federal government to help me for the release of my daughter."

"I am a poor widow please help me. Please I am begging with the name of God for my daughter release and Nigerian please help me". The mother said the family last spoke to the daughter last week Monday, adding that she was begging to be released. "She said she had an injury on her leg. Government should please help my daughter. I am crying to all that can help", she said.



Faith Onoriode

TRAVEL AND LEISURE

Anago-Osho: Why Badagry Tourism Sites are Preferred by Diaspora Africans

Justina Uzo

Perhaps, it is not just Ghana or The Gambia that are cashing in on slave routes heritage. A popular tourism operator and National President of the Association of History, Nature and Culture Tour Guides, Mr. James Anago-Osho has said tourists are also exploring slave sites in Badagry, Lagos.

Among the places they visit in Badagry are the Heritage Museum, AGIA Monument where the gospel was first preached in Badagry by the missionaries, as well as The Slave Market Museum.

"Point-Of-No-Return," he said, is a must-see site for most of the African Americans who are keen on going back to their roots.

In his presentation during the recent "Best of Lagos FAM Tour '22," Anago-Osho urged tourists, both and international, to visit Badagry.

"Badagry is where Africans in the Diaspora call home. They come to explore the coastal land and rich historical heritage and culture, as well as visit the slave trade route called 'The Point-of-No-Return.' Adding: "Badagry, Lagos is the preferred home-coming for Africans in the Diaspora. It was the biggest slave port along the West African coast; this is why we have returnees from Brazil who built their Brazilian quarters on Lagos Island, and those who have settled around Ebute-Meta and Yaba area of Lagos State."

Anago, as he is simply called, also stressed that Lagos State is the main destination in Africa for African Americans who wish to come home, saying that he has organised tours for thousands of Africans in the Diaspora, taking them around Lagos. He disclosed how an African-American, who visited, defined Lagos as the hub in which "we return home to visit, to tour and sometimes relocate."

In his paper titled "Re-inventing Lagos As the Prime Destination for the African in the



Anago-Osho, extreme left, with tourists in Badagry...recently

Diaspora," he made a case for those returning. Africans in the Diaspora, he said, are those "forcefully transported people of African descent or origin to the Americas through a lie called the Slave Trade." He pointed out that because these Africans did not volunteer to be enslaved, efforts should be made to help those who wish to come home. He told his audience gleefully at the Slave Trade Int'l Museum, Badagry during the tour of Lagos that it is important for the government to provide an enabling environment for the development of Lagos tourism.

He hopes that the Lagos State Government would step up tourist infrastruc-

ture and an enabling environment to help the local communities to get tourism income.

"Badagry tourism is a multi-million dollar investment and a multiple profit is guaranteed," he said.

Anago, who is also the Founder, Anago-Osho Adventures, regretted that they had been facing challenges in the competitive slave heritage routes segment of the tourism business.

He said: "The lack of proper promotion and marketing have impacted negatively on Badagry tourism, especially in the face of competition. No wonder, we see posts on the Internet like '10 reasons to come to Ghana and 10 reasons not to go to Nigeria', even though Lagos is the gateway to the African Diaspora returnees home after 450 years."

Anago had lent his voice to other tourism operators that want Lagos State Government to re-engineer the huge cultural activities and tourism offerings of the state for economic benefits.

Anago maintained that the tourism revenue would be enormous if the state government can market Badagry tourism effectively.

According to him, "The Door of Return" event held in 2017 in Badagry, was aimed at reuniting Africans in the Diaspora with their descendants in Lagos and around Africa.

He, therefore, enjoined the federal government to work closely with Lagos to support the programme of Autosomal DNA Test which, he said, connects the returnees to their bloodline family members in Africa who have done their own DNA test and the data is uploaded to GEDMARCH to help trace their roots and connect with long lost family.

Anago explained that this was one of the ways those who had done their own test have traced their roots to Nigeria.

He said many Africans in the diaspora have had their DNA tested to discover their lineage and several of them are traced to Lagos. He assured that Badagry tourism result would be tremendous to the state.

Tourism operators who were speakers during the tour organised by Lagos State Ministry of Tourism Art and Culture in a bid to promote and market culture, entertainment and tourism offerings of the state, revealed mouthwatering statistics to show economic benefits derived from the leisure industry in Lagos State.

There is no gainsaying that the tour round all the five divisions of Lagos State, including Ikeja, Oshodi, Eti-Osa, Epe and Ikorodu areas, was an eye-opener.

For instance, it was gathered that "four thousand beach-goers visit Elegushi Beach, Lekki while seven thousand visitors use Landmark Beaches, another exclusive beach in Lekki, every week.

FTAN, SON Collaborate with Lagos on Hotel Grading

Justina Uzo

The Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN) and Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) are now working together with the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture in an effort to achieve best practices in the planned national hotel grading and classification exercise, with Lagos as the pilot.

Representatives of the three organisations, who met in Lagos, recently, discussed how to collaborate to chart a national uniform grading and certification model for other states to follow.

Speaking on the importance of Management System Standard, the Director, Management Systems Certification, Standard Organisation of Nigeria, Mr. Felix Nyado said the benefits range from identifying risk and opportunities, preventing problems from reoccurring, boosting marketing and sales effort, improving employees performance to improving management control over the business.

He said: "The implementation of the standard is very important to the stakeholders in Nigeria (hotel owners and all hospitality and tourism promoters) because it is a sign of an upgrade in our hospitality business environment.

"The demand for a unified, one-stop certification and ratings system for Nigeria hospitality establishments is a request from the major stakeholders to reduce the weight of compliance on the owners.

"The inspection is going to be carried out by the state ministry of tourism and in line with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Standard, which specifies requirement for competence of bodies performing inspection and for the impartiality and consistency of their inspection activities."

The SON team emphasised the need to follow

a best global standard in hotel grading and classification and presented the ISO Management System Certification comprising of the ISO 9000; Quality Management System, ISO 14001 Environment Management System, OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series, ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System, Integrated Management System, as well as the route of certification.

According to Nyado, "The provision of certification service is in first, second and third phases among which are the inspection and grading audit, assessment report and recommendation, and the final stage is the certification."

In her remark, the Lagos State Commissioner for

Tourism Arts and Culture, Mrs Uzamat Akinbile-Yusuf appreciated the SON team for the visit over the grading of hotels.

She reminded attendees that Lagos has its own grading and classification mandate under the ambit of the law, adding that such provision is still valid and will be upheld irrespective of the collaboration.

Getting more curious about the position of the SON, she asked for the actual role of SON in the hotel grading exercise, stating that they would not play second fiddle in their mandate which was clear under the Supreme Court judgment.

The commissioner also agreed on the fact that FTAN, which is an organised private sector body, is

pushing the course for the benefit of the country and Lagos, but also held onto her position on who is taking a lead position in the grading exercise.

Giving a clearer picture of the process, the President of FTAN, Nkereuwem Onung said the purpose of the collaboration was not to superimpose one party on the other but to use the process of division of labour to actualise the process that would bring uniformity in the hotel industry in terms of national grading and certification.

"We are actually making Lagos State the pilot of this grading and classification project as a pace-setter and we know and believe that if the state gets it right, it will be a sustainable lead for other states of the federation."

Onung explained that it was high time Nigeria joined the global best practices in giving our hotel and other tourism and allied business an international standard so that all other benefits accrued to the status can be enjoyed.

He warned: "We are losing many things owing to non-uniformity in the national grading of our hotels and this is an impediment to investment opportunities because no investor will want to invest in an environment or business where everything goes."

"Also, as it is now, where a one Star hotel in state 'A' will be Two or Three Star rating in other states and so on.

"The Lagos State on their part made it clear that they are ready to collaborate and make the process work provided the parties involved in the collaborative effort recognise the legal provision of the Supreme Court in favour of the state."

Akingbile-Yusuf agreed to take time out to look at the SON strategic document on the requirements and guidance for use on hotel and serviced accommodation management systems and rating. The team promised to get back in a month's time for another meeting.



L R: Felix Nyado, a Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) director; Nkereuwem Onung, President, Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria (FTAN); Mrs. Uzamat Akingbile-Yusuf, Lagos State Commissioner for Tourism; Ladejobi Ganiyu Ibrahim of the Hotel Licensing Department of the state and Justina Ovat, Vice President (South-South) FTAN, after a meeting ... recently

PERSPECTIVE

Enugu 2023: Who is Afraid of Ekweremadu?

Austin Okolie

The name Senator Ike Ekweremadu needs no introduction in the Nigerian political firmament – former chairman of his community's age grade association at the young age of 10, former President-General of his community's (Mpu) town union, pioneer elected chairman of Aninri Local Government Area, first ever Chief of Staff to a governor in Nigeria, former Secretary to Enugu State Government, five-term Senator, three-term Deputy President of the Senate (including as an opposition), former Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament, and the list goes on.

A compendium of projects facilitated by Ekweremadu as Senator, published by an online news portal literally broke the internet. Running into thousands, the projects/interventions clearly stand him out among his peers across the country.

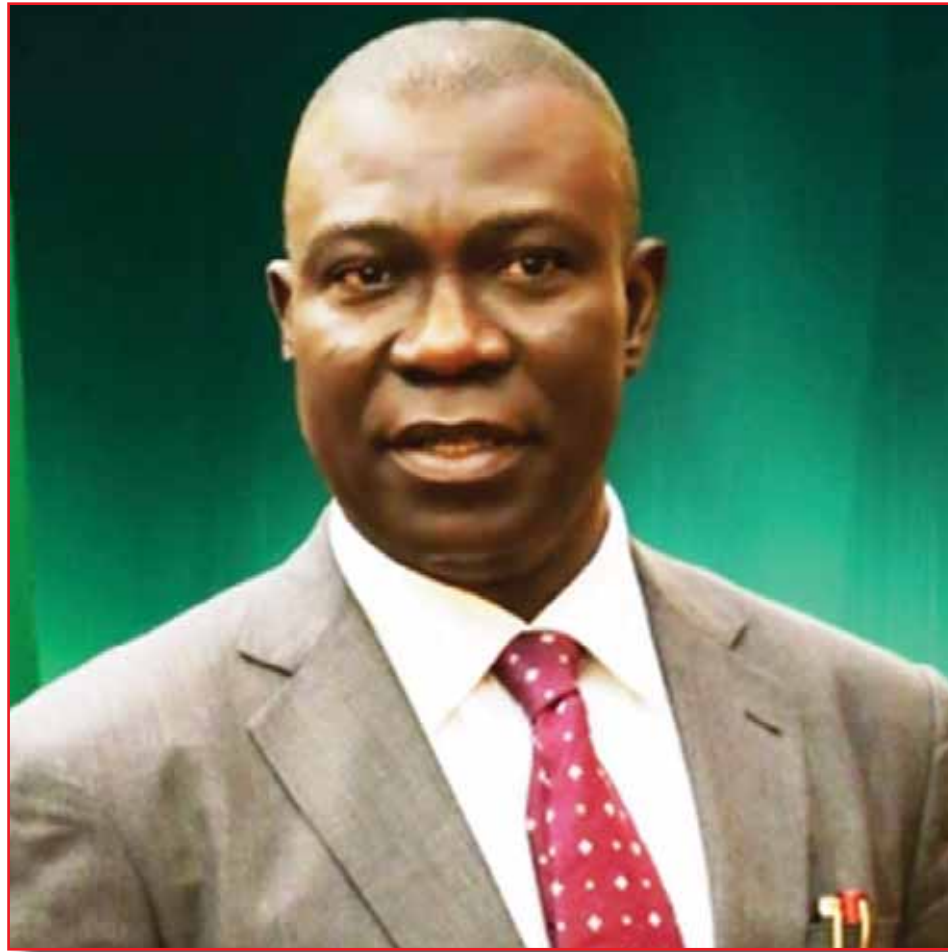
But apart from projects attracted, thousands of scholarships and bursary awards, Ekweremadu has been instrumental in the making of a good number of political office holders, including governors.

Today, the erudite professor wants to be governor himself to apply the wealth of experience, local and global contacts gained over the years to the service of his native state, and all the chained demons appear let loose from hell.

While Ekweremadu's popularity continues to soar, as his enthusiasts, supporters, and objective people see an Ekweremadu governorship as the best news to Enugu State and Igboland at this time, the naysayers, elite conspirators, and their radicalised anti-Ekweremadu's lynch mob, believe an outright intimidation and disqualification of the Senator from the governorship contest is the only solution.

First, they embarked on publications and multi-million naira zonal rallies to advocate the zoning of power to Enugu East Senatorial zone in 2023. When the lie that our founding fathers laid the foundation for the zoning arrangement couldn't fly, as they couldn't tell Nigerians when, where, and which elders met to agree on the zoning order, they switched to the fallacious claims that Enugu PDP Caucus in 2013 zoned the governorship to Enugu North and Enugu East in 2015, and 2023, respectively. But it took them nearly two years to come up with forged minutes of meeting. Their minds did not tell them that even if the oven-baked document were authentic, no portion of PDP constitution authorises state or national caucus of the party to zone offices. The ridiculousness of claiming that Agbaja brothers alone moved, amended, seconded, and presided over a zoning decision supposedly binding on a multi-clan state like Enugu did not occur to them. Neither did the stupidity of claiming that they suddenly "zoned" the governorship seat to Enugu North in 2013 when Enugu East and North already tasted the governorship seat occur to them.

To their shame, former Governor Sullivan Chime, the man they claimed presided over the meeting, came out for the umpteenth time to state that there is no formal zoning arrangement/agreement in Enugu State. Chime's stand



Ekweremadu

further validated my piece entitled "No Zoning Arrangement in Enugu". I urge all truth-seekers to Google-up and read it.

Meanwhile, shocked to their marrows that all their propaganda emboldened rather than cow Ekweremadu, as he declared for governorship race on March 11, 2022, they filed a frivolous lawsuit at the State High Court to stop him vide a midnight injunction. In the suit marked E/254/2022, the Applicant, Chief Ofora Mbannaji from Nike, wanted Ekweremadu stopped based on a zoning agreement supposedly reached at an "expanded Caucus" meeting of the Enugu PDP in 2013.

But in their desperation, they forgot that no court would stoop so low as to grant such deny a Nigerian his constitutionally guaranteed right to vote and be voted for. They equally forgot that it is no longer business as usual as the Electoral Act 2022 had expressly precluded State High Courts from having anything to do with state and federal elections. Besides, there is no organ like "Expanded Caucus" in PDP constitution. Therefore, when the Ikeoha Campaign Organisation brought their foolhardiness to their notice and the knowledge of the world, they ran to the courts to quickly withdraw the lawsuit, tail-in-between their legs.

Today, the State House of Assembly, Local Government Council Chairmen, Town Unions, and the Enugu State

Council of Traditional Rulers, etc. have all been needlessly dragged into induced and compelled issuing of communiqués upholding an in-existent zoning arrangement all in the bid to stop Ekweremadu. Those who resisted have been threatened and or sanctioned.

Recall that majority of the royal fathers protested the unauthorised communiqué endorsing zoning, which their Chairman, HRH Igwe Lawrence Agubuzu, issued in their names despite the uproar and rejection of the proposal during their meeting. Chairmen of the Traditional Rulers Councils in some local governments have consequently been replaced and membership of the Enugu State Council of Traditional Rulers consequently adjusted. Monthly allowances of Chairmen of the body of Presidents-General of town unions at local government level, who refused to sign a prepared communiqué they brought to their state meeting, have had their suspended.

Last March, the Ikeoha Campaign Organisation alleged the intimidation of Ekweremadu's supporters by agents of state, including the present detention in prison of Paulinus Ugwu, the PDP Ward Chairman for Okpatu; the detention and subsequent charge to court for baseless offences of Joshua Ogbonna, Francis Akpa, and Obi Mamah, using the late Deputy Inspector General of Police, Joseph Egbunike; ostracisation of Barrister Emeka Asogwa, Engr. Armstrong Agbo, and Chief Charles Mbah for their association with and commitment to Ekweremadu; nocturnal meetings and alleged fetish practices against

Ekweremadu; and the appointment of known deadly thugs and cultists into state and local government offices all aimed at intimidating and stopping Ekweremadu.

Those who saw these as possibly some politically motivated allegations were shocked to read about the attack on Ekweremadu's supporters and associates during the last monthly meeting of the Aninri LGA chapter of the PDP, which led to life-threatening injuries and hospitalisation of many, including Hon. Chinedu Okwu, who is the Member representing Ekweremadu's Aninri State constituency in the House of Assembly. Gory pictures and videos of the attack, which trended on the social media showed these men in pools of their own blood with broken heads and horrible machete cuts.

This then raises the question: Who is afraid of Ekweremadu? Easy. Some are misguided folks, especially from Enugu East, think Ekweremadu has come to disrupt a purported zoning arrangement to take their "birth right". Some believe he wouldn't be anybody's godson. To some, he has overstayed in the public office, and therefore should retire into oblivion.

Closely related to this group is the clan of the envious, who feel diminished by Ikeoha Phenomenon and accomplishments as a lawmaker and feel they would be eclipsed from Enugu's book of remembrance by his accomplishments should he lay his hands on executive powers. They don't care what promises an Ekweremadu administration holds for Enugu. As far as they are concerned, if Ekweremadu is the door to paradise, they would rather perish in hellfire.

So, apparently, the anti-Ekweremadu gang-up isn't driven by altruism or common good. None of them have accused him of ineptitude, bad record of service or poor performance. On the contrary, they attest to his experience, competence, worldview, outreach, and global contacts. Yet, as far as they are concerned, he nothing short of stopping him would make them happy.

But Ekweremadu is not new to such machinations. He has seen, endured, and overcome all manners of political treachery, but God had seen him through it all. Somehow, he always emerged victorious. Surely, 2023 won't be an exception because the voice of the people is the voice of the gods.

My exhortation to those opposed to Ekweremadu's governorship ambition is to seek and obtain the policy document and the implementation strategies he has fashioned creatively to chart a "Pathway to a New Enugu State", which is trending and resonating in political and social spaces in Enugu and beyond.

If they are still not satisfied, they should either obtain forms to contest the primary election, unveil their own policy documents to avail the electorates and other citizens the opportunity to interrogate and comparatively analyse what each aspirant has to offer or throw their support behind their preferred aspirant. But by all means, let all eschew the path of violence, exclusion, and intimidation.

Dr. Okolie is a Senior Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow, and Former State Director, National Orientation Agency, Enugu State.

LAUTECH to Honour Ex-Oyo Milad, Popoola, Ayorinde, Ambassador Adefope

Wale Igbintade

The Ladoké Akintola University of Technology, LAUTECH, Ogbomosho will today confer Honorary Doctorate Degree on a former military governor of Oyo State, Major General Oladayo Popoola (Retd), and a legal luminary, Chief Mobolaji Olukayode Ayorinde (SAN) as the university holds its 14th combined special convocation ceremonies.

Also to be honoured is a former Nigerian High Commissioner to Zambia and Malawi, Ambassador Ibironke Adefope.

The institution disclosed this in separate letters of invitation sent to the three prestigious honorees.

Specifically, a letter dated April 8, 2022, written to Chief Bolaji Ayorinde (SAN), and signed by the Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Liasu, stated that the University's Senate arrived at the decision having taken into consideration Ayorinde's pedigree and contribution to humanity in general.

The letter reads "Council at its meeting of Friday, April 8, 2022, considered the recommendation from Senate on your nomination for the award of Honorary Degree, Doctor of

Civil Law (D.CL Honoris causa) at the Convocation ceremonies holding on Saturday, April 23, 2022.

"Council arrived at the decision to award you the honorary degree, having taken into consideration your pedigree and contribution to humanity in general. It is the belief of the University that awarding you this degree will serve as further impetus for you to continue to be of use to humanity".

Mobolaji Ayorinde (SAN) was a former Pro-Chancellor, Chairman Governing Council Ladoké Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, between 2007 and 2011.

He was also a member of the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy, PACPM during the time of former President Goodluck Jonathan and a Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Chartered Arbitrators, Chairman, Aviation & Transport Committee, Nigerian Institute of Chartered Arbitrators.

He was also the Chairman of the Oyo State Committee on the Decongestion of Prisons.

In June 2012, he was appointed Chairman of the Governing Board of the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria by the President. Ayorinde was conferred with the National Honour of "Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic" of Nigeria, OFR in 2014."



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MISSILE

Bishop Yahaya to Buhari

"The truth about leadership is that there is morality in leadership. If you cannot deliver as a leader in a civilised clime, the right thing and best thing to do is to bow out." –The Anglican Bishop of Kaduna Diocese, Timothy Yahaya, telling President Muhammadu Buhari to resign following unending killings in Nigeria.

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The Dele Momodu Effect on Poor and Rich Nigerians

The chequered story of his life will draw tears not only to the eyes of the over 83 million people living in extreme poverty in Nigeria today but also melt the heart of most Nigerians; rich or poor, young or old. It is relatable, poignant and edifying. His story speaks pointedly to every Nigerian who has given up hope either because of the circumstances of their birth or the forlornness of the hopelessness they have found themselves later in life. It is a story that tells you that you may be a rejected stone today, penniless, down and out but could become one of the chief cornerstones tomorrow, not by cutting corners but by building a network of influence and working extra hard to transform your dream into reality.

Bashorun Ayòbámidélé Àbáyómí Ojútelégàn Ajàní Momodu was born into a peasant family. He struggled through very challenging circumstances to obtain university degrees. As he started working, he started living his dream. He started earning the trust and respect of not only his contemporaries but also the leaders of the society such as Chief Akin Omoboriowo, The Ooni of Ife Oba Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II, Chief Moshood Abiola, Dr Mike Adenuga Jr, Mr Hakeem Belo-Osagie, and other distinguished personalities. Then, suddenly, fate dealt him a devastating blow in the aftermath of the June 12 1993 Presidential election. This upturned the next couple of his years into a hodgepodge, punctuated by daunting moments, including the inability to fend for his family. That would indeed break any man! Momodu was so desolate that at some point while he was in exile, he contemplated suicide. But today, the same Chief Momodu, for the second time in his life, has offered himself to become the chief servant of Nigeria, the President of the Federal Republic.

When he announced his intention to run, some, failing to come to terms with the painful sacrifices he had made for his fatherland in his own way, scoffed at the proposition. Some derisively dismissed his ambition as a pipe dream. They forgot that if George Weah of Liberia, once the world's best footballer, or Pedro Castillo of Peru, a rural primary school teacher, or James Garfield, known as the poorest man to ever govern as US President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a former actor and comedian and now President of Ukraine, or the 36-year old President Gabriel Boric of Chile, a former students union President, did not venture, they would not have become the Presidents of their respective countries. The most instructive was that of businessman and showbiz impresario, Donald Trump, who became American President. Some even asked him to go and start from the grassroots like the Afenifere leaders of yore would have counselled. They forgot that Dele Momodu, egged on by the circumstances of his formative years, had already entrenched himself in the ways of life at the grassroots and understood their nuances and expectations.

Many, however, instantly realized that a Dele Momodu on the ballot on the platform of a major political party like the People's Democratic Party in 2023 is bigger than the Momodu persona. It will finally settle the score in Nigeria that irrespective of the circumstances of your birth and your station



Momodou

in life, if you work exceptionally hard, chase your dreams and believe in yourself, you can rise to the very pinnacle of any public office in this country. Even without ever holding any elective office or having an iniquitous political Godfather. It will ignite a new wave of the Audacity of Hope. From the son of a bricklayer to the daughter of a palm wine tapper, the children of petty traders and the grandchildren of subsistence farmers, a new seed of hope and self-belief will be planted in a new generation of Nigerians.

It will bridge the social divide where Nigeria has been split down the middle between the extremely rich and the extremely poor; where the justice served to the extremely rich is the exact opposite of the injustice dished out in swift succession to the poor; where the impoverished, their children and great grandchildren have no option than to use decrepit educational, health and social infrastructures while the ruling class that engineered the ruin, fly out unabashedly with their children to relish superior amenities in other more organized climes where their own leaders treat their people, rich or poor, with humaneness and dignity.

Of all the aspirants who have signified their intentions to run for the highest office in the land, Dele Momodu stood out for the unusual combination of some rarified features. Without ever occupying any political office in Nigeria or elsewhere in the world, Momodu has met with more Nigerian, regional and global leaders than most of the people who have so far indicated their interest to become the next Nigerian President. He is what is called in the Yoruba etymology "Atobatele" (already ordained with the characteristics of royalty). It is a bankable asset that will count at critical moments.

In the crowded field of Presidential hopefuls, Dele Momodu is one of the very few who feel extremely comfortable in the company of the old and young, rich and poor, peasants and elites. He is not detached from the realities of the excruciating pains of the masses. He is close to them. He talks to them directly

every day, either on social media or in-person. He socializes with them. They are part of his daily routine. He knows what the shoe pinches them the most. He knows what he needs to do to flip their despair to joy. No adviser can hoodwink him and tell him all is rosy when people are gnashing their teeth in the pangs and distress of poverty. He has been one of them. He has shared with them from his personal resources to uplift as many as he could.

As President, he will judiciously deploy the resources of the state to bring the greatest joy to the greatest number of people. He is a firm believer in the axiom of utilitarianism. He knows that happiness is the only thing that truly has intrinsic value. Those who know Dele Momodu know that he will not partake in anything that will spur unhappiness. He will not approve any action or policy until he is sure it will promote the happiness of Nigerians. Just as he is pushing for the happiness of the masses, he will promote the happiness of the rich. For him, everyone's happiness counts. He is as close to Aliko Dangote as he is to the vendor who sells his Ovation magazine. He is an ardent believer in the live and let live mantra. If the Dangotes of Nigeria live happily, they will create more wealth and more jobs for the masses. If the masses become buoyant with more disposable income, they will have more resources to patronize the Dangotes or have the opportunity to become more Dangotes. It is a virtuous cycle, a win-win for all. He will lead a government that will provide the enabling environment for all sides of the divide to thrive. There is no zero-sum game in his world view.

As a social engineer, he knows that nothing thrives in the face of insecurity. For him, guaranteed security is an irreducible minimum for desired and sustainable growth. Also, as a voracious reader, he has read many books on the Art of War and military tactics. He has interacted with many military Generals from General Alani Akinrinade to General Ibrahim Babaginda. He has their ears, and they are ready to avail him of the wisdom of their experiences. On his 60th birthday, former President Ibrahim Babangida, in his tribute to Bashorun Momodu said, "Dele... you have made a lot of impact especially on the young generation of this country. May God continue to bless you. You are an inspiration to journalism in Nigeria..." He understands the importance of strategy and preparation. He knows how to equip and reward our servicemen to motivate them to victory against bandits and terrorists. Over 20 years ago, he was combing the forests of Sierra Leone and later in Liberia, to check on the well-being of our military men. He knows how to work with our best talents in the Military to get results. He is an excellent listener who will encourage his military chiefs on how to bring the best ideas to the table to protect Nigeria against internal and external aggression. He has shown that he is a man of courage who will not hesitate to take the fight to anyone who attempts to sabotage his plan for the great people of Nigeria.

He treats everyone with dignity and respect. He treasures and respects women. He admires their loyalty. I recall a scenario when his company was staging an event for

the Prophetess, Iya Adura, Reverend Esther Ajayi, who would later describe Bashorun Dele Momodu as a national treasure, at Movenpick Hotel, Accra, in 2018. Being a General who will never send his men to war and go to sleep, Dele Momodu was on ground to personally monitor proceedings. The hall was packed, everything was splendid. Amid the euphoria, Bob Dee as we all love to call him, leaned closer and said to me, "You know if not for the women we invited, this hall would not have been full. Many of the men we invited did not show up even after confirmation while almost all the women turned up. They are always loyal. They are always there for us. You can count on them." One needs no soothsayer to know that a Dele Momodu Presidency will readily concede one third of the slots in his government or more to competent women.

I don't know how many people of Chief Dele Momodu's age work as hard as he does. I doubt he sleeps for up to four hours in a day. His work rate has been heightened by the brisk nature of social media where a platform can lose its competitive edge if it misses critical posts. It is the Per Second generation. He is a hands-on leader. Anywhere he is, he monitors social media and responds to issues promptly. Irrespective, he has not allowed that momentum to affect his other responsibilities. He is the grandmaster of multitasking. It tells you of how he will treat his assignment if Nigerians recruit him as our President. Being hardworking has become second nature to Dele Momodu. His brilliance and hard work were what attracted him to Chief MKO Abiola, Dr. Mike Adenuga and a host of others. This was what made him excel in journalism when he was working for Weekend Concord where he was the shining star. He has taken the same philosophy to Ovation International Magazine which has been the Number 1 celebrity magazine in Africa for over two decades. As the CEO of Ovation Media Group, a flourishing media empire, Chief Momodu has shown his dexterity in successfully navigating a business entity.

Chief Dele Momodu is a widely travelled man in five continents and over 60 countries and territories. He knows the power of travel and tourism as a major contributor to the global GDP and job creation. Personally, I am thrilled that he will recreate the best of tourism he has seen elsewhere around the world including Dubai, which he helped to turn into a global phenomenon, in Nigeria. While travel and tourism contributed 3.3 million jobs and 4.4% to the Nigerian GDP in 2019, an equivalent of \$18.1 billion, the same sector contributed 12% to the Egyptian GDP at the value of \$34 billion. Yet, the Nigerian GDP is rated bigger than Egypt with a population double that of its North African counterpart. With the growth in the global travel and tourism sector projected to exceed the pre-pandemic level this year and beyond, Chief Momodu has seen the opportunity for growth in the tourism sector. He has marshalled plans that will stimulate the provision of jobs for millions of Nigerian youths through tourism, the digital economy and the creative industry.

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