

# Renewed Military Bombardments Force Boko Haram's Chief Executioner, Family to Surrender

Kingsley Nweze in Abuja

There was jubilation in the camps of the military on the frontlines in Borno State following the surrender of a senior

member of Boko Haram, Bashir Bulabuduwaye to troops of the Nigerian Army, resulting from their renewed onslaught in the Lake Chad area.

Security sources said

Bulabuduwaye was Boko Haram's chief executioner, who killed all abducted persons condemned by the group.

It was gathered that the terrorist and his family, his wife and

children inclusive, surrendered to the troops of Operation Hadin Kai in Banki, Bama Local Government Area of Borno State on September 12, 2022.

Intelligence sources said

Bulabuduwaye was the official who carried out death sentence on captured military men and civilians when Abubakar Shekau was a leader of the terrorist group.

The sources said the former

terror kingpin had appeared in many grisly footages showing fighters aligned with Boko Haram, where he slit the throats

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**Lawan: Buhari May not Physically Present 2023 Budget to NASS... Page 8**

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# THIS DAY

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N250

## Court Hears FG's Bid to End ASUU's Strike Monday

● *Buhari meets with pro-chancellors, promises further consultations*

Deji Elumoye, Alex Enumah and Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

Justice Polycarp Hamman of the National Industrial Court

will next Monday hear an application for interlocutory injunction to compel members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to suspend

their ongoing strike, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.

In a related development, President Muhammadu Buhari

met with Pro-Chancellors of Federal Universities, with a pledge to engage critical stakeholders in the education sector towards ensuring that the

seven-month old industrial action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is called off.

The Federal Ministry of

Employment, Labour and Productivity, had approached the industrial court to challenge

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# Atiku's Candidacy against PDP's Constitution, Says Bode George

● *Former vice-president heads to Europe on 'business trip, not medicals'*

Charles Ajunwa and Bennett Oghifo in Lagos; Chuks Okocha in Abuja

A former deputy national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Olabode George yesterday said if the party had stuck religiously to the principle of zoning as entrenched in its Constitution, its 2023 presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, would not have become its standard bearer.

On the same day, former vice-president Atiku left Lagos for an

unnamed European country, with his media aide issuing a statement that he was on a business trip and not for medicals as is being speculated.

Atiku emerged PDP's presidential candidate after polling 371 votes at the party's presidential convention, defeating Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, who scored 237 votes.

George, a former military governor of Ondo State, who spoke on Arise News, said the

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### CONDOLENCE VISIT...

L-R: Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano State; Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and Senator Kabiru Gaya, when Osinbajo paid a condolence visit to Gaya over the death of his son, Sadiq, in Kano...yesterday

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## COURT HEARS FG'S BID TO END ASUU'S STRIKE MONDAY

the refusal of the striking lecturers to end the seven months old strike.

At the resumed hearing yesterday, the plaintiff's lawyer, Mr. James Igwe (SAN) urged the court to hear his client's pending application for interlocutory injunction on the grounds that the issue being one of national interest requires utmost urgency.

The plaintiff claimed that millions of students had been out of school since February 14, 2022 when university lecturers went on strike, adding that, "Section 47 of the Trade Dispute Act gives your lordship the power to direct that no worker should continue to embark on strike pending when the applications are heard and determined."

Reacting, ASUU's lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) objected to the request on the grounds that the plaintiff's application could not be heard because the court had scheduled the case for further mention.

Falana disclosed further that his client's leaders were in the process of meeting with relevant stakeholders, including members of the House of Representatives on September 20 to further explore ways of resolving the dispute.

He added: "We are going out of our way to ensure that this matter is resolved and we appeal to the claimant (FG) to cooperate with us."

Igwe opposed the adjournment, on the basis that "there is an affidavit of urgency in national interest for accelerated hearing of the application for injunction seeking to restrain the union from continuing the strike, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit."

On his own part, counsel for the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa (SAN) prayed the court to make their issue of joinder a matter of priority over every other application before the court, since it concerns jurisdiction.

Adegboruwa said: "I am standing before you on behalf of the students. We urge your lordship to give us an opportunity before the two elephants."

Making further submissions, the government's counsel, Igwe

explained that the interlocutory injunction supersedes other applications in terms of priority.

"It is saying, let intellectualism not be halted. Let education continue while the elephants continue fighting. This is a matter of national interest. It is not politics. Nobody should play to the gallery. Any adjournment should not exceed 48 hours."

In a short ruling, Justice Hamman agreed with Falana, and adjourned till Monday for hearing of the suit.

"The matter is for further mention, which means hearing cannot take place", the judge held, adding that the interlocutory injunction, which has an affidavit of urgency, would be heard first at the next sitting.

Hamman held that the application for joinder by SERAP was not ripe for hearing since it was filed through the office of the Attorney General of the Federation the previous day (Thursday, September 15).

The case filed by the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) against the Federal Ministry of Education and ASUU was later mentioned.

NANS' lawyer, Debo Ikuesan prayed the court for a definite hearing date for his client's suit, but Justice Hamman queried the competence of the suit and his court's jurisdiction to entertain it.

The judge, who questioned the juristic status of the claimant, ordered Ikuesan to file a response on or before September 20 to address both issues.

Responding to questions from journalists outside the courtroom on why it took the federal government seven months before referring the matter to court, Igwe said the government wanted to exhaust all the conciliation processes.

"The Minister of Labour and Employment apprehended the strike and set up the necessary mechanisms towards its resolution and the government was serious about it. Those conciliatory processes were on. ASUU did the rollover strike and indefinite strike. So, what the Minister of Labour and Employment has done (make referral) is in the best interest of the nation. I am sure he would have gone to court earlier but he wanted an amicable resolution."

Meanwhile, a budding union of academics, the Congress of University Academics (CONUA) has declared its interest to join the case in court.

National Coordinator of CONUA, Niyi Sumonu, disclosed this while briefing journalists at the court premises.

Sumonu, who led his members to court, said they were discussing with their counsels to see how they could join the matter on point of law.

He said they applied to the Federal Ministry of Labour for registration in 2018 and were waiting for the handing over of the registration certificate.

"We are interested in the case because any matter pertaining to the universities, teaching, lecturing and industrial action is of utmost importance to us because the outcome will have a bearing on us.

"Because we are waiting for

registration, we cannot be part of the suit. We are talking to our counsel to see which part of the law will make us come into the suit."

Sumonu added that their members who are from Federal and State universities have never been on strike.

## Buhari Meets with pro-chancellors

President Muhammadu Buhari has pledged to engage critical stakeholders in the education sector towards ensuring that the seven-months old industrial action embarked upon by ASUU is called off.

The President, who spoke yesterday at the State House, Abuja, while meeting with the committee of pro-chancellors of federal universities, promised to hold further consultations with

relevant stakeholders, with a view to ending the protracted strike by the university lecturers.

Buhari said without necessarily going back on what is already an established policy, "I will make further consultations, and I'll get back to you."

Earlier in his speech, Professor Nimi Briggs, who led the Pro-Chancellors to the meeting said they had come to meet with the President in three capacities: "As President and Commander-in-Chief, as father of the nation, and as Visitor to the Federal Universities."

He added that despite the pall cast by more than seven months of industrial action, "the future of the university system in the country is good," citing as example the recent listing of the University of Ibadan among the first 1,000 universities in the world, a development occurring

for the first time.

Briggs commended the federal government for concessions already made to the striking lecturers, including the offer to raise salaries by 23.5% across board, and 35% for Professors.

He, however, asked for "further inching up of the salary, in view of the economic situation of the country."

The Pro-Chancellors also asked for a reconsideration of the No-Work, No-Pay stance of the government, promising that lecturers would make up for lost time as soon as an amicable situation was reached, and schools reopened.

Also speaking, Minister of State (Education) Goodluck Nana Opiah, said all the concessions made by the federal government were to ensure that the industrial action comes to an end, but that ASUU had remained adamant.

## ATIKU'S CANDIDACY AGAINST PDP'S CONSTITUTION, SAYS BODE GEORGE

former vice president was allowed to contest, and eventually won the presidential ticket based on an in-house agreement that opposed the provision of the party's constitution.

He said, "On the issue of constitutionality, I referred you to the fact that our party's constitution explicitly states and I quote: 'there will be zoning and rotation of elective offices and party offices' and if we had stuck rigidly to that, there was no chance for Atiku to have emerged as the presidential candidate."

George also lambasted those faulting the calls for the resignation of the party's National Chairman, Iyorchia Ayu.

There are growing calls among the PDP stalwarts spearheaded by Wike, asking Ayu to step down from the position to allow peace and stability in the party.

The former Ondo State military administrator had during a recent press conference in Lagos called for Ayu's resignation while making a case for the position to be filled by a southerner.

Defending his call for Ayu's resignation yesterday on Arise News, George said it was surprising that some party members were advocating for the anti-Ayu group to respect the constitutional provision that supports a new chairman

to emerge from the same zone as Ayu even if he (Ayu) resigns.

The elder statesman explained that if the party members could abandon the constitution and allow all zones to contest, when in fairness, the presidency should have been zoned to another region aside from the North, then the same can apply to Ayu's situation for another chairman to come from the South.

He said: "So, when it suits you, you can refer to the constitution and when it doesn't suit you, you can back away from the constitution. If we all on moral suasion purpose, and during a family discussion we agreed that look, people have been canvassing, spending money and going round from the last six months and since there was no definitive selection or zoning of whether it should come from the North, South, West or East, let us allow this to go now, the same principle is what will happen for Ayu.

"If we could accept the issue (sideline constitution provision) for a presidential candidate to come from any zone, which is against what is in our constitution, then what is good for the goose is good for the gander. On this premise (Ayu's resignation), we can do that again. Allow us for this period to do that because no

matter what happens, at the end of the election, whether we win or we don't win, there will be a convention to revisit the whole thing about these positions.

"They (those backing Ayu's chairmanship) are making it look as if it is rigidity. We bent the constitution based on moral suasion purposes, justice, and equity to allow all the zones to contest and now when the same issue comes up to allow the south to produce the national chairman, they are now saying no, it will go against the constitution.

"It is true it will go against the constitution. But they forget there was a provision for the zoning of the presidential candidate in the constitution too but we abandoned that for unity and peace, we allowed everyone to contest and if we were able to do that at that time, what is different now?"

George also went down memory lane on the history of the PDP regarding power rotation: "I'm looking at the thought processes of the founding fathers of our party. They gathered in 1998 and intentionally looked at the problems that have beset this nation called Nigeria. They came out with a suggested solution that we should divide Nigeria into six geo-political zones because in the First Republic, they had the majority tribes and their way and their say. Minority tribes were just on-lookers; same in the North and same in the South.

"That created that friction that led us to all kinds coups and counter coups and the civil war and the incursion of the military into government. It took all those into consideration and came up with this solution that said 'look, let us divide Nigeria into six geo-political zones' and there are also six top positions in this country.

"The positions are: the presidency, the vice presidency, the Senate presidency, the Speakership, Secretary to Government and the National Chairman of the party."

He said there are six zones and six positions and that each zone would have one of these six top positions.

"In other words, you have removed the friction, the anger in people that 'are we just mere onlookers in the management of our country' and that after every eight years, all the three positions in the North will come down to the South and the three positions in the South will go to the North.

"If you look at it, number one is the presidency, number six is

the chairman of the party and so number one and number six cannot be from the same zone for balancing act. The party is woven into the executive, the legislative arm and the party. It was a brilliant concept and that was what gave us the opportunity to stabilise the country for almost 16 years.

"Here we are again going into it and some people said there was no need for zoning anymore and that shocked me. In fact, the need to have zoning is more important now than in 1999. Maybe some of these people don't understand the concept that led to the thought processes of our founding fathers."

## Atiku Heads to Europe on 'Business Trip, Not Medicals'

Atiku travelled to an unnamed European country last night alongside his running mate and Governor of Delta State, Ifeanyi Okowa.

His Media Adviser, Paul Ibe in a statement yesterday afternoon, said the trip was a "continuation of an earlier business trip of three weeks ago," and not for medicals as is being insinuated.

He adds: "He (Atiku) will be travelling immediately after his meeting on Friday (yesterday) in Lagos, with the leadership of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN).

"At the conclusion of his European trip, the former vice president will also use the opportunity to visit his family in Dubai. His trip is for business and family purposes and has nothing to do with medicals as is being insinuated in some quarters."

The development comes about three weeks after Abubakar met with Nyesom Wike, governor of Rivers, in London.

The London meeting also had Samuel Ortom, governor of Benue, Seyi Makinde of Oyo and Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia - who are Wike's allies - in attendance.

It was convened by Atiku to resolve the crisis in the party.

Meanwhile, the National Chairman of the PDP, Iyorchia Ayu, had also travelled to Europe on Wednesday.

Ayu is expected back in the country by the end of the month.

It is speculated that Atiku would meet with Ayu in Europe amid calls for the latter's resignation.

On Wednesday, Atiku had said the only way Ayu could be removed as National Chairman was through the amendment of the party's constitution.

## RENEWED MILITARY BOMBARDMENTS FORCE BOKO HARAM'S CHIEF EXECUTIONER, FAMILY TO SURRENDER

of prisoners and shot captives after accusing them of being infidels.

"The terrorist, Bulabuduwaye and his team of executors had murdered at least 1,000 persons captured and sentenced to death," said another military source.

The source stated that Bulabuduwaye was among the commanders, who fled last year's invasion of the terror group's stronghold in the Sambisa forest area by a column of Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) fighters, in May 2021 which resulted in the death of Shekau.

The source adds: "He broke away after refusing to pledge his allegiance to the Islamic State, to form a camp in Kote village in the axis of Banki, where he was hiding with other fighters," the source said.

"He surrendered due to the sustained intelligence-led air strikes, heavy artillery bombardment and ground offensives by the Nigerian Military troops of Operation Hadin Kai.

"It was difficult for him to access food and other logistics coupled with the flooding which already ravaged most of their settlement.

"He also fears battlefield elimination by ISWAP, being one

of those fingered to be eliminated for refusing to pay allegiance."

The Theatre Commander, North-east "Operation Hadin Kai", Maj. Gen. Christopher Musa, recently said over 79,000 insurgents, comprising combatants and non-combatants, had so far surrendered to the military.

## Army Chief Warns Criminals Fueling Crisis

Meanwhile, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Faruk Yahaya, yesterday warned those fueling crises in various parts of the country to desist from such unpatriotic acts.

The army chief gave the warning at the closing ceremony of the Chief of Army Staff Third Quarter Conference 2022 held at the Army Headquarters Command Officers Mess, Abuja.

Yahaya warned them to retrace their steps or face the consequences of their actions. He affirmed that the Nigerian Army, within the ambit of rule of law, will continue to ensure that all peace-loving citizens of the country go about their legitimate businesses and live their lives without fear or intimidation.

He said the Nigerian Army would continue to work closely with other security agencies to ensure peace in the country.

The Army Chief said the conference examined issues affecting professional conduct of personnel, reviewed training, operations and manpower, as well as various projects embarked upon by the Nigerian Army.

Yahaya said the conference afforded commanders and senior officers the opportunity to appraise all Nigerian Army activities and "we are now rejuvenated towards achieving the goal of discharging our constitutional responsibilities."

He enjoined all formations and unit commanders to be vigilant and monitor all situations through constant monitoring and ensure proactive solutions to situations. "Commanders are equally reminded of the need to employ stringent measures to maintain efficient security of arms and ammunition," he said.

The COAS also directed commanders to ensure that subordinates were educated on the guidelines provided in the new Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement (RoE), and directed that commanders must also ensure the professional conduct of troops

and resist any distraction and attempt by misguided elements to bring the Nigerian Army to disrepute.

"All must remain professional and apolitical in conduct all through Operation Safe Conduct," he said

Yahaya noted that the directive on the reviewed Nigerian Army rules of engagement and code of conduct for Operation Safe Conduct should be adhered to strictly by personnel during the electioneering period.

On the welfare of troops, Yahaya said the Nigerian Army was developing a robust programme to enhance the rehabilitation and resuscitation of personnel who were disabled due to injuries from operations.

"I am sure that when this is completed, the impact on the morale and performance of our troops will speak for itself," he said.

He commended all personnel for the optimism and commitment shown during the conference which clearly depicted in the quality of discussions and contributions.

The Army Chief restated the loyalty of the Nigerian Army to the Constitution and President Buhari.

# NEWS

News Editor **Charles Ajunwa**

Email [charles.ajunwa@thisdaylive.com](mailto:charles.ajunwa@thisdaylive.com)

## Catholic Bishops Urge INEC to Deploy Technology Transparently for 2023 Elections

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

Ahead of next year's general election, Catholic bishops have urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to

ensure that technology is transparently deployed in order to increase the confidence of the people in the electoral process.

In a communiqué issued at the end of its second plenary

meeting for 2022 held in Orlu, Imo State, the bishops under the auspices of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) said that as laudable as the Electoral Bill signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari maybe, INEC needs to implement it in a transparent way.

"2023 general elections are fast approaching. We commend the National Assembly and the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for enacting and signing into law the Electoral Bill 2022. We acknowledge the President's commitment to ensuring a level playing ground for all candidates in the elections.

"Furthermore, we commend INEC for its innovations, especially in the area of technology, to ensure

free, fair and credible elections. We, however, enjoin the commission to ensure that this technology is transparently deployed, in order to increase the confidence of the people in the electoral process," it said.

The clergymen also condemned as unlawful and sinful all forms of vote selling and buying and advised all politicians and voters to refrain from doing so.

While describing the protracted strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) since February 14, 2022 as unacceptable, the bishops urged the federal government and ASUU to find a quicker and better way of resolving the matters under contention so that public universities will re-open.

They said that resorting to courts

may not be the best and fastest way to solve the problem.

Speaking on concerns over the adoption of same faith candidates by one of the political parties, the bishops said: "While it is not our responsibility as religious leaders to dictate to political parties the choices of their presidential, vice presidential and other candidates, we have the duty to advise the citizenry to bear in mind the implications of these choices while electing the next set of leaders.

"We, therefore, renew our call on all our faithful, laity and clergy alike, to come out en masse to vote for people of unassailable integrity, who have the good character, capacity and track record to lead our nation out of the present

socio-political and economic doldrums, irrespective of party, religious and ethnic affiliations. It is through the right political choices that our current situation can be ameliorated."

In the communiqué, the CBCN decried the worsening state of insecurity in the country as well as activities of terrorists and insurgents, kidnappers and bandits.

The bishops further accused the federal government of not living up to its duties with regard to security.

"We observe that even when suspects have been arrested, there is not even diligent prosecution of the culprits of these nefarious acts, thereby leaving the citizenry helpless and despairing," they said.

## One Killed in Renewed Aladja/Ogbe-Ijoh Boundary Crisis

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

Delta State Police Command yesterday confirmed the killing of a man during an early morning exchange of gunshots between the people of Aladja and Ogbe-Ijoh in Udu and Warri South West local government areas of the state.

The two communities have been embroiled in a long drawn land tussle which, it seems, the state government is finding difficult to resolve.

According to sources, the renewed crisis erupted after one of the warring community's seven-day ultimatum regarding the Delta State Government's initiative to demarcate boundaries between the two communities' borders had expired.

It was gathered that gunmen suspected to be from the two communities confronted each other at the expiration of the ultimatum issued by Ogbe-Ijoh community's forum over a demolished building in the course of demarcation.

THISDAY observed that the people of Aladja, an Urhobo community in Udu Local Government Area, as early as 5a.m. raised the alarm of invasion by their neighbour from Ogbe-Ijoh, an Ijaw community in Warri South West council area, alleging sporadic shootings into their area.

The Aladja community alleged that the attack by their neighbour was a follow up to a 14-day ultimatum issued by the Ogbe-Ijoh people for the joint committee set up by the local government chairmen to stop demolition of houses at the boundary between the warring communities.

However, peace has returned to the communities as troops of 3 Battalion, Effurun and policemen took over the disputed area.

According to a military source, the troops, on arrival at the scene of the clash discovered the lifeless body of a middle-aged man identified as Frank Amakiri, an indigene of Ogbe-Ijoh as well as one Fabrique Nationale (FN) rifle mounted with a magazine loaded with nine rounds of 7.62mm (NATO) ammunition besides the deceased.

Additionally, he said a suspect, one Michael Amakiri, who was identified by community members and a biological brother of the deceased, was arrested at the vicinity for interrogation.

Delta State Police Public Relations Officer, Edeafe Bright, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) confirmed that one person died in the shootout but assured that normalcy has returned to the area.



## CONSOLIDATING ON EDUCATION...

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State (2nd left) with the newly inaugurated Chairman of the Enugu State Post-Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB), Favour Eucharia Ngozi Ugwuanyi (3rd left), Secretary of the PPSMB, Remigius Chibuzo Eze (left), members of the Board, Ugochukwu John Eneze (middle), Chukwuma Okenwa (2nd right) and the Ex-Officio members, Prof. Rose Onah (3rd right) and Mrs. Agatha Oge Ukah, after their inauguration at the Government House, Enugu, yesterday.

## Media Rights Group Faults Claims on Baguada Kaltho's Death

Journalists for Democratic Rights (JODER) has faulted claims by a Nigerian medical doctor, Mahdi Shehu, suggesting he knew how and why a journalist, Baguada Kaltho was killed.

JODER called on the National Assembly to institute a judicial panel of inquiry to investigate Shehu's claims "so as to know the facts about the murder of Kaltho."

Shehu, who spoke in an interview on Arise News early this week claimed he refused a parcel bomb given to him by one Russel Hanks and left Nigerians with the impression that Kaltho was later given a parcel bomb by the American which led to his death.

"Shehu's fresh attempt to link the death of Baguada Kaltho to an official of the United States Embassy has raised fresh concerns not only about the heinous crime committed against the late Kaltho but also against the Nigerian media. This is one issue that should not be allowed to go unprobed," JODER said in a statement signed by its official, Mr. Adewale Adeoye.

The group said Shehu's position has added new twist to what has remained an unresolved murder and that it should be in the interest of

free speech the media to pursue every angle to its logical end.

JODER said for now, Shehu has left many gaps in his story which made his conclusion to appear questionable and therefore calls for further investigations by independent parties so that those responsible for Kaltho's death will be held accountable based on convincing and incontrovertible evidence.

The rights group said Shehu's claims are too plain to be believed especially his statement that the American gave him a parcel bomb to attack Durbar Hotel in Kaduna in June 1995 for N1 million.

"It looks too curious that an American diplomat would work so openly, handing over a parcel bomb to someone he met in few days and sounds difficult to believe that the official, even if he was a secret agent, would make himself so vulnerable to easy exposure by relatively unknown third party.

"In the complex realm of international diplomacy, it is difficult to believe that the Political attaché of the US would personally hand over a parcel bomb in a public place like Durbar Hotel without even the fear of a set up by the Nigerian state. But if this was the case, Shehu needs to come forward with more information that will help unravel the murder of Kaltho.

## Court Nullifies PDP Governorship Primary in Zamfara

Onuminya Innocent

There was palpable fear in the fold of People Democratic party (PDP) Zamfara State as the Federal High Court sitting in Gusau, Zamfara State, yesterday, nullified the governorship primary election in the state that produced Dauda Lawan for 2023 election.

Justice Aminu Bappa during a court sitting in Gusau yesterday ordered that the party should conduct fresh governorship primaries in the state.

The PDP governorship primaries held on May 25 produced Dauda Lawal-Dare as the party's governorship candidate for the 2023

governorship election in the state.

The three aspirants, who are plaintiffs in the suit, Mr. Shehu Baukaye, Wadat Madawaki and Hafiz Muhammad pulled out few minutes to the commencement of the exercise over alleged irregularities.

The election was conducted by a committee which was sent from the PDP National Headquarters Abuja, led by Adamu Maina-Waziri.

The defendants are the PDP, Maina-Waziri, Col. Bala Mande (rtd); Zamfara PDP Chairman, Lawal-Dare, the PDP governorship candidate, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Trial Judge, Bappa-Aliyu said that the court has granted all the prayers of the plaintiffs looking at the merit of the suit.

The 109 page judgement will be presented to the counsels of both parties according to the judge.

Addressing journalists at the court premises, the counsel to the plaintiffs Ibrahim Mani, said the court had nullified the election of Dauda Lawan Dare as the PDP candidate based on the prayers they had submitted before the court.

According to him, "part of our prayers, we urged the court to nullify the primary elections because of series of irregularities and we are happy that our prayers were

granted."

The state Legal Adviser of the PDP, Bashir Abubakar who represented the defendants in the court, said the PDP would study the judgement and appeal it because the trial judge gave a summary judgement.

Abubakar added that the judgement was in favour of plaintiffs and all the defendants were going to study it and know the next line of action.

But some PDP stakeholders, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they fear a repeat of what happened to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2019.

## Ugwuanyi Inaugurates Newly Constituted Enugu State PPSMB

Enugu State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, yesterday, inaugurated the newly reconstituted Enugu State Post-Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB), at the EXCO Chamber, Government House, Enugu.

Ugwuanyi also swore-in Oliver Uchenna Enete as his Special Adviser and Remigius Chibuzo Eze as a Permanent Secretary.

Inaugurating the newly reconstituted PPSMB, Ugwuanyi named Favour Eucharia Ngozi Ugwuanyi as Chairman of the Board with Ugochukwu John Eneze and Chukwuma Okenwa

as members.

The governor equally named Prof. Rose Onah and Mrs. Agatha Oge Ukah as Ex-officio members and the newly sworn-in Permanent Secretary, Remigius Chibuzo Eze, as Secretary of the Board.

Ugwuanyi explained that the Enugu State PPSMB was reconstituted pursuant to Sections 4 and 9 of the Enugu State Post-Primary Schools Management Board Law, Cap. 67, Laws of Enugu State 2004 following the expiration of the previous Board by effluxion of time.

The governor disclosed that

the Board is saddled with the responsibility of managing and controlling all post-primary schools and institutions, being state schools within the context of the Education Law.

He added that "the centrality of this mandate to the development of our future human resource underscores the imperative of appointing persons with sound educational training, diverse experience, character and competence into the Board."

Recalling that Enugu State was recently ranked first in pass rate (93.9 per cent)

among the public secondary schools in Nigeria and second best-performing state in the country that sat for the WAEC examination in 2021, Ugwuanyi said: "These feats and more are testament to the quantum of investment the state has made in the infrastructure, human resource and supervision of the state post-primary schools system."

Congratulating the new members of the PPSMB on their appointment and inauguration, the governor told them that their track records evidently recommended them for the strategic assignment.

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# NEWS

## Lawan: Buhari May not Physically Present 2023 Budget to NASS

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari may not appear before the joint Senate and House of Representatives session to present the 2023

budget next month.

The uncertainty was confirmed yesterday to journalists by the President of the Senate, Senator Ahmad Lawan, after inspection of Room 022 being put in shape as

temporary chamber for the Senate on resumption Tuesday next week.

Lawan while fielding questions from journalists said though the National Assembly was expecting Mr. President for presentation of the 2023 budget estimates in the first week of October, but the renovation work going on is creating a challenge of where to host Mr. President.

He said, "The Green Chamber of the House of Representatives normally used for such a very important event is also being

renovated, calling for urgent action from the leadership of both Chambers on resumption, on how to address the challenge," he said.

He disclosed that one of the urgent legislative assignments that would be carried out by the Senate on resumption next week, is confirmation of Justice Olukayode Ariwoola as substantive Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN). "Confirmation of Justice Ariwoola's appointment by Senate on resumption next week is very necessary to beat

the three months period of acting in that capacity.

"The Senate would have confirmed his appointment before proceeding on recess in July but request to that effect got it from Mr. President a day proceeding to the long recess," he explained.

He said further that issues of national security which have improved and consideration of the 2023 - 2025 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Fiscal Strategy Paper (FSP), will also be accorded legislative

priority on resumption.

On the temporary Chamber to be used, the Senate President said arrangements put on ground are to a large extent, manageable since it will only be used for some months.

"Any temporary arrangement made or being made, cannot be compared to a permanent one. Whatever sacrifice that should be made are being made by us to pave way for Hallowed Chambers of the Senate and the House of Representatives, renovated to global standard," he added.

## Duro Onabule Buried in Ijebu Ode

James Sowole in Abeokuta

The remains of Chief Duro Onabule, a veteran journalist and former spokesman to former Military Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida, yesterday, were laid to rest.

Onabule died on August 16, 2022, at the age of 83.

The funeral service which preceded the interment of the deceased, was held at the Cathedral Church of Our Saviour, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State.

In his sermon, the Diocesan Bishop, Rev. Peter Oludipe, described late Onabule as an icon, hardworking and a goal getter.

Oludipe, reading from Hebrews 9:27, noted that life remained transient, extremely short, saying that everyone would die at God's appointed time.

He stated that Onabule was a

philanthropist and a family man who did his best and impacted the nation positively.

He said, "Irrespective of our achievements, we will all die and give account of our stewardship. What are you doing to contribute to the growth and development of the nation?"

"People die regularly everywhere in the world. This is a funeral service that we are all familiar with. Today, it has become the turn of Onabule.

"Death is certain, it is the reality of life, whether male or female, young or old, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, all men will die," he said.

The bishop appealed to Nigerian leaders to show more love and care to the citizens.

He urged the people to pray for credible leaders ahead of the 2023 general elections.



## SWEET VICTORY...

Kebbi State Governor Atiku Bagudu (4th from left, back row) and Captain of the winning NSK Farms Polo team, Alhaji Nura Sani Kangiwa (3rd from left), flanked by polo players at the 7th Argungu Polo Tournament and Cultural Festival

## On CNN, Obi Explains Plans to Take Nigeria out of Economic Crisis

Enameh Gabriel in Abuja

Labour Party presidential candidate, Mr. Peter Obi, has said the only way to take Nigeria out of its current quagmire was to tackle insecurity head on.

Obi, while speaking in an interview with CNN Zain Asher yesterday, said his first plan was to put security in place for the safety of the people.

He said that with security in place, farmers will be able to return to the farm and cultivate on the vast arable lands the country is blessed with.

The former Anambra State governor noted that security was impacting negatively on the economy of the country and needs to be dealt with decisively if the country wants to rise above poverty.

He said, "One is that you have to deal decisively with security. It is impacting negatively on your

economy today. Because you have to get your farmers to go back to the farm, and start ensuring that the vast land of the North is invested and cultivated on. You have to start pulling people out of poverty as quickly as possible."

In the course of the interview, Asher, who described him as the most popular candidate among the young people, asked, Nigerians are used to being disappointed by their leaders, can all the problems of Nigeria which are corruption, oil theft, insecurity, physically be solved by one person?"

Reacting to the question, Obi said, "If we have a leader that is competent, has the capacity, and commitment to deal with it, no one will solve it overnight. But there will be clear, visible, measurable attempts to deal with it. And they are things that are solvable. There are things they can deal with decisively."

## INEC Chairman: Insecurity, Social Media, Attitudes of Politicians Bane of Democracy

Segun James

The National Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Mahmood Yakubu, has lamented that insecurity, social media and the attitude of politicians have adversely affected democracy in Nigeria, even as he explained that the cost of conducting elections in Nigeria is also caused by lack of trust in public institutions.

Yakubu who spoke in Lagos yesterday at the Editors' Forum of the Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE) held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Ikeja, said the voting population of Nigeria is higher than the entire 14 of the 15 nations that make up the ECOWAS sub-region.

Yakubu said that the conduct of

elections in the country amounts to about 1.8 per cent of the national budget, a figure he stressed is heavy compared with other nations in the world.

He also cited the high number of voters as one of the reasons for higher cost of conducting elections.

According to him, 60 per cent of the electoral cost is spent on logistics and personnel allowances. He disclosed that for the 2019 election, the commission employed 1.4 million ad hoc staff even as it deployed over 18,000 motor vehicles and several hundreds of boats for the riverine areas of the country.

He explained that elections have to be conducted in all the nooks and crannies of the country at once saying this definitely would cost a lot of money in terms of logistics and personnel.

## Osinbajo Commiserates with Kano Senator over Son's Death

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo yesterday commiserated with Senator Kabiru Ibrahim Gaya over the death of his son, Sadiq Gaya.

Osinbajo visited Senator Gaya in his residence at Bompai Area in Nasarawa Local Government Area of the state.

Expressing sadness over the death of Sadiq, the Vice President said "this is a very, very sad visit. Sadiq was a young man. He was like a son to me. He has visited me a few times. He was a lawyer also like me. So, I had a very special relationship with him."

"I feel a very personal loss. I

commiserate with and condole the distinguished Senator and all members of his family, the Government and the people of Kano State who have lost a very precious son in this young man."

While praying for the family, Osinbajo said "we believe in God, he is the only one who can give and take life. No matter what the circumstances are, only God can decide how long a man would live."

"All will be well, I know that even with his own family - his wife and his children, all will be well with them. I want to express my sincere condolences to all of us that are here and to pray that the Almighty God will give the

family peace and that we will not see this kind of thing again. We will not experience the death of young people in our midst again."

On his part, the Governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, who had earlier received the Vice President at the airport, thanked him for the visit, noting that Kano is the VP's second home where he visits often.

"This is not the first time that you have come, you have come several times. Thank you and God bless you."

In his response, Senator Gaya, who introduced his family and some members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state,

thanked the Vice President for the visit, acknowledging that his late son and the Vice President were indeed very close.

Describing the departed as an amiable son, Gaya said the Vice President's visit has uplifted and encouraged the entire family.

He was accompanied by the condolence by former Defence Minister, Brig. Gen. Mansur Dan Ali (rtd); Minister of State for Works and Housing, Umar El-Yakub; Special Adviser to the President on Political Matters, Senator Babafemi Ojodu; Kano State APC Chairman, Alhaji Abdullahi Abbas, and Dr. Bashir Gwandu, among others.

## 6 Years After: FG to Kick-starts Pan-African Aviation, Aerospace University

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The federal government yesterday in Abuja set in final motions for the establishment of Pan-African Aerospace and Aviation University, six years after rigorous proposals and requirements submitted to National Universities Commission (NUC).

President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration revealed that it

was high time that the country goes into huge research and development in the areas of aerospace and aviation.

Briefing journalists in Abuja, the Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika said, "We have a need to establish a university dedicated to that and it has taken a very long time, since 2016 we have been on it because it is a rigorous exercise, we need to go through all of the requirements

by National Universities Commission (NUC), they have been very cooperative and supportive and guided us through the process. They provided support, so here we are today with the university about to start

Sirika noted that "The name of the University will be the African Aviation and Aerospace University. We named it Africa because the intent is for it to be

a Pan-African university that will support it entirely and this is so because in our contacts and in our appropriation to have this university come up, we did indeed contact those in the country and outside.

"There are many universities that are aerospace and aviation-related and also International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and many others and all these calibrated

## Alleged N1.8bn Fraud: Court Discharges, Acquits Businessmen

Wale Igbintade

After almost four years of trial, a Lagos Special Offences Court, yesterday, discharged and acquitted two businessmen, Ogor Eliot and Kelvin Chris, accused of N1.8 billion fraud by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo exonerated Eliot and Chris of the

entire five-count charge bordering on conspiracy, obtaining money under false pretence, conspiracy and forgery.

The judge held that the EFCC failed to establish any element of criminality against the defendants, adding that the transaction which led to the charge was of a civil nature that could have been resolved by the complainant and the defendants.

The defendants were arraigned by the EFCC's Lagos Zonal Command on October 22, 2018, alongside Danium Energy Services Limited, which the prosecution alleged was used to deceive Sterling Bank Plc to lend them money to finance a Local Purchase Order (LPO) for 20,000 Metric Tonnes of Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) for supply to Total Nigeria Limited.

Each defendant pleaded "not guilty," following which trial commenced.

On August 5, 2022, the court adjourned till yesterday for judgment.

At the resumption of proceedings, the court upheld Eliot and Chris' contention that the charge should not have been brought in the first place.



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## NEWS



## STATING ELECTORAL FACTS...

L-R: Former Managing Director, The Sun Newspapers, Dr. Tony Onyima; President, Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), Mallam Mustapha Isah; Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu; INEC National Commissioner, Festus Okoye; INEC National Commissioner, Alhaji Muhammed Haruna, and the Vice President of the NGE, Bolaji Adebisi, during the Interactive Session with NGE on the 2023 general election in Lagos...yesterday

## NCAA Restores Azman Air Operations Licence 48 Hours after Suspension

Chinedu Eze

Less than 48 hours after it suspended Azman Air's operations over failure to renew its Air Transport Licence (ATL), the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has restored the airline's licence, which allows it to resume scheduled services.

NCAA in a brief statement said, "Consequent upon the fulfillment of all outstanding requirements, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has renewed the Air Transport Licence (ATL) of Azman Air, enabling the airline to resume flight operations."

The regulatory authority had in the midnight of Wednesday, suspended the ATL of the airline, which nullified its Air Operator Certificate (AOC), thus suspending it from scheduled service.

The Director General of NCAA, Captain Musa Nuhu in a Whatsapp interview with aviation journalists explained that the NCAA took the action because the airline failed to provide the required documents for the renewal of its Air Transport Licence.

Nuhu further explained that one of the critical documents for the renewal of the airline's ATL

was the tax certificate, which the airline could not provide because it failed to remit ticket and cargo sales charge amounting to N1.2 billion to NCAA.

In addition to that, the airline also failed to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on how it would remit the fund, which is a five per cent charge that airlines collect on behalf of the regulatory authority.

The NCAA also said that the airline failed to submit security clearance for the renewal of its ATL, which expired in April 2021.

The NCAA boss said that the N1.2 billion debt was the

revenue that accrued from the five per cent Ticket Sales Charge (TSC) and Cargo Sales Charge (CSC) collected from the air travellers by the airline.

Nuhu told journalists that NCAA management had held a series of meetings with Azman Air leadership on how to pay back the debt, but both parties failed to reach an agreement.

For instance, he explained that the management of the airline had promised to pay back the sum of N10 million monthly as part of the N1.2 billion debt, but said the regulatory body insisted on N50 million monthly from the airline.

## Malami: Justice Ministry Ensures Nigeria's Restoration to Path of Growth, Development

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation (SGF), Abubakar Malami, has said that the judiciary has made an impact on all areas of Nigeria's development.

Malami stated this in Kano yesterday at a three-day top management retreat of the Federal Ministry of Justice with the theme: 'Enhancing

Systems and Structures in the Federal Ministry of Justice for Effective Justice Sector Service Delivery'.

He said some examples deserved to be laid down about the practical demonstration of how the services in the Ministry of Justice impacted on all areas of national development.

"On the economic front, the Ministry of Justice has been able to save Nigeria's

economy from total collapse which would have been brought about if P&ID had succeeded in enforcing an arbitral award of over USD 10 billion," he said.

The Attorney General of the Federation also said that the Ministry of Justice had played an important role worthy of note towards ensuring the restoration of Nigeria's path of growth and development

through the settlement of the multi-billion dollar adverse claims on the Ajaokuta Steel Plant.

"Our asset recovery drive has secured the sum of US\$322 million which enabled the federal government to embark on empowerment programmes that have taken over 100 million persons out of poverty as part of the national social investment programs," he said.

## FG Inaugurates 18-man Technical Working Group Proposal for Escravos, Onitsha Port, Others

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The federal government yesterday inaugurated an 18-man technical working group (TWG) proposal for channel management between Escravos, Onitsha and Baro Port on the Niger River through Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement.

The federal government, through Minister of Transportation, Mu'azu Jaji Sambo, described the nations Inland Waterways as cash cows long overdue for harnessing, noting that they abound with economic potentials capable of revolutionising the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

According to him, "The 18-Man TWG has technocrats from National Inland Waterways, Nigeria Ports Authority, the Navy among others, with the Permanent Secretary, Transportation, Dr. Magdalene Ajani, as Chairman, the Managing Director, NIWA, Dr. George Moghalu, as Alternate Chairman, the Deputy General Manager, Business Development, NIWA, Hassan Kaka as Secretary."

Sambo, who made this known in Abuja at the inauguration noted that providence has, "challenged me to put into reality what I went to China to pursue as an employee of National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA)."

He said, "I went to China, 2016, 2017 and 2018. In my own case, I was marketing the waterfront lands owned by NIWA and we zeroed on the Marina NIWA area office with proposal to reclaim that land to build a container terminal as well as passenger terminal for people passing through Apapa.

"The idea was that when containers come into Lagos, you don't have to discharge those meant for Onitsha in Lagos, but transport them in barges or vessels that can transverse low draughts to Onitsha Port to be picked by vehicles for distribution in the hinterlands."

Sambo maintained that the primary objective is to invest, maintain and operate a high grade Inland Waterways channel between Baro River Port point to Onitsha River Port to the Warri Port at the Niger River and onward connection to the Gulf of Guinea for a sustainable maritime transportation route and lay a solid foundation for navigation network that would connect the Lagos Ports, Lekki Deep Seaport with the Onitsha and Baro River Port for transportation of containerised and non containerised cargoes for shipping efficiency in Nigeria."

## We Won't Allow Widows, Pensioners, Other Vulnerable Groups to Suffer in Abia, Says APC Guber Candidate

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

The untold sufferings that widows, pensioners and other vulnerable groups have been subjected to in Abia State would come to an end next year if the All Progressives Congress (APC) takes control of the state.

This promise was made by the governorship candidate of APC in Abia, Chief Ikechi Emenike while addressing a stakeholders meeting at Ikwuano local government, saying that he was deeply touched by the plight of these vulnerable groups.

In the course of his consultative tour of the 17 local governments of Abia, widows and pensioners come around in organised groups to present their plight to the governorship hopeful, expressing support for him to

become Abia chief executive in 2023 to end their sufferings.

Emenike, who took pity on the widows, said that he would run a people-friendly, inclusive administration that would take special care of the vulnerable groups, including widows and pensioners.

"You have a husband in me, you have a father in me," he told the widows, adding that his administration would pay monthly stipends to widows, empower them and also abolish all obnoxious cultural practices targeted at women.

The APC governorship standard bearer, who has chosen a woman to be his running mate, said that women would have a prominent place in his government because they play a very special role in stabilising the family and society.

## Gov Emmanuel Seeks Awareness against Gender-Based Violence in Nigeria

Okon Bassey in Uyo

Akwia Ibom State Governor, Mr. Udom Emmanuel, has called for concerted efforts by relevant stakeholders and authorities to work towards eliminating all forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) against women and the girl-child in the country.

Emmanuel made the call when Nigerian Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF) led by the Chairperson of the forum and first lady of Ekiti State, Mrs. Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House Uyo on Thursday.

The governor, who decried the high rate of gender-based violence in the country emphasised that much awareness should be created to promote the rights of women and enforcement of punitive measures to serve as deterrent in curbing the menace in the society.

He lauded Nigerian Gover-

nors Wives Forum for leading in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, saying his state had identified with the vision and programmes of NGWF to address the challenges of the girl-child.

To achieve this, the governor said the state had built referral hospitals in the senatorial districts to intervene in cases of sexually assaulted victims who need help.

"If we had started this in time past, I think the awareness would have been much and a lot could have been achieved.

"All the issues outlined have been there in time past either they were not reported or there wasn't any kind of awareness on the right privileges on the people who were victims to raise an alarm wherever there is an abuse.

"I don't think there is any state in Nigeria today that the governor is not aware that he needs to at least have a referral centre for sexual assault victims.

## Gbagi Feeding People with Lies, Alleges Aniagwu

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

Delta State Commissioner for Information, Charles Aniagwu, has said that the state's 2023 governorship candidate of Social Democratic Party (SDP), Kenneth Gbagi, has been feeding the people with many lies through the news media out of desperation to win unmerited sympathy for his gubernatorial ambition.

The commissioner stated this at a media briefing in Asaba yesterday while reacting to certain claims by Gbagi in a television interview on Thursday on a number of issues relating to the 2023 election vis-a-vis his preparedness to prosecute governorship ambition.

Aniagwu pointed out that whereas the SDP governorship flagbearer was telling the people of the state that he would establish industries in the Delta, Gbagi was apparently unable to manage some of businesses well as they were suffering a downward trend.

Specifically, he accused the former minister of state for education of looking for an avenue to place his hands on the treasury of the state obviously with the intention of helping him revive his ailing businesses.

Aniagwu said that it was unfortunate that rather than telling the people what he hoped to do if given the chance to govern Delta State, the businessman and lawyer engaged himself in attempting to run down the Okowa administration by reeling out lies about the PDP government and his own imaginary entrepreneurial prowess which lacked empirical validation in the state.

"Perhaps, he needs money that belongs to Delta State government to revive his business that he ran aground", he said while lamenting the fact that Gbagi was merely building castles in the air regarding claims that he was a successful entrepreneur who was determined to industrialize Delta State.



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## COMMENTARY

# ZERO DEATHS ON NIGERIAN ROADS

**Cosmas Odoemena** canvasses the 'Zero death' project as way of reducing the carnage on our roads

I recently attended to a dispatch rider who was knocked down by a sport utility vehicle while doing his job. He sustained a fracture in the leg and was lucky to have survived. Another vehicle drove into a residential building in one suburb in Lagos and was stopped by a concrete electric pole. Luckily no one died. But not everyone is that lucky.

According to data from the Federal Road Safety Corps and the National Bureau of Statistics, between 2013 and 2020, at least 41,709 persons lost their lives to road crashes in Nigeria. Road traffic accidents remain one of the leading causes of death in the country. There have been efforts by the government to reduce road traffic accidents but they have not led to a significant reduction in them.

But, is it possible to prevent people from dying from road traffic accidents? An ambitious project by a coalition entitled, The Road to Zero: Achieving Zero Deaths by 2050, thinks this is possible. Since it is impossible to eliminate human error, planners and engineers are thinking of ways to design roads and vehicles to accommodate human error to make the whole system safer. Joined with this effort is the promotion of a "Safety Culture" that stresses the importance of safety in all decisions made by everyone.

The Safe System Approach is now achieving success in some parts of the world. It originated in Sweden through its Vision Zero program and in the Netherlands through the Sustainable Safety program. They both achieved success with not less than a 50 percent reduction in fatalities between 1994 and 2015. This idea has found its way to other countries in Europe and beyond with remarkable success in Australia and New Zealand. Even the United Kingdom and the United States have latched on to it.

Everything about this project is captured in a circular logo called the Prioritizing Safety Wheel with Safe System at the center. Round the Wheel are five elements, Safe Vehicles, Safe Roads, Safe Speeds, Safe Road Users, and Post-Crash Care. Achieving zero traffic deaths and serious injuries requires strengthening all five elements. A Safe System cannot be realized without all five elements working in synergy. On the outer side of the Wheel, Safety Culture was echoed around it six times.

The Safe System Approach begins with a mentality that it is not acceptable to allow deaths and serious injuries to happen on the roads. It accepts that road users are human beings and that it's inevitable for them to make mistakes. It is these mistakes that cause road traffic accidents. The goal of "zero" is to remove fatal and grave injuries, and not to eliminate crashes in totality.

According to Mark Doctor, a senior safety and design engineer, and Chimai Ngo, a program manager for zero deaths, safety culture, and transportation safety planning initiatives, to achieve zero deaths and serious injuries, when crashes do happen, "they must be managed so that the kinetic energy exchange on the human body is kept below the tolerable limits for serious harm to occur." This principle guides the use of a Safe System Approach in designing and operating the road system. It is expected that



**THE SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH BEGINS WITH A MENTALITY THAT IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ALLOW DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES TO HAPPEN ON THE ROADS. IT ACCEPTS THAT ROAD USERS ARE HUMAN BEINGS AND THAT IT'S INEVITABLE FOR THEM TO MAKE MISTAKES. IT IS THESE MISTAKES THAT CAUSE ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS. THE GOAL OF 'ZERO' IS TO REMOVE FATAL AND GRAVE INJURIES, AND NOT TO ELIMINATE CRASHES IN TOTALITY**

human error will occur, therefore, "the road infrastructure and vehicle technology must be designed and operated so that deaths and serious injuries are engineered out," wrote Doctor and Ngo.

**Safe Vehicles**—Vehicles are designed and regulated to minimize the frequency and severity of collisions by applying safety measures that use the latest technology. In-vehicle systems can help prevent the use of mobile phones while the vehicle is in motion to reduce distraction. **Safe Speeds**—Human beings are less likely to survive crashes at high-speed. Reducing injuries to humans from speed reduction happens in three ways: reducing the force from the impact, giving additional time for drivers to stop, and improving visibility.

**Safe Roads**—Transportation infrastructure which is designed to allow for human mistakes and injury tolerances can significantly reduce the severity of crashes that do happen. For example, by physically separating people moving at different speeds, having dedicated times for different users to move through a space, and informing road users of hazards. Street design plays a vital role in this approach. Safer street designs can slow down vehicle movement, provide visual cues that make it clear when different user groups share the space, and when needed, provide separation between the user groups when vehicular operating speeds are incompatible for sharing space with other users.

**Safe Road Users**—The safety of all road users is equally addressed; these include pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, who ride transit or travel by some other mode. It includes reducing distractions for all road users. Part of it is reducing impairment. This can be through alcohol detection and ignition interlock systems which help in preventing intoxicated drivers from operating a motor vehicle.

**Post-Crash Care**—Those who are injured from crashes depend on emergency first responders to quickly find them and give them first aid before moving them to medical facilities. Post-crash care also includes forensic analysis obtained at the accident site, traffic incident management, and related activities.

Safety is a proactive concept. Transportation agencies can use proactive and data-driven tools to identify and reduce latent risks in the system, instead of waiting for accidents to happen and then reacting to them.

Nigeria can study this policy and see how it can be domesticated. Lagos State can blaze the trail in Nigeria through its smart city project. Perhaps the new city called the Eko Atlantic City can be used as a pilot study if it has not already been factored in. Even the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, can give Lagos a run for its money. Other states should not take my word for it!

The whole project will require legislative and enforcement strategies aimed at achieving widespread user compliance with road rules and laws. It will require money, vision, and political will. But it is something worth pursuing. One life matters.

**Dr. Odoemena, medical practitioner, writes from Lagos Twitter: @cuzdetriumph**

## REMINISCENCE OF A FREEDOM-FIGHTER

**William Eleje-Abili** reflects on work after retirement

The Book of Numbers records that a certain man named Uriah was a mature man but King David awoke from off-side of his bed feeling macho and ready to do something odd. It got so sado-macho and odd in the even when war was going on, such that it would appear that the King spelled the letters of Uriah's name tele-guiding him to his un-timely death in the front. A king is a man of letters, of authority to cause action, a power of attorney.

Letters represent affectionate love, loathsome hate, or scholarly report. They sometime require masterful observance of courtesy. Letters are alphabets of named character in transfiguration or man-hunt. They lend themselves to improvisation of explosives. Letters are newspapers written from the holy gods to humanity. If you're free-lancing, note that the Lance is a Corporal, you are a freedom fighter of some sort and must be corporate elite to be credible. Don't appear abruptly from the wilderness unless you've got a loud voice. Start from the beer-palour or any-place you can engage a constituency in whose interest your positions are constituted or fascinated by your ideas. But here I was on television, not watching my tone or body-language talk-

ing about Dictionary in a language am not known to speak, looking like what is known in local parlance as 'Ijekebee-Ehugbo'.

Let me also use this opportunity to apologise to society for my write-ups on affairs of state. The exacting requirement of newspaper article for brevity, left a lot of issues requiring fuller consideration. My articles on state and governance were imaginative flashes of wishful thinking. It is good for one to know himself, someone like me has no business in politics, I don't have to do anything to make enemy but cannot keep a friend, though I go the extra mile, what is doing me is name-calling, people live life thought after but mine was as an after-thought...

A few months back, I released a series of articles in an in-house plat-form under the caption 'Ode of A Speaking Ass'. The series treated capital matters in soft-sell terms, telling simple truths like 'the governor's vote is for security but protection is of God'. The Ode were supposed to be a parody of a certain Dumb-Ass and the Rider, conceived like church-bells, drawing attention to my SPIED, Scriptural Paraphrases and Illustrations in Ehugbo Dialect. SPIED represented the intercourse of the Resurrected-JAH with HIS Church, a satire of mad-man and madam, defined by protestation of the testes

to Cupid the mother of harlots, accustomed to excise duty, utter obscenity, portraying the church as a body of organs, one of which is the scrotum being a sex-god, a type of Christ, the head of the figure and assizes of my calling. I was carried away by divine inspiration and people read meaning into things...

The problem with Journalism is that the Journalist must not be seen or heard except as represented, making it difficult at times for people to tell when it is no longer him, such that they begin to judge him rather than his work. He's supposed to go on tinted vehicles and be clean but cannot lean on his appeal to morning jurisprudence, he cannot say everybody's mind, he's not a prisoner of his conscience but of his image. I should have known these things, but returned to the world an illiterate and though born again could not pass test of life-lesson on time. In many respects, I was like an over-grown baby known in Ehugbo as Ezenze Uroturo, a precocious elder, delinquent in exposure but somewhat experienced. Till tomorrow, I don't know how to take plaque, if it is with my left or right. I spent a good deal of my talent, energy and resources on ideas that the time has not come or are no longer current, doing things analogue...

I'm the type that if I see someone doing something I can't handle I allow them if only I can guide, but was never in a position to do so. I retired without knowing it, when I began to look down on people living in Lagos. I dodged all those after-work-life training because I knew they'd only confirm my fears. My brain got too lazy to sleep until too lazy to work, leaving me awake all night only to have nothing to do with my heart before noon, other than time to spend until my money got counted for days without number for I was not keeping dates as Calendar of a know-how to go out for income, the difference of left from right and the bottom-line of thought. But just when I began to get ready to sleep and work, I officially resigned. I will like to forget my work-life, it was not in alignment with my name, did not balance my number and I never banked on it. But it is not with gleeful delight for I do not know any other means of livelihood. I opened a corporate-account and left it to happenstance but did not enjoy due course of seasonal weather. I remained on a particular grade level for 13 years on rising cost of living, selling my investments in real estate. I now have to return to my homeland without income...

**Eleje-Abili writes from Lagos**

INSIGHT



The cost is rising ...

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](mailto: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](mailto:saturdayeditor@thisdaylive.com) along with the email address and phone numbers of the writer.

### Achieving Gender Equality ...

For decades, the question of gender parity has overstepped the boundaries of equality to firmly register as a question of justice. Those who have been at the forefront of pushing this question have always argued and firmly too that if everyone is to be considered as an equal partner in the bid to make the world an equal place, women too must take their rightful place.

However, in a deeply and cheaply patriarchal society such as Nigeria, the mere thought that women should claim equality with men is giving some people stomach cramps on a nightly basis.

This is not surprising. A country as gravely unequal as Nigeria would always be loath to close the equality gap. Whether the scrutiny is on income inequality or gender inequality or on something as basic as equality before the law, the result is always the same. This inequality is at once widespread and systemic. Wherever one turns in the country, the nagging feeling of inequality is unmistakable. The result is always the same. It is many people, more than half of Nigeria's population that continue to run the risk of being left out by the fact that Nigeria has repeatedly failed to straighten the crooked lines of its gender equality.

Gender inequality is the social phenomenon in which men and women are not treated equally. The treatment may arise from distinctions regarding biology, psychology, or cultural norms prevalent in the society. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be social constructs.

Some common examples of gender inequality existing in the world today are lack of mobility, freedom of marriage, discriminatory divorce rights, citizenship, frontline combat, custody rights, violence and professional obstacles.

In its most insidious form, gender inequality manifests in violence. The statistics are sobering: Some one in 20 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 – around 13 million – have experienced forced sex. In times of both peace and conflict, adolescent girls face the highest risk of gender-based violence. Hundreds of millions of girls worldwide are still subjected to child marriage and female genital mutilation even if both are recognized internationally as human rights violations.

In many instances, gender inequality begins from

childhood with too many children growing to get used to it. Girls and boys see gender inequality in their homes and communities every day- in textbooks, in the media and among the adults who care for them.

Parents also assume unequal responsibility for household work with mothers bearing the brunt of caregiving and chores.

A new report by the United Nations Women and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) has revealed that achieving gender equality will no longer be possible by 2030. According to the report, at the current rate of progress of Sustainable Development Goal 5, it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality.

The report title "Gender Snapshot 2022" showed the frightening implications of global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, violent conflict, climate change, and the backlash against women's sexual and reproductive rights and health.

**Kene Obiezu, Twitter: @kenobiezu**

### Gov. Fintiri and the Cattle Tax Increment

Taxes and royalties collection is a fundamental avenue for a government to generate revenues to fund development in infrastructure and human capital.

Adamawa State is in need of other sources of revenues apart from the free Petro-dollar from the center, but the state is poor, with a fragile economy including thousands of unemployed youths and people engaged in unproductive jobs.

The World Bank says most developing countries with fragile economies "often face the steepest challenges in collecting taxes."

There is a correlation between the timing of the introduction of new taxes; peoples' economic strength and politics. No government can survive local politics if it introduces new taxes at the wrong time- especially when it is facing a re-election bid. Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri is seeking re-election in the 2023 governorship election.

Governor Fintiri's introduction of a new cattle tax regime appears ill-timed, unplanned, and poorly communicated to the concerned people. So many explanations from the Governor's aides, yet no

one understands them, because, the basics in tax administration were left out - new tax collection should be optimized but with minimal burden on the taxpayers, it should be fair and equitable, and at the appropriate time.

The Adamawa State government said that the 'Adamawa State Agribusiness Support Programme (ADAS)' is designed to take full advantage of the agricultural opportunities within the state and will focus on three areas of crop value chain, livestock, and aquaculture. The government further said the Agric bond will draw N25 billion annually which will be used to offset many of the state's liability and loans, and open a window for generating huge revenue as well as galvanizing the market in the Agric business, especially the livestock subsector" including the upgrade of cattle markets in Mubi, Ganye, Song, Gombi, Ngurore, Tungo, Malabu, and Wuro Bokki.

The Fintiri government failed to do its homework in two areas - balancing the economic needs and political necessity. The cattle tax is as historic as northern Nigeria. The N5,000 imposed on every cattle is exorbitant and unaffordable according to many people in the business.

On the other hand, there is a thorny politics associated with the cattle tax, and the people related to the business are complex and very important in the socio-political settings of northern Nigeria. Thus before tinkering with the tax, there is a significant requirement for discussion, engagements, and understandings. The livestock business is a very important sector, so to speak. As a result of poor timing and lack of discussion with stakeholders, on the new increase in the cattle tax, the Mubi cattle market, one of the biggest in the north didn't operate last week and on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, the market was sealed by the security agents.

Well, the governor has found himself in a catch-22 situation, because the upward review on tax for cattle and grains, was one of the conditions the government must fulfill in accessing the N100 billion agribusiness bond from the capital market. Governor Fintiri has already collected N25 billion from the 100 billion. And the investors are the ones to be collecting the taxes

**Zayyad I. Muhammad, Abuja**

THE SATURDAY NEWSPAPER

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## NEWS

## Yabatech N50bn Endowment: Osinbajo Calls for PPP to Solve Nigeria's Education Problem

Funmi Ogundare

Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, yesterday stressed the need for public/private sector participation through endowment funds to lift the education sector out of its current quagmire.

Osinbajo, who made this appeal at the N50 billion endowment fund launch of Yaba College of Technology, held at the Eko Hotels and Suites Victoria Island, Lagos, emphasised on the importance of public and private sector participation saying that it is no longer realistic to rely on public funds for education.

According to Osinbajo who spoke virtually during the

programme, "we can transform our education sector with radical intervention from the private sector. It is a win-win situation for us."

He described institutions as proven ground for best ideas saying that colleges in America for instance, were able to sustain their institutions by endowment for over 200 years and driven by value.

"The N50 billion endowment fund demonstrates your awareness about what is at stake and mirrors your vision. Yabatech is proof that we can invest in education through public and private partnership,"

Osinbajo, who was a special guest of honour said.

He commended the college's management for the initiative.

The Rector of the college, Mr. Obafemi Omokungbe who expressed concern about its decayed and inadequate infrastructure, said the endowment fund launch was necessitated by the need to generate funds to improve its infrastructure and ensure continued existence of legacy projects that will make the 75 years old college globally competitive.

According to him, "the endowments will encourage the college to make commitments for the future, knowing that the resources to meet commitments will continue to be available.

"The endowments will also

enable faculties and students to conduct innovative research, explore academic fields, apply new technologies, and develop teaching aids and learning methods. This will help the college strategies to strengthen and enhance the quality of its programmes."

Making endowed gifts, Omokungbe noted, put a responsibility on alumni and friends of the college to ensure the long term well-being of the institution, adding that future generations of students are assured benefits of higher quality education, as well as institutional contribution to national development and better standard of living.



### WE SHARE IN YOUR GRIEF...

L-R: British Deputy High Commission Lagos, Ben Llewellyn-Jones and the Chairman, Honeywell Group, Oba Otudeko during HGL's condolence visit to the British High Commission, Lagos...recently

## Buhari Sympathises With Governor Akeredolu over Mother's Demise

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has extended condolences to Governor Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State and his family

on the passing of their beloved mother, Mrs. Grace Akeredolu.

The President, in a release issued yesterday by his Media Adviser, Femi Adesina, urged the Akeredolu family members

to draw strength from the life lessons taught by Mama, the values of care and compassion she inculcated in them and the sacrifices she made for her children to succeed in life.

President Buhari prayed for the peaceful repose of the soul of the departed, and urged the family to hold fast to their faith and trust in God to guide them through the difficult period.

## Sylva Bags Chieftaincy Title in Daura

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, has been conferred with the chieftaincy title of 'Sarkin Kudun Hausa' by the Emir of Daura, Dr. Faruk Umar Faruk.

The traditional ruler disclosed this in a letter he personally signed and handed over to the minister when he paid him a courtesy call at his palace.

He said the decision of the Daura Emirate Council to honour Sylva was necessary considering his track record in the development of Nigeria, especially the northern region.

According to him, the council approved the conferment of the title in recognition of the minister's enormous contributions which he exemplified

vis-à-vis stability and oneness of the country.

The monarch, who described Sylva as a peace promoter, noted that the title has made him the representative of the Hausa community in the Southern region of the country.

"I have the pleasure to inform you about the conferment of the traditional title of 'Sarkin Kudun Hausa' on you in appreciation of your unwavering support to our son, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, Bayajida II.

"Your achievements in the Ministry of Petroleum Resources are commendable and appreciable apart from your contribution to the development of Nigeria, particularly Daura. A day for the tuburning ceremony will be communicated to you.

## Adamawa APC Chairman Resigns, Deputy Takes Over

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

The All Progressives Congress (APC) Adamawa State Chapter has appointed Hon. Samaila Tadawus as the acting state chairman of the party following the resignation of the former party chairman, Ibrahim Bilal.

Bilal had in a letter dated September 13 and addressed to the National Chairman of the party, Senator Abdulahi Adamu through the office of National Vice Chairman North-East resigned his position.

The letter read: "I write to inform you that I am resigning from my elected position as the Adamawa State Chairman of our Great Party (APC) immediately.

"While the constitution of APC requires me to occupy the office until 2026, I will be

grateful if I could cease from becoming the State Chairman immediately.

"I sincerely apologise for any inconvenience this sudden news may cause. Grateful, for the fantastic opportunities you have offered me to serve this great party in Adamawa State. I wish to thank you personally for your graciousness and leadership."

Bilal assured of his unalloyed loyalty and commitment to the ideals of the party, adding that he would do everything legally possible to advance its course.

Also, the National Vice Chairman, North-east, Mr. Salihu Mustapha, in a letter addressed to Adamu dated September 13th said Bilal resigned his position following meetings and consultations across all levels of the party in the state.

## LP Committee Gets Two Weeks Ultimatum to Produce Party's Social Contracts Policy Document

Enameh Gabriel in Abuja

To build more confidence in its supporters, the Labour Party has disclosed that it has set up a committee to draft the party's policy document that would be made public in two weeks.

This is just as it said that the committee was also requested to set up a presidential campaign planning and strategy committee for next year's general elections.

The information was contained in communique released by leadership of the party from a two-day national leadership retreat titled: 'Nigeria at a Crossroads: Labour Party as the Only Credible Option for National Salvation', held in Abuja on 12th-13th of September, where crucial national issues were raised, panel discussions held, observations and proposals made, and relevant resolutions duly passed.

"In moving the campaign process forward, ahead of the 2023 elections, the retreat sets up major national committees, namely, a committee to produce

Labour Party Campaign Policy document (Given 2 weeks), Presidential Campaign Planning and Strategy Committee", part of the communique read.

The party's move followed Peter Obi's promise to sign a performance agreement with Nigerians and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to make sure that ideas generated at the retreat were followed to the latter.

He promised to solve the challenges facing the country if elected as the president in 2023, saying the blame game must end as that would not offer anybody any excuse.

At the event, Obi said "That is why election next year will not be based on ethnicity; it will not be based on religion; there is no place Christians buy things cheaper; there is no place Muslims buy things cheaper.

"It will not be by my turn, it is nobody's turn. It must not be by connection.

"Election next year must be based on character and trust; it must be based on competence," he said.

## Shopex Launches Nigeria's First TV Infomercial

Mary Nnah

ShopEX, a Premium TV shopping platform, is set to launch Nigeria's first TV infomercial across select DSTV channels this September as it celebrates 40,000 transactions with customers since its launch in 2020.

Featuring TV star Mercy Johnson, and social media celebrity chef Tola (aka 'Diary of a Kitchen lover'), and Chef Dee, the 15-minute shows will showcase ShopEX's best-selling products - The Copper Chef and The Power XL Airfryer. Customers will be able to purchase the products 'live' by calling the number on their TV screens or visiting the ShopEX website.

"We are excited about this

milestone and are incredibly grateful to our tens of thousands of customers who have invested love and trust in the ShopEX brand. We are also proud to have produced Nigeria's first long-form infomercial that allows viewers to see our world-class products in use. We will continue striving to innovate the shopping landscape in West Africa by offering high-quality goods to our customers wherever and however they shop, be it via TV, online or social media," said Olajumoke Kujero, Country Manager of ShopEX.

Meanwhile, ShopEX is celebrating reaching 40K customers by offering its customers a 40 per cent discount on select goods till the 30th of September 2022.

## Insurance, Wellbeing Professionals Headlined to Discuss Mental Health at Dive In Festival

Dive In - the global insurance industry's well-established festival for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) is back for the fourth time in Nigeria, joining over 40 countries taking part across the globe.

Headlining the Nigeria virtual event is a panel of insurance professionals and wellbeing experts who will drive conversations around this year's theme, 'Breaking the Taboo: Mental Health and Wellness in the Workplace'.

The event, which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 28 September will focus on traditional taboos associated with mental health in Nigeria; the importance of good mental health; and the role that employers can play in maintaining employees' mental health and wellbeing regardless of harsh traditional and societal lenses. Industry experts will advocate the need to build braver, psychologically safe work cultures that truly allow people to feel safe, valued, respected, and free

to express themselves.

Facilitating the 2022 Dive In virtual event in Nigeria is financial broadcast journalist and business anchor at CNBC Africa, Esther Awoniyi. Awoniyi is one of CNBC Africa's most versatile business anchors and has moderated high-level panels at events such as the EU-African SME Summit, Africa Development Bank Annual Meetings, and the World Economic Forum Africa Meetings.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS UBACHINYELU NONYELUM CHUKWUZUBELU, now wish to be known and addressed as MISS UBACHI NONYE CHUKWUZUBELU. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS JULIANA LESSI MORGAN, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS JULIANA LESSI OMUNATE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

# Ring True

08054699539

yemi.adebowale@thisdaylive.com

## Yemi Adebowale



# Which Economic Growth is Buhari Talking about?

Nine days back, while inaugurating the Presidential Committee on the National Economy, which he heads, President Muhammadu Buhari celebrated an apparent fantasy growth of the Nigerian economy under his watch. He asserts, "Our economy continues to grow despite the adverse effects of rising interest rates, a stronger US dollar, higher inflation across the world, COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the loss of substantial volumes of oil."

I guess Buhari was celebrating the voodoo Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth persistently pushed out by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), despite the waning in almost all sectors of the economy. The consumption end is also struggling due to the economic crunch. In the most recent second quarter 2022 statement, the ludicrous NBS reported that Nigeria's GDP grew by 3.54 per cent (year-on-year) in real terms. The NBS has been reporting GDP growth since Q4 of 2020. How did this agency come about these results in a country witnessing its worst economic decline in almost four decades? Something is amiss somewhere.

Almost all sectors of the Nigerian economy have been experiencing excruciating strains for over seven years. In the non-oil sector (the biggest contributor to Nigeria's GDP), the likes of agriculture, finance, insurance and transport are struggling. Nigeria's inclement economic environment has slowed them down. A large number of farmers can't access their farms due to the activities of terrorists; manufacturing continues to plunge while crude oil production is sliding - yet, the NBS is reporting GDP growth. I guess the GDP is no longer the monetary value of goods and services produced in a country within a given period of time.

The GDP report of a country is significant because it gives information about the size of the economy and how it is performing. The growth rate of real GDP is often used as an indicator of the general health of the economy. In broad terms, an increase in real GDP is interpreted as a sign that the economy is doing well. Unfortunately, the growth rate reported by the NBS for the Buhari government is not a true reflection of the health of the Nigerian economy. In practical terms, Nigeria's economy is not healthy. I suspect that figures are being manipulated.

Our President has been celebrating an economic growth that is not impacting on the

**The growth rate of real GDP is often used as an indicator of the general health of the economy. In broad terms, an increase in real GDP is interpreted as a sign that the economy is doing well. Unfortunately, the growth rate reported by the NBS for the Buhari government is not a true reflection of the health of the Nigerian economy. In practical terms, Nigeria's economy is not healthy. I suspect that figures are being manipulated**

lives of the people in the real sense of it. There is so much poverty in our land amid the growth our President is celebrating. How would he reconcile the large number of people struggling for a meal a day amid the economic growth? Now, many go to bed with supper and wake up not sure of breakfast. The gloomy news is that under Buhari, and with the so-called economic growth, Nigeria surpassed India as the country with the largest number of people living in life-threatening poverty in the world. How would he reconcile this?

The fantasy growth of the Nigerian economy has also not impacted on jobs for the people. The last time the NBS picked up courage to release figures on unemployment was Q4 of 2020 and it reported that Nigeria's joblessness rate rose from 27.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 to 33.3 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020, translating to 23.19 million unemployed people. In practical terms, let's all look around us; in our homes and those of our neighbours. Of course, we will see an army of unemployed Nigerians in a country supposedly enjoying economic growth.

A World Bank report titled, "A Better Future for All Nigerians: 2022 Nigeria Poverty Assessment," released early this year, noted that poverty reduction had stagnated in this country since 2015, with more Nigerians falling below the poverty line over the years. This is a validation that the lives of Nigerians are not being positively affected by whatever economic growth being celebrated.

How can Buhari be talking about economic growth amid decaying federal health institutions, roads and schools across the country? Even the President, his family and his cronies, with

their families are regularly flown abroad to enjoy foreign medicals and schools.

The Naira, our symbol of nationhood, is now in shreds and our President is telling us about economic growth. The massive depreciation of our Naira is also contributing to the poverty ravaging the nation and the crisis in the manufacturing sector. As at yesterday, the Naira was trading for a record N700/\$ in the real market. This is the same Naira Buhari inherited at about N220/\$. I never in my wildest imagination thought that our dear Naira would ever depreciate to the level we are witnessing today. Now that the exchange rate has become extremely ridiculous, people who protested against N220/\$ under the Jonathan administration are nowhere to be found. Our symbol of statehood has never been this badly battered in all our years as a country. Yet, Buhari is continuing with a muggy forex policy that has led to a record gap between the official and parallel market exchange rates.

Forget about those useless figures from the NBS. In practical terms, the Nigerian economy is under stress. This has been the situation for over seven years. The Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry was apt when it listed forex challenges among factors putting a serious strain on the Nigerian economy. Insecurity, rising price of diesel and epileptic electricity supply are other factors choking businesses, with so many companies shutting down and throwing thousands of Nigerians into joblessness.

In a recent declaration titled, "LCCI statement on Nigeria's economic growth performance," and signed by its Director-General, Dr Chinyere

Almona, the chamber noted: "The economy has continued to struggle with many inhibiting burdens like inflation, weak revenue generation, degenerated infrastructure, forex challenges, unsustainable cost profile seen in debt services and subsidy payments, and the daunting threats of worsening insecurity.

"The Chamber is concerned that if we continue in this trajectory, the economy may bleed away into a stagflation which will impact on production cost, job losses, worsened forex crisis, and dampened growth in the medium term. It is also worrisome that the 2023 budget estimations indicate that there may not be any significant allocation to capital projects in 2023. We urge the government to tackle oil theft to earn more foreign exchange, borrow from cheaper sources to reduce the burden of debt servicing, and take a decisive step towards removing fuel subsidies."

How can anybody celebrate economic growth in a country planning to borrow over N11 trillion and sell national assets to finance the budget deficit in 2023? If the economy is actually growing in practical terms, the Buhari government will not be servicing debt with almost all its revenue.

No doubt, Buhari's celebration of this weird economic growth is a debilitating mess amid so much pain in mother Nigeria. The Buhari years have brought untold hardship on Nigerians, whether the masses or middle class. Can our President honestly say that he has practically delivered on his promises of a better economy to Nigerians, with few months left of his tenure? Can he honestly say that Nigerians are better off under his government than that of his predecessor? The frank answer will be a big No! This is the truth that must be told. Enough of propaganda!



Ikpeazu

## A Word for Ikpeazu, Ortom, Lalong

Civil servants in Plateau, Benue and Abia states are in anguish due to irregular salaries. The affected governors are going about as if all is well in these states. I am talking about Okezie Ikpeazu, Samuel Ortom and Simon Lalong of Abia, Benue and Plateau states respectively. Ikpeazu has a backlog of six months, Ortom has five months and Lalong has three months. The salary backlogs noted above concern just civil servants in the ministries. If we progress to departments and agencies, these governors owe workers between 10 months and two years.

Ortom, Ikpeazu and Lalong also owe pensioners huge backlogs. These governors are living big while civil servants and pensioners wallow in poverty. Ikpeazu and Ortom are often seen flying to Europe with Governor Nyesom Wike for useless meetings. They even go on holidays abroad with him. These two governors follow Wike around like errand boys instead of spending quality time at home tackling salary and pension challenges.

Ortom, Ikpeazu and Lalong are not fit for the offices they are occupying. This is my submission today.

## Birnin Gwari's DPO Still in Abductors' Dungeon

For those unaware of the heart-wrenching story, here is a quick recap. A Chief Superintendent of Police, Sani Mohammed was on his way to Birnin Gwari Police Division in Kaduna State on June 27 (this year) to resume as the new Divisional Police Officer (DPO). He did not make it to Birnin Gwari. The DPO was abducted by terrorists alongside many travellers on the notorious Birnin Gwari highway. Mohammed is today 83 days old in the dungeon of the terrorists. The abductors are communicating with relations of Mohammed, yet, the police can't nab them. It is disheartening that the Nigerian Police Force can't even rescue one of their own.

The terrorists have been milking relations of the DPO, with ransom running into millions of Naira already collected. They still refused to free Mohammed, while threatening to kill him if more money is not sent to them. On September 4, the younger

brother of the abducted officer, Adamu Abdullahi, lamented: "We have sold our valuables for ransom but the bandits are still demanding more. The family members have done what we can, we paid N7 million to secure his release but the gunmen are still holding him, demanding N20 million. They have given us this coming Wednesday to complete the ransom payment otherwise, they will kill him."

Well, they did not kill the DPO last Wednesday as threatened. Some frustrated relations of the DPO have been visiting the Kaduna Police Command, demanding action. They are begging the police to secure freedom for one of their own.

Abdullahi cries further: "We have met the police commissioner in Kaduna thrice, but it seems that there is no effort to rescue him (the DPO) and there is no delegation from the police to sympathise with the family of the kidnapped officer. We are appealing to

President Buhari, the Inspector General of Police, and the Police Commissioner in Kaduna, to help rescue the police officer.

"The wife and children of the kidnapped officer are being tormented. We had to seize their phones because whenever the gunmen called and threatened to kill him, his wife often fainted. Our family members, including the father, who is about 90 years old are in critical condition."

The Kaduna State Police Command claims to be working to liberate DPO Mohammed, adding that the actions taken by the police may not necessarily devolve to the public, including the family members of the kidnapped officer. Well, the truth is that there is no result. It is so sad that the police can't free one of their own, 83 days after his abduction. The Kaduna State police should stop issuing useless statements and get down to work. This DPO must be rescued alive.



Presenting

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THE SHORTS

## BROKEN TIES

STARRING: OLANASE DANIEL, OLAYEMI OSHODI, ADAMSON ALI, ADAMSON IBRAHIM, OWOLABI MICHEAL  
PRODUCED BY: OLAYEMI OSHODI | DIRECTED BY: ADAMSON IBRAHIM  
WRITTEN BY: OLAYEMI OSHODI, OLASHORE KAYODE | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: ADAMSON ALI  
DOF: BADMUS IBRAHIM | STUNT COORDINATOR: ADAMSON IBRAHIM  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: OLAYEMI OSHODI

A FILM BY THEO-ZINY JOEL

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## SHOWBIZFLAIR

# Ini Dima-Okojie: From Banking to Acting

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

“Ini is an incredible actress. She’s a method actor. The first time I met her when we had to read the script, I thought she was just trying too much. I was like, relax, take it easy. Later on, I realised she was just in character. The person I met was not Ini, it was the character she was playing.” The foregoing critic from the late movie director, Biyi Bandele on actress Ini Dima-Okojie, says much about her craft.

The character Sarah in ‘Blood Sisters’, the critically acclaimed Netflix 4-part limited series, appears to be her most talked about role as an actress. The screen actress in a recent interview in May, 2022, recalled that her journey had been an interesting one. “My Nollywood journey has been an interesting one. By the time I decided to tow this path, there was no looking back for me. During

the hard times, I found strength to persevere because just being an actor and the opportunity to be a storyteller feels bigger than me. Going back to when I got back from film school, I didn’t know where to start.

“It so happened that a family friend was about to become a first-time producer for a series called ‘Before 30’. This was in 2014. When I reached out to her, they were done with auditions and had started filming. However, there was a spot for a Production Assistant. I did not mind. I needed to get my foot in the industry. So, I joined Nollywood as a Production Assistant while still auditioning.

“My major break came a few months later when I got a supporting role in ‘Taste of Love’, another series with Blossom Chukwu-jekwu in the lead role. I hurriedly quit my Assistant job”, Ini explained.

She used to be a very shy kid, loves fashion, and found ways to express herself through that a lot. But it is a different love when she watches films. “Whenever I watch films or TV shows, it takes me to a place

where I want to be able to do the same thing and make people feel the way I do. I always wanted to act.

“Eventually, when I couldn’t get over the feeling, I had to do it. I was even surprised, and sometimes I asked myself if this was really my path. So, I guess it turned to reality and was meant to be.”

Her journey into the movie world started in 2014 when she ditched her job in investment banking to pursue a career in acting.

This transition was birthed from the passion of storytelling. “I mean you go to school and you just think, I’d end up as an accountant or in my case, an investment banker and I did that. But I couldn’t stop thinking of that girl that would literally imagine herself accepting awards,” she revealed in an interview.

This led her to a degree in acting from the New York Film Academy. Coming back from New York Film School to Nigeria did not come easy. Yet, she describes it as one of the best decisions she ever made.



Ini Dima-Okojie:

# Edosio Deelen’s Intriguing, Powerful ‘Otiti’ Story

Ferdinand Ekechukwu



Edosio Deelen

“I just released my second film and it premiered in Brazil, it is going to Spain, Argentina, New Zealand and France in the next couple of months”, filmmaker Ema Edosio Deelen says about her second screen production following a chance meeting with this reporter. It’s a feature film, one that she plans to take round the world before bringing it to a streamer. Edosio Deelen is famous for her first directorial, ‘Kasala!’ a box-office hit and now available on Netflix Africa.

‘Kasala!’ a comedy-feature successfully

made the global film festival circuit in 2018, having thirty screen times and winning nine awards. Edosio Deelen’s movie is fiction, but her message is real and so important. Soon she shares her plans, letting out information about her latest movie, ‘Otiti’. “No plan for the cinemas at the moment”, she revealed. “My plan is for it to travel around the world, build enough reputation and then take it to a streaming platform.”

This entire film will be one of intimacy, loneliness and vulnerability. The primary themes of ‘Otiti’ are fear, dysfunctional families, adoption, and growing old in Africa. Inspired by her life experience, the film focuses on the intersection of all of these themes as it explores the life of the lead character ‘Otiti’.

It tells an intriguing and powerful

story of a withdrawn and reserved seamstress, a boyfriend she refuses to take the next step with and a secret that she carries with her. However, a meeting with Onome, a potential client, upends her regular life and she realizes that she is the daughter of a wealthy man who had abandoned her and her mother...

She would then meet the bedridden father who welcomes her into the family, knowing that she is his daughter. But his three sons Dafe, Tega and Onome are wary of her. As the days go by, and with the date of her planned fashion show approaching, Otiti takes upon her, the responsibility to care for her father.

This does not sit well with her step brothers who would rather prefer their father dead so they can take over his wealth.

# Bolaji Alonge to Explore Lagos City Life through Photography

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Iconic Lagos, a multi-media exhibition scheduled to take place at Didi Museum, Lagos, on Saturday 17 till Sunday 25 September, is dedicated to the largest city in Africa, the economic and cultural heart of Nigeria. Organised by Eyes of a Lagos boy, Bolaji Alonge, Iconic Lagos is about celebrating everyday life in Lagos, honoring its inhabitants and exploring what makes the city unique.

Iconic Lagos consists of three elements: photography by Bolaji Alonge, mixed media images by Jason Ogbazi/Alonge and artworks by other artists – expressing their own vision of Iconic Lagos. A call for submissions was published in July and about 400 entries were received that show the centre of excellence as a source of inspiration.

Bolaji Alonge is an artist, photographer and actor from Lagos, Nigeria with more than two decades of experience in documenting history from the African perspective, working towards a balanced representation. “Defining our own image is one way of taking charge of our future. Iconic Lagos presents an alternative narrative that will remain tattooed on the viewers’ retina”, Bolaji Alonge explains.

According to him, “Celebrating the beauty around us in spite of everyday challenges and the current global instability is not a luxury, it is a necessity.”



Bolaji Alonge

A selection of 20 artworks by artists from US, India, South Africa, Belgium, Benin Republic, UK, Abuja, Osogbo and Lagos will be presented as part of the exhibition.

All others will be displayed in a digital format. Alonge adds: “The artists all capture the idea of Lagos that we intend to showcase and we are proud to work with these amazing talents. Over the years, I have encouraged young Nigerians to take up the camera to express themselves. Opening up my platform to others is a natural next step.” The exhibition runs every day from 10am to 6pm.

# Naija Star Search: VJ Adams Unveiled As Host, Main Show Begins

The search for the next Afrobeats superstar enters a new phase on Sunday as the group stage of Naija Star Search kicks off, with celebrity OAP, VJ Adams, as the show host.

Naija Star Search airs every Sunday at 8 pm on ST Nollywood Plus, ST Nollywood and ST Yoruba channels on StarTimes, and on StarTimes-ON mobile app.

Seventeen contestants, made up of young and promising music talents, were unveiled by the judges last Sunday. They will perform only Naija songs, starting with the classics and contemporaries to warm their vibes (ginger their swagger) and then singing original songs composed by themselves.

In the group phase, the contestants are grouped under the judges for mentoring. It is expected that the show’s judges, Kenny ‘Keke’ Ogungbe, ID Cabasa and Asha Gangali, will use their wealth of experience to bring out the stars in these young gems.

The contestants under Team Asha include Sparrowh, TOMs, MB Dre, Specko and Kachi; For Team Cabasa, there are Jaydbody, Greysky, Denerio, Esjay, Thekhaleed and Skimzo; while Team Keke has eMzee, Eniolá, Black Bella, SKIFFY, Melo and Jazzman.

They will compete to earn a place among the final seven to be groomed by the Kennis Music label and given a platform to turn their raw talents into superstars, in addition to the N10 million prize.

Aside from the electrifying performances by the contestants, the show is full of drama, intense competition and passion as the twists

of the game cause mixed emotions.

Naija Star Search is a reality show aimed at discovering the next generation of Afrobeats superstars.

Comparing Naija Star Search to the future of Afrobeats, Kenny Ogungbe said, “Afrobeats will never die. The people sustaining it now are in their mid-twenties and thirties. To sustain it, we need to groom new talents in their teens so that in the next ten years, we will still have those holding it. We are here for the future to project the beauty of Naija music.”

The host, Adams Ibrahim Adebola, popularly known as VJ Adams, is a celebrated video jockey, television presenter and executive producer. Formerly an OAP with Sound City, VJ Adams is widely sought-after across Africa to anchor trendy shows.



VJ Adams

## SHOWBIZFLAIR

# Jerry Shaffer, Badboy Timz, Bella Shmurda Team-up for New Song

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Out across all streaming platforms, this incredibly-composed sound titled, 'Vibration', by Jerry Shaffer, in which he hires two incredibly talented Nigeria artistes, Bad Boy Timz and Bella Shmurda is the bop. Bad Boy Timz' mid-tempo vocals start the song with a searing groove. The energy from Bella Shmurda midway into the song is also a perfect match for the bop.

'Vibration' is a perfect blend of Afrobeats and Amapaino sounds. The two featured artistes really created a robust sound. If ever one imagined what a duet between these two pop stars would sound like,

then the brand-new song is a perfect summit of anticipation. 'Vibration' is another fine addition to the litany of hype-infused records in Nigeria. With the video billed to drop next Friday.

Arguably the perfect summer closing bop, the jam is Shaffer's first official release for the year 2022. Jerry Shaffer, who is famed for his chart-topping records including the widely acclaimed bop Shedibalabala, Ju Di E among others, is one of the trailblazing hype-men who have created and taken hype-infused records mainstream in Nigeria.

Produced by the Kenyan sound whiz, Motif Di Don, this international collaboration between Nigeria & Kenya "Vibration" is an energetic and euphoric record that romanticizes the glamor

of the outdoor-heavy recreational lifestyle that Lagos is famous for.

He says, "It is all about taking time out to breathe, and enjoying the world as it is. It's the Shaffer lifestyle; go out, make memories, and enjoy your life. With the song, it's basically a feel-good jam, you know, to get your feet moving on the dance floor and keep the energy going."

Jerry Shaffer, who is also a Hennessy-affiliated hype man, is one of the leading hype men in Nigeria. He started music professionally, in 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic with his debut single, 'Say So', featured Nigerian-British singer Mo Eazy and Slimmz, propelling him into the mainstream music scene. Since then, Shaffer has gone on to build a legacy as a prolific entertainer, including managing one of Nigeria's biggest artistes, Bad Boy Timz.



Jerry Shaffer

# Toyin Abraham Plays Stripper in 'Ijakumo'

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Multiple award-winning actress and producer, Toyin Abraham has shared a little peek into her ongoing project titled, 'Ijakumo' (The Born-Again Stripper) which is currently being shot and directed by Adebayor Tijani. Snippet from the movie has got her fans and Nollywood lovers anticipating. Scripted by Kehinde Joseph, the suspense thriller plays Toyin in the role as Asabi, a scorned lover on a revenge mission to destroy the life of her former lover.

Ashabi, the daughter of a powerful spiritualist, is hell-bent on destroying the life of her former lover, Jide, a renowned pastor of a mega church, who jilted and left her to die. With the help of Sharon, a stripper and choir leader who Jide lusts after, Ashabi figures a way to achieve her revenge plan. The actress first announced principal photography on September 5, confirming that the thriller would debut in cinemas from December 23, 2022.

Recall that the popular thespian announced two projects to celebrate her 40th birthday. The movie star made the first announcement via her Instagram handle with stunning photos bearing tribal marks of her character from her upcoming movie. "Meet Asabi Onidada (Okola)! 1st Announcement is my movie - Ijakumo (The Born-Again Stripper), coming to cinemas from December 23rd!!! It's different. Anticipate," Abraham wrote on Instagram.

Toyin is joined by an impressive cast including her actor hubby Kolawole Ajeyemi, Lolade Okusanya, Kunle Remi, Lillian Afegbai, Olumide Oworu, Eso Dike, among others.



Toyin Abraham

# Côte d'Ivoire to Host Next CANEX Weekend

The next Creative Africa Nexus Weekend (CANEX Weekend) will be hosted in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 25 to 27 November 2022, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) have announced.

Afreximbank stated that Côte d'Ivoire had agreed to host CANEX Weekend 2022, the three-day gathering of creatives from across Africa and the Diaspora, a prelude to the CANEX Summit planned as part of the third Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2023), also scheduled to take place in Abidjan, in November 2023.

"CANEX WKND 2022 represents an important milestone in Afreximbank's deployment and implementation of its CANEX programme, a multi-faceted intervention aimed at supporting and developing Africa's exciting and rapidly emerging creative sector.

"The event will feature

creatives, potential investors, industry leaders, creative industry businesses and government representatives and will provide a space for networking and experience sharing in music, film, fashion, crafts, visual arts, literature, gaming, VR and more for creatives from the continent and the Diaspora.

"Building on the success of the CANEX held at IATF2021 in Durban, South Africa, in November 2021, CANEX WKND 2022 will further build bridges across Africa with a strong focus on connecting Francophone and Anglophone African creatives. Participants will be able to exhibit fashion, arts and crafts in a dynamic market; benefit from contacts with potential partners; and participate in panel discussions and high-level break away masterclasses while leveraging a range of networking opportunities," said Afreximbank.

## TeeMirror

# God Gives Good Music

Temiloluwa Bayode popularly known as TeeMirror is an Afrobeats artiste who began his music career professionally from his university days at UNILORIN. He has relentlessly pushed what he knows how to do best and risen to a level of impact. TeeMirror is more than ready to break more grounds. He talks to **Tosin Clegg** about his music journey much more

## I started as a chorister

My music journey started as a chorister and later, a choirmaster in college FGCI. It professionally began in 2010 when I recorded my first song. I recorded more and more until Tanke Sir, a cover of PSY's gangnam style gave me a break-out. The song organically grew until I needed to face life proper. I left music for media in a bid to satisfy another talent of mine, especially the one that could bring active income to feed my family. Experiences from there made me learn better about making music, promotions and power of leverage.

## Making meaningful songs

Although my songs are moments in-

spired, I specially get the direction to make meaningful songs. I just must tell you that my new song, Daily2K is evergreen, because it speaks volumes about the day to day hustle of an average African man, especially the chants of prayer and motivation. It takes me just a short period of time to get a song done. So far, the inspiration is ready, the beat syncs, I am ready to record. I have finished a song in four hours before.

I have done a lot of songs in the past which I'll say was my elementary stage. Right now, I am pushing my new song and I will

be dropping an Extended Play (E.P) shortly after this, titled, "WW -WDD" Which means "what works works, what doesn't, doesn't" a self-created quote derived from Que Sera sera. The songs I've made in so many ways have shaped my person, my career. The impact is also visible on fans as the testimonials have pushed me to do more.

## Good music depends on content

When the content is right, a good music is easily identified even when it's not socially accepted. For key elements of churning out good music, you need the right inspiration, the right beat and the right mixing and mastering. Above all, God gives good music!



TeeMirror

## BOOK REVIEW

# Segun Runsewe Captures Queen Elizabeth II's Last Visit to Nigeria

A book published in 2005 by Otunba Olusegun Runsewe on Queen Elizabeth II's last visit to Nigeria offers a colourful account of the historical moment, writes **Charles Ajunwa**

In December 2003, Queen Elizabeth II - who died on September 8, 2022, at the age of 96 - arrived in Nigeria to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Abuja. It was her second visit to the country, having visited Nigeria for the first time in 1956 for 20 days.

The CHOGM is Commonwealth's highest consultative and policy-making gathering.

As documented in the seminal book, *Sketches of the Commonwealth and the 2003 Nigeria CHOGM* written by the current two-term Director General of National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Otunba Segun Runsewe, the Queen and the Heads of Delegation were ushered into the International Conference Centre, Abuja, with "a thematic presentation of Nigerian culture."

In the foyer, the Heads of Delegation were treated to an exhibition titled, "Celebrate! Nigerian Art for the Commonwealth." The centrepiece of the exhibition was a display of paintings, drawings, and prints by Chinwe Chukwuogo Roy. This included a Golden Jubilee portrait of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II; a new full-length portrait of the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; and Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the former Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

The grand entrance of the Queen and other Heads of Government was announced by the Master of Ceremony, Mr. Ikenna Ndaguba, heralded by the call of the big drums - 'dundun' and 'Ikoru'; 52 children carrying the flags of each Commonwealth country present and that of the Commonwealth rolled in and fixed the flags in alphabetical order behind the platform seating the Heads of Delegation. Then the Okpa Ekpe masquerade, a traditional symbol of law and order, galloped into the auditorium, acknowledging the entrance of the dignitaries as the 'Ikoru' drum continued to boom, interspersed by the drummer's call and the chanter's emotive rendition of the poem 'The Call of the Ikoru Drum', which testified to the ideals of the Commonwealth, welcomed the Heads to Abuja CHOGM, while urging them to heed the advice of the Ikoru drum by always upholding the principles of the organisation.

As she ventured to take her seat, the Queen was escorted by President Obasanjo, while the Secretary General, Rt. Hon. Donald McKinnon and the Duke of Edinburgh preceded them.

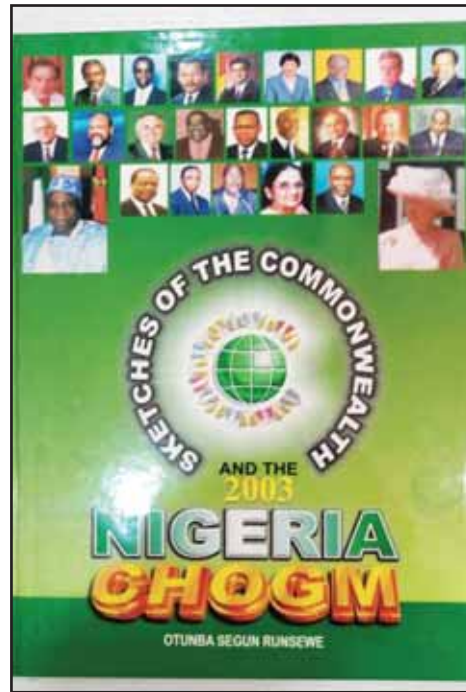
The president received the symbol of peace and good governance from the Ekpe masquerade and declared: "Your Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II of England, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Our people and our ancestors welcome you to Abuja CHOGM 2003."

What followed was five minutes of a professionally-crafted visual presentation of the story of the Commonwealth and Nigeria, the country's early history and ancient heroes; its modern history and modern heroes; the military interventions, Nigeria in the Commonwealth; her peacekeeping efforts; the Queen's 1956 visit; and the 1996 hosting of the Commonwealth Meeting in Nigeria, then known as the Prime Minister's Meeting.

After the presentation came a display of assorted dances, costumes, and drums. The segment opened with the maiden's dance, "Nkwaumu agbogo" from Ebonyi State, a high-speed dance. Then the Malik Dancers and "Koroso" performed with flutes called "Sarewa" and an athleticism that showed the agility of the average Hausa-Fulani youth.

Then entered Ara, the female "dundun" drummer, whose talking drum to interpret the different shades of her body movements and those of the other dancers in a musical ensemble. The "dundun-bata" dance is a traditional yet social dance of the Yorubas of South-west Nigeria and is associated with royalty.

Following the Yoruba troupe was a performance of the Swage dance - the supple, fluid, swinging Tiv dance of the youth and maidens. Into it was infused another Tiv dance, 'Tivsetere', or the 'Cats dance', in which the dancer, through supple, flexible muscular contractions, imitates animal movements. The Swage gave way to the Agbaka masquerades



from Kogi State. Accompanied by a flutist, three drummers, and a chanter, Agbaka exhibited fast, energetic, powerful dance movements to capture the essence of youthful exuberance.

It then gave way to the slow moving, graceful dance of the Kanuri, the Maliki dance, which sought to capture the Kanuri core values of peace, elegance, and pride.

After a captivating performance of the song 'Otenkwu' led by Prof. Laz Ekwueme and another five minutes of visual presentation on world sports, Nigerian tourism and the country's business potential, the CHOGM choir and reputable Nigerian artists such as Bright Chimezie and Dede Mabuaku performed the CHOGM Anthem. The star artist, Sir Shina Peters, also entertained guests.

At the end, the Queen was visibly pleased. In her speech, she thanked the Nigerian government for inviting her back to the country after her previous visit in 1956.

"Although much has changed since then, the warmth of the Nigerian welcome remains a constant and we have again been touched by the generous reception we have been given," the Queen said.

She lauded Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 and its development efforts, noting that Nigeria has "an important voice on global issues."

The Queen urged the Obasanjo administration to keep the torch of freedom burning. "I am told that a Nigerian proverb runs: 'never start a journey if you have no plan to finish it,'" the Queen said.

"Mr. President, it matters to the United Kingdom and to the other countries of the Commonwealth that Nigeria does not falter on the journey of development and democracy. Without prosperity - and democracy - in Nigeria, there will be no lasting prosperity in Africa; and without that prosperity in Africa, there cannot be lasting prosperity, with good conscience, in our world."

By setting the tone for the Abuja CHOGM, the Queen had ensured the summit would be a success. Although her role as Head of the Commonwealth carries no formal functions, Queen Elizabeth II's presence and words held great symbolic significance and helped underline the sense of the Commonwealth as a family of nations.

During her 2003 visit, she participated in several functions, spreading the Commonwealth message of peace, democracy, equality and good governance.

In the wake of Queen Elizabeth II's death, the book, which was first published in 2005 by West African Book Publishers Limited, takes on increased significance. It is a compendium of visual information reflecting on the Commonwealth's history, character, organisational structure, and future prospects. It includes a minute breakdown of the deliberations at CHOGM 2003 and decisions made thereafter.

In his foreword to the book, President Obasanjo noted that "it is a true account of the major events and activities that took place during that memorable meeting. It also captures the spirit and essence of the Commonwealth as a highly respected international organisation."

The President added that Runsewe's timeless offering "is a store of value and useful reference material for major libraries and institutions in Nigeria and the entire Commonwealth."

"This publication will continue to remind all those that come across it of the core principles that bind the Commonwealth Nations together in partnership for peace and prosperity in the world."

The Abuja CHOGM was eventually described as a staggering success by at least 49 of the 53 Heads of States that attended the event. Their collective verdict, "Abuja CHOGM is the best ever".

One of the foreign journalists that covered the Abuja CHOGM, Karen Middlemen of The West Australian Newspaper who hitherto was afraid of travelling to Nigeria due to negative stories written about the country. But all stereotyped mindset

changed after spending days in Abuja. Hear her: I have seen a vibrancy in Abuja that people back home do not know about Nigeria. Obviously, there is a lot of development and places to go here, the people are friendly, the food is good and entertainment is wonderful."

But it will also be remembered as the last event in Nigeria graced by the now departed Queen Elizabeth II.

"I received the news with a shock," Runsewe told THISDAY of the Queen's demise. "The Queen gave fantastic leadership of the Commonwealth. She was in control and there was coordination. The world is going to miss the Queen. And she is one leader that the people loved. She has been able to set up a structure that I believe will sustain the Commonwealth."

Capturing her last moments in Nigeria in his book now seems prescient to Runsewe - at least, future generations can get a glimpse of what it felt like when Her Royal Majesty graced the soil of Africa's largest economy. "It's a lesson that anything we are doing, we should always document," the author said.

## Bugudu Commends NIHOTOUR DG on Culture, Tourism

Justina Uzo

The Kebbi State Governor, Alhaji Atiku Bagudu has praised the Director General of the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR), Alhaji Nura Sani Kangiwa for his effort in organising a successful sport-tourism event - the Argungu Polo Tournament and Cultural Festival - which brought people together from different parts of the country and beyond.

He said Kangiwa, who was his Adviser on Tourism before he was appointed NIHOTOUR director general, was able to raise the bar because "he is diligent and a professional." "Kebbi State now has another strong annual festival apart from the Argungu Fishing Festival," Bagudu said excitedly.

Like many destinations and businesses, Kebbi Tourism has faced challenges in restarting after COVID-19. While making his speech at the closing ceremony of the 3-day fiesta, which ended last weekend, when over 24 polo players from six teams competing to win Cups, the governor expressed optimism that polo tournament in Argungu would in the next few years rival or even surpass other polo events in the country. Bagudu was also impressed with the roused interest of the locals and tourist receipts.

He urged Nigerians to show greater resilience towards promoting national unity to end insecurity and achieve lasting peace in the country.

The governor said if the people were bonded by unity on a genuine cause, even where pockets of insecurity exists, evil would surely be defeated.

Bagudu said: "Today is a manifestation of bravery and resilience. That we are here thinking this is a small event underlies or misrepresents the bravery and resilience of our people. Because in a country or a world where turbulence is being witnessed everywhere, for us once more to show resilience that we are able to organise events like this, which brings people together from all parts of the country, and even outside the country to celebrate, shows that we are not intimidated or afraid. Even in spite of pockets of insecurity, we will defeat the evil."

"The organisers of this event, the Emir of Argungu, people of Argungu, I am saying that we can defeat evil. We will go to our farms, we will go out to our fishing grounds, we will graze our animals and enjoy our festivals."

After a long wait for the much loved Argungu fishing festival, tourists found a good reason to visit

Argungu emirate.

Many said the polo tournament was timely. The last major festival was easily 2020 Argungu Fishing Festival. The cultural fiesta is gone, but memory still lingers.

Kebbi Tourism had showcased what makes the destination tick, including Argungu fishing competition and Argungu Auto Rally. It didn't only open Kebbi Tourism, tourist arrivals also rose. As you may know tourism improves the lives of the local people. Dignitaries from around the country were in Argungu at the time. President Muhammadu Buhari also visited Argungu with his high-profile entourage. It was gathered that benefits had started to trickle in to the tourism stakeholders in Kebbi.

Sadly, the pandemic came and impacted negatively on travel and tourism just like other businesses.

A visitor from Abuja who simply introduced himself as Olusegun said The Nura Sani Kangiwa Polo Tournament and Cultural Festival was worth it. "I enjoyed the festival. You know I had looked forward to seeing the fishing competition but it wasn't part of the package. The polo tournament and night life in Argungu were good," he noted. Adding: I like that part of the North (Kebbi). They have an impressive culture."

An entertainer known as Argungu said she was happy to perform her art after a long time. She was in high spirits as visitors were seen having photo opportunity with her. All she could tell this reporter is, "everything is good" (in Hausa Language).

The event featured scintillating cultural displays, drumming and exciting magical displays. Music and dance spiced up the event. Corporate organisations like Fan Milk added flavour to the festival. The state is expected to attract potential investors using tourism.

The Kebbi State government had earlier assured that it would create an atmosphere conducive enough to promote long term investment especially in the tourism sub-sector.

No wonder, Bagudu enjoined other individuals to do their best in contributing to the growth of the state in whatever capacity they can as the NIHOTOUR DG is doing.

The Governor also lauded the Emir of Argungu, Alhaji Ismaila Mera for his support, stressing that Argungu had blossomed in sports and culture due to the support of the Emir.

At the end of the polo tournament, NSK Farms Polo Team won the tournament.

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## INTERVIEW

# 'Teachers in Rivers State Unhappy'

In this interview with Blessing Ibunge, the Chairman, Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Rivers State Wing, **Collins Echikpu**, speaks on the challenges of teachers in government-owned primary and secondary schools in the state

**H**ow long have you been leading the union and how has the experience been since assumption into office?

I took over the mantle of leadership in December 2, 2021. So, it about eight months now. It is a good thing I am leading the NUT in Rivers, but Rivers State teachers have many complaints because of the way they are being treated by the government. So, it is not an easy task. My position covers both public primary schools and secondary schools in the 23 local government areas of the states. Teachers with the Rivers State Ministry of Education are also part of the state's chapter of the NUT.

**How would you describe the welfare of teachers in Rivers States?**

For now, the government is not carrying the teachers along. I will not deny the fact that the government is not owing teachers' salaries, they built some schools, but concerning the welfare of teachers, it is nothing to write home about. There are no promotions of teachers. The last promotions were done in 2010 and up till now no implementations. From that time till now, no promotion, no increment via payment, so the teachers do not know where they belong to. Also, for many years, there have been no employment of new teachers. Employments were last done in 2013. From 2013 till date, many teachers have retired without replacement. If you go to some schools, I will bet you, go and investigate, in many of the primary schools in remote areas, you will see that some schools with just one or two teachers. I mean Head Master working with just two teachers. Some classes are being joined in Rivers State. In this modern day, you will see primary 1, 2 and 3 in one class and primary 4, 5, and 6 in one class. So, I want to tell you that there is no learning, no proper learning and teaching in some schools in Rivers State. Don't be deceived, if you go to these township schools like in Port Harcourt, you would think all is well in other schools. It is not.

So, for the welfare of teachers, we are relegated to the background. We need to be promoted; like I tell you, I am one of them. I was promoted last in 2010 to level 13. From that 2010 when that promotion was done till date, it has not been implemented. So, it is across the board. They are still paying me salary of a great level 12. I am not even sure of what they are paying. Those of them that were employed in 2013, till now, ought to have enjoyed two promotions but they are still in one grade level.

That affects the appointment of teachers to other levels because in this our work, before one is promoted principal or vice principal, there are rules that you must get to a certain grade. So, because of lack of promotion, you can see that somebody who is not supposed to head a school is heading a school. Rivers State teachers are not working with happiness and there is no satisfaction. There is nothing to write home about welfare of teachers in the state.

**Are you saying that in the past seven years, there has not been employment of new teachers in the state-owned schools?**

In primary and secondary schools, the Governor Wike has not made any effort to employ new teachers. He has made efforts in the tertiary institution, as I am talking with you now, employment is ongoing at Rivers State Rivers University Ajuru. It is also going on at Borji Polytechnic. I was told. But in primary and secondary schools, no effort has been made by governor Wike. He made some promises, he said 10,000 teachers would be employed. But up till now, nothing has happened. I believe before he will go, he may employ new teachers but for now, I am not sure of any employment the present government since he came onboard.



Echikpu

**I want to tell you that there is no learning, no proper learning and teaching in some schools in Rivers State. Don't be deceived, if you go to these township schools like in Port Harcourt, you would think all is well in other schools. It is not**

**What are the implications of none employment of new teachers by the Rivers State Government?**

As I earlier said, there is no proper teaching and learning in Rivers State public primary and secondary schools. Some schools are not teaching what you expect them to teach, and you know that in secondary school, specialization takes place. A teacher will teach one subject; if you are qualified to teach English, you teach English. If you are qualified to teach mathematics, you teach mathematics. We don't have enough teachers for this specialization. There is no proper learning and teaching in some schools in Rivers State because of inadequate teachers. We needed more teachers, even more than 20000 teachers, to ensure quality teaching.

There are some teachers that have

also upgraded themselves by getting higher qualifications. Some of them entered service with primary school certificates and they have upgraded themselves by obtaining NCE or first degree. These ones need to be upgraded. They have attended a promotion interviews but their promotions are still hanging.

**What is the state of infrastructure in the Rivers State-owned primary and secondary schools across the 23 local governments?**

I commended the present government for the infrastructure they are doing in the state but for schools, there are some areas that are lacking. Some schools are nothing to write home about in terms of infrastructure. One of them is State School, Edeoha in Ahoada East Local Government Area. You have seen the very bad one in

Sangana Street, Port Harcourt city. Come to Ahoada East, you will see the state schools Edeoha. When it rains, there will be no place for the children to sit and learn. Another one is UPE model in Ahoada town, the roof has been pulled off by the wind. It is a model school built by the former government, when it rains the children will be packed in one class. This schools need renovation. You see schools like the primary school in Ihugbogo, you need to go there and see, the children are not learning. It is in a very bad state.

Let's talk about secondary schools. CSS Ihuowo, CSS Ihuaba and then go to Emohua, you will see schools like St. Georges Primary school Oduoha, State School Eweku Odegu, State school, Rumuodogo Odegu, Senior Secondary School Oduoha in Emouha. They are all in very bad shapes. Also go to State Schools I, II, III, V Ibaa; Ibaa Girls Secondary school and Community Secondary School, Obelle. They all need renovations. You go to the Kalabari areas, you see so many of the dilapidated crying for renovation. Government needs to pay attention to school and without education there will be no nation. Building flyovers, building this and that is okay but if you don't build schools, you are nowhere.

**How would you describe the conditions of retired teachers in the state for the past seven years?**

The retired teachers are suffering. The government will tell you that they are not owing anybody in that sector, later they will say they are owing. Right now, we have come up with some schemes; we have what they call Welfare Scheme in this state; when you retire, you go to your union first and collect money and you can start with that. I cannot tell you much about the retirees but presently their fate is in the hands of God.

**How fast do the government process the gratuity of the retiring teachers in the state?**

For gratuity, teachers' own is not kept separate; all retirees' matters are being handled in one place, so it depends on the system. You cannot process your own as a teacher separately and process somebody who retired from the Ministry of Finance separately. So, all retired civil servants in the state have a single platform. I want to advise that our teachers should be able to know when they are supposed to retire from work. If you know when you're supposed to retire from work, you begin to push your papers, it will be very fast to get your gratuity. Some teachers will not know when they were supposed to retire until their salaries are stopped and they will be complaining that their salaries have been stopped, not knowing they had been retired. I know when I am supposed to retire; I know when I entered this job, May 1, 1999.

**Do you think the present government has done enough in terms of the welfare of the students?**

They are also doing what the past government did; they provide books, we enjoy free education in the state. They register the students for exams and WAEC, NECO which the previous administration also did. The only difference between Wike's government and the previous one is in the area of teachers' welfare and the schools that are not being renovated. That is where we have problem with them. We pray that the government should make a U-turn to know what they are supposed to do and do the needful for teachers. Promotion is important, implementation of the ones they have promoted long ago is also important. We need it and increments are our expectations. I advise my teachers to keep on praying that one day, the God we serve will deliver us.

# POLITY

**Femi Majekodunmi**

## Gov Abiodun Will Get 2nd Term Easily

Dr. Femi Majekodunmi is the Chairman, Ogun State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). In this interview with **THISDAY**, he talks about the various interventions of the Dapo Abiodun-led administration in the state, especially in education, and concludes that the governor will get a 2nd term easily. Except:

**The new academic session has commenced, how prepared is your Board to provide necessary learning aid to both new in-takes and old pupils?**

I can tell you just like the motto of the scout of those days, "Be prepared". We are always prepared and that is one thing that I have inculcated into every staff in the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). We have to plan ahead. We have got to prepare for eventuality, and we cannot but thank our Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, enough in this regard. He is like that. He plans ahead and he is prepared for every eventuality. It is reflected in SUBEB as well. Go to any public school today, especially primary school, you would see clean premises. You would see teachers wake up to their duties. We monitor them from time to time. The important facilities have always been there. And our dear Governor has always supported us in monitoring activities, in checking and re-checking many of these things that are doing in a long way to get the schools always prepared for the services rendered to the learners.

**Has the State Government not done enough in terms of benches and desks for pupils, considering cases of pupils sitting on bare floors in some public schools?**

One thing that I would tell you about and that is, we have not excluded it from what I just said. From time to time, we supply chairs and tables. A lot of efforts have always been put in place by this current administration to resolve all these problems. The present government took over at a point where not much was done to SUBEB. One of the things that Governor Abiodun did was to put in the needed money. We are talking about billions of naira to solve many of these problems. That is, building new structures. You can see yellow roofs all over the places and rehabilitation of many structures.

Don't forget that Ogun State is the Gateway to education in this country. It is a place where Western education really started. You may recall many of the medical doctors, lawyers, accountants and others who are still professionals came from Ogun State. Many of these schools that we are talking about, especially schools under our own supervision or purview were built over 100 years ago. At that time, when we came in, over 900 projects were put in place, because of one problem or the other. Some of them were nearing completion. When I came in, and that was the job I was saddled with, putting right all the inadequacies of the past administration. All the wrongs of the past. The government before us did little or nothing. I can boldly say that, because Dapo Abiodun did a lot and he is still doing it.

Just recently, he paid a lot of money into the marching grants. And very soon, we will be having series of buildings coming up for public primary schools. We will have more chairs, more toilets, fences and things like that. All these things are being done to solve the problems that we have been talking about. It is a situation nobody can solve in one year, nobody can even solve in ten years, but Dapo Abiodun has done a lot. We cannot but commend him. So, this is the situation. And he is still doing it.

Dapo Abiodun is one that wants even distribution of amenities, of projects, welfare and so on. All we expect government to provide, he has vowed not put everything in one senatorial district and that is what he is doing. And yet, he has done more than anybody has done in the capital city. I had thought that the capital city would be neglected, not so. He is doing everything possible and he almost wants everything to be attended to, despite the paucity of funds. Check the

various divisions or the various senatorial district, everywhere work is ongoing. And when you come to Basic Education, where I hold forte, money is being spent everyday to take care of our pupils, our learners, to take care of our teachers. Training programmes are going on consistently. Even extra-curricular activities like, sports, agriculture and so on are all ongoing.

Nothing is being left unattended to, and more will come in place very soon because money has been made available, like I told you earlier. He is a tireless governor. People use to say, he is the best Governor. He is the most hardworking governor in this country. And I agree with that.

**Is education still free in Ogun State public schools?**

Very much so. We make sure that parents are not made to pay any school fees. Not only that, we frown at, and we made it illegal for any school or teacher to levy any pupil for anything because in the past, occasionally, we have contributions of N500 for one thing or the other. We have always stopped situations like that. And all teachers today, they don't do anything contrary because the government is providing virtually everything for them. We even give schools what we call running cost. Recently, this running cost was doubled. You can imagine the care that the governor has committed himself to. So, every head teacher in schools, we give them substantial of money to take care of minor situations, emergency situations because these pupils are young and they will have to be protected.

**Ogun State has produced great icons in different walks of life which makes it the education capital of this country. But in the past one decade the quality of education has witnessed a sharp drop. What other approaches has the state government brought to bear to restore the lost glory?**

May be, the right thing is to talk of Nigeria as we have found ourselves, nowadays. Gone are the days when Nigeria, be it our universities or polytechnics, have foreign students coming from different parts of the world. All these things have gone down. The quality of education has declined in the country, generally, for reasons we all know. I am one of them that is very concerned about this situation. With all efforts on deck, we will overcome it.

**The 2023 General elections are approaching. As a leading figure in Ogun State's All Progressives Congress (APC), how prepared**

**Take for instance, our past Governor, again, I won't mention his name, many of his supporters all over the local governments are with Prince Dapo Abiodun now. We control virtually every ward now. We control the State House of Assembly. So, what else do we need to win? The people are still with us, very much so. In a situation where the governor has decided to work, even harder than before and he has started**



Majekodunmi

**is your party, considering the gale of defection into either the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) or, the African Democratic Congress (ADC)?**

This is a straightforward question, the way I see it, and there are straightforward answers to it. The only thing that is not true is the area you said many people had left APC to either PDP or any other party. More are coming, may be, you don't realise this. Those of us who are together in the APC, that later decided to form another party, I can tell you, 80 percent of them have returned under Prince Dapo Abiodun's leadership. And don't forget, immediately Abiodun got into power, the first thing he did was to encourage and work with many opponents. Many of them are with us and they are still with us. May be, at a point in time, some left for reasons of not winning primaries. That is all you can get.

Dapo Abiodun today will win 80 percent of the votes in the coming 2023 governorship election in Ogun State. I am a seasoned politician. I have been in it for a long time. And I read writings on the walls all the time. I know the trend. Many people don't know the trend. It is not enough for somebody leaving the party to nowhere, just because he lost primary election. We have such, and they advertise the little so much noise as if the whole party is in cracks. Some of them have little or no supporters, but they exaggerate. I don't want to mention names. Take for instance, our past Governor, again, I won't mention his name, many of his supporters all over the local governments are with Prince Dapo Abiodun now. We control virtually every ward now. We control the State House of Assembly. So, what else do we need to win? The people are still with us, very much so. In a situation where the governor has decided to work, even harder than before and he has started. Within the next three months, you would see it. We are not saying that we are popular of winning. and we will rest on our oars. Nothing like that.

We are still working hard and we will continue to work hard until we win 80 percent of the total votes of the elective positions. You wait and see. It is a known fact today that, the main APC in Ogun State has no strong opponent. Where are the opponents? Tell me. Where are they? Except noisemakers and there are many noisemakers. And we will not rest on our oars until total victory is won. We have all it takes to do that to attain total

## POLITY

# Nwabunka: Base Pyramid Will Drive Nigeria's Economic Growth

Godwin Nwabunka, founder and CEO of the Grooming Centre, a microfinance-oriented NGO, explains why his entire life is devoted to adding value to human existence, starting with the bottom of the pyramid—the grassroots. He spoke with **Nduka Nwosu**. Excerpts:

**G**odwin Nwabunka radiates simplicity, which easily connects him with his staff of 3500 in 27 states across the country. Through his life's work, he has provided opportunities to hundreds of thousands of homes.

You can say his simplicity belies his accomplishments since he founded the Grooming Centre, an NGO microfinance institution headquartered in Ejigbo, Lagos.

Since inception, the Centre has groomed millions of clients to enhance their livelihoods using financial and non-financial services, and has provided jobs for thousands of young people, a talent hunter for the next generation.

What makes the Centre tick? Nwabunka's early beginnings tell the story better. Nwabunka is a development economist, whose PhD at the Pontifical Gregory University in Rome explored the finer details of appropriate technologies for small and medium enterprise development, using Imo State as his universe. That was in 1983.

He had earlier written his Master's thesis on the behavioral patterns of people at the workplace. Working with the United Nations at the UNDP and UNICEF equipped him with a better understanding of the activities of the small and medium enterprises as well as issues of education and the upbringing of children. Nature, it seemed, was preparing him for a great assignment.

As he put it, it was more like driving a change process. "When I started the Centre, what I did was to try to build a team that would provide support to the growth of a viable institution, drawing on my experience of leading the implementation of the UNDP Micro-start programme in Nigeria, which provided support to the nascent microfinance institutions in the country.

"In the early days, I received a lot of advice and support from my friend Shafiqul Haque Choudhury, who was the founder of the Association for Social Advancement (ASA) Bangladesh, which was the Technical Partner on the Micro start Projects and also the fastest growing microfinance institution in the world at that time."

Now, in defining the Grooming Centre, the global roots which include Bangladesh must not be allowed to overshadow the experience from the homeland. The Centre's growth is indeed a story of the Nigerian experience, driven by a mission to empower MSMEs in the informal sector of the economy, a dialogue that has spanned over three decades at various levels of government.

It became a vibrant discourse in the 1980s after the establishment of such agencies as the Centre for Management Development, a training and research ground for a new breed of disciples designed to sow the seeds that would produce the right results for the growth of these SMEs across the country. Nwabunka was one such disciple who eventually moved on to acquire knowledge and experience in other equally notable institutions.

Nwabunka was inspired by his mother, who was both a farmer and a trader, and used thrift and savings to contribute to the household income. This culture comes in different dimensions such as 'esusu' or 'ajoo' depending on the part of Nigeria. you are coming from Either way, the idea is to empower individual group contributors with pooled funds in an equitable and rotatory manner, while building social cohesion among participants. Grooming Centre's operations are rooted in these principles but operated using modern processes and digital tools.

Grooming's clients are the traders you find at Tejuosho, Oyingbo, Ogbete markets, Ariara in Aba, Idumota, Wuse, Dugbe et al. They are welders, plumbers, tuck shop operators; small businesses across various supply chains. They are very active businessmen and women who generate billions if not trillions of naira sustaining the economy and constitute a large chunk of the base pyramid. For example, during a project executed with the Mastercard Centre for Financial Inclusion, 300 Grooming Centre clients who had been provided with inventory management



Nwabunka

software were found to have generated over one-billion-naira turnover in one quarter.

Therefore, he argues, when policy frameworks are being developed, the input of this important segment must be taken into consideration. As he put it: "it tells you the power of the bottom of the pyramid and the informal sector. If this is happening within a small sample of 300, can you imagine what goes on in the entire sector? If you aggregate this, you can see the volume of trade going on that is unaccounted for.

"So, when policies are being made for the development of this sector, a top-down approach focusing on the role and needs of big players such as banks, insurers and quoted companies is not comprehensive enough. Consultation with the actual players at the base and their service providers should be the basis for such policy formulation."

That justifies the more expansive definition of Grooming Centre, by addressing the near absence of financial services to the large population of people engaged in small trading and micro productive activities across the country. "We are committed to promoting financial inclusion and empowering our members." The Centre's finan-

cial services, he adds, are backed up with training programmes, advisory services, and close monitoring. With 605 branches and thousands of members, Grooming Centre is an evidence of little drops of water making an ocean.

Nwabunka is actively involved in the Ministry of Doing Good. According to him, poverty is a bane, a disease and when you educate people, you remove them from the poverty cycle. Sickness and disease are enemies of progress, he argues. When these three issues - poverty, illiteracy, and disease, which are obstacles to progress are removed, the sky becomes the limit in accessing the good things of life. This is a cardinal cornerstone of his personal approach to philanthropy.

A devout Catholic, an altar server at Mass growing up, Nwabunka is a collector who helps to count tithes and offerings in his local parish. In response to a question on why he has embarked on the journey that birthed Grooming Centre is the familiar religious refrain: to the glory of God and the benefit of humankind. He follows up that response with a probing question: what shall it profit a man if he acquires the entire earth at the expense of his eternity?

"It is just my personal philosophy," he stresses, saying it has nothing to do with wealth acquisition and primitive capitalism. "Yes, I love the good things of life, of course everyone does. The fact, however, is that it does not take so much of you to live the good life. So, unbridled wealth acquisition, which you may not really need, and which is to the detriment of everyone, does not appeal to me.

"To the glory of God, my career has placed me on a path where affluence is not an attraction. I ask: 'why does anyone need money?' You need money to live in a good house, raise a good family, pay children's school fees, and ensure they attend some of the best schools in the world. A decent environment where you help to create wealth will offer these possibilities. The truth is that if you are involved in wealth creation or one activity or the other that is for the good of society, the good things of life will surely rub off on you. I have always had this orientation working for the United Nations.

"You can do good and have your necessities taken care of. We are following a certain trajectory here, which is to build an institution that will outlast or outlive the founder and all those involved in the building process, to the greater good of humanity. That is where we are headed."

The idea behind the Grooming Centre, he says, is one of a sustainable, self-driven organisation that will live beyond him, what he calls an orientation from the very beginning when he was groomed to be a fisher of men: "It is an orientation, the same reason I do not believe in a lot of things such as chieftaincy titles, things people pursue and miss the heart of the matter in the process.

"Many have become blinded by these vain pursuits of adulation and material acquisitions; they prefer praise and self aggrandisement. In the church I prefer to be a faithful servant of the Lord, which is what I do as a member of the Board of Collectors."

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**The idea behind the Grooming Centre, he says, is one of a sustainable, self-driven organisation that will live beyond him, what he calls an orientation from the very beginning when he was groomed to be a fisher of men.**

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## POLITY

# A Special Plea on Nigeria Prize for Literature

Uzor Maxim Uzoatu

The celebrated season of the Nigeria Prize for Literature always ends on the note of winner-takes-all. It is incumbent on me to plead now that the longlisted and shortlisted authors be also rewarded with cash. While the overall winner goes home with the grand prize of \$100,000 it stands to reason to console the longlisted writers with \$1,000 each while the shortlisted ones can be gifted with \$5,000 each. I think this is a modern democratic ideal as opposed to the ancient one-man-standing of bull-fighting or the Russian roulette!

The 2022 longlist included Augusta's Poodle by Ogaga Ifowodo, Coming Undone as Stitches Tighen by Iquo Diana Abasi, dispossessed by James Eze, Ife Testament by Segun Adekoya, Memory and the Call of Water by Su'eddie Vershima Agema, Nomad by Romeo Oriogun, The Lilt of the Rebel by Obari Gomba, The Love Canticles by Chijioko Amu Nnadi, Wanderer Cantos by Remi Raji, Yawns and Belches by Joe Ushie and Your Crib, My Qibla by Saddiq Dzukogi.

The eventually shortlisted three authors are Su'eddie Vershima Agema, Romeo Oriogun and Saddiq Dzukogi. It makes me feel somehow that only one out of these gifted poets will walk away with something while the rest are left barren.

Let's take the example of the Booker Prize awards in Great Britain where in 2022 the winner will go home with the £50,000 grand prize while the six shortlisted authors will receive £2,500 each. It will not be a wrong move to go the way of the long-established Booker Prize.

The Nigeria Prize for Literature has always been open to change in its affairs as it always engages the general public and the media toward the improvement of the award over the years. This way, the prize money has been increased from the initial \$20,000 in 2004 to \$30,000 in 2006, \$50,000 in 2008, and finally \$100,000 in 2011.

The essence of literary awards happens to be the exposure of books and not just bagging the ultimate title as an end in itself. The more books that are given the exposition through the

stages of the awards will render more clout to the exercise. There is the tendency for perennial contenders, who are eventually unrewarded, to lose interest in a way that detracts all meaning to the drive for literary awareness.

One champion does not a community make. The call for diversity should make as many books as possible to be showcased. Giving all attention to that one book that wins the prize detracts from the multiplicity of voices needed to give a rounded education to the community.

Literary judgement is fraught with idiosyncrasies such that even the real best book can never ever be determined by even the greatest assemblage of judges. A book that ought to have won could end up being discarded. The books that somehow beat the odds to get to the point of being shortlisted or longlisted deserve recognition in monetary compensation.

While the prize winner can go with the accolade of "best novel of the year" or "best play of the year" or the finest collection of poetry", there is the concomitant matter of not leaving all the runners-up in the lurch. While in Britain and the United States there are established publishers for the marketing of books, Nigeria still lags behind in not having clearly defined book-publishing organs. Most of the Nigerian publishers are printers who make no returns as royalties to authors. There should be no denying of these striving authors of any monetary rewards that may come their way through literary awards.

It is not for nothing that most Nigerian authors organize the elaborate launching of their books so that they can at the very least cover the printing costs of the books. A book produced on such arduous terms that goes all the way to the shortlist or longlist of the Nigeria Prize for Literature deserves to win some money for the effort!

Writers abroad enjoy the services of astute publishers, experienced editors, savvy marketers and dutiful publicists. The Nigerian writer is what is known as the one-man-riot squad because he involves himself in all aspects of the publishing trade before he can ever get a book out there. Waiting for a

publisher to help him along the line would amount to waiting for Godot.

If Britain where correct publishing thrives can reward shortlisted authors with cash prizes, what stops Nigerian literary award organizers from doing the needful? This would do a world of good toward enlarging the creative process in Nigeria.

Time was when Nigeria had proper publishing as represented by foreign-owned companies such as Heinemann, Longmans, Macmillan, Evans, Oxford University Press etc. That time is gone, and most Nigerian authors must perforce pay the so-called publishers to print their books sans editing, marketing or any publicity whatsoever.

As the NLNG put out in its mission statement as per setting up the Nigeria Prize for Literature, "prior to inauguration of the Prize, the quality of writing, publishing, news features and articles in newspapers and magazines, and the quality of film production on television and radio did not paint a picture of the excellence the industry was previously known for."

These authors who struggle past these Herculean odds to get to the longlist or shortlist deserve to be monetized!

The NLNG goes ahead to stress: "It therefore became evident to us at Nigeria LNG that a well-run literary prize with transparent adjudication process, administered by respected academics, writers and lovers of literature, and with respectable monetary reward will spur creativity and contribute to the improvement of the quality of writing, editing and publishing in Nigeria. The rest, as they say, is history."

It is my plea that the "respectable monetary reward" that will spur creativity should be spread across board beyond the one-person winner. Creativity will grow in leaps and bounds once the erstwhile denied runners-up are encouraged through some monetary rewards due them in the dire Nigerian scheme of things. The NLNG remains a listening organization, and I can count on the management to help the authors of Nigeria by way of this special plea.



L-R; Chairman Nigerian Bar Association Benin Branch, Mr Yakubu Kadiri, SAN; Immediate Past President Nigerian Bar Association, Mr. Nosa Edo-Osagie; Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice Edo State, Mr. Olumide Akpata; and Mr Oluwole Iyamu, SAN during the valedictory court session in honor of late Ogaga Emoghwanre at the High court ceremonial hall in Benin city... recently.



The Oni of Ife; Ooni Babatunde Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II paid a visit to Cavista Nigeria, a Lagos based Home Health Care Technology firm, headed by the Founder Mr Niyi John Olajide.



L-R: Vice Chairman, Mamuda Group, Mr Nemr Hammoud; Honorary Consul of France in Kano; Mr Stephan Malaussene; Honorary Consul of Lebanon in Kano, Mr Khalil Muselmani and Managing Director, Mamuda Group, Mr Nasser Hammoud, during Pop Cola's first year anniversary in Kano...recently



L-R: Chief Technical Officer, Nommy Paul; Brand Communication Manager, Adalemo Jemimah Ufuoma; CEO, Ajay Awashti; Head, Product and Pricing, Prem Kumar; and Manager, Device Test, Kolawole Hammed Omotunde, all of Spectranet, the Wifi network, during the Launch of Spectranet WiTel held at the Spectranet office in Lagos... recently

KOLA ALLI



# Fellow Nigerians, Obi'Dient Threat Is Real But...


**THEFRONTLINES**
**JOSEPH USHIGIALE**

 jushigiale@yahoo.co.uk,  
 joseph.ushigiale@thisdaylive.com  
 08023422660 (sms only)

**B**arring any last-minute changes, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) would blow its whistle to signal the commencement of the 2023 political campaigns across the country. This time around two front runners including the All Progressives Congress (APC), and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) would be contending with a new and formidable entrant - the Labour Party (LP) and others.

With the conclusion of a highly bruising convention, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu picked the APC ticket; former Vice President Atiku Abubakar emerged as the flagbearer for the PDP forcing Peter Obi to decamp to Labour Party (LP).

Most contenders who lost out in their initial quests for tickets in their respective parties either decided to rest their ambition and support the flagbearer, or to move to other parties to find expression for their ambition. One of those persons is the former governor of Anambra state, Peter Obi. The multi-billion naira serial investor and businessman had initially hoped to pick the PDP ticket, when it became apparent Atiku was in pole position to clinch the ticket, Obi switched parties from PDP to pitch his camp with the LP.

As if on a cue, in just a few months after emerging as the party's flagbearer backed by Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, the Obi presidential ambition is on fire. Now christened Obi'Dient, the campaign has assumed an unprecedented life of its own seized by angry youths who are frustrated with the way the country's commonwealth is being mismanaged and pillaged by the elites and want a change.

In the upcoming 2023 elections, three issues define the trajectory of the polls. The north which claims to be in majority insists on retaining power. It is not persuaded by the fact that President Muhammadu Buhari, a northern is about to complete his two-term tenure. Atiku of the PDP is the arrowhead to actualize that dream for the north.

In the South, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu would have been coasting home to victory but Peter Obi's growing popularity has put a spanner in his victory lap. In particular, Tinubu is laying claim to the presidency as payback for supporting Buhari's fourth attempt at the presidency in 2015. Buhari had failed to clinch it in three previous attempts. Today, Tinubu's 'lifelong ambition' is emboldened by his landslide success at the party's primary where he gave Senate President Ahmed Lawan, Buhari's anointed candidate, and others resounding defeat.

Obi is coming into the race purely as an outsider. The fact that he was governor on the platform of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and later decamped to the PDP has not changed that status. Yet, he has emerged as one entrant that is already shaking the political firmament to its rustic foundation with his Obi'dient movement. The movement is promoting and driving the wind of change currently sweeping across the country like wildfire.

The spectacular and equally perplexing development to note is that both Obi and the

LP have no structures across the country but the youths who make up about 70 percent of our 200m population have taken over the campaign. They have transformed it into a movement the first of its kind in the country. Most profound of this development is that this Obi'Dient movement has completely shattered and leveled the mythical 12m audio votes which could not secure Buhari the presidency even after three attempts because the movement is purely voluntary and focused on bringing change to the shenanigans pervading our polity.

What is driving Obi's movement? Obi is from the South-east the same region that produced the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and apart from the late Dr. Alex Ekwueme who came close to ascending the presidency. At the moment, sympathy seems to weigh heavily in favor of a President of Southeast extraction. But the ultra-conservatives in the north are totally against a Nigerian President of Igbo extraction primarily because of the civil war. The unfounded fear of this group is that a President from Igboland would lead the country to secession.

Since the Obi'Dient phenomenon took the country by storm, a lot of pundits have tried without success to disparage and cast the movement in a bad light. While some claim that Obi has no nationwide structures to clinch the Presidency, others dismiss the movement as hired crowd and composition of idle internet noisemakers.

All those holding these negative views have to rethink their permutations. This is 2023 we are talking about and quite a lot of water has passed under the bridge literally. In the next few paragraphs, we would be analyzing Obi's clear path to victory in an election

that he clearly has momentum and is in a vantage position to win. Why is Obi's wave on the rise? A couple of factors are responsible for this momentum. First was his decision to walk away from the PDP when it became clear that money in Dollars would undermine the credibility of the presidential primary election to determine a winner. That singular decision endeared him to the youths who ab initio had no trust in the electoral process. They found in Obi an upright man who at least believes in accountability, shuns corruption, and self-aggrandizement, and has the gumption to say enough is enough of this depravity in our polity.

Another point is the great expectations and confidence they had in voting for Buhari in 2015 and his turning out to be a huge disappointment in the end. So right now, these youths are on a vengeance mission and have decided that this time around, they would rather do it themselves. They are hellbent on organizing into a movement and changing the electoral fortune of this country for the better.

So how is this possible? We need to note that the Obi'Dient movement is a voluntary initiative provoked by the burning desire of youths who cut across the country to wrest back their country from political buccaneers. In the last few weeks, the LP deliberately launched a massive roadshow to perhaps test its popularity and the outcome was a resounding success. Since then, other presidential candidates have been trying spiritedly to march the record without success.

Obi's pathway to success is clearly encrusted in the wave that is rising in his favor right now. To win this

election in a landslide margin, he must be able to harvest or mine the data of his Obi'Dient followers: phone numbers, location, age, education, language spoken, etc. He must use this data to mobilize and build an army of loyalists, volunteers, and door-to-door canvassers who would hit the ground across the country to establish an iron-clad structure.

How would these foot soldiers influence things? They would become grassroots mobilizers where the battleground clearly is. They would knock on doors, create visibility, and saturate the nooks and crannies of the country with Obi'Dient message of Hope and optimism. They would constantly strive to convince people to vote Obi, ensure that they get the votes out on election day and police the votes against manipulation from beginning to end.

The importance of mining these data is for messaging purposes. It is important he gets the statistics of his target audience so that for instance, with the phone number you can know from analytics the kind of device the person is using and whether it is a feature phone or an android and the type of message to deploy. With these details, he would know the group that would receive messages through SMS, email and robocalls, etc.

So far it seems Obi's message is music to their ears but soon it would no longer be when the campaigns go full steam. What's in messaging? Plenty, it is through effective messaging that a candidate would connect with the grassroots. Obi has done well by captivating his audience with his message. But this sort of messaging would not help him connect with the people and win him the presidency.

So what does he do? Obi has to learn from the legendary Fela Anikulapo. Fela started his music by singing in English language to his audience. But few listened to him then. It was not until he reinvented himself by singing in his native Yoruba and pidgin English that gradually, his message began to resonate with people and eventually made him a superstar.

Obi must speak in the language they understand and tackle issues that are at the heart of people's misery. First, he should be ready to deploy his messages in the different major languages across the country to communicate directly with his supporters wherever they reside. He should also establish a feedback mechanism between his campaign and the grassroots.

What do the people want? Obi must strive to differentiate and distance himself from the status quo and position himself as a reformer or a true change agent. Whatever his accomplishments before now, those are already fully documented. What the people want to know is how he would provide jobs for the unemployed, reduce the rising cost of living today by addressing inflation, and how he would turn Nigeria from a consumptive country to a productive country.

Remember that Obi's major business over time is the importation of finished goods which he stocks for sale in his supermarket chain. So he is already seen as shipping jobs abroad and making Nigeria a consumptive country and other candidates are laying in wait to take him up on these issues and so far he hasn't addressed them pointedly and convincingly. Next week, we would discuss messaging nuggets that would be his game-changer.



L-R: French Ambassador to Nigeria, Mrs Emmanuelle Blatmann; Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Commissioner for Youth and Social Development, Mr. Segun Dawodu, signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Lagos State Sports Commission and French Embassy in Nigeria at Lagos House, Marina...yesterday



L-R: Non-Executive Director, Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority, (NSIA), Mr Pius Anyiad; Chief Executive officer Officer, Pandagric Norvm, Mr. Bruce Spain; Managing Director, NSIA, Mr. Uche Orji; and Executive Director, Pandagric, Malam Aminu Umar Sadiq; during the "Redefining Agriculture in Nigeria for the Future" Media briefing for the inauguration of Pandagric Novum in Abuja... Yesterday  
 PHOTO KINGSLEY ADEBOYE

## EXPRESSION

**'Rub Minds' Incorrect**

**"T**HE establishment of regional security organisations (organizations, preferably) point (points) to the need to have a decentralized policing system, which notable Nigerians have called for in recent times"

"Kaduna State governor, Nasir El-Rufai, recently raised alarm (the alarm) on (over) the control of some parts of the state by some criminals"

"On behalf of the National Peace Committee, I wish to felicitate with you as you clock three scores and ten." Get it right: I wish to felicitate you as...

Wrong: "He lives in a face-me-I-face-you apartment." Right: He lives in a rooming house.

DAILY INDEPENDENT of September 6 exhibited editorial slovenliness in two paragraphs: "The conference, which is organized by the NGE, will see an assemblage of editors, comprising of men and women..." Yank away the second 'of' in the extract.

"Although it may be difficult to ascertain whether all of them are Nigerians, but it is evident that majority (the majority) are predominantly Yorubas (Yoruba). Insight: 'although' and 'but' cannot co-function. Therefore, delete 'but'."

Leadership of September 5 disseminated copious solecisms right from its front page: "Masquerade arrested for robbery" This is impossible! What was arrested was not the mask (masquerade), but the masquerader.

"Uzodinma condoles (condoles with/condoles)... motor dealer's (sic) president (another comma) as he buries mum"

THE GUARDIAN of September 4 lacked lexical focus: "Challenges of restoring peace on (to) the Plateau"

"Real reasons why employees quit their jobs" A rewrite: Real reasons employees quit their jobs

Last Wednesday's edition of Daily Trust circulated multifarious blunders: "NUPENG's

strike threat: Fed Govt in race to beat Reps deadline" "No fewer than 501 Kano indigenes have been awarded scholarship for masters degrees at (in) different universities of their choice." Would it have been my choice? Get it right: master's degree(s).

"The governor said Kano has (had) been experiencing..."

"He said if something urgent is (was) not done..."

"The beneficiaries, he assured, will (would) take over the realms of leadership of the state at (in) various human endeavours."

Still on this medium: "Venezuela had built the biggest refinery in (on) that continent..." No further comment or analysis.

"Alleged lopsided appointments in the INEC is (are) presently generating ripples in the Presidency..." Who can tell me the function of 'presently' here, please?

"Container-carrying trailers often constitute a menace on the roads" Death on wheels: a menace on roads.

"What has happen (happened) to them?"

Lastly from THE NATION ON SUNDAY under review: "Syria (Syrian) rebels target regime air power" World news: regime's air power.

"Not long ago, Obi Cubana buried mum with pomp" The young man buried his mum in pomp—certainly not 'with pomp'!

After a long break from this column, THE PUNCH returns. Its edition of September 1 did not advance the advocacy of the English language: "It's intended to allow us, as Yoruba sons and daughters, to rub minds on the way out of the country's crippling underdevelopment..." Quest for unity: there is nothing like 'rub minds'!

You either exchange concepts/ideas/perspectives/thoughts/views or have a meeting of minds.

How do you 'rub minds'? Let's meditate/think before communication, like Chaucer who really

transformed English into a literary language.

Blueprint of August 30 politicized the English language through slip-shoddiness. "No love lost between Saraki and I (me)—Ahmed"

"Ex-Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed has been in the news of late on issues bothering (bordering) on governance in Kwara State and his relationship with his predecessor, Senator Bukola Saraki."

Lastly from Vanguard of September 12: "How public varsities' fee hike truncate (truncates) students' ambition"

Advertised unpardonable infelicities: "...great cultures and civilizations have been those in which the ruling class has (have) made conscious efforts to initiate, promote and sustain their peoples, cultural talents"

"It would be height (the height) of folly if Nigeria is taken unaware (unawares)."

"Nigeria should use all her (its) political and diplomatic efforts within and without for a peaceful resolution on (of) the issue." I say 'no' to the feminization of language!

"They wanted to deport them back to Africa..." Just delete 'back' which is implied in 'deportation'

Wrong: non-challant; right: nonchalant. And this: in spite of (not in spite of...)

"...the electorate is (are) weak and is (are) often intimidated, so nothing avails."

"It is even more so because this has happened in the Holy month of Ramadan when faithfuls (the faithful) are supposed to eschew hate and violence..."

"Whatever may have been the grievances of the rioters in Kaduna and Abuja, their conduct is an assault on the rule of law, and a set-back (setback) for (to) the democratic process."

"If and (or) when you relate it to the time..."

"...he gave credence to the annulment by advocating for..." Delete the last word in the extract.

"However, emerging signals point to the fact that the older generation of politicians are (is) only interested on (in) how to ensure that..."



MEDIAGAFFES

EBERE  
WABARA

ewabara@yahoo.com, 08055001948

"A situation where a housemaid or nanny becomes endangered specie (an endangered species)..."

"...I buy kola nuts and cigarettes and exchange banter almost every night" Banter' is uncountable.

"He however said that his men are (were) equal to the task and that they are (were) already..."

"He contended that bankers, being an integral part of the polity, cannot be immuned (immune) to the moral degeneration..."

"A Vehicle Revolving Loan Scheme was in place by which staffs were assisted to purchase their own cars" Back to the future: staff.

"...the purchase of modern luxurious aircraft to offer comfort..." No more old school: luxury aircraft.

"However, we should stop talking about potential but hold the bull by the horn." Get it right: take the bull by the horns (not horn).

"With regards to the particular case of the armed forces..." This way: with regard to or as regards.

"Answers to the above question is hereby provided below by PDP-USA Chapter..." Answers... is' indeed!

"...to stimulate employment, build more roads and other social amenities or solve one social problem or the other." Going by the contextual pluralism of the extract, the right expression should be: one social problem or another.

"Group assures on rancour free PDP" Still on this recurrent blunder: who did the group assure? And this: rancour-free...

"Kalu condemns do or die politics" This way: do-or-die politics.

"The race to Government House in Kano has begun in earnest as..." Without any effort: The race has begun...

"The non Passage (sic) of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) did not help matters in 2009!" The non-passage (take note of the hyphen and lower case 'p')...

**KSA@76: Iconic Maestro Rides On**

In a few days, Thursday, 22 September, 2022, the lithe, lyrical superstar shall be 76 years old, without a hint of waning in musical glory or dwindling in pomp and pageantry. The immensely popular and 'world-famous' Nigerian global export, Chief Sunday Anthony Oshola Adeniyi Adegeye further sketches his legendary status into our consciousness - even after almost 60 years on this melody lane - throwing us into nostalgia and reminiscences. Such is this week's focus which rummages into a volume of an encounter we had with King Sunny Ade, KSA, a few days before his 53rd birthday in 1999. His thoughts, desires and remonstrations are still fresh and poignant... unwrinkled by the passage of time... much like any of his numerous evergreen melodies. Join us, please:

**Have you ever lost your voice?**

Yes. Not really lost, you know. It was just like faint. If I do about one week non-stop, and there is no space, no time for me to rest, yes it can. I have lost my voice twice.

**How did you react? Did you panic, or what was your reaction?**

It was like you feel that the heaven is going to fall because when you are talking they won't hear you, when you want to sing, you can't. It happened one day, we were there that day but you wouldn't notice. It was at the National Stadium when I was made to perform after Lagbaja. There was a band again and then I came. Unfortunately, I couldn't find my voice. What I did immediately was I turned back to the band boys and said give me 'F' quickly, instead of 'G'. Then they put me on G, and then I said, give me F... then they lowered me back to G. That is where I now changed the actual song I wanted to sing. I started singing slow before I could regain my voice, taking almost 30-35 minutes. It was like 'what is wrong? What is happening?'

Your life history is very well known. But sometimes when you look at all these things,



Sunny Ade

do you think there is nothing that has not been written about you?

Well, I would say like my mother used to say, 'I'm your mother. I delivered you to the world, so the whole world will not like you.' Whatever anybody wants to know about you they are free (laughs) because I don't have any skeletons in my cupboard. I am not hiding anything. But the only area is, you know, backstage... people see what is happening on the stage, they see you dancing. Like this question now, 'have you ever lost your voice?' It is a one in a million question. But at the backstage it is only a few people that used to ask... when you see the people on the stage, you know that the beauty of the stage, the lighting, the effect of the dressing; but before you get to the stage and after you get off the stage, what is actually happening at the backstage?

Probably, I am alive or dead when the show is about to commence. You remember that Raypower II show, I mean

when Lagbaja was coming with his horns, I tried to dodge in order for him not to see where I was sitting, but I heard the song he was singing, my song. How will I do it? And you, unfortunately, were sitting beside me and you were even showing me to him; the next thing I was thinking I would do was dance, but suddenly he just handed the microphone to me; so what would I do?

**You have been an inspiration to a lot of people. Most times, you dance for hours, and you are well over 50. Do your legs tell you that it is time to go sometimes?**

Yeah, sometimes when you are on the stage you don't feel it until you are off the stage, especially when the music is good and the people dance and they respond well to you, you won't feel it. It is like a footballer, unless God wills it, until the end of the match, especially when you are winning, you don't even feel your legs at all. You can't feel anything, you want to head and to jump. The goal keeper will just stretch all his body and fall on the floor, he won't even know until after the match. It is like that, but I thank God that the inspiration from the music and the inspiration from the people, the inspiration from the boys that are really creating the music, I don't normally feel it.

Okay, as a maestro you created a music idiom recognized all over the world. But one of the "professional" allegations against you is that you don't create successors. Correct?

It is not correct. First of all, the music I am playing I have never taken from anybody. That is it! Well, I can never be like that. If not that we all are talking to Femi, Femi will never play Fela's music. So, it depends on him. He may say he doesn't want to play Fela's music. He is not Fela. Nobody can be like Fela. All the people springing up, they didn't spring up when Fela was alive. So, eventually when I go, I believe somebody will play my music. This music, juju music, has come to stay. It is more or less like the Yoruba culture, which says Afieṣṣṣṣṣ (when you go, you hand



COUNTERPOINT

FEMI  
AKINTUNDE-JOHNSONfajalivet@gmail.com  
08182223348 - (SMS Only)

over to your child). Not everything you hand over nowadays (laughs).

All I want from my own children is that when I go, I want them to be well-read until they decide to do whatever they want to do. Some of them probably will not like to play music, some are being groomed. Like the Michel Jackson family, everyone of them. But like today, it is only one or two that are really doing it. I'm not saying it is not good, I have been thinking about it and I used to tell my kids that what they owe me is not music at all, it is education, and when they do that I can become their manager in future (general laughter).

Anybody can be their manager, I don't care; but at the moment...I pray that some of my children will become musicians. Yes. I pray. And at the moment, I have kids who play music. Even some in America, they play music. Some are playing together with Dr. Victor Olaiya's daughter, they are playing music. That is not the way I want. The way I want is, can you beat me to it?

I usually tell them I am a doctorate degree holder and I want them to do the same: get it academically and not in the honorary way. I want them to beat me to it. Now, I am a graduate, so I want them to be much more than that. So, if I am the only one playing my music and nobody at all in the whole world... that kind of question can be difficult for me to answer. When at every corner you go people now play like Sunny Ade, everywhere, eventually anybody can be Ten Juju Music or Five Juju Music. But to fill my vacuum? Even my kids cannot fill my vacuum when I go because they cannot be King Sunny Ade. They can only be the sons or the daughters of King Sunny Ade.

(To Continue)

# GLOBAL SOCCER

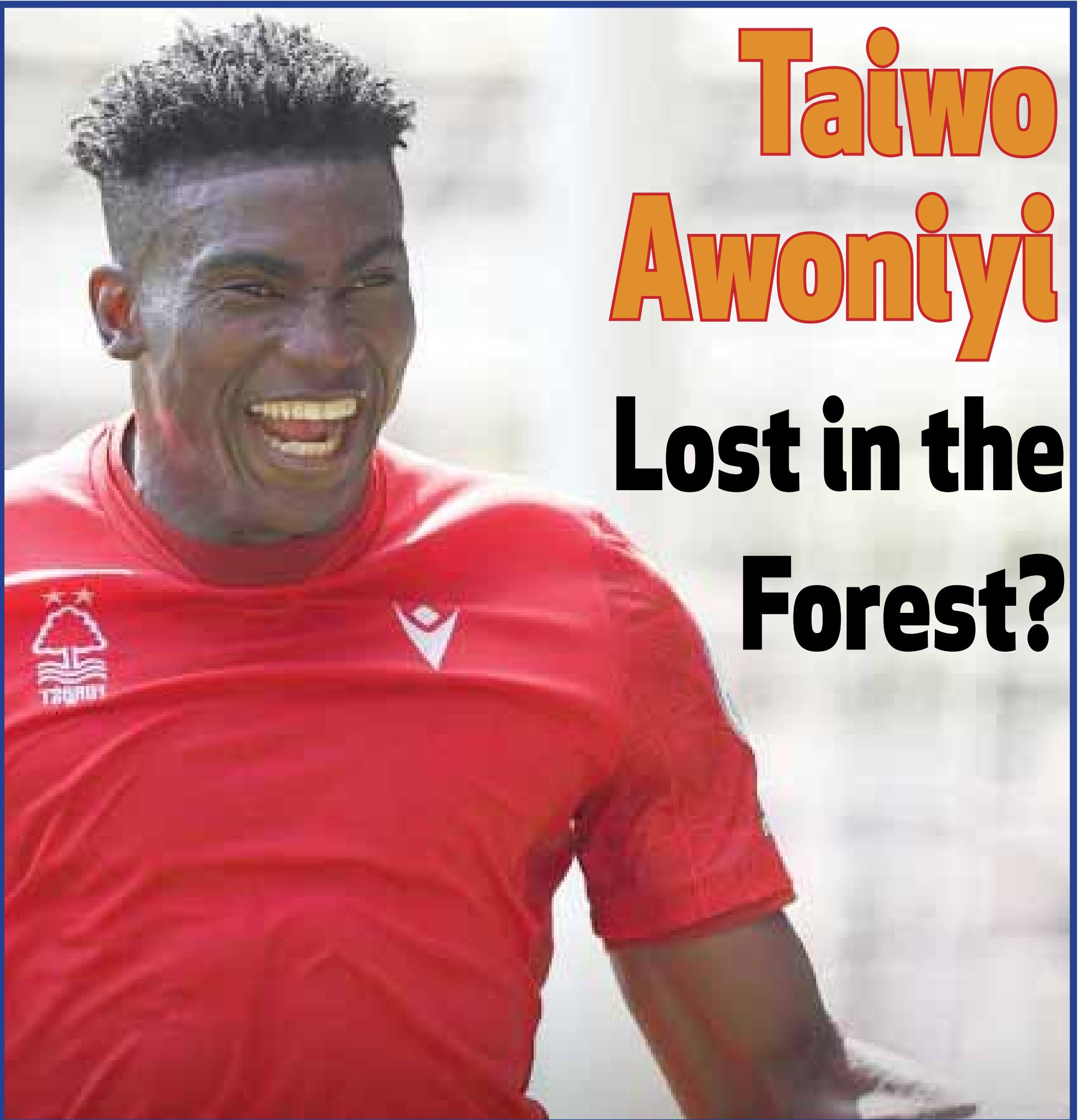


**NO LOVE LOST**

A **THIS DAY** WEEKLY PULL-OUT

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**Taiwo  
Awoniyi  
Lost in the  
Forest?**

## GLOBAL SOCCER



Taiwo Awoniyi has just two goals to show for his effort so far at Nottingham Forest

# Taiwo Awoniyi

## Lost in the Forest?

His 15 goals last season—the sixth in the German top flight not only helped Union Berlin to a respectable fifth position in the Bundesliga but also qualified The Iron Ones to the Europa League, missing out of the Champions League by a single point. But rather than consolidate on that enviable performance with the German club, Taiwo Awoniyi choose to pursue his longtime dream of playing in the Premier League. He therefore moved to Nottingham Forest for a club record transfer of £17m. Since joining The Tricky Trees, the Nigerian has not only been used sparingly but also fighting to help the club stay afloat in the English top flight. With an unenviable statistic that shows that two out of all promoted teams from the Sky Bet Championship struggled to retain their Premier League status at the end of the season if not relegated, **Kunle Adewale** writes that with Forest deep down in the murky waters, Awoniyi may be joining Nigerian legions campaigning in the Championship next season

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

After seven-loan spells to various European clubs, he was finally sold to German Bundesliga side Union Berlin, and it was there he finally found a home.

With his exploit at Union Berlin where he last season scored 15 goals, the sixth in the German top flight that helped The Iron Ones secure a Europa League ticket.

Awoniyi indeed warmed himself into the heart of Berlin fans and was seen as their Cult Hero. Rather than compliment on that, the Nigeria striker decide to move to the Premier League—his longtime ambition.

However, at Nottingham Forest he has just been used sparingly. In Forest's last two matches (before yesterday's game against Fulham) against Manchester City and Bournemouth respectively he was introduced into the game with less than two matches to the end on both occasions, unlike in Berlin where he was a regular starter except

for injury.

While Awoniyi's Nottingham Forest is placed 19th on the Premier League log, Union Berlin, a club where he was worshiped and adored by the fans are currently topping the Bundesliga table.

Union Berlin went top of the German Bundesliga for the first in their history by edging past Cologne.

Unbeaten Union secured top spot after Freiburg were held to a goalless draw by Borussia Mönchengladbach.

But it is Urs Fischer's side who led the table after six games, ahead of teams such as champions Bayern Munich, who are third and Borussia Dortmund in fifth place. Union are also competing in the Europa League after missing out on Champions League qualification by a single point last season.

When he scored his 10th Bundesliga goal last season Union Berlin fans hailed the 24-year-old the best in the world.

"He is the best in the world," one fan told Soccer.net.ng after the game.

Another group of fans sang a special song of praise in honour of the player.

However, his dream has always been to play in the Premier League since being signed by Liverpool but getting a place in the star-studded Reds' side and also securing a work permit have been an issue culminating in going on a seven-loan spell to various European clubs before finally being sold to German Bundesliga side Union Berlin. However, succour finally came the way

of the Super Eagles striker to achieve his dream with newly promoted side, Nottingham Forest ready to cough out a club record signing of £17.5m for the signature of the Nigerian international.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Awoniyi ultimately turned his loan to Berlin into a permanent £6.5m move last summer but not before he had the chance to link up with

Liverpool for their pre-season camp in Austria. And it gave him the chance to finally work under Klopp and also receive one of the German's famous bear-hug greetings.

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

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

Awoniyi then began his second stint in Berlin in style, scoring in three successive matches on route to notching 15 Bundesliga goals, which helped the club earn Europa League qualification.

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

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

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

"It shows that I did not make a bad decision to sign for Liverpool. I have always said that Liverpool is one of the best things that happened to me as a footballer. They gave me the platform to achieve my dream and with them I have no regret at all.

"I do not see not being able to play a game (for Liverpool) in the Premier League as a regret because in life, with time, everything is still possible." "It's been a long process but finally Taiwo Awoniyi can now focus on his career somewhere in England. He has the ambition to play in the Premier League," a top official at Imperial Academy told BBC Sport Africa.

Forest head coach Steve Cooper said: "There's been a lot of interest in Taiwo from other Premier League clubs and other clubs across Europe, so we're delighted that he's chosen Nottingham Forest. "Our recruitment and coaching teams have been monitoring his progress closely over the last few months.

"He's a player who we really believe in and we look forward to him going on to fulfil his potential and become a top Premier League striker with Nottingham Forest." "I'm very excited to be here at Nottingham Forest," he told the club's website.

"It's always been my dream to play in the Premier League and, having spoken to Steve Cooper about our ambitions and looking at Forest with its great history, it's a club that I want to be part of."

With just a goal in 335 minutes in the Premier League and Nottingham Forest placed 19th on the log, a campaign in the Sky Bet Championship indeed looms for Awoniyi.

GLOBAL SOCCER

# Tottenham Set to Compound Leicester's Premier League

With just one point from six matches and placed last on the log, Leicester City's Premier League woes may be compounded today as they visit North London for a date with Tottenham Hotspur who are yet to taste defeat in the league this season



**Premier League Table**

Arsenal	6	7	15
Man City	6	14	14
Tottenham	6	7	14
Brighton	6	6	13
Man Utd	6	0	12
Fulham	7	1	11
Chelsea	6	-1	10
Liverpool	6	9	9
Brentford	6	6	9
Leeds	6	0	8
Newcastle	6	1	7
Southampton	7	-4	7
Aston Villa	7	-4	7
Bournemouth	6	-13	7
Wolves	6	-1	6
Crystal Palace	6	-2	6
Everton	6	-2	4
West Ham	6	-5	4
Nottm Forest	7	-11	4
Leicester	6	-8	1

How well Wilfred Ndidi and co are able to contain Harry Kane will go a long way in determining if Leicester will come out unhurt against Tottenham

Tottenham Hotspur will be aiming to bounce back from their Champions League defeat to Sporting Lisbon when they welcome Leicester City to North London for today's battle. The Lilywhites suffered a 2-0 loss in Portugal midweek, while Brendan Rodgers's men most recently went down 5-2 to Brighton & Hove Albion. While Antonio Conte watched his side struggle to create many clear-cut opportunities against Sporting, former Tottenham youngster Marcus Edwards nearly scored an exhilarating solo goal before another pair of Ruben Amorim's attackers got the job done for the hosts in the dying embers. Substitutes Paulinho and Arthur Gomes both came off the bench to score in added time for Sporting as Tottenham fell to their first Champions League loss of the season, although Conte did not believe that a defeat was an accurate reflection of how the game went. However, Conte's reluctance to refresh his XI did not pay dividends, but Spurs have been handed an ideal opportunity to recover against the Premier League's basement side, with the game going ahead despite concerns that Queen Elizabeth II's funeral would force a postponement. A 2-1 win over Fulham two weekends ago saw Tottenham move onto 14 points from their first six games of the new league season, and the third-placed Lilywhites could end the day top of the table if Manchester City fail to overcome Wolverhampton Wanderers at lunchtime. Current leaders Arsenal will hope to respond against Brentford one day later. Tottenham welcome Leicester to North London having strung together a seven-game winning streak at home in all competitions, but creative concerns continue to bedevil

Conte, whose side are far from well-rested compared to Rodgers's under-performing crop. Some Leicester fans would have welcomed the chance to see their side test their mettle against 17th-placed Aston Villa last weekend, while others would have accepted the postponement of that clash with open arms given the way their side have performed so far. In what turned out to be Graham Potter's final match in charge of Brighton & Hove Albion before his quickfire Chelsea appointment, the Seagulls were the predators and the Foxes were the prey in a 5-2 South Coast romping, which extended Leicester's losing run to five matches. Rodgers and co can no longer turn to the transfer market to solve their lengthy list of problems - although there was a reluctance to splash the cash in the summer anyway - and the visitors remain rock bottom of the standings with a measly one point from six games. One would not knock Leicester for going down to Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United, but performances in all areas of the pitch have been alarming nonetheless, and only Bournemouth (18) have shipped more goals than the Foxes (16) so far. Tottenham did the double over Leicester by an aggregate scoreline of 6-3 in the 2021-22 Premier League season and are now out to record their fourth successive win in this fixture, and the hosts' confidence tank could do with a top-up before facing Arsenal after the international break. Meanwhile, top spot in the Premier League table is up for grabs for Manchester City when they travel to Molineux to take on Wolverhampton Wanderers at lunchtime today. The Citizens ran out 2-1 winners over Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League in midweek, while the hosts have not been

in action since beating Southampton 1-0 on September 3. From becoming Wolves' new marquee striker to suffering a devastating Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury in his first half of football for the Premier League side, Sasa Kalajdzic went through all the emotions as he now embarks on the long road to recovery. With Raul Jimenez also struggling to cut the mustard, Wolves have turned to Premier League winner Diego Costa to spearhead their charge, with the ex-Chelsea man bringing his fiery and controversial playing style back to England for another year. Wolves did not need Kalajdzic, Costa or Jimenez to sink Southampton 1-0 two weekends ago, as Daniel Podence came up with the game's only goal in first-half injury time for their first win of the season, and their trip to Anfield to take on Liverpool was postponed in the wake of Queen Elizabeth II's death. As such, Lage's side still possess a three-game unbeaten run ahead of the visit of the champions, but their lack of firepower to this point has only allowed them to climb as high as 14th in the table with a league-low three goals - only West Ham United have also been as shot-shy. Having conceded just one goal at Molineux and four in total so far this season, Wolves do hold the honour of being the Premier League's best defensive team after six matches, and every inch of that rearguard nous will have to count if City are to walk away with anything less than three points. Out of respect for his former club, Erling Braut Haaland did not celebrate his winner against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League, but the BVB faithful could have forgiven the 22-year-old for revelling in his acrobatic excellence at the Etihad. Jude Bellingham marked his return to English turf with a deft header to open the

**Premier League**

**TODAY**

Wolves	v	Man City 12:30
Brighton	v	Crystal Palace P
Newcastle	v	Bournemouth 15:00
Tottenham	v	Leicester 17:30
Brentford	v	Arsenal 14:00
Everton	v	West Ham 14:00
Man Utd	v	Leeds Utd PP
Chelsea	v	Liverpool PP

**LaLiga**

**TODAY**

Mallorca	v	Almería 13:00
Barcelona	v	Elche 15:15
Valencia	v	Celta Vigo 17:30
Bilbao	v	Vallecano 20:00

**SUNDAY**

Real Betis	v	13:00
Villarreal	v	Sevilla 15:15
Osasuna	v	Getafe 17:30
Sociedad	v	Espanyol 17:30
Atlético	v	Madrid 20:00

scoring in that Group G clash, but a John Stones thunderbolt levelled the scores in the second half before Haaland channelled his inner Johan Cruyff to sink his old employers - the outside-of-the-foot cross from Joao Cancelo was not half bad either. Now returning to domestic action for the first time since drawing 1-1 with Aston Villa on September 3, Pep Guardiola's side remain one point adrift of Arsenal at the top, but a draw would be enough to see the champions return to the summit before the Gunners tackle Brentford a day later. City's unbeaten run in all competitions now stands at eight games - with four of their most recent five ending in victory - and it has been over a year since Guardiola's men lost a Premier League away match, winning 15 and drawing six since defeat to Tottenham Hotspur last August. Wolves did overcome the Citizens at Molineux as recently as December 2019 - doing the double over them that year - but the champions have since won four in a row versus the hosts, and the four-goal Kevin De Bruyne masterclass helped City to a 5-1 win in this fixture back in May.

## GLOBAL SOCCER



Anthony Joshua with his promoter, Eddie Hearn

### Fury can't be Trusted to Fight Joshua, Says Promoter

The timing is difficult for Anthony Joshua. He has suffered two punishing defeats to Oleksandr Usyk and appeared to all the world to be in turmoil with an outpouring of emotion after the most recent loss.

But he is now in serious negotiations to take on another high-profile contest with British heavyweight rival and WBC champion Tyson Fury.

Eddie Hearn, Joshua's promoter, explained, "He thinks: this is my only chance, because if he fights Usyk, win or lose I think he'll retire or you never know with Fury, he could just never fight again."

Joshua has already agreed to a December 3 date for the

fight and the financial split Fury has offered.

"The reason he accepts these terms is he feels this is the only chance he'll get to fight Tyson Fury. So therefore, okay, it would have been better to come off a victory but we're here and [Joshua thinks] I can beat him and I feel good," Hearn said.

"When he drew to Deontay Wilder, we offered Fury the fight against AJ and we offered him 60-40 and he said no and he said I'll only take 50-50. That's one of the reasons I wanted to push back on some of the terms. But in the end it was AJ who overruled and said no just accept it.

"He's always believed he can

beat him."

Hearn has met George Warren, one of Fury's representatives and last Friday accepted their terms in writing. The next step is to receive and review contracts.

"Broadcasters need to have their discussions," Hearn said. "Which I don't think will be a problem. It's actually not that complicated.

"If they're genuine and George tells me they are, then I think the fight will get made," he continued. "I think George feels his instructions are to make the fight. But you just never know with Tyson Fury... Is this a ploy to speed up the Usyk fight, get more money from a site?"



2022 International Pairs winners: (L-R), Bidemi Ojo, International Pairs representative in Nigeria Remi Olukoya and Tall Akar... displaying their trophies

### Ojo, Akar Win International Pairs, to Represent Nigeria in Spain

This year's edition of the annual International Pairs Golf Championship came to a thrilling end at the Golf Section of Ikoyi Club 1938 on Sunday with the pair of Bidemi Ojo and Talal Akar emerging as the overall winner.

The pair grossed a total of 79-stableford points to come tops in the competition.

They opened their game with 40-stableford points to lead the pack on day one and closed with 39-stableford points on the day-two for a total of 79-stableford points over 36-holes to win the competition.

With the victory, the winning pair will enjoy a trip to Spain in November with 5days accommodation in a 5star hotel, where the world final of International

Pairs has been scheduled to hold.

While Ojo and Akar reign supreme over co-contestants, the pair of Babatunde Ori and Anthony Unuavworho also gave a good account of themselves losing by just 3-stableford points to the winner after shooting a total of 76-stableford points.

The team of Walter Olatunde and Tim Maguire came third scoring 75-stableford points while Tim Ayomike and Emmanuel Oluoha were further down on the leaderboard at 75-stableford points.

The pair of Gbenga Ayodele and Norden Thurston completed the top five on the events leaderboard.

Elated by the outcome, Ojo and Akar promise to be worthy representatives at the

world finals, saying both players complemented and encouraged each other well on their way to victory. Guests are welcome to join the winners to Malaga Spain.

Satisfied with the outcome of the competition, International Pairs representative in Nigeria, Remi Olukoya thank the players and corporate organisations that supported the event.

"The success of this event was a result of the organisation that supported us, Gree Air conditioners, GAC Motors, Meristem, Pepsi, Dradrock Real Estate, Iwosan Lagoon Hospital, Admoni, Bon Hotel Nest Bodija, Cadbury, and I want to say a big Thank You to them," Olukoya said.

### Waldrum Calls Oshoala, Ajibade, 20 Others for Japan's Clash

Head Coach Randy Waldrum has called up 22 players of the Super Falcons, among them Rasheedat Ajibade and Asisat Oshoala, for next month's international friendly match against the Senior Women National Team of Japan, Nadeshiko, in Kobe.

The team is dominated by the usual suspects but also welcomes four members of the U20 girls that reached the last

eight at the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in Costa Rica in August.

There are first choice goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie, defenders Osinachi Ohale and Ashleigh Plumpre, midfielders Regina Otu, Halimatu Ayinde and Ngozi Okobi-Okeoghene, and forwards Uchenna Kanu, Gift Monday, Vivian Ikechukwu and Toni Payne.

The match serves as continuation of the Super Falcons' preparations for next year's FIFA Women's World Cup finals in Australia and New Zealand, and comes just weeks after a two-match tour of the United States of America, in which they lost 0-4 and 1-2 to the USWNT.

The match holds at the Noevir Stadium, Kobe on Thursday, October 6.

### Aquatics Federation Promise to Make Nigeria Swimming State

If the plan of the present board of the Nigeria Aquatic Federation comes to fruition Nigeria's swimmers will in the nearest future be competing favourably at the Olympics and other international swimming championship.

Speaking at a press conference organised by the Nigeria Aquatic Federation on coaches and aquatics lifeguard professional course, the President of the Aquatic Federation, Chinoye Aliyu, said the present board of the federation was focused on making the country a swimming state.

"Our focus is to make

Nigeria a swimming state. That is why we are interested in upgrading and re-training our lifeguards," Aliyu said.

"We want to make our waters safe. The national coach will be here from Abuja to interact with our coaches on how to move swimming forward," she stated.

For the chairman technical of the federation, Nseobong Jesimiel, a two-day coaching course would be organised for the coaches.

"The coaching course would last for two days with so many activities lined up. We will be teaching general principles of

swimming with a number of seasoned coaches' lineup," Jesimiel said. Speaking further, the chairman technical said professionals and ex-swimmers to teach about the technicalities of swimming. "We want to lay a good foundation right now. With the help of the new president a strong foundation would have been laid at the conclusion of the seminar.

Participants expected at the course include hotels, schools, swimming pools owners amongst others.

Over 5,000 participants are expected seminar which starts on September 25 to 30.

### Madrid Derby Live on DStv, GOtv

City rivals Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid will go against each other this weekend for matchday 6 of the 2022/23 La Liga season showing on SuperSport.

Diego Simeone's men will host their unbeaten neighbours to the Wanda Metropolitan Stadium on Sunday night. The tie will be broadcast on SuperSport La Liga (DStv channel 204 and GOtv channel 32).

While Los Blancos are currently top of the table, Atletico is currently outside the top four with 10 points. The hosts will be desperate to

end their neighbour's unbeaten run and claim a vital three points to climb higher on the league table.

Before the Madrid neighbours face each other, Barcelona will take on Elche at the Camp Nou Stadium today at 3:15pm. Xavi Hernandez's men had a disappointing outing in Europe during the week and they will be keen to bounce back.

The Catalans have a chance at becoming league leaders this weekend if they secure victory against their opponents and hope that Real Madrid drop points against Atletico on

Sunday night.

Other games to look out for today include Mallorca vs Almeria showing at 1:00pm, Valencia vs Celta Vigo at 5:30pm, Athletic Bilbao vs Rayo Vallecano at 8:00pm. All will broadcast on SuperSport La Liga (DStv channel 204 and GOtv channel 32).

Sunday games include Real Betis vs Girona at 1:00pm, Villarreal vs Sevilla at 3:15pm and Real Sociedad vs Espanyol at 5:30pm. They will broadcast on SuperSport La Liga (DStv channel 204 and GOtv channel 32).

### Iyare, Otabor Win Okunbo @ 60 Golf Tourney

The duo of Osaze Iyare and Deborah Otabor were winners at Kingsley Okunbo @ 60 Invitational Golf Tournament concluded over the weekend at the Benin Club Golf Section, Benin City, Edo State.

The five-day birthday golf tournament was organised by the Committee of Friends led by fmr. BCGS Captain, Ignatius Aigbokhaode in honour of Kingsley Okunbo, a philanthropist, an avid golfer and an apostle of golf development in Edo and in Nigeria.

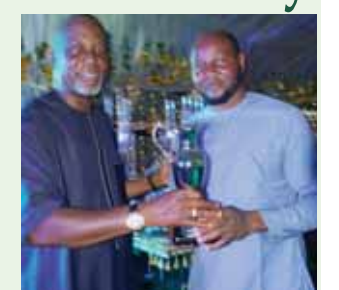
Iyare (hcp 3) last Friday played 68 net thus wrapped-up the game on Saturday with 73 net, and hereby declared winner in the men's hcp 0-18 ahead of former BCGS Captain, Mayer Ologbosere who recorded 153 net while

Jude Igbinador placed third with 155 net. Gen. Oscar Iyare (rtd.) won the best gross award with 171 gross.

Similarly, Otabor prevailed in the ladies hcp 0-28 with 152 net played over two days having beaten Princess Nkeruika Awiaka on count-back while Ehis Igbinador placed third with 156 net.

At the closing ceremony, special guests winners, the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Philip Shaibu and his wife, Maryam and many other guests from across the country showered encomium on the celebrant's and organisers of the event that attracted over 200 golfers.

Other winners were Emmanuel Omofuma in the men's hcp 19-28 with 72 net; Foluso Obo won the ladies hcp 29-36 category with 76



Kingsley Okunbo (left) presenting the overall winner trophy to Osaze Iyare at the Kingsley Okunbo @ 60 Invitational Golf Tournament held at Benin Club Golf Section, Benin City

net; Prof. Josephine Mokwunyei (81 net) and Chief Afam Obanor (74 net) won the veteran men's and ladies respectively. Dr. John Ogbeide (93 net) and Ivie Iyoha (98 net) won the super veteran men's and ladies too.

### Ikhureigbe Triumphs at Obama Kitty Group Challenge

Veteran golfer, Monday Ikhureigbe has emerged first winner of the Obama Kitty Group challenge played over two days with a net score of 150 at the Benin Club Golf Section (BCGS), Benin City, Edo State.

Similarly, Chris Osarumwense won the best gross award with a total of 174 gross played over two days. He recorded 87 gross on day one and day two respectively to emerge winner.

Veteran golfer Ikhureigbe, who played 73 on day one of the kitty challenge finished what he started with another 77 net on day two to emerge winner. He was hereby decorated with the green jacket by the Chairman, Okunbo and assisted by others.

The Obama Kitty was specially organised by the group during the Kingsley Okunbo @ 60 Invitational Golf Tournament to celebrate the founding father of the group, Okunbo whose has tremendously steered the leadership of the group to higher height just as Obama has extended its network of membership to other golf clubs across Nigeria.

However, this kitty group according to the former BCGS Captain, Ignatius Aigbokhaode in his admonition at the closing ceremony of the birthday tournament, noted that the kitty would now become an annual event whereby winners in various categories would be decorated and presented with different trophies and prizes.

Aigbokhaode recalled the forma-

tion of the Obama kitty group that has now become a toast of other kitty groups in the club and beyond.

It could be recalled that members of the kitty group led by Okunbo embarked on foreign trip to golf clubs in Dubai in June and ever since their return to Nigeria, members have been winning trophies and other prizes in the club and beyond.

Other members of the group are His Excellency, Philip Shaibu, Deputy Governor of Edo State; President of Benin Club 1931, Friday Iboi; former Presidents of Benin Club, Peace Anunah, Dr. Matthew Oriakhi; former BCGS Captains, Chief Afam Obanor, Ignatius Aigbokhaode, Prince Aghatise, Mayer Ologbosere amongst others.



Raphael Onyedika battling an opponent for possession

# Raphael Onyedika

## Relishes Super Eagles Debut

His blistering start to the season since dumping Midtjylland for Club Brugge in August has not gone unnoticed as Raphael Onyedika has been rewarded with a Super Eagles call-up for the Nigeria international friendly encounter against Algeria later this month

**W**ith injuries to some senior national team players, Super Eagles Manager, Jose Paseiro handed a first time call-up to three players for the upcoming international friendly against the Desert Foxes of Algeria slated for September 27.

Club Brugge midfielder, Raphael Onyedika have been invited for Nigeria's friendly against the Desert Foxes of Algeria later this month.

The 21-year-old has been in fantastic form for Belgian Pro League champions, Club Brugge since joining from FC Midtjylland this summer and has featured prominently for the Club Brugge since then.

He was in full action as Club Brugge defeated FC Porto in the UEFA Champions League on Tuesday.

The Belgian champions in August announced the completion of the signing of the Nigerian midfielder in a 5-year-deal that would see him stay at the club until 2027.

The 21-year-old defensive midfielder who can also play centrally in the defence had been on the radar of many top European clubs, including Serie A champions AC Milan.

Onyedika joins Club Brugge from Danish side FC Midtjylland where he had been since 2019 as a youth player, before being promoted to the senior team in 2020.

Before confirming the deal, Club Brugge's manager Carl Hoefkens reveals he cannot wait to welcome

Onyedika to the Jan Breydel Stadium.

"I hope to see him (Onyedika) very soon with us, I just want to work with the best players possible. I know his quality, so I'm looking forward to it," Hoefkens said.

The 2022 PulseSports30 star was been a target for Italian champions AC Milan for weeks before the Belgian side joined the race for his signature.

Onyedika had a breakthrough year which saw him become one of the busiest Nigerian performers in Europe last season.

The 21-year-old schemer was an ever feature for the Danish giants in his first senior campaign with them, playing a total of 48 games - scoring four goals and assisting three times across competitions.

He sealed it by leading the club to a Cup win and also won the league's player of the month award for November.

This season, he will look to help Club Brugge defend their league title, as well as qualify them from their UEFA Champions League group where the Belgian side has amassed the six points at stake after victory over Bayer Leverkusen and FC Porto.

Comparing the youngster to French superstar, Paul Pogba did not come to him as a surprise as he looks forward to winning everything.

Onyedika has revealed how he draws inspiration from his Juventus counterpart, Pogba as he looks forward to achieving success with his new side Club Brugge.

The 21-year-old joined the Belgian champions last month in a deal worth €10 million to become Club

Brugge's second most expensive signing this summer.

Plenty of similarities have been drawn between the Super Eagles youngster and the former Manchester United midfielder and Onyedika is not surprised given Pogba is his role model.

"I like to win duels and I am also good with the ball at my feet," he told Belgium's Voetbal Nieuws.

"Personally, I look up to Paul Pogba. A lot of people say we look alike, but I just want to be the best version of myself."

Before signing for the Belgian side, Onyedika had attracted interest from a number of teams, including Serie A champions AC Milan and the player, who can play in a number of midfield roles, says it was an easy choice. "I chose Club Brugge because they are the best team in Belgium and because they want to win everything. I also want to win everything, so that's a good combination. I have also heard that Club Brugge has the best supporters in Belgium," he added.

Onyedika was awarded the Best Young Player Award in Denmark last season after impressing for Midtjylland in the Danish Superliga as well as the Europa League.

The Super Eagles hopeful used to play street football before joining FC Ebedei's academy at the age of 15. After three years in Ebedei, he signed for Midtjylland's academy, an affiliate club to FC Ebedei, shortly after his 18th birthday.

In his first full season in Denmark, he featured in the U19 League and in the Uefa Youth League, his physique, speed and playing style leaving scouts and coaches impressed.

Onyedika made his Club Brugge debut playing 61 minutes as the Belgian champions thrashed local rivals Cercle Brugge 4-0.

It however remains to be seen whether the Portuguese Super Eagles manager would give him playing time against Algeria for his first international debut.

### GLOBAL SOCCER

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KUNLE ADEWALE

### THISDAY ON SATURDAY EDITOR

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# Chummies®



Aunty Maero  
08053069365

**HEY CHUMS!**  
How are you all?  
Do you have a story  
to tell?  
Then, send  
an email to:  
maerozako@yahoo.com



## STRANGE FACTS

...Bees can recognize human faces Honeybees make out faces the same way we do. They take parts- like eyebrows, lips and ears and cobble together to make out the whole face. It's called "configular processing".

## DO YOU BRAINSTORM with your friends?

Laugh! Play! Great! But have you thought of coming up with a big idea? I mean have you had a good chat lately and thought of doing something new? I know Zulu and her friends Tobe Peters and Adebola are coming up with a great idea. It's a secret so I cannot tell but you can brainstorm sometimes!

Brainstorming means sitting around and using your brains. Everyone thinks hard and comes up with stuff.

Take Care,  
Aunty Maero.  
08053069365

**NEVER LET  
YOURSELF  
FEEL  
UGLY!!**

**YOU ARE  
BEAUTIFUL!**

I read about a lot of children who are bullied because of the way they look. Also, sometimes, we do not feel good about certain parts of our body or life. We want to be like other people. I used to feel that way sometimes till I read that God made me in his own image. He made me this way on purpose! God loves you no matter how you look. Be happy. You are beautiful!!  
Read Genesis 1:27 in the bible.

What is  
the best  
**book** you  
have read  
this year?



I have read quite a lot this year! What would life be without good books...or even boring ones? I just love books because we all learn so much! What have you read lately?



# Nairawise Chummies®



**GET INNOVATIVE!!  
EARN SOME NAIRA!!**

**ITS the long holiday soon!!**

I started doing vacation jobs when I was just 14 years old I think My parents would take my brother Efere and my sister Makaino to the teacher's institute in Benin. It was so much fun working there. We were paid some money. It was so exciting. Do you know what we were taught at that time By our parents? We were taught that our first salary was to be handed over to our parents who would pray for us to do well in the future. We were also to give some to our church.

**Every Naira Counts**



**ITS RAINING NOW  
So, ...**

Hey,

How are you all doing?  
Suddenly, I have so many adults asking if they may join the nairawise club. The club is for children only!!  
Thank you,  
Maero.

**Take Care,  
Maero,  
08053069365**

**CHUMMIES GREEN TEAM...SAVE THE EARTH!!**

Did you know?...

That plastic bags and other plastic garbage thrown into the ocean kills as many as a million sea creatures a year. These plastics floating in the sea looks like food to these ocean animals. So, they eat these, choke and die!!

## NAIRAWISE ADVICE

Get innovative!! You could make some money for yourself you know! Try creating something. Since it is Christmas soon why not ask mum or dad nicely to buy you some cardboard and art tools for you to work with. Make those special cards and sell early. Or you may ask mum if you could get lessons in cake-making or sewing. Every NAIRAWISE CHUMMIE must do something new this holiday!

**Don't just try keep books dry!**



Courtesy: Chummies Book Club

# AUTO WORLD

**Bennett Oghifo**

07052343083 Email:bennett.oghifo@thisdaylive.com



Mercedes-Benz Atego truck interior

## TIPS OF THE WEEK

### Complete Guide to Car Dashboard Warning Lights

Your dashboard lights up with lots of symbols each time you start the car, but what do they mean – and what if one stays on?

Cars have a range of dashboard warning lights, such as the oil pressure warning light or engine management light, which are designed to alert you if one of a variety of systems isn't quite right. Many cars show these warning lights briefly when you turn on the ignition, but they should soon go out again. If one or more of these lights stays on once the engine is running, it could be a sign there's something wrong with your car.

You might have noticed that dashboard warning lights can be displayed in various colours: red, amber, green and blue. These usually denote how serious the problem is; blue and green warning lights are less urgent, but we recommend taking the same precautions as you would for more serious warnings because acting sooner rather than later can prevent an issue from getting significantly worse or causing damage to your car. It's best to stop as soon as it's safe to do so and then check the car's manual for further advice before continuing on with your journey.

A low windscreen washer fluid warning light is an example of one of the less urgent and easier-to-fix issues, whereas more serious faults will be displayed with red and amber-coloured warning lights, and should be checked as soon as possible by a professional. This is especially true of any issues relating to the brakes, engine, oil or gearbox because it could put you at danger or cause irreparable damage to your car if it isn't sorted promptly.

The majority of car warning lights are universal for all makes and models of cars, but their location on or around the dashboard can vary. We recommend looking at your car's handbook to check what they all mean. Here we guide you through the most common and important dashboard warning lights you might encounter in your car.

#### Check engine light

If this warning illuminates, it's very important to get your car checked, even if it feels completely normal to drive. This is because it warns of a potential problem with the engine, which you'll want to avoid damaging at all costs.

This light can come on for a very wide range of problems, so while it's likely to be just a faulty sensor or minor issue, a proper diagnosis is critical to prevent potential damage.

#### Oil pressure warning light

Aside from a brake warning light, an oil warning light is one of the most serious warning lights of all, hence it being red. Oil pressure is generated by the oil pump keeping the engine oil circulating and by the quantity of oil in the engine. A leak, a faulty pump or too little (or even too much) oil can cause damage to the engine, very likely resulting in huge repair bills or even a write-off.

(Source: Carbuyer)

## Mercedes-Benz Vans, Rivian Move to Partner on Electric

**M**ercedes-Benz Vans, full range provider of electric private and commercial vans, and electric vehicle manufacturer Rivian, have today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to initiate a strategic partnership. The partnership will enable the companies to cooperate on the production of electric vans.

Rivian exists to create products and services that help our planet transition to carbon neutral energy and transportation. Rivian designs, develops, and manufactures category-defining electric vehicles and accessories and sells them directly to customers in the consumer and commercial markets. Rivian complements its vehicles with a full suite of proprietary, value-added services that address the entire lifecycle of the vehicle and deepen its customer relationships.

Subject to the parties entering into final binding agreements and to obtaining the relevant regulatory clearances, the companies intend to establish a new joint venture manufacturing company with the purpose of investing in, and

operating, a factory in Europe to produce large electric vans for both Mercedes-Benz Vans and Rivian, starting in a few years. The target is to build an all-new electric-only production facility leveraging an existing Mercedes-Benz site in Central/Eastern Europe.

The companies envisage production-optimised vehicle designs for efficient manufacturing on common assembly lines. They will aim to produce two large vans, one based on VAN.EA (MB Vans Electric Architecture), the electric-only platform of Mercedes-Benz Vans, and the other based on the second generation electric-van, Rivian Light Van (RLV) platform. Further options for increased synergies from the joint venture will also be explored.

The joint venture mirrors the common objectives of Mercedes-Benz Vans and Rivian: both companies plan to rapidly scale the production of electric vans to help the world transition to cleaner transportation. By working together, they will be able to leverage operations synergies and substantially increase cost efficiency to help make the vans more affordable for commercial customers driven by total cost of ownership.

RJ Scaringe, Chief Executive Officer of Rivian:

"Rivian was created to encourage the world to transition away from fossil fuel consumption by creating compelling products and services. We're delighted to be partnering with Mercedes-Benz on this project. Mercedes-Benz is one of the world's best known and respected automotive companies, and we believe that together we will produce truly remarkable electric vans which will not only benefit our customers, but the planet."

Mathias Geisen, Head of Mercedes-Benz Vans: "As a pioneer in the field of locally emission-free transportation Mercedes-Benz Vans has gained broad experience in producing and launching eVans since 2010. Now we are accelerating the transformation to a fully electric product portfolio. From 2025 onwards, all vans based on our new architecture VAN.EA will be electric-only. I am delighted that as part of this transformation we are now joining forces with Rivian - a highly dynamic and inspiring partner with a strong technology position. We are sharing investments and technology because we also share the same strategic ambition: accelerating the electrification of the van market with sustainable and superior products for our customers."

## Ford Introduces Mustang Dark Horse

**W**ith sinister looks and a specially modified 5.0-liter V8 – the most powerful 5.0-liter V8 ever, projecting 500 horsepower – Mustang Dark Horse expands the lineup and sets a new benchmark for American street and track performance that could only come in a Mustang.

A statement by the automaker said a special team of Ford engineers, designers and experts worked for more than three years to create Mustang Dark Horse, a street and track-capable performance Mustang with striking visual cues and all the capability sports car lovers expect, right down to the available carbon fiber wheels from Carbon Revolution (late availability). Mustang Dark Horse is the first new performance name for the brand since Mustang Bullitt was introduced in 2001.

"For decades, Mustang has competed against the most premium brands on the greatest world stages and won," said Jim Farley, CEO of Ford Motor Company. "We surprised everyone, and we're going to surprise them again with a track-capable Mustang that puts a new level of performance, styling and American engineering in the hands

of everyday customers who still want the thrill and excitement of a V8 sports car."

Unique 5.0-liter V8 with Even More Athletic Performance

The foundation for Mustang Dark Horse starts with the all-new 2024 Mustang, which has been transformed with a digitally immersive cockpit, new engines and styling to make it the most exhilarating and fun-to-drive Mustang ever.

"We've taken the all-new Mustang, the best of our new 5.0-liter V8 performance, and added power, improved the aero, tires, steering and provided an interactive cockpit to create a Mustang that goes beyond any 5.0-liter Mustang before it," said Ed Krenz, Ford Mustang chief nameplate engineer.

The heart of Mustang Dark Horse is its unique 5.0-liter Coyote V8 engine, specially modified with piston connecting rods first introduced in the 760-horsepower Ford Performance Mustang Shelby GT500. Mustang Dark Horse will deliver the highest level of performance in the all-new Mustang family.

Visually differentiated from any 5.0-liter V8 before it, Mustang Dark Horse includes a dual throttle-body intake design to improve engine breathing, accentuated by the open nostrils in the front grille.



Ford Mustang Dark Horse

## AUTO WORLD

# Toyota Hilux Gets a Tundra Face Transplant by Japanese Tuner

The eighth-gen Toyota Hilux has been around since 2015 and despite two consecutive facelifts in 2017 and in 2020 it has started showing its age in terms of styling. For those who would like a visual refresh, Japanese tuner GMG Double Eight is offering a custom bodykit that makes the Hilux look like a clone of the larger and considerably newer Tundra.

Surprisingly for an aftermarket job, the visual upgrades could be mistaken for another facelift, with the lines of the Tundra looking quite nice on the Hilux.

The highlight of the bodykit is the redesigned front fascia, sending Tundra vibes. It includes a massive octagon grille with a honeycomb pattern, a black skid plate, GR-style Toyota lettering, and three yellow marker lights making the Hilux look like a full-size pickup. The new vertically-positioned bumper intakes are connected with the stock headlights, while a cosmetic hood scoop is mounted on the stock

bonnet.

The rest of the bodywork remains largely unchanged, with the exception of the wide fender add-ons. Those are body-colored with stamped elements to make them look more rugged. The pictured vehicle is also fitted with a new set of deadlock alloy wheels shod in grippy A/T tires and quite possibly a lift kit, further improving its visual appeal and off-road credentials.

There are no mechanical changes, which means that the Toyota Hilux retains its stock 2.4-liter turbodiesel with 147 hp (110 kW / 150 PS) in JDM-spec, or the 2.8-liter turbodiesel with 201 hp (150 kW / 204 PS) elsewhere in the world. We guess that the bodykit is compatible with all Hilux variants, including the GR Sport.

The cost for the upgrades is ¥235,000 (\$1,630) for the front bumper, ¥5,000 (\$35) for the grille's inner mesh, ¥8,000 (\$55) for the yellow marker lights, ¥95,000 (\$659) for the fender add-ons, and ¥58,000 (\$402) for the bonnet scoop.



Toyota Hilux with Tundra face

# Volkswagen Presents All-electric ID. XTREME01 Off-road Concept Car



Volkswagen all-electric ID. XTREME concept car

Volkswagen has presented the ID. XTREME an exceptional off-road concept car that will generate an enthusiastic response among the many electric mobility fans at the event.

The automaker said the fully electric concept car with all-wheel drive system is based on the ID.4 GTX and combines the strengths of a modern SUV with the sense of adventure embodied by a rugged off-road vehicle.

The ID. XTREME01 from Volkswagen stands for maximum emotion and a desire for adventure. The concept vehicle was created by the team of Andreas Reckewerth (Head of overall vehicle MEB) in the Volkswagen Development department. "The modular electric drive matrix (MEB) has enormous technical potential," says Silke Bagschik, Head of the MEB Product Line. "For many of our customers, vehicles are much more than just a means of transport. With the ID. XTREME, we are raising electric mobility from VW to a new performance level." The result of the project is a unique off-road vehicle that impresses with its rugged appearance and outstanding power. A high-performance drive on the rear axle and software adaptations in the drive control unit increase the system

power of the concept car by 65 kW to 285 kW compared with the ID.4 GTX02 – in other words, by about 30 percent. "The ID. XTREME is made by enthusiasts at Volkswagen for ID. enthusiasts here in Locamo. We are really eager to find out how the fans of electromobility react to the vehicle. Based on the feedback from our community, we will decide how to proceed with the project," adds Silke Bagschik.

The exterior of the VW ID. XTREME01 also shows that the vehicle is ready for every off-road adventure. Raised rally running gear, 18-inch off-road wheels, a modified crash member with additional front bumper, and 50 mm-wider wings manufactured by 3D printing combine to give the concept vehicle an authentic off-road look. The roof carrier with additional LED lights and the completely closed aluminium underbody also equip the fully electric all-wheel drive vehicle for excursions away from paved roads.

Acoustically also, the ID. XTREME01 has something special to offer: the driving noise was developed together with Volkswagen Design especially for the concept vehicle and is output to the outside via a sound generator in the wheel housing. In the interior, the concept car impresses with various highlights, including numerous Alcantara applications, revamped seats and elements in the accent colour orange.

## FRSC @ 34

Twenty six years ago, I ported. I bid farewell to the pen business. The Federal Road Safety Corps was God's destination for me. It has been 26 years of colorful and eventful career, culminating in impactful programmes such as Oga Driver, an interactive road safety programme on Aso Radio. Within these periods, I have been honored to man positions such as Sector Commander of the Federal Capital Territory and Lagos as well as two time spokesperson of the Corps. There were others.

This piece is not about me. It is about the Federal Road Safety Commission. On 18th February, 2022, the Commission clocked 34. To mark the feat, we clinked glasses and rolled the red carpets for 34 years of fighting several battles to stay afloat in the business of begging motorists not to commit suicide.

Before 1988 when we were established, we competed with Ethiopia on who clinched the medal as the nation with the worst roads to travel. Ethiopia floored us by clinching the gold medal. We got the silver medal for having roads barely described as slaughter ground for human beings to travel. That was our story when we were born. Apathy among road users was a problem. Even among the government and the private sector, the buy in was epileptic. The agency was not the preferred place for young and inspiring Nigerians; the juicy Ministries were in the thing. Infrastructure was not as good as it should be.

The road travelled within this period has been rough, thorny and traumatic sometimes. Yet, FRSC has made more than passing impact on the life of Nigerian road users. In 2010 when the World Bank came calling after our poor rating, their song changed. It recommended the Corps as a best model in lead agency in Africa. Today FRSC is a member of the UN Expert Group on Road Signs and Signals. We are the fourth law enforcement agency in the world to have its processes certified in conformity to the Quality Management System (with NIS ISO 9001:2008 in Road Safety Administration and Safety



### SAFE DRIVING

with  
Jonas Agwu

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

Management). Within the Sub-region, FRSC has played prominent roles in birthing and sustaining the West African Road Safety Organization (WARSO).

There are other leadership roles. They include bringing road safety consciousness into the process of policy making and implementation in government and the private sector, professionalism of the road transportation sector as well as mainstreaming of road safety activities in Nigeria. In partnership with other players in keeping with the United Nations charge to government, the Corps midwife the formation and adoption of a National Road Safety Strategy for Nigeria and encouraged the adoption of non-motorized transportation policy as well as established the National Road Traffic observatory which has harmonised all road safety related data in Nigeria.

In the words of the World bank, FRSC has elevated the efficiency of the emergency post-crash care in Nigeria and pioneered the use of three digit (122) toll-free emergency number in Nigeria and recently the use of body cam as well as an operational control center that has enhanced policing our roads. The Corps currently boast of the highest number of ambulances in the country which has caused the Ministry of Health to co opt the Corps into the National Emergency Medical System and Emergency

Ambulance Scheme (NEMSAS)

The commission's campaigns have helped in reducing the carnage on our roads and have made travelling by road, especially during festive periods like Sallah and Christmas, less of a nightmare. So, all factors considered, the investment has been worth it and the creation of the FRSC by the General Ibrahim Babangida regime can easily be justified.

The FRSC institutional vision aimed at eradicating road traffic crashes and creating a safe motoring environment received great fillip under its helmsmen such as past Corps Marshals, Major General Anthony Hananiya, Osita Chidoka, Boboye Oyeyemi among others. Hananiya brought in his military flavor to up the Agency' profile, Osita went beyond routine administration to focus on the international profile of the agency, institutional capacity building and operational effectiveness. Oyeyemi built on these foundations. Today we have a commission with globally acknowledged templates for measurable impact and service outcomes. This is no accident, but the result of a clear institutional focus on operations, people and processes.

Thirty four years after, there is increased FRSC presence on the highways with over a thousand formation comprising Zonal,

Sector commands as well as unit and outpost while station offices have been set up to address gaps in data collections. The toll-free telephone number 122 for road traffic emergencies has created a seamless communication gateway between the commission and the motoring public, shoring up early reportage of road crashes. The implementation of international vehicle transit charged at selected Nigerian Border posts has also enhanced safety and co-ordination of trans-border movement.

This is in addition to the "One Driver One Record" initiative, which allows for tracking and matching a driver with his driver license, vehicle number plate, insurance and traffic offences in a single view. Meanwhile, the order and control in motor vehicle

administration and vehicle insurance management from the FRSC have improved collaboration among security agencies.

The Commission has made great investments in human capital development and has used mostly modern, merit-based templates for staff recruitment. This has gone hand in hand with enhanced staff welfare and improved service delivery. Today we have a Nigerian road user that is better able to appreciate best global safety practice; including the need for private sector and government involvement in road safety issues.

The on-going robust public advocacy on road crash reduction and intensive routine patrols are fully complemented by effective rescue service; with optimal utilisation of IT and re-alignment of operational strategies. The Commission also now has an improved process that promotes transportation safety regulation, through the Road Transport Safety Standardisation Scheme (RTSS). This scheme regulates fleet operators having a minimum of five vehicles, with records showing that; 2,445 operators are registered, 9,955 operators are inspected and 6362 operators certified while 3,593 failed certification exercise.

The improved buy-in from fleet operators, robust stakeholders' engagement and enhanced safety standards has created a better interface between road use managers and fleet owners.

While we commend the FRSC for its string of successes, beginning with the firm foundation laid by Pro. Soyinka and Dr. Olu Agunloye, and mindful of the fact that the Commission was able to convince the National Assembly and the general public on the need for the upgrade of the National Drivers Licence and Number Plates, we believe the fees and charges should be reviewed downwards. It is However, on record that the features introduced in the upgrade license scheme has secured Nigerian reciprocity with six European countries and the state of Maryland in the USA.

# Jumia Kicks Off 'Brand Festival' Campaign

Pan-African e-commerce platform, Jumia has announced the kick-off of its annual "brand festival" campaign, an initiative aimed at promoting authentic products at the best prices directly from the manufacturers on the Jumia platform.

According to the organisation, the campaign offers millions of consumers nationwide the opportunity to buy original products from renowned brands such as Adidas, Samsung, Infinix, Umidigi and Nivea, amongst others.

Shedding more light on the campaign, Chief Commercial Officer of Jumia Nigeria, Ijeoma Arum stated that the brand festival transcends promoting authentic products, to connecting consumers to manufacturers for the best deal.

"We are aware of the needs of today's consumers, which is to gain quality goods at the most competitive market prices and that is the essence of this campaign. We have partnered with the best international brands to make their products accessible to consumers across the country, so consumers can spend less while buying more.

"Partnering with Jumia is always an opportunity to co-create on providing customers with amazing offers on innovative mobile and electronics products which Samsung is best known for, both locally and globally.

Manager of e-commerce Group, Samsung Electronics West & Central Africa, Oyebade Moses, said, "With the current economic situation, it is imperative to ensure that customers are still able to access basic commodities that have a significant impact on their daily activities. The Brand Festival is set to provide this and we are happy to be a part of it."

Arum urged consumers to take advantage of the amazing offers of the festival that will wrap up by October 2.

She added, "The campaign will feature Treasure Hunt, Brand Days, Daily Check-In, and Flash Sales, where consumers can win exciting prizes and get further discounts on a number of products. The campaign is also providing free shipping on a wide range of products to consumers within Lagos, Abuja, and Ibadan".



Coordinator of the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, Branislav Hock; Global President of the Association of Forensic Accounting Researchers (AFAR), Prof. Godwin Oyedokun; Director of the Centre for Counter Fraud Studies, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Prof. Mark Button and a member of AFAR and scholar at the University of Portsmouth, Adegunju Adeyombo Gbenga during AFAR's understudy visit to the University of Portsmouth in United Kingdom...recently

## TTSWG Announces New Board Appointments

Nigerian pro-technology and non-governmental organisation, Telecommunication and Technology Sustainability Working Group (TTSWG) has restructured its board with new key appointments.

The TTSWG focuses on sustainability through best practices in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

According to the group, the board consists of eminent personalities with a proven track record within the telecommunication and technology industries.

The new board is chaired by Engr. Abdu-Waya Mohammed, who is also the Head Strategy at FCT Internal Revenue Service.

Others members of the board included Vice-Chairperson, Dr (Mrs) Wunmi Hassan who is also the President/CEO of High-Tech Centre for

Nigerian Women and Youth; Iklmatu Abubakar Ramallan, Founder/CEO of IQRAM & IRA Technologies; Dr Chris Uwaje, Chair, Mobile Software Solutions Ltd; and Prof. Francis Idachaba, professor of Communication Engineering at the Covenant University.

Mohammed is a technology specialist with over 30 years of experience in both academics and industry. He also serves on the National Broadband Steering Committee of the NCC.

Hassan, an IT professional per excellence evaluated Nigeria's Information Technology Policy of 2001 in her PhD research with her result as a major input to the reform and convergence of the major ICT institutions in the country, thereby culminating in a Communications Technology Ministry in Nigeria today.



L-R :Social Development Specialist, World Bank, Dr. Yetunde Fatogun; Deputy Director, Policy Innovation Centre (PIC), Dr. Osasuyi Dirisu; State Coordinator and Policy Advisor, Deutsche GIZ, Stephen Bamidele Dada; and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Dr. Jumoke Adeyeye, at the second leg of the Certificate Course in Gender and Development organised by the PIC in Abuja... recently

## Spring of Life, New Horizons Promote Tech Skills among Youths

Frontline Information Technology training outfit, New Horizons Nigeria has pledged support towards the development of technology skills among Nigerian youths.

The organisation made this known at the graduation ceremony of the newly certified Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA-certified) students in Enugu, recently.

The MTA-certification programme is being powered by New Horizons, a frontline global IT training company with presence in over 80 countries of the world.

The new certified students emerged from Spring of Life and Fountain of Wisdom School, which has New Horizon as its IT consultant.

Speaking at the ceremony, Founder/Director of the school, Mrs. Stella Adibe described the school's latest achievement as a demonstration of the school's commitment to boosting technology skills among students, stressing that the school has lived up to its billing as front-row IT-driven School.

She expressed fulfillment at the institution's partnership with New Horizons, which recently

produced the new 20 MTA certified students.

On his part, MD/CEO of New Horizons Nigeria, Mr. Tim Akano pledged continuous support to make the school an epitome of IT-driven institution in the 21st century.

Also speaking, General Manager of New Horizons, Northern Region expressed that Enugu and Nigeria at large boast sharp and focused youths who will emerge as Nigeria's industry captains, and become entrepreneurial giants like Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Mack Zuckerberg and Google Boys, amongst others.

He said, "Being certified as a Microsoft Technology Associate demonstrates that these students have laid a solid foundation for their information technology career and that they have built the skills needed to get the most out of any organisation even at a developmental stage.

"It means that they have been convincingly positioned with their skills to bail the country out of its total dependence on oil and become an IT-driven country like India, China, Singapore and Malaysia that are presently dominating the world's lucrative IT market".

## Terawork Charts Path for Work Place Progress

Online freelance marketplace Terawork has addressed various challenges mitigating against productive workplace at the just concluded "BeyondWork" programme.

The "BeyondWork" initiative was launched in furtherance of the company's mission to continually provide growth opportunities for professionals in Africa.

The event hosted some of Nigeria's finest freelancers and intellectual professionals to address issues in the workplace and also featured health-conscious actions such as medical investigations, diagnosis, consultations, and a warm-up session with popular vocalist, Yinka Davies.

Speaking, Chief Executive Officer of the organisation, Femi Taiwo affirmed that beyond connecting workers to the next gig, the organisation was committed to creating safe and borderless community for workers.

He said, "We want to let them do the jobs they are passionate about and in good health, getting the right support and timely rewards and fulfillment for their sweats, and truly creating wealth. For our customers, it can't just be about hiring and managing talents, but getting values for every dime spent on talent and truly growing their enterprises and our economy, regardless of the 'japa' syndrome."

"The 'BeyondWork' initiative also aimed to help freelancers gain a broader view of the role of their health in their career and economic advancement. Our long-term goal is to take outsourcing to the next level by offering a robust platform that matches customers with the most suitable freelancers for their job offers.

Commenting further, Davies said, "BeyondWork is about finding a cause to believe in and truly live for after the routine grind we find ourselves in that has never given us satisfaction."

## Firm Holds Seminar for Education Stakeholders

The Management of Caleb Group of School has said that it would be engaging stakeholders across the education sector in the country in a virtual seminar to chart a path for development in the sector.

Specifically, the Director of the school, Dr Ola Adebogun stated that the idea of the seminar was inspired by the increasing rate of moral decadence and sexual immorality among students in secondary schools.

Adebogun stated that the seminar would gather parents, teachers, school administrators, government officials as well as representatives of educational institutions and agencies to brainstorm and proffer solution to the scourge.

He explained that the programme would also address the issue of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions all over the country.


According to him, codes for participating

in the seminar will be communicated across various media platforms.

He said, "Guidelines for participation include strict adherence to civility and decency in use of language, clear and consistent use of accurate facts and figures and deliberate avoidance of insinuations and innuendoes.

"It should be noted that the seminar should not be used as an avenue to settle old scores or unduly lambast public office holders, just as aspersions on individuals and organisations will not be tolerated.

"We shall reason and research presentations that can illuminate the search for practical solutions to the ugly trend of sexual perversion among college children. Communicate will be issued at the end of the seminar and forwarded to relevance policy makers for necessary actions."



**Celebration  
of Life**

MRS  
**GIK**  
GRACE IYABODE KOSEMANI  
**OSUNKOYA**  
1949-2022  
OUR GEM STEPS INTO GLORY

The Family of Pa Joseph Oladapo Osunkoya from Ijebu Ode regrets to announce the death of our wife, mother, grandmother, great academic and philanthropist, Mrs Grace Iyabode Kosemani Osunkoya.

←—————→

**SERVICE OF SONGS**  
Tuesday, 27th September, 2022 Time: 6 pm  
At Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 12/18 Alafia street, Ilasamaja, Mushin.

**WAKE KEEPING & NIGHT OF TRIBUTES**  
Thursday 29th September, 2022 Time: 6:00pm prompt  
At Euphoria Event Place, 1b Archdeacon Ogunbiyi Close Off Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja

**FUNERAL SERVICE**  
Friday 30th September, 2022 Time: 10:00 am prompt  
At Bishop Ajayi Crowther Memorial Anglican Church (BACMAC),  
1st Avenue, 12 Road, Gowon Estate, Egbeda, Lagos.

Interment Follows @ The Vaults and Gardens Ikoyi (*Only for immediate Family*)

←—————→

**SURVIVED BY:**  
Loving Husband, children and grandchildren.

## PERSPECTIVE

## ASUU Acting against its Constitution, National Interest

Leonard Karshima Shilgba

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is one of the trade unions operating in many public universities in Nigeria. It comprises of voluntarily registered members who have been offered appointments in the universities which classify them as "academic staff". According to the Trade Union Act (2005), membership of trade unions in Nigeria is voluntary, and no staff shall be victimized for refusing to join, or for pulling out of a trade union.

Public universities consist of teaching/research staff, non-teaching staff, and students (who are the reason for the employment of university staff, and who, being the primary customers of the universities, should remain the focus of the activities of the staff). No single trade union in the public universities should act in a way that suggests, or gives the impression that they are representatives of the "university system", or champions of the "interests" of those universities.

Without any doubt, the Trade Union Act of Nigeria (2005) provides a clear definition of "Trade Union":

Section 1(1) of the Trade Union Act defines a trade union as "any combination of workers or employers whether temporary or permanent, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of employment of workers, whether the combination in question would or would not, apart from this Act (i.e. if this Act had not been enacted) be an unlawful combination by reason of any of its purposes being in restraint of trade, and whether its purposes do or do not include the provision of benefits for its member".

In plain English and rational interpretation, a trade union in Nigeria is registered for the purpose of protecting the "terms and conditions of employment" of its members, which, except for the registration (with the Registrar of Trade Unions) would render such trade union ineffective in this regard. In fact, Section 2 of the Trade Union Act agrees with this position:

**Section 2:**

(1) A trade union shall not perform any act in furtherance of the purposes for which it has been formed unless it has been registered under this Act:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall prevent a trade union from taking any steps (including the collection of subscription or dues) which may be necessary for the purpose of getting the union registered.

(2) Where a trade union registered under this Act ceases to be so registered, it shall not thereafter perform any act in furtherance of its purposes:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall prevent a trade union from taking steps which may be necessary for the purpose of dissolving the union.

(3) If any act that is prohibited by subsection (1) or (2) of this section, is performed by a trade union, then—

(a) the union and every official thereof; and  
(b) any member thereof who, not being an official thereof, took any active part in the performance of that act, shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.

Taking into account all of the above provisions of section 2 of the Trade Union Act, whether or not ASUU displays in the public its certificate of subsisting registration, we may assume that ASUU is a trade union, whose activities are regulated by the Trade Union Act, otherwise, it would be unthinkable that the Federal Government of Nigeria would allow ASUU to operate.

Having established that ASUU, as a registered trade union, exists to "regulate the terms and conditions of employment" of its members, let us consider the legal definition of the phrase "terms and conditions of employment":

As published on Investopedia by Carol M. Kopp (2021), reviewed by Thomas J. Catalano, and fact-checked by Katrina Munichello, "Terms of employment refer to the responsibilities and benefits associated with a job as agreed upon by an employer and employee at the time of hiring. These terms, which may also be referred to as conditions of employment, generally include job responsibilities, work hours, dress code, time off the job, and starting salary. This may also include benefits such as health insurance, life insurance, and retirement plans." (Emphasis is mine)

There is no employment law I have seen which contradicts the definition of "terms of employment" above, and it would be interesting if ASUU could provide a contradictory definition.

The terms and conditions of employment were clearly set out in the appointment letters of each member of ASUU, and each of them provided a written letter of acceptance before commencement of work



Ngige

at their universities. If their employer violates those terms and conditions, as a trade union, ASUU would be doing the right thing in taking legal steps to protect those terms and conditions. I must point out that in the appointment letters issued to ASUU members at the time of hiring, no provision was made regarding by what payment means or technology their salaries would be paid; and it is trite that an employee cannot dictate to the employer those means.

Furthermore, in the appointment letters issued members of ASUU, it is not stated that any of them would be engaged or consulted in the funding of their universities. Is it not bizarre that ASUU would take seriously any university funding "agreements" it has purportedly signed with the Federal Government when ASUU has no legal standing to assume a negotiator role on behalf of federal universities, which consist of many employees who are not members of ASUU?

In fact, there are many staff of federal universities who belong to no trade union at all! How were such staff members represented when those "agreements" were forged and signed? Who negotiated and signed on behalf of this class of university employees? How binding are such "agreements" then? It is indubitable that ASUU does not have the mandate to negotiate on behalf of Nigerian public universities (federal or state). And if ASUU members think otherwise, they should provide the documented evidence.

ASUU, as a trade union was not registered as a Governing Arm or Superintendent of public universities,

nor as the Chief Negotiator with the owner of federal universities for the funding of those universities in Nigeria. ASUU members may provide contrary information, and also cite provisions in the Trade Union Act of Nigeria which empower trade unions to negotiate with their employers the funding or financing of the companies, industries, or organizations they work for.

Can you imagine employees of Dangote Cement Company, for instance, negotiating with the company's management on how many billions of naira the company must set aside every year to fund the company, and going on strike, shutting down the company for several months, and claiming they are doing this to "save the company's operating system"? ASUU needs to re-examine its constitution side-by-side with the Trade Union Act, to see if its actions are for the advancement of the socio-economic and cultural interests of Nigeria.

One of the objects of ASUU is "protection and advancement of the socio-economic and cultural interests of the nation". In view of this, I pose the following questions:

How does ASUU keeping Nigerian students out of their classrooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, and libraries for about one full academic session (and still counting) protect and advance the socio-economic and cultural interests of the nation?

The Nigerian economy is presently in dire straits, with a budget deficit of over N3 trillion in the current

financial year (no thanks to the naira-guzzling fuel subsidy, for which more than N4 trillion has been budgeted), reduced foreign exchange earnings, and dwindling real incomes of Nigerians in both public and private sectors. Yet, the federal government has offered ASUU salary increases as follows: 35% salary increase for the professorial cadre and 23.5% for other ranks, which, for instance, would make a professor at the bar (CONUASS 7/10), whose present monthly gross salary is above N550,000, to earn above N550,000 x 1.35 = N742,500 as monthly gross salary. ASUU calls this "peanuts", and, unapologetically and without empathy for their students (whom they claim to be "fighting for"), keeps the universities indefinitely shut.

How does this action by ASUU protect and advance the socio-economic and cultural interests of the nation, while students, parents, landlords, and other businesses which rely on university operations for survival are groaning, even as workers are being laid off by such businesses? Let us also consider that the Federal Government, while offering these salary increases to ASUU, has not said anything yet about her other civil servants, whose children ASUU has forced to stay out of the campuses, with withering financial consequences upon them. Where is ASUU's respect for its published Object (viii)?

ASUU tells the Federal Government, "You must pay us for all the months we have been on strike." In response, the Federal Government refers ASUU to section 43(1)(a) of the Trade Dispute Act (TDA), which states as follows: "Where any worker takes part in a strike, he shall not be entitled to any wage or other remunerations for the period of the strike, and any such period shall not count for the purpose of reckoning the period of continuous employment, and all rights dependent on the continuity of employment shall be prejudicially affected accordingly."

Yet, ASUU, which often cites its "agreements signed freely (as if ASUU doesn't, metaphorically, put a gun to the head of the Federal Government with crushing strikes) by the Federal Government", disrespects, ignores, and mocks this provision, and insists that the Federal Government break the law in order to pay them for work not done.

Do ASUU members give scores to students for academic work not done (Maybe some do for some untoward reasons)? ASUU is telling the Federal Government to take our taxpayers' money and give to certain workers for service not rendered to the taxpayers. How should the Federal Government give account to us who faithfully pay our taxes; and how would such violation of the law protect and advance the socio-economic and cultural interests of the nation?

ASUU objects include "such other objects as are lawful and are not inconsistent with the spirit and practice of trade unionism." (Emphases are mine) Object (ix) Is ASUU compelling the Federal Government to violate a provision of the TDA lawful? What is the "spirit of unionism"; is it disrespect for the laws of the land? The "spirit of trade unionism" (at least in Nigeria) cannot possess and incite members of trade unions to act outside the purpose of trade unions, clearly set forth in section 1(1) of the Trade Union Act of Nigeria.

The ASUU has increasingly taken up roles not defined either in the Trade Union Act of Nigeria or its constitution. Its members assume the latitude of boundless interpretations of its roles; and seeing that no strong challenges have come against them, and thereby becoming increasingly emboldened by this festival of silence, ASUU has arrogated to itself variegated responsibilities, including Dictators of funding of public universities and General Superintendents of public universities.

The Federal Government has allowed ASUU to transform itself into a chimera that has become an obstacle to the growth of Nigeria's public university system. ASUU, having unabashedly departed from its objects, which formed part of its registration with the Registrar of Trade Unions, has become part of the problem with Nigeria's public university system.

It has become too militarized, and this reflects in the language of ASUU members. It is time for the Federal Government to give full expression to the implementation of the laws setting up each of its universities. The governing council of each federal university is its employer, and the Federal Government must hands off and let the real governing work of federal universities begin. Until this is done, federal universities, instead of operating as centers of teaching, learning and research, shall continue on the ruinous path as battlegrounds of trade unionism, where academic staff compete for national prominence, not on account of intellectual dexterity, but on vocal leadership of trade unions.

shilgba@yahoo.com @Shilgba

**The terms and conditions of employment were clearly set out in the appointment letters of each member of ASUU, and each of them provided a written letter of acceptance before commencement of work at their universities. If their employer violates those terms and conditions, as a trade union, ASUU would be doing the right thing in taking legal steps to protect those terms and conditions. I must point out that in the appointment letters issued to ASUU members at the time of hiring, no provision was made regarding by what payment means or technology their salaries would be paid; and it is trite that an employee cannot dictate to the employer those means**

## SPORTS XTRA



Chidera Ejuke's brilliance not enough to earn Hertha Berlin three points against Mainz

## Ejoke's Brilliance Not Enough to Earn Hertha Berlin All Three Points

Super Eagles forward Chidera Ejuke supplied the assist for Lucas Tousart's goal for Hertha Berlin, but a stoppage-time goal from Anthony Caci ensured Mainz snatched a 1-1 draw at Mewa Arena.

Hertha Berlin picked a crucial point against Bayer Leverkusen at the

Olympiastadion last week, and they looked to do one better when they traveled to Mainz who were coming off a 4-1 bashing at Hoffenheim.

Super Eagles forward got the nod to start his fifth consecutive game for Die Alte Dame.

The 24-year-old needed just thirty minutes to reward his manager for his trust. Ejuke sent a long raking pass

onto the head of Lucas Tousart, who made no mistake from close range and fired home to make it 1-0 for the away side.

Hertha Berlin maintained a strong front, holding out for most of the game. Ejuke had a good display, putting himself about as usual. The CSKA Moscow loanee has 43 touches in the game before he was taken off for

Peter Pekarik in the 83rd minute.

Unfortunately for Hertha Berlin, they could not hold on to their one-goal lead. Substitute Caci capitalized on a defensive lapse from Hertha Berlin and produced a superb effort that beat Oliver Christensen in the Alte Dame goal to ensure it ended 1-1 at the Mewa Arena.

### Nigerian Descent, Boniface Gets England Call-up

Another Chelsea player of Nigerian descent has received a call-up to an England youth team ahead of international matches this month.

According to Chelsea insider, Chelsea Youth, via Twitter, Blues Academy starlet Somto Boniface has been named in the latest England U17 squad.

A defender by trade, Boniface is the second Anglo-Nigerian player in Chelsea's ranks in contention to add to his international caps at youth level for England, the other being 2022 European U19 champion Carney Chukwuemeka, who has been named in England U20 squad.

The 2017 U17 world champions are participating in the Syrenka Cup, which takes place in Warsaw, Poland.

Boniface has already been capped by the Young Lions at U17 level, making his debut for the age group in a friendly against Scotland last February, after starring for the U16s.

The 16-year-old, who can play as a left-back or left wingback, has totaled eight appearances in the U18 Premier League.

First year scholar Boniface has been on the books of Chelsea since U9 level.

### Akpala Appointed Coach of Belgian Side, KV Kortrijk

Former Super Eagles and Sporting Charleroi forward, Joseph Akpala has joined Belgian club, KV Kortrijk as an assistant coach.

The Belgian club made the announcement on its official website yesterday.

"Joseph Akpala started his Belgian striker career at Sporting Charleroi, where he won the top scorer title

in 2008. He then scored 56 goals in 168 games for Club Brugge. After passages in Germany and Turkey, Akpala was also active in Belgium at KV Oostende," the club said in a statement.

"Today Jimmy & Joseph strengthen the staff of Adnan Custovic as assistant trainers, after the departure of Bart Meert & Damien

Januel.

"The full technical staff now consists of: Adnan Custovic (T1), Joseph Akpala (assistant), Jimmy Hempte (assistant), Gunter Van Handenhoven (assistant), Gérard Lifondja (physical coach), Patrick Deman (goalkeeper coach) & Jelmer Platteeuw (video analyst) "Welcome, Joseph &

Jimmy!"

Akpala scored one goal for Nigeria in an international friendly match against France in 2009.

The 36-year-old former Club Brugge forward thrived in the Belgian league and is expected to contribute his quota to the development of players at the club.

### Shehu Abdullahi Joins Bulgarian Giants Levski Sofia

The Super Eagles midfielder, Shehu Abdullahi has joined Bulgarian Premier League side, Levski Sofia. Abdullahi announced his new club on Twitter yesterday, months after he left Cypriot club, Omonia Nicosia. He has been a free agent and unattached in the last three months.

Levski Sofia are one of Bulgaria's biggest clubs, having

played in the Champions League in the past. The club has also won 72 trophies including 26 national league titles.

"I'm honoured to join this great team, PFC Levski.

"The club has got great history & one of the oldest in the country. "I want to be part of the club's history and win titles.

"I'm excited and I can't wait to get going. Looking forward

to an amazing experience with this amazing group."

He'll be looking forward to helping the Blues have a decent outing in the First Professional Football League and the Bulgarian cup.

Levski Sofia are currently in ninth place, having accrued a total of 15 points from seven games.

Abdullahi's career has seen

him play in Kuwait, Portugal, Cyprus, Turkey and now Bulgaria. He was a member of the CHAN team that came third in 2014 and was also a member of the Super Eagles 2018 World Cup squad.

The former Kano Pillars star now joins Richard Eromoiye and Sunday Adeniji as some of the Nigerians to play for Levski Sofia.

### Fulham Compound Forest's Woes in Five-goal Thriller

Manager Marco Silva said there are still "a lot of fights ahead" despite Fulham producing a thrilling comeback win over Nottingham Forest at the City Ground.

Fulham scored three goals in six minutes to pick up their third victory of the Premier League season so far.

"[The start of the season] has been really good. As well some games in the beginning of the season we should have got more points because we deserved it," said Silva.

"But it is just seven games. It is the start of the season. We go into the international break with confidence then we prepare for the next one.

"A lot of fights ahead of us. We are happy with how we started but we have to keep going."

Forest had led early on when Taiwo Awoniyi headed in a corner but were stunned by a remarkable Fulham comeback in the second half.

Tosin Adarabioyo headed in the equaliser after 54 min-

utes, before Joao Palhinha's stunning strike made it 2-1.

Before Forest could catch their breath, Harrison Reed stroked in a third.

Fulham appeared to take control of the match as the second half wore on but a wonderful flick from Forest substitute Jesse Lingard set Brennan Johnson free and he teed up Lewis O'Brien.

Momentum switched back to Steve Cooper's side but time ran out to score another as Fulham clung on for a victory

which saw them move up to sixth place in the table.

"It was a fantastic feeling for us even if we suffered a little in the last few minutes and they had belief they could score again," added Silva.

"I have to congratulate the players because it is really tough to do something they have done. It's the way we work and prepare for the game to learn every single day.

"We are a group and a unit working hard to achieve. We believe in ourselves and always trust in ourselves."

### NFF Gen Sec, Sanusi, Elected NAPER.SD First Vice President

The General Secretary of Nigeria Football Federation, Dr. Mohammed Sanusi was yesterday elected the 1st Vice President of the National Association of Physical and Health Education, Sports and Dance (NAPER.SD) at the association's congress that took place at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Also elected alongside the respected sports administrator are Professor B. F. Adeyanju (President); Professor Joshua Umelfekwem (2nd Vice President); Mr. Franz Atare (Secretary General); Mr. Sylvester Ikujamuoye (Assistant Secretary General); Dr. Isyaku Abdullahi (Financial Secretary); Mrs Joy Maiyaki (Treasurer); Mr. Kehinde Lamidi (Public Relations Officer); Dr. Aliyu Madaki (Publication Secretary) and; Mr. Godspower Odede (Auditor).

Sanusi, a former lecturer at the first-grade citadel of learning, Ahmadu Bello University and who also holds the traditional titles of Danmasani Wajeke of Wammako district in Sokoto State and Dan-Buran of Gwandu Emirate in Kebbi State, served several terms as President of the National Colleges of Education Games.

A qualified coach, Sanusi headed accommodation and logistics work during the 8th All-Africa Games that Nigeria hosted in 2003, before serving as Director of Competitions of the Nigeria Football Federation. He became the General Secretary of NFF in March 2015.

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## MISSILE

### Sanwo-Olu on Muslim-Muslim Ticket

**"We had forgotten that in 2011 when Action Congress at that time gave a platform to Malam Nuhu Ribadu, his vice-presidential candidate then was Fola Adeola. It was a joint Muslim-Muslim ticket, and we did not see any problem at that time"** – Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State defending the All Progressives Congress' Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket.

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OF ROBUST JOURNALISM  
SINCE 1995

# UZOR MAXIM UZOATU

GUEST COLUMNIST



# Presidency: The Fire This Time

The presidency of Nigeria is so highly coveted that even expired players want to grab it "by fire, by force", as the Pentecostals would say. The presidential wannabes are all over the place with their foot soldiers, intent on commandeering all attention. The ethnic card has been furiously highlighted in the "my turn" game, and one cannot but admit that in a tribal country there must be tribalism.

When the calamitous matter of single faith domination match is thrown into the fire of ethnic monomania in a land that prides itself on diversity and plurality there is bound to be inferno in overdrive. The goings-on in Nigeria today along the ethno-religious divide call to mind the unbearable racial turmoil in the United States that made James Baldwin to write the immortal essay *The Fire Next Time*.

Baldwin writes these telling words in that essay: "Perhaps the whole root of our trouble, the human trouble, is that we will sacrifice all the beauty of our lives, will imprison ourselves in totems, taboos, crosses, blood sacrifices, steeples, mosques, races, armies, flags, nations, in order to deny the fact of death, which is the only fact we have."

Death stalks the Nigerian terrain, and it is crucial to take to mind what Baldwin also writes in *The Fire Next Time* thusly: "The most dangerous creation of any society is the man who has nothing to lose."

Nigerians have never had it so bad economically, educationally, politically etc., and all pointers are in one direction: The Fire This Time. The youths of Nigeria especially are full of voice all over the country, telling anybody who cares to listen that they have nothing to lose, and they are going for broke. Like James Baldwin, these irate youths are asking: "Do I really want to be integrated into a burning house?"

Most Nigerians are dying of hunger, and the politicians are apparently only interested in hiring hirelings to manufacture Fake News to further their nefarious ways. Suicide has become the national creed while the suicide note is the national anthem of hopelessness.

Beyond lonely suicide, what beckons is mass action. It is incumbent on Nigerians across board to do something fast before a boiling cauldron overwhelms all of us. The clear and present danger is that one oppressed Nigerian can copy the Tunisian who set himself on fire and thus led to the mass action that changed the history of the world.

The Tunisian, Mohammed Bouazizi, was unable to find work and had to make ends meet by selling fruits at a roadside stand. On December 17, 2010 a municipal inspector confiscated his wares, and one hour later, the anguished Tunisian doused himself with petrol and set himself on fire.

His death on January 4, 2011 brought



Buhari

together various groups dissatisfied with the existing system in Tunisia: the unemployed, political and human rights activists, trade unionists, students, professors, lawyers, and many others. Thus began the Tunisian uprising that led to the sacking of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011, ending his 23 years in power.

Barely 10 days after the sacking of President Ben Ali in Tunisia, protests began in Egypt on January 25, 2011 and ran for 18 days. Beginning around midnight on 28 January, the Egyptian government attempted to eliminate the nation's Internet access in order to inhibit the protesters' ability to organize through social media. It was all in vain for on February 11, 2011, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was forced to flee from power, after being in office for about 30 years.

Then the fire spread to Libya, the land of Muammar Gaddafi, where the protests lasted till October 20, 2011 when the erstwhile strongman met with gruesome death. The uprisings that swept through the Arab world were given the name: The Arab Spring.

Nigeria had a spectre of the Arab Spring when the then President Goodluck Jonathan removed the fuel subsidy on January 1, 2012. This was done without the consent of the legislature, and there was not even enough dialogue with labour unions and civil society organizations. The very unpopular New Year "gift" sparked off spontaneous anti-government demonstrations in many Nigerian cities the very next day, that is, on January 2.

Nigerian towns such as Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Ibadan, Awka, Ilorin, Kebbi, Gusau etc. were literally on fire as many protesters marched on the streets with placards, and made bonfires. The demonstrations brought together the unemployed, the under-employed,

the employed, the poor, ill-assorted classes of people, the educated, the uneducated, the artisans, sundry workers, musicians, diverse artistes, students, all kinds of activists and, yes, tribesmen.

The name that was given to the crusade was "Occupy Nigeria", and it had a melting pot at the Gani Fawehinmi Square in Ojota, Lagos. For a week, from sunup to sundown, the many classes of Nigerians converged at the square, and the number of protesters increased steadily. The "Occupy Nigeria" protests put panic inside the pants of the government such that Jonathan then announced that the government had reached an agreement with the labour unions to put petrol price at 97 Naira from the high of 141 Naira.

Let's not talk of the fuel price of today or the dollar-to-naira exchange rate lest we be charged with going too far forward in sabotaging the next level acrobatics of the change regime.

Getting back on track, starting from 2017 and climaxing in 2020, there was the pan-Nigerian social movement against police brutality codenamed EndSARS which nearly brought the government of President Muhammadu Buhari on its knees.

The protests occurred in all the major Nigerian cities but an expired Nigerian journalist serving as a kept man for one of the presidential wannabes only recently brazenly wrote that it was the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) that undertook EndSARS to destroy Lagos! And in the warped mind of the diseased charlatan, IPOB stands for all the Igbo people of Nigeria!

It's the height of shamelessness for the pathetic fellow suffering from senile infantilism to hide behind ethnic jingoism in the crude bid to goad the Yoruba and the Igbo people to undergo a fight-to-finish like the Hutus and Tutsis did in Rwanda. This waka-pass character shall remain nameless

because he is worse than worthless. No oriki for him!

Now, let's get serious, for as Tunisia's Mohammed Bouazizi had shown, one small misstep can lead to national cataclysmic tragedy.

The heart of the matter is that a country cannot forever exist in suspended animation. Something has to give sooner or later; why not now? Nigeria is thus poised on historical contradictions that must be resolved one way or the other. The current leadership in Nigeria must understand that it is running against time. It is a clear case of emergency because if the issues are not addressed fast Nigeria's many millions may end up imitating George Orwell's animals in Animal Farm by overthrowing their oppressors. This definitely will not be a pretty sight. Already James Baldwin's preface to *The Fire Next Time* rings true: "No more water, the fire next time!"

What faces Nigeria today is the eternal question posed by Chernychevsky in old Russia: "What is to be done?" Lenin took up the "What is to be done?" charge, and the Soviet Revolution happened. Then Mikhail Gorbachev who died the other day came up with his Glasnost and Perestroika that paradoxically opened up the Soviet Union for dissolution. The point really is that a leader must take charge one way or the other. It is a truism that leadership is lacking here. A true leader chosen from the forthcoming election can save Nigeria by displaying sincere personal example in dealing with the clear and present dangers in the country: true federalism, a workable constitution, devolution of powers, fiscal diversity, economic redirection etc.

Nigeria cannot afford to miss the essence of the real issues and fall for the accident of ethnic skullduggery in the coming elections. The need for free, fair and credible elections cannot be over-emphasized. The time is past when the world paid no heed to incumbent governments re-birthing themselves perpetually in Africa in so-called democratic elections. Jonathan clearly read the handwriting on the wall and thus ceded power, remarkably avoiding needless bloodshed. The eyes of the world are on Nigeria, and it is incumbent on Buhari to follow the Jonathan example by serving up elections that will win the trust of doubters. Nigeria is obviously too big to be thrown into utter confusion. The country is already too fragmented as to witness a peaceful parting of ways like the old Czechoslovakia. The fractious breakup of Yugoslavia after the death of Josip Broz Tito cannot be the prayer of any country. Even the parting of ways of the ethnic nationalities of the Soviet Union is as yet not a done deal as the tragic events between invading Russia and Ukraine manifest. Nigeria can ill-afford to set fire on her head.

The fire this time in Nigeria must perforce be squelched.