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**He abhors injustice; he's brilliant, courageous, patient, emotional but a fighter too*



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URHOBO PROGRESS UNION (UPU)



Olorogun,
Dr. Moses Taiga

**CONGRATULATIONS!
CONGRATULATIONS!!
CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

On behalf of my family, we Congratulate the Urhobo Nation and leadership of the Urhobo Progress Union, UPU, ably led by Olorogun, Dr. Moses Taiga, President General, UPU World Wide on attainment of 90 years.

UPU @ 90 celebration is a complete testament of what is possible in the Urhobo Nation. We join the host of heaven to celebrate a foremost social cultural organization on the surface of the earth.

Long live UPU
Long live the Urhobo Nation



SIGNED
DCN & DCNS Chris Iyovwaye



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Kano political mishap threatens Tinubu

*As Osinbajo's supporters meet Northern Elders

By Emmanuel Aziken

SOME of Nigeria's leading political stakeholders are today descending on Kano, as the state with the country's highest political currency quietly slips out of the hands of the national leader of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu.

Tinubu's immediate and near political rivals including Governor Mohammed Baduru Abubakar of Jigawa State, Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti are among dignitaries joining Tinubu's alter ego, Governor Abdullahi Ganduje at a lecture to mark the 21st anniversary of the Mambayya House of Bayero University, Kano.

The gathering in Kano by the stakeholders is also coming as emissaries of some of major APC presidential aspirants fan out across the North for support towards their 2023 aspirations.

While Vice President Yemi Osinbajo is yet to openly articulate his plans, supporters of the vice-president according to authoritative sources are quietly mobilizing for support from opinion moulders in the North.

However, critics were dismissive of the efforts of the Osinbajo supporters as they affirmed that without Tinubu conceding to him willingly or by accident that the moves by the vice-president's supporters would be in vain.

Meanwhile, the chances of a political accident happening to Tinubu increased this week after his firm hold on Kano slipped with the removal of the structure of the APC from the hands of Governor Ganduje.

Saturday Vanguard reports that the decision of a Federal High Court, Abuja recognizing the Senator Ibrahim Shekarau led faction of the APC as against that led by Governor Ganduje has thrown a major spanner in the wheels of the Tinubu campaign.

With 44 local government areas and a firm support from the Kano legislature, Tinubu had, until this week, been seen as almost invincible in Kano.

"I can assure you that Tinubu is in a panic," one political stakeholder said yesterday.

"You will see that by the time that Ganduje finishes fighting this battle that the congresses would have been finished without his control," a source embedded with one of the presidential aspirants told *Saturday Vanguard* yesterday.

The trouble for the Tinubu campaign is also worsened by the fact that the chairman of the Shekarau faction, Alhaji Ahmadu Haruna Danzago, is a longtime political associate of President Muhammadu Buhari.

Danzago was for many years the chairman of the defunct Congress for Progressives Change, CPC during which time he formed a political partnership with Buhari that has survived till now.

Saturday Vanguard could not confirm speculations of his governorship aspiration. However, he is aligned with other powerful Kano politi-



•From left: Mrs Bolanle Adesanya, Head Campaigns and Infrastructure, TotalEnergies; Mrs Oluwaleye Olayinka, Principal, Immaculate Heart Comprehensive Senior Secondary School, Mende, Lagos; Mrs Clementina Arubi, representing, Eng Bola Awunti, Group General Manager, National Petroleum Investment Management Services; Mrs Moyosola Areola, Manager, Business Development and Projects representing MD, TotalEnergies Big Ltd; Mr Fatokun Joseph, Principal, Mende Senior High School and Olori Adeyemi Kalejaye, Director, Education District II, Maryland Lagos during the official launch of the TotalEnergies School-Based project HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign for Secondary Schools held in Mende, Lagos.

cians including Senator Barau Jibrin and some members of the House of Representatives putting into question the tenacity of the structure now aligned to Ganduje.

"There is no doubt about it, Ganduje will keep fighting this case while the status quo remains and which means that his rivals will dictate and organize the congresses," another source present in Kano said yesterday.

"Ganduje should have seen the handwriting on the wall when the president's body movement started shifting towards Danzago. All that rioting and burning of houses in Kano will not help anyone. My brother, you cannot fight the Federal Government," the source said yesterday.

The case for Ganduje and Tinubu is not helped by the fact that their rivals are also spreading out across the other parts of the North where Tinubu had been held as unbeatable.

While Borno State for example has for long been regarded as Tinubu territory, a source revealed yesterday that the fidelity of the political leaders to Tinubu can no longer be guaranteed. Borno which has about the second biggest bag of votes from the North had for long been seen as in the kitty of Tinubu through the state's dominant political leader, Senator Kashim Shettima.

It was also gathered that Senator Ali Modu Sheriff despite his historic problems with Senator Shettima is also said not to be in the Tinubu camp.

"You know Sheriff is Baba's (Buhari's) in-law and will definitely move along that way," a source speaking on the power play in Borno said.

Meanwhile, there are reports of quiet meetings with northern elders by some influential northern leaders who see Osinbajo as a good candidate.

It was gathered that elders who could turn the way for the vice-president are secretly being sounded out to support the vice-president in the event he gets the nod from Tinubu.

Death of Downen College student: Lagos shuts school, father opens up, Nigerians react

Olasunkanmi Akoni & Ebele Orakpo

The Lagos state government has ordered the indefinite closure of Downen College in Lekki, Lagos over the controversy trailing the death of one of its students, Sylvester Oromoni Jnr even as reactions have trailed the incident. The 12-year-old student was alleged to have been attacked by some of his senior colleagues for refusing to join a cult group.

The student's father, who bears the same name as his son also claimed that his son was fed liquid substance and intimidated into keeping mum over what transpired. But the school had earlier dismissed the claim, alleging that the deceased only sustained injuries while playing football with his colleagues.

Following a meeting with the management and staff of Downen College on Friday, the Commissioner for Education, Folasade Adefisayo, announced an indefinite shutdown of the institution.

A statement signed by Ganiu Lawal, spokesperson of the Lagos State Ministry of Education said, "The Lagos State Government has ordered the indefinite closure of Downen College, Lekki, pending the outcome of an investigation into the death of Sylvester Oromoni Jnr, a student of the school. Commissioner for Education, Mrs. Folasade Adefisayo announced the closure after a meeting with the School Management and Staff. The Commissioner called for calm, saying no effort will be spared in getting to the root of the incident."

The Commissioner's announcement came after Downen College had issued a statement to parents about its plans to shut

down for two days. The Management of the school, in a statement to the parents said,

"in view of the current situation concerning the school and considering the emotions of the students, we have advised that our students stay home tomorrow, Friday 3rd and Monday 6th. This will also afford the students the opportunity to revise for their forthcoming examinations starting next week."

They earlier bullied my son, collected his food-stuffs, clothes —Father

Father of the deceased student, has however opened up on some of the atrocities his son went through in the school.

In an interview with an online medium, The Cable, Oromoni Snr said that his son was subjected to severe bullying, revealing that the boys who allegedly bullied Oromoni Jnr had been reported to the school management the previous term.

He said, "My son suffered. His birthday is next tomorrow (Dec 4). I'll celebrate it. I'll have a cake baked. I'll cut it on his behalf. The boys they mentioned were also reported to the school last term when they bullied Junior and collected all his food-stuffs and clothes. I have two daughters, one of whom earlier graduated. I had to remove the second after this incident. They asked this boy to describe the sister's private part and this got to us."

The boy's father also said that Oromoni Jnr had been issued death threats if he ever revealed what happened to him in school. He also stated that contrary to what Downen College had said in a statement addressing the sad incident, the family friend who they sent to pick up Oromoni Jnr from the school described

Police arrest housewife for setting her husband's mistress ablaze in Ogun

James Ogunnaike

OPERATIVES of Ogun State Police command have arrested a 32 year-old housewife, Kehinde Abdul Wasiu, for allegedly pouring petrol on her husband's mistress, 23-year-old, Tosin Olugbade and subsequently set her ablaze.

A statement issued by the command's image maker, Abimbola Oyeyemi said, "the suspect, and a mother of three, was arrested following a report lodged at Onipanu divisional headquarters, Ota, by the husband of the deceased, Fatai Olugbade, who reported the matter to the police. Olugbade accused his wife of having extra marital affair with Ismail Wasiu, and to his surprise, the said wife packed out of his house and moved to the house of Ismail Wasiu, her concubine.

"He stated further that on the 14th of November 2021, he learnt that the wife of Ismail Wasiu had an argument with his wife, and the said Wasiu's wife poured petrol on her and set her ablaze. The deceased was rushed to the hospital by her family members but later gave up the ghost while receiving treatment. Upon the report, the DPO Onipanu division, CSP Bamidele Job, mobilized his men and moved to the scene where the husband of Kehinde who had asked his wife to run away was arrested". "The CSP Femi Olabode led homicide team embarked on technical and intelligence based investigation, which led to the apprehension of the suspect Kehinde Abdul Wasiu at Saki area of Oyo State. On interrogation, the suspect confessed to the commission of the crime, but claimed that she didn't know what came over her on that fateful day.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect and her husband initially lied to the family of the deceased that it was cooking gas that exploded and burnt the deceased. But when the lie was exposed, the husband asked the wife to run away".

a totally different situation.

Oromoni Snr said "They put fear in him so much so that, when you ask him, he might keep to himself and say, 'they will kill me'. This way, we didn't know what to do. I considered removing him, reconsidered since his sisters were still in the school. The new incident came to my knowledge on November 21st after the school called my wife to notify us that our son was in the school clinic, injured. My senior son, who was to make a London trip, came to see us in Warri.

"The next day, we sent a family friend to help pick up our son since he was the only person in Lagos and take him to the hospital. When he got there, he panicked, pointing out that he doubts it's a football injury as the school claimed. He said the boy couldn't stand because his waist was bent and swollen with one side of his belly. His mouth was black. I asked, 'is this really a football injury?' He was taken to my house in Lagos but couldn't sleep at night. I asked my eldest to fly to Lagos on November 24 while I took a trip to Asaba, from where I'd also make for Lagos. On getting there, he screamed. 'This is beyond football injury. Come to Lagos now,' he told me over the phone."

Nigerians react
Meanwhile, reactions have continued to trail the incident. In her reaction on one of her social media handles, the former wife of the Alaafin of Oyo, Adeyemi Olaitan, said: "I saw a disturbing video of a 12-year-old boy that was maltreated in school. I couldn't hold my tears. If I'm the mother, I would have burnt down the school by now by myself o. I don't play with my kids. Why on earth will you do that to an innocent boy?"

Morrison Nwaigwe wrote: "Nawaoooo, so this thing is real! True, Downen College, Lagos did this to this small boy."

Blessing Gilbert wrote: "Ah! This is pure wickedness. I couldn't even watch to the end. What a painful and undeserving death."

Ogbomo B. Noma: "This is why parents need to be close to their kids. Some parents put their kids in boarding or hostels and are always working. Yes, money is important but of what use is money when our children are being assaulted? Terrible situation for the family!"

Reacting to Ogbomo B. Noma's statement, **T-Zola Abiola said:** "I was thinking of bringing my son down to Nigeria to attend boarding school, because I want him to learn about culture and African values, but with this, (even with the parents in Nigeria) and this happened! What about me that's not in Nigeria?"

Lilian Pono's response to Ogbomo B. Noma: "The worst part of it is that he had told the parents of how they were molesting him but they still left him in the school. Hmhmhmhmhm! I'm just short of words."

Gerald Ihegaranya: "This is so sad for a child to be tortured to death. How did the school authority allow such cruelty in their school?"

Prime Minister wrote: "At what point was the boy taken to hospital by his family? From the school clinic, he was first taken to his father's house in Lagos despite the reported poor condition of his health! Keeping the boy in the school despite reported bullying incidences was a risk that has turned bad."

The matter should be investigated by the Police with or without formal complaint by the family.

Government should begin to take cultism in secondary schools serious. This is becoming common.

Seun Akinmolu said: "Threat to life should not be taken lightly. The boy should have been withdrawn immediately."

UPU marks 90th anniversary Photos by Akpokona Omafuaire



Governor of Delta State, Sen. Ifeanyi Okowa (m) flanked by UPU President General, Olorogun Moses Taiga, HRM, Dr. R.L. Ogbon, Ogoni-Oghoro I, Ohworode of Olomu Kingdom (3rd right) HRM, Orhue I, Orodje of Okpe Kingdom (4th left), and others while cutting the Anniversary cake.



A cross section of Urhobo Kings.



Alaowei Broderick Bozimo, former Minister of Police Affairs chats with Olorogun Kenneth Gbagi, PDP governorship aspirant as Prof. G. G. Darah, Chief Ejaife Odebala and Olorogun looks on.



Governor Ifeanyi Okowa presents Pioneer Nationalist Award to the oldest monarch, HRM, Ovie, Dr. R. L. Ogbon, Ogoni-Oghoro I, Ohworode of Olomu Kingdom as Olorogun Moses Taiga, President General of UPU worldwide looks on.

UPU PG, Egwunyenga, Augoye , others make case for better Nigeria *Okowa lauds kings

By Jimitota Onoyume

PRESIDENT General Urhobo Progress Union, Olorogun Moses Taiga has called for implementation of fiscal federalism in the country, saying no serious progress can be made in contemporary Nigeria except the nation sets in motion indices of true federalism.

He made the call as Chairman of this year's annual Good Governance lecture of the Justice Development and Peace Commission, JDPC, of the Catholic Diocese of Warri, Delta state in Warri with the theme: "A nation in search of direction: Political and economic imperatives".

"The country can still achieve the dreams and foresight of its fore fathers. Current Unitary and over centralised system contradicts the spirit of federalism. We believe that with fairness and justice for all, Nigeria can flourish again", he said.

Vice Chancellor of the Delta state University, Professor Andy Egwunyenga in a good governance lecture titled, "Setting a new agenda for integral development in Nigeria: Matching policies with action", he called for urgent steps to tackle the challenges of insecurity plaguing

the nation, adding that religion has a major role to play in the drive for development. He said government should see how it can tap from the gains of religion for effective mobilisation of the people towards greater visions.

The Guest Speaker , Chief James Augoye who was also a former Commissioner for Works in the state enjoined the Federal government to also redress the challenges of insecurity in the country, adding that the government should ensure the electoral reform was driven to conclusion .

According to him, a proper electoral reform will guarantee more confidence and participation in the electoral process. The Guest Speaker also lauded the achievement of governor Ifeanyi Okowa in the state, adding that only a pragmatic leader could make meaningful impact in the political space.

In his welcome address, Catholic Bishop of Warri Diocese, Most Rev John Afareha charged political leaders to implement policies.

Meanwhile Delta Governor, Sen. (Dr) Ifeanyi Okowa, on Friday, commended Urhobo people for their immense support and contributions to the development of the state and country.

Okowa gave the commendation in his remarks at the 90th Anniversary of Urhobo Progress Union (UPU) held at Urhobo Cultural Centre, Uvwiamuge-Agbarho, Ughelli North Local Government Area of the state.

He said that UPU, as a socio-cultural group and through its human resources, had played remarkable role in the development of the state and Nigeria in the 90 years of its existence.

According to him, UPU has played a major role in the advancement of not just the Urhobo nation but the advancement of Delta and Nigeria.

The governor thanked the leadership of the union for using its relationship with the people to ensure peace and organising them for purposeful development and being of great assistance to any government in power in the state. "I know the role the UPU has been playing in helping to build peace in Urhoboland and in trying also to extend hand of friendship to other ethnic groups across the state. By the time our people in Delta State relate as one, then you would have helped government to solve its problems because once you have been able to establish peace, it becomes much easier to develop

op the state," he said.

Okowa commended traditional rulers in the state for their support, saying "at every point in time I always thank traditional rulers for the roles they have played individually and collectively to the growth and development of the state. "They have always been a strong support behind all the governments of this state but particularly in my time, they have done a lot to help in stabilising government and to ensure that we have been able to live in unity as a people. Let me also thank the kings for their support to the UPU, making it the oldest ethnic nationality group in Nigeria," he stated.

He lauded UPU for the honour done to some illustrious sons and daughters, adding that it would help in encouraging others to put in their best in the growth and development of the nation.

He acknowledged the cordial relationship between the Urhobos and their neighbours, and said that a hand of friendship was very important "because he who extends hand of friendship wants to have a friend. I don't believe that we must fight everything through; sometimes a kind word or a conversation can help you to get to where you want to be," he said.



Pa Gregory Akaghoru lifts up his Pioneer Nationalist Award for securing UPU house for 60 years while Governor Ifeanyi Okowa and Olorogun Moses Taiga, President General of UPU applaud.



HRM Abe I, Ovie of Uvwie Kingdom presents award to Olorogun Oskar Ibru on behalf of Late Olorogun Felix Ibru as Chief Moses Odibo looks on.

Jonathan bemoans collapse of Nigeria's local govt system

By Dirisu Yakubu

IMMEDIATE past President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, has decried what he called the collapse of local government system in Nigeria.

According to him, the weakness of the third tier of government, has not helped the security situation confronting the Nigerian State, given its closeness to the people at the grass-roots.

Jonathan stated this in Abuja at a graduation lecture he delivered at the National Institute for Security Studies, NISS.

The lecture entitled, "Repositioning The Nigerian Economy for Sustainable Development: Challenges and Prospects", signalled the completion of a 10-month programme for sixty six Executive Intelligence Management Course (EIMC 14) participants, drawn from Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana, and

Liberia.

While establishing a nexus between security and economic growth, the former President urged the federal government to boost investors' confidence by emplacing a business-like day environment.

In the words of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS' envoy, "because of the weakness of the lower tiers of government, the local government system that is supposed to interface with communities directly, and prevent this, is dead in this country.

"In terms of governance nothing is happening at that level, the community engagement is so weak. Governance at the local level has collapsed completely.

"It is not the federal government that will have the structures to engage the local governments, since they are mainly managed by the

states now, because we are told some states take their money.

"The states must have strong departments that can coordinate the affairs of this local government".

He continued: "These departments must have regular meetings with traditional rulers and community development committees to assess the threat level in these communities.

"And if they detect any they will be able to escalate it up to the level of the Inspector General of Police or Chief of Army, depending on where the level of security threat (is).

"What we have now that communities have a lot of tension is due to the weakness of the lower level of government which has led to major conflicts. The federal government can troops but that can never solve our problems".

NUPRC reiterates commitment to tackle oil spills

THE Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has reiterated its commitment to tackle oil spills in the Nigerian oil and gas sector in fulfillment of its regulatory mandate as enshrined in the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, Petroleum Act and the Petroleum (Drilling and Production) Regulations and subsidiary legislations.

According to the commission in a statement, "this assurance has become necessary following concerns trailing the oil spill incident of November 3, 2021 which

occurred at the Santa Barbara Well 1 operated by ALTEO Eastern Exploration and Production Company in Bassambiri, Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

"The Commission said it will continue to monitor the site situation and guide the operator until the spill and its attendant problems are completely addressed. This includes but is not limited to implementing all effective physical and engineering solutions to the incident, managing the safety of the response providers and people in the neighbour-

ing communities and educating the general public on the site situation periodically.

"In specific terms, the Commission will ensure that the pressure from the well is stopped to put an end to the oil release, the already released oil is appropriately contained and skimmed off as it is being released, a joint investigation visit (JIV) is conducted as soon as it is safe to do so, cleanup and restorative actions are done immediately after the spill is stopped and compensation paid to affected communities timely and in accordance with the law.

FUTO will remain students' first choice

— VC

By Chidi Nkwopara, OWERRI.

THE management of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, FUTO, has reiterated its resolve to ensure that the institution remains the first choice of prospective university students.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor (Mrs.) Nnenna N. Oti, who stated this during the pre-convocation press conference in Owerri, also disclosed that a total of 64 students would be conferred with first class honours degree at the 33rd Convocation ceremony of the Institution.

According to the VC, Osuigwe Chisom Henry of the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering,

emerged the best graduating student for the 2019/2020 session with the cumulative grade point average, CGPA, of 4.96 percent.

Professor Oti said: "A total of 4,032 students would be conferred with first degrees, 380 would bag Higher Degrees, comprising 42 Ph.D, 219

M.Sc, M.Tech, M.P.H, M. Eng, MBA and 119 PGDs.

The VC, who is a Professor of Soil Science Technology and the 8th substantive Vice Chancellor of FUTO, further confirmed that she would rely on "Consolidating the culture of Excellence" mantee.

Olu of Warri: Court adjourns case to Jan 11

By Jimitota Onoyume

A Delta state High court in Warri has adjourned to January 11 next year a case with suit number W/128/2021 between Chief Ayiri Emami versus Chief Akoma and others to look at matters on pending joinder applications.

The court also granted an application by some persons to be joined as 4th to 7th defendant members of the Olu Advisory Council. According to the court, the persons were necessary parties in the case, adding that it was proper for them to have opportunity to state their roles on the issues before the court.

A third application for joinder was filed by the Emiko family and this was adjourned to January 11 next year for adoption.

Chief Ayiri among other things had approached the court to challenge his suspension as Ologbotsere and also processes on the emergence of the new Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III.



SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE (SPN):

BORNO STATE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA
INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROGRAMME

Date: 4th December, 2021

LOAN NO: ADB-2000200000701

IFB NO: BO/IBSIP/2021/GOODS/NCB/16

1. This Invitation for Bids follows the General Procurement Notice (GPN) for this project that appeared in UNDB online of 5th March, 2019 and on the African Development Bank Group's Internet Website.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received Financing from the African Development Bank in various currencies towards the cost of Inclusive Basic Service Delivery and Livelihood Empowerment Integrated Programme. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for the supply of Water Quality Laboratory Equipment.
3. The Project Implementation Unit, Inclusive Basic Service Delivery and Livelihood Empowerment Integrated Programme Borno State now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the execution of the supply of Water Quality Laboratory Equipment
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at the office of the Programme Coordinator at the address below.
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of twenty thousand Naira (N20,000.00).
6. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the African Development Bank Standard Bidding Document: Procurement of Goods.
7. Bids must be delivered to the above office on or before 12:00 am on 3rd January, 2022 and must be accompanied by a security of N3,000,000.00
8. Bids will be opened on 3rd January, 2022 in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 1:00pm at the Conference Hall of Borno State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, No.1 Airport Road Maiduguri, Nigeria

Signed

Engr. Dr. Mohammed Musa Aliyu
 Programme Coordinator
 Borno State IBSIP
 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency
 No.1 Airport Road, Maiduguri
 E-mail: bornoibsip@gmail.com



ALL EYES!

Saturday NEWS

ENDSARS REPORT: 60 civil society bodies declare readiness to walk with Sanwo-Olu

By **Olasunkanmi Akoni**

A coalition of concerned Civil Society Organisations, DefendLagos, has expressed readiness to join Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, in the proposed "Walk for Peace" by the state government to bring harmony and healing of Lagos, aftermath of EndSARS, October 20, 2020 Lekki Toll Gate shooting incident.

DefendLagos Coalition is an amalgamation of over 60 civil society organisations and self determination groups formed following the wanton destruction of Lagos on Wednesday October 21, 2020. Coordinator Committee for the Protection of Peoples Mandate, CPPM, Nelson Ekujumi, and Declan Ihekweire, activists For Good Governance, made the remarks on Friday at a press briefing, held in Ikeja, Lagos.

Also in attendance were: Domestic Violence (CAID-OV), Gbenga Soloki; Coalition of Oodua Self Determination Groups (COSEG), Dayo Ogunlana and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, Razaq Obasola, among others.

The group also warned that any attempts to sabotage the economic activities of Lagos State through the narrative of #LekkiMassacre would be forcefully and legally resisted.

The group noted that it was unfortunate that the good intentions behind the 2020 #EndSARS protests were rubbished, when hoodlums hijacked the process to destroy significant monuments, lives and even various security posts in the country, especially in Lagos State.

They commended the Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu for the spirit of statesmanship displayed in reaching out to some of the leaders of the #ENDSARS Protest Movement during his broadcast on Tuesday 30th

- Urge speedy implementation of panel recommendations
- Tell aggrieved persons to go to court for redress

November 2021. The group also appealed to Governor Sanwo-Olu to rally the Presidency, the

National Economic Council (NEC), APC legislators, the Police Service Commission and the Inspector General of

Police amongst others to push for necessary reforms in the Police.

Old Students commission N32m building for New Era Girls' School

By **Prisca Sam-Duru**

THE New Era Girls' Secondary School Lagos Alumnae Association, NEGSSLAA, is set for the official commissioning of their 32 million naira self-funded building aimed at improving the academic and moral standing of the students.

The epoch making event which takes place on December 7, 2021 in the school compound in Surulere Lagos, according to the President of NEGSSLAA, Tamra Runsewe-Abiodun (FWACP Paed), was in line with three thematic areas the association intended to operate, at the outset of her administration in 2018.

Mrs Runsewe-Abiodun who spoke during a press conference held in the Alumnae Building Hall during the week, disclosed that uppermost in the heart of NEGSSLAA, has been to improve the Academic performance of the students, their moral standing as well as the visibility of the School.

The need to actualize their set objectives, she hinted further, led to the association conducting a Need/ Baseline assessment of the school which involved interaction with teachers, students, and parents. "The outcome of that exercise was mind-blowing, devastating as far as sexuality issues are concerned. Briefly, it was noted that over 70% of our girls were undergoing one form of Child Sexual Abuse or the other, 60% being physically and sexually molested, 10% struggling with mental issues (suicidal tendencies) due to the guilt and fear from CSA. Also, close to 90% of girls in JSS1 class were not properly



• Some NEGSSLAA members at the press briefing to announce the forthcoming official commissioning of their Alumnae building in Surulere, Lagos.

ly educated about menstruation", she explained.

Following the findings, the NEGSSLAA President revealed that they have made arrangements to engage the services of guidance and counsellors to address the issues and to help students make good career choices, as well as subject teachers for courses that will allow them do engineering or environmental science courses which they've been lacking.

"The construction of the building was meant to address the sexuality issues/ moral laxity among the students, provide opportunity for career guidance which will culminate in an improved academic performance, as well as improve the visibility of the school as an edifice like this is likely to attract the interest of corporate and international NGOs to girl child education in Lagos State.", Runsewe-Abiodun stated, adding that, the association had earlier helped in "improving on the ambience of the school by landscaping, providing interlocking pavement stones, provision of green areas, and replacement of the gate and planting of flowers in the school compound. Several other projects were carried out by class sets/branches in Nigeria and in the diaspora to the tune of 20 million naira

as a part of the 70th Anniversary of the School".

MAVIN seeks 10 percent slots for persons living with disability

THE Muslim Association of Visually impaired of Nigeria, MAVIN, has urged political parties to reserve at least ten percent political slots for the persons living with disability in the selection of party candidates for the elections in the country. This is to guarantee equal opportunity and inclusion of persons living with disability in policies formulation and implementation of the government and it would give them a sense of belonging.

The President of the Association, Mr. Dahiru Gambo stated this in a statement issued and signed by the spokesperson of the Association, Alhaji Abdul-Wasiu Salaudeen to commemorate this year's International Day of Disabled Persons. According to him, "the aim of the day is to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of their situation in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

COMTUA adopts apprenticeship system to grow trucking sector

By **Godwin Oritse**

THE Council of Maritime Truck Unions Association, COMTUA has said that it will adopt the apprenticeship system of training young Nigerians in the haulage and trucking business in the Nigerian Maritime industry,

Speaking at this year's delegate conference held at the Marriott Hotel in Lagos, COMTUA immediate past Chairman Comrade Leye Thompson said that already, the Council is made up of truck owners who are also willing to take up young Nigerians as apprentice in the trucking business.

Thompson also said that beyond taking up young Nigerians and training them as truckers and haulers, a little stipend will be paid to the apprentices while undergoing training.



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Corrigendum

The Borno state Inclusive Basic Service Delivery and Livelihood Empowerment Integrated Programme (IBSIP) wishes to cancel an earlier advertised Specific Procurement Notice IFB No: IBSIP/2021/GOODs/NCB/16 dated 2nd December, 2021 on this newspaper. The document contains some errors which was observed after the publication.

We regret any inconvenience it might have caused to the general public.

Signed



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 Programme Coordinator
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 Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency
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Saturday NEWS

Terrorists attack Kaduna village, kill 2, abduct 50

By Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo

TWO peasants were killed and not fewer than 50 abducted yesterday when terrorists attacked the Ungwan Gimbiya community on the outskirts of Kaduna, a clergy who craved anonymity has said.

According to him, "the bandits struck in the early hours of today (Friday), invaded Ungwan Gimbiya Community of Sabo in Chikun Local Government area of Kaduna state and abducted over 50 people and killed two. A total number of 13 families were attacked by the bandits. The attack lasted about two hours with heavy gunshots."

A resident of the area stated that the attack was the worst in that community and this has led to mass exodus of residents of the area to safer places, even as the security agents were seen patrolling neighbouring forests.

Pastor Mina Cole to be buried December 18

THE burial programme of Pastor (Mrs) Mina Dugoabere Cole, aged 77, who has joined the saints will start today with service songs at the Redeemed Christian Church of God, RCCG, Central Parish, 1249 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja at 5pm.

According to the burial arrangement released by the family, a night of tributes will be held in her honour on Monday December 13 at the RCCG City of David, Church Road, Dideolu Estate, off Ligali Ayorinde St, Victoria Island, Lagos by 5pm.

This will be followed by another service of songs on Wednesday December 15 at RCCG King's Palace, 6 Benjamin Okpara Street, Elechi, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Time is 5pm

On Saturday December 18, there will be lying-in-state at Jack Compound, Abonnema, Rivers State at 7am followed by funeral service and interment at 12 noon at KNC Field, Buguma Rivers State.

Thanksgiving service will thereafter be held to round up the burial programme on Sunday December 19 at RCCG Overcomers Parish, Abonnema, Rivers State at 10am.



Late Pastor (Mrs) Mina Cole



Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State (right), the National Vice Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), South South zone, Chief Dan Orbh (left), former Chairman of the PDP in Enugu State, Engr. Vita Abba (2nd left), his wife and Special Adviser to the Governor on Project Development and Implementation (PDI), MaryRose, during the funeral rites for Abba's father-in-law, Chief Fredrick Eze, at Ugbaike, Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area, yesterday.

Mob set man ablaze for allegedly turning students into yams in Ibadan

By Sola Isola, Ibadan

AN unidentified middle-aged man suspected to be a ritualist has been set ablaze in Ibadan, the Oyo state capital for allegedly turning students to tubers of yam.

It was gathered that the suspect was arrested, killed and set ablaze on Friday morning by residents of

Ashi, Bodija, and Akobo for allegedly turning two students of Bashorun Ojoo High School into tubers of yam.

Source revealed that the incident occurred at the front of the school adding that all efforts made by the residents to prevail on him to turn them back proved abortive. However, no one was able to prove if he actually turned the students into yam tubers.

The man, according to an eye witness who pleaded anonymity, was tied with ropes and interrogated.

"His inability to provide concrete answers made the angry residents set him ablaze.

"The remains of the suspect were later dumped at the front of the school fence.

In a viral video, the man was tied with rope with two tubers of yam placed before him.

COVID-19 OMICRON: FG reviews int'l travel protocol

By Omeiza Ajayi, Abuja

THE Presidential Steering Committee PSC on COVID-19 has reviewed the International Travel Protocol it earlier issued on October 22.

The revised protocol comes into effect on 5th December, 2021.

Chairman of the PSC and Secretary to the Government of the Federation SGF, Mr Boss Mustapha disclosed this in a statement issued Friday in Abuja.

According to him, the revised protocol is aimed at further reducing the risk of importation and exportation of COVID-19 especially the variants of concern.

Part of the statement reads; "All passengers arriving in Nigeria are expected to provide evidence of and comply with the following rules:

"COVID-19 PCR test to be done within 48hrs before departure; Post-arrival Day 2 COVID-19 PCR test; Self-isolation for 7 days (for unvaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals); and, Day 7 post-arrival exit PCR test (For unvaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals)".

Also, "all out-bound passengers are required to

provide either of the following documentation: Valid evidence of full vaccination against COVID-19 and Negative PCR test result within 48hrs from the time boarding".

Mustapha explained that the review of the protocol was based on science, national experience, and global developments.

"The PSC assures Nigerians, that it shall contin-

ue to monitor global and specific country situations with a view to taking necessary measures to safeguard the health of Nigerians.

"The PSC calls on all Nigerians to ensure that they have taken their full dose of COVID-19 vaccinations and to continue to observe compliance to public health social measures", he added.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby informed that: Mrs. Philomena Nadu Sonaika is the eldest of the children of Late Mrs. Victoria Ayaba Coker Williams who died on 9/11/2014 and lived at her property known as Flat 4, Block 504, Lagos State Low Cost Housing Estate, Abesan, Lagos State before her death.

After her death and burial, my siblings and I packed all her belongings and documents including the original Allocation Letter in respect of her property known as Flat 4, Block 504, Lagos State Low Cost Housing Estate, Abesan. The Allocation Letter is now missing and it got lost in transit while moving my late mother's belongings to my house in Badagry, Lagos State. All efforts made to recover the said Allocation Letter have proved abortive.

Signed:
Mrs. Philomena Nadu Sonaika
(for and on behalf of the children of late Victoria Ayaba Coker Williams).

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Akpugo leaders celebrate Ugwuanyi for pioneering devt in their community

•As gov inaugurates privately-financed road project

THE people of Akpugo in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State on Thursday came out en masse to celebrate Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi for his special love for them which they said the governor demonstrated when his administration constructed the first state government road project in the community after years of neglect by past administrations.

Gov. Ugwuanyi during one of his routine visits to communities inspected the then deplorable Ogonogoeji-Ndiagu-Akpugo rural road (from Atavu Bailey Bridge to Afor Onovo), and promised to construct the road, regretting that the community had not witnessed any development by the state government in the past, which he fulfilled.

Speaking when the governor visited Akpogu, on Thursday, to inaugurate the asphalted 1.9km Ugwuagba-Achikpa-Onicha Agu Road in Ogonogoeji-Ndiaga, the Chairman of Nardo Group, Chief Bernard Edeh, an illustrious son of the community who executed the project, disclosed that the governor's special love for the community, which was evident in pioneering development in the area, spurred him to undertake the road infrastructure in support of his administration's rural development programme in the state.

EVANS: Absence of counsel stalls trial

By Onozure Dania

THE absence of counsel to alleged billionaire kidnappingpin, Chukwudumeme Onwuamadike, popularly known as Evans, yesterday, stalled the hearing in his case before a Lagos High Court, sitting at Tafawa Balewa Square TBS.

Evans is standing trial on two separate charges, bordering on conspiracy to kidnap, kidnapping and attempted murder, before Justice Adedayo Akintoye.

In the first charge, Evans is standing trial alongside Joseph Emeka, Ugochukwu Nwachukwu and Victor Aduba. In the second charge, he is standing trial alongside Joseph Emeka, Victor Aduba and Linus Okpara.

At the resumed hearing, of the case yesterday, the Lagos State Prosecutor, Mr Babatunde Sumonu, told the court that the case was for mention.

Mr B. C. Mbam and Mr O. A. Egbogbo, however, announced their appearance as counsel for the second and fourth defendants in the first charge. The first defendant, Evans, told the court that his counsel was Mr Victor Opara and he did not know why the lawyer was not in court.

WAR ON BANDITS: Designate Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, MACBAN, FUNAM terrorist organizations — Ortom tells FG

By Peter Duru, Makurdi

GOVERNOR Samuel Ortom of Benue state has again urged the Federal Government to enlist groups like the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, MACBAN and Fulani Nationality Movement, FUNAM, as terrorist groups in the country.

The call is coming on the heels of the recent declaration of an Abuja High Court which designated bandits as terrorists. Governor Ortom who made the call Friday while speaking at a wedding ceremony in Makurdi alleged that the bandits perpetrating attacks in the country were mostly members of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, MACBAN and FUNAM hence the groups should be designated as terrorist organizations as well.

He commended the Federal Government for taking steps to designate bandits as terrorists saying it was the right step in the right direction.

The Governor said, "I want to commend the Federal Government for being bold to designate bandits as terrorists which is long overdue."

"And I want to also call on the Federal Government to include Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, MACBAN and Fulani Nationality Movement, FUNAM in the category of terrorists because those bandits are their members."

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Saturday NEWS

CHANGE OF NAME

ANYIBIE

This is to confirm that the names HOPE OBAKPORORO ANYIBIE and HOPE ANYIBIE refer to the same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as HOPE ANYIBIE. All former documents remain valid. Banks and the general public please take note.

ANYIAM

I, formerly known and addressed as Anyiam Deborah Chiyenum, now wish to be known and addressed as Ojarikre Deborah Chiyenum. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OKORO

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS OKORO VICTORIA OROWO, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS OYEHAKONO VICTORIA OROWO. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

UCHENNA

This is to notify the general public that the bearer of these names; Mr Abosi Uche and Mr. Abosi Uchenna Chinonso refer to me. Henceforth, I wish to be known as Mr. Abosi Uchenna Chinonso. All documents bearing Abosi Uche in the company of Darling Petroleum Company Limited remains valid. The general public should take note.

EWERE

I, formerly known and addressed as ERIGBUEM EWERE, ERIGBUEM EWERE AMAUCHE and ERIGBUEM AMAUCHE EWERE, now wish to be known as OMILO EWERE AMAUCHE. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

OYOSORO

I, formerly known and called Asoquo Mary Oyosoro, now wish to be known, called and addressed as Okpokpo Mary Oyosoro. All former documents remain valid. General public and other authorities concerned should please take note.

IFONEDO

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS. IFONEDO KATE OKE. Now wish to be known and addressed as MRS UMUKORO OKEOGHENE KATE. All former document remain valid, general public please take note.

JEREWEI

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS JEREWEI PERES ESTHER, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS TORUDIWEI PERES ESTHER. All former document remain valid, general public please take note.

SALIU

I, formerly known as Miss Saliu Omone Mercy now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs Kayode Omone Mercy. All former documents remain valid and general public should take note.

AWHAVBERA

I, formerly known as MISS AWHAVBERA UVIE BLESSING, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. PALMER UVIE BLESSING. All former documents remain valid and general public should take note.

ANABEWO

I, formerly known and address as Miss EUNICE ANABEWO, now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs EUNICE ASIBOR.. All documents bearing my former name remain valid, General public please take note.

CHUKWUWUZIE

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Chukwuwuzie Prisca Onyebuchi, now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs. Ohaegbulem Prisca Onyebuchi. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

AKPAN

I, formerly known and addressed as AKPAN PEACE JOSEPH, now wish to be known and addressed as PEACE NSEMEKE UGOCHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

AJISEFINNI

I, formerly known as MISS AJISEFINNI FOLABOMI, now wish to be known as MRS STANLEY FOLABOMI AJISEFINNI. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OZIOMA

My name was wrongly captured as OZIOMA IJEOMA BLESSING, instead of OZIOMACHUKWU IJEOMA BLESSING. Henceforth wish to be known and addressed as OZIOMACHUKWU IJEOMA BLESSING. All former documents remain valid. General public and authority concerned please take note.

OBODO

I hereby confirm that in my NIM Registration, my name was wrongly written as Obodo Azubike, instead of my correct name as Obodo Azubike Raymond. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

OBARAKPOR

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS. OBARAKPOR JESSICA VOKE. Now wish to be known and addressed as MRS CHANINOMI JESSICA VOKE. All former document remain valid, general public please take note.

EMASODJE

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss. Christy Emasodje. Now wish to be known and addressed as. Mrs Christiana Akhere Onehioria. All former document remain valid, general public please take note.

OGBE

I, formerly known and addressed as Ogbe Elejo Blessing. Now wish to be known and addressed as Oriya Blessing Ogbe. All former document remain valid, general public please take note.

STEPHEN

My name was wrongly written as Stephen Olorunto, instead of my full correct name as Mr. Stephen Oluwatoyin Aiyegbade. All former documents remain valid and general public should take note.

OSHEVWIYO

I, formerly known as MISS E F U R H I E V W E EMWUISIFUOMA MARYANN OSHEVWIYO, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. NWABUZOR EMUISIFUOMA MARYANN. All former documents remain valid and general public should take note.

THOMPSON

This is to inform the general public that in my BVN/ Bank details, my name was wrongly written as THOMPSON SUNNY, instead of IKPIMOGI SUNNY which is my correct name. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

Ibadan residents protest demolition of N23m property

RESIDENTS of Ojo Rbo community, Ibadan in Egbeda Local Government area of Oyo State have taken their protest to the Alarere residence of Otun Olu-badan of Ibadanland, Oba Lekan Balogun

over alleged demolition of their property worth N23m.

The protesters led by Adetunji Ahmed, Muyideen Lawal and Ismaila Sabitu, Chairman, Secretary and leader respectively, the community leaders complained that their ancestral land was acquired by the state government over 40 years ago through Oyo State Housing Corporation without doing anything meaningful on the land and their request for set-back of their use was not granted despite repeated appeals.

According to the community leaders, "they cajoled our fathers that the land would be utilized in a way that it would be beneficial to their children and the unborn generations but nothing of such happened and out of frustration, we began using part of the land. It was last year that government came to clear the land on the pretense of making the area open and unsafe as hide-out for criminals which glad-

dened our hearts. Then, there was no any form of construction, but they came back this year and started pegging for construction and demolished eight structures met on the land which were valued at N23m without serving us any notice" they alleged.

Oba Balogun, while addressing the protesters sympathized with them and noted that Nigerian governments at all tiers should be wary of actions capable of aggravating the current palpable tension pervading the land, saying, "there is pent-up anger in the land and any little thing can ignite the already charged atmosphere capable of rupturing the fragile peace we all seem to be enjoying".

Appealing to the protesting community members to remain calm while their grievances are brought to the attention of government, he said, "the law frowns at self-help and that's why I have to commend you for this peaceful disposition just as I assure you

that government's attention will be drawn to your plight".

However, the Housing Corporation in Oyo State faulted the claim of the community members on the ground that the protesters did not say the truth in order gain the sympathy of the unsuspecting public stressing that the community members had used up the allotted set-back and that they had even started selling unallotted portion to unsuspecting members of the public.

An officer of the corporation who was not authorized to speak further explained that the same aggrieved community members had once taken the state government to court over the same matter and lost only for them to resort to cheap blackmail which could not undo what had already been done, adding "the state government which owns the land has sold it to Federal Housing Authority [FHA] and the authority cannot be stopped from accessing what it had paid for".

Niger State Police Command nab two suspected bandits *Recover 71 rustled Cows, 23 sheep

Wole Mosadomi, Minna

NIGER State Police Command has arrested two suspected bandits who have been terrorising people of Munyan local government area in the past months. They were said to be members of a 10-man gang of bandits operating within Niger State. Eight other members are still at large.

Besides the arrest of the suspected bandits and cattle rustlers, a total of 71 cows and 23 sheep stolen last week Friday were also recovered from them.

They were said to have attacked Chibani, Dnalakpe villages via Zazagha in Munya Local Government Area of the state and succeeded in escaping with the rustled cows and sheep to Kwali Forest in Abuja.

Nemesis however caught up with them when the police attached to Gawu-Babangida division in Gurara Local Government area of the state arrested them after a tip off while trying to sell two out of the 23 sheep they stole.

Parading the suspects in Minna, the state Police Public Relations Relations Officer, PPRO, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, said they were arrested last Tuesday based on credible information received by the Security Officers in

the area.

Those arrested are Jau-ro Nuhu, 35 and Sani Goga, 25, both of Dapa village, in Kwali, Abuja.

The PPRO said, "the suspects were sighted at Izom cattle market with two suspected stolen sheep from Munya Council and an alarm was raised leading to their arrest.

"During interrogation,

Arson: Shekarau, Barau, others complain to IGP

THE joint stakeholders forum of the Kano state chapter of the All Progressive Congress (APC) has lodged a complaint to the Inspector General of Police for what the forum tagged "criminal acts of intimidation, arson and attempt to commit murder".

The letter dated December 2nd, 2021 was jointly signed by the six members of the forum led by former Governor, Senator Ibrahim Shekarau and Barau I Jibrin and four other members who are currently in the House of Representatives.

The complainants revealed that since the November 30th verdict of an FCT Abuja court voided the state APC congresses, losers had taken to "criminal acts of intimidation,

the suspects confessed to be members of a ten-man gang of bandits who stormed communities in Munya LG last week Friday and rustled cattle to the forest of Kwali, Abuja," the Police Spokesman remarked.

He also confirmed that 71 cows and 23 sheep were recovered from them adding that effort was ongoing to arrest other members of the gang.

arson, attempt to commit murder, threats to life and breach of peace".

The complainants listed the master minds of the destruction, by fire of the campaign office of Senator Barau I. Jibrin (Kano-North) and attempted to cause bodily harm to "those they met in the office".

They said "these elements led the mob that also vainly tried to set ablaze our party office on Zaria road. "The mob also walked by our residences chanting provocative slogan and threatened those who didn't share views".

The forum therefore urged the IGP to investigate thoroughly what caused the mob action resulting in arson with the view to bring culprits to book and also nip in the bud threats to peace and order in the State.

The Saturday Interview

KADUNA:

Rape a girl below 14, face death or castration

Hadiza Balarabe, North-West first female elected deputy governor celebrates many changes in the state

- Says Mallam El-Rufa is many things rolled into one
- He abhors injustice; he's brilliant, courageous, patient, emotional but a fighter too
- I was a big risk but he was ready to take that big risk
- My position as deputy governor is transient and will not change me



• Balarabe

Dr. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe, the deputy governor of Kaduna State, is the first female elected deputy governor in North-West Nigeria. In this interview, she spoke about her partnership with Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, the governor, the achievements, and the challenges ahead as the El-Rufai administration marches towards 2023 and about the man, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, who, she maintains, many clearly misunderstand.

Your Excellency, what has changed since that fateful day, the 2nd of November 2018, when your partner, the Governor, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai settled for you as his running mate. Definitely that is a date that you won't forget?

You rightly captured it, certainly it's a date I won't ever forget. But I think the governor had probably made up his mind long before the 2nd of November, 2018. We only filled and endorsed the nomination forms on the 2nd of November and submitted to the Party, about a day to the closing date. I think what has changed from then is my perception of life. In all honesty, I never for once dreamed about this, absolutely nothing prepared me for it. The possibility of me being the deputy to Mallam Nasir El-Rufai was not ever what I imagined, not even in my dreams.

However, I am grateful to God for the opportunity. And this has strengthened my belief in the saying, that what will be will be, because what God has destined for you will surely come to pass. I am forever grateful to Allah for the opportunity to serve my dear people of Kaduna state. It's an appointment that I will never take for granted. I have learned more than ever before that there is reward for hard work and integrity. I am now more than ever determined and more committed to put in my best in the service of the people of Kaduna State. I remain eternally grateful to Mallam Nasir El-Rufai for considering me worthy.

Are you saying that nothing prepared you, that he didn't hint you?

Absolutely nothing. As usual, I was just busy doing my work as a public health physician, which by the way I was enjoying. My plans after my tenure at the Primary

Health Agency, was to set up or work with an NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) or any other organization, but God had his own plans.

Mallam Nasir El-Rufai usually calls people to offer them positions or jobs. So along the line, did that kind of conversation take place. Did he call you to make the offer... something like, I am thinking of running with you for the second term?

Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, had on several occasions narrated the events of how I became his running mate. I vividly remember him sending for me, which wasn't new, considering the renovation and rehabilitation of the Primary Health centers that the agency was overseeing. Truly, I thought that the discussion would only be on our assignment, but along the line he asked me why I wasn't taking any interest in politics. Of course, I had no answer. He advised that I took interest, because it would be good for me in the future. And that was it. On my part, I just continued my work at the agency. That's the closest discussion about my likelihood of joining him that we had.

One time Anambra State Governor, Chief Chukwuemeka Ezeife, described deputy governors as spare tyres, meaning

you function at the discretion of your boss. The 1999 Constitution hasn't really been fair in allocating responsibilities to deputy governors, but we know you've acted several times as Governor of Kaduna state, with the full powers and that El-Rufai has never shied away from shouldering you with assignments. For instance some days

ago you were in Abuja to represent Kaduna State at the APC Governors meeting (All Progressives Congress). How do your colleagues from other states relate with you, we know the stories of deputy governors in other states, do they envy you considering the partnership, the relationship with your principal?

When we meet, we just generally talk about the issue at hand. We don't delve into what's happening to anyone. His Excellency Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, has said on one or two occasions, that in Kaduna state we are partners, we are a team, and we will always function as a team. I remain eternally grateful to Mallam Nasir El-Rufai for being such a fantastic human being. I remember vividly, the sentiments he expressed in the two books that he gave me when I first assumed

duty, which he also graciously autographed. One of the books was the 'Accidental Public Servant' and he wrote, 'My sister, deputy and partner, Dr. Hadiza Balarabe, with sincerest regards, best wishes and gratitude for your service, support and sacrifice for Kaduna'. When he gave me the book

'Becoming' by Michelle Obama, he wrote 'For my esteemed partner and Deputy with affection and gratitude for your hard work, dedication and loyalty, Hope Michelle's experience will help'. So it's not that I think that he sees me as a partner, but that in reality he demonstrates that fact. In Kaduna state, under El-Rufai, no deputy governor has been treated as a spare tyre.

I cherish those words and will forever be dear to my heart. Those words mean a lot to me... I have continued to put in my best to ensure that I am not found wanting in any way. He has high regards for me as a person and the office.

Those words are touching. It's not surprising, considering he is a poet.

He is everything rolled into one... an astute administrator, a chartered surveyor, a lawyer, a team leader, a wonderful father, a motivator. I can go on and on.

Was your mother alive to see you become a big woman, with siren, State Security Services personnel, and all that. I understand she died a Christian, just like your stepmother was also a Christian... confirm this please.

Even if she were still alive, you know you will always be a child when it comes to your parents. So, I would have remained that little girl to her. Unfortunately, she died in 2009, so she didn't get the opportunity to witness my election as the deputy governor. But knowing her, she'll be happy and filled with gratitude to Allah the Almighty, that her dear daughter had risen to the number two position in the State. She will forever acknowledge the faithfulness of Almighty

Continues on page 11

The Child Welfare Act was recently amended... and the amendment to the Penal Code law 2020, prescribes castration/death for anyone who commits rape of a child below age 14

The Saturday Interview

Continues from page 10

Allah. I pray always that she is in the bosom of the Lord. My stepmother...yes, she also died a Christian. The religious background of my mother, my two step - mothers and my father, has helped shape my world view. My father is very liberal, he never tried to convert his two Christian wives. He allowed them to practice their religion. He has a third wife, who is a Muslim. That's my family, Muslim father, two Christian mothers, another Muslim wife and all Muslim children. This has made it possible for us to enjoy the best of both Worlds...Sallah and Christmas every festivity.

In spite of your position, you have remained your witty self, down to earth. The only difference is that your confidence has continued to grow. Ma, deep down, what are the factors that continue to motivate you the most. Is it the fear of failure, or fear of disappointing women who see in you several possibilities; a trained medical practitioner, who is also making her mark in leadership. Or is it the fear of failing a man who took what some called a huge risk, picking you as his deputy. Or is it more about yourself, that you don't want to fail yourself?

First, this position hasn't and I pray it won't change me, because it is transient. I equally believe that Allah in His mercies gives positions or wealth to test your faith, which once you misuse, you are on your own. So I try as much as possible to remain myself, while spending my time learning. I'm still learning and getting to understand how things work... it's very tough, but we will get there. When I got Mallam Nasir El Rufai's email informing me of his decision to run with him, I was afraid. My first reaction was I hope this goes well...because I knew it was going to be a difficult sale... coming from a relatively obscure background - Sanga, a doctor who has never been involved in politics...I didn't want Mallam to fail because of me...I was a big risk, but that he was ready to take the risk, meant he believed in me, that there was something I could offer.

Secondly, I don't want to fail the people of Kaduna state, who believed in the capacity of the ticket to make a difference in their lives.

Considering the position of women, there is just no way, I will give some people who have reservations about the capacity of women, the opportunity to celebrate. So yes, I don't want to fail women and girls, who see me as a role model. So very early I knew I had to work very hard, to justify the appointment, so as to leave a record of service, that they can always refer to. Mallam El- Rufai, has given us unprecedented opportunities to be part of the decision-making process, there is no way, I am going to jeopardize that solid support.

My appointment has several dimensions. Like you know, I am from Gwantu, a very small town, but he has made a point that where you come from, doesn't matter. Nor should religion matter, that what matters is the commitment to serve, to be fair and just to all. And lastly, there is no way I can afford to fail myself, because I dread failure. Failure haunts me. So, these are the motivations for me to keep putting in everything into the assignment.

So, you strive towards making a difference?

Absolutely. I try as much as possible to put in my very best in everything I do.

We now understand the mentality you have brought to the job. Your Party, the All Progressives Congress has made great inroad into zone 3. So much that the APC won 5 out of the 8 local governments, you must be feeling good, because you led the campaign team. So, what changed?

I think a lot has changed and not only in zone 3, but the whole of Kaduna state. The people can see developments in all spheres. And obviously they like what they see and hear. These realities helped quite a lot in helping the people vote for the APC. We overwhelmed them with evidence. Before 2015 elections, it was campaign promises, but after that they wanted concrete evidence. So, we have demonstrated capacity, that we can be trusted to deliver, and we have delivered. We are happy that we conducted an election that even the opposition acknowledged was very fair. They won and lost fairly. We ensured a level playing field and the Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission, wasn't scared of doing the right thing. We are happy that the world has come to acknowledge the democratic credentials of Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, as opposed to the misinformation and untruths about him.



KADUNA: Rape a girl below 14, face death or castration

So, your record of service made the difference?
Yes, it did.

It has made a difference, but your winning might also create problems moving towards 2023. The APC ticket will be very competitive...are you prepared to manage that scenario. Because many people will want to run... controlling five local governments out of eight, in the Southern part of the state, means you're likely to have more than two, three candidates vying for Senate and for the House of Representatives. How will you manage that?

When we get to that bridge we will cross it, don't worry.

But you do envisage that problem?

The challenge started with the local government elections. We had several aspirants, who wanted to fly our flag across the 23 Local Governments. Thankfully, our leader Mallam Nasir El- Rufai ensured that it was well managed. He ensured a credible party primary and met one on one with all those who lost...so we went into the election united. We are confident that we can also manage 2023, by the Grace of God.

Medicine and Politics, any difference?

Not substantially. Both are about service to humanity. Only difference is the long and vigorous training in medical school because you are going to manage human beings. Again, there are many politicians that have spent years in politics, so much that they also have a good understanding of human behaviour.

Both essentially are about care.

Yes, it's about care and service to humanity. That's Medicine and Politics.

Mallam Nasir El-Rufai appears an emotional person. We've seen him cry at the burial of Ibrahim Attahiru, the late Chief of Army Staff, we also saw him weeping when Professor Andrew Nok died. We saw him dancing to reggae by accident. What other sides of him, that are not known to us you want to talk about?

This is a herculean task...what area do you want me to talk about and what do I leave out? Some people's perceptions of Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, have been framed by what they read or hear, from those who have issues to grind with him. Only few people will be honest in their assessment of someone who in the course of his assignment as a Minister had to bring down houses built on land belonging to public schools, that distorted the master plan.

But I know for certain that El-Rufai is

an authentic leader, he is genuine, and he is confident, this is a fact that can't be denied. Everyone, almost everyone knows that he applies knowledge in administering the state, that no policy is implemented that is not backed by evidence, knowledge and experience. He is a fantastic human being. Thoughtful, inspiring, he challenges everyone around him to be the very best version of himself or herself.

His motto is you should be better than what you were yesterday. And he will give you all the necessary support, the motivation. He is our cheerleader, which many people will find surprising. It's public knowledge that he is very bold, courageous and he's a very, very blunt, which is why he doesn't shy away from taking very difficult and challenging decisions. He is not rash. He is patient, extremely patient.

He's a stickler for justice, he abhors injustice. He's a fighter and most importantly, he's an advocate for equal opportunities, for both men and women. Like you said, he cries when he has to cry, yeah, but I want to let you know that it takes strength to cry. It's not everybody that can cry, it's only the strong that can cry. He is emotional, just like every other person, because he is a human being. What people keep forgetting is that El-Rufai is also a human being. He has emotions too; I admire him because he can express his emotions.

Let me ask you pointedly is Nasir El-Rufai arrogant?

No! When I say no, it's a no, you don't have to push further...asking me why I said no. He is not, it's just the machinations of some people, because he believes that the government should work for the generality of the people.

That's not being arrogant. But they must give him a bad name to justify their negative campaigns against him.

Does he have this 'I know it all' attitude? Does he seek your advice?

That's a very funny question and contrary to the reality of his administration. You know, when I hear people talk about his so called, "I know it all" attitude, I usually ask myself which El-Rufai are they talking about? Because that's not the El-Rufai, that I know. You are at liberty to make inquiries from the Members of the Kaduna State Executive Council....El-Rufai is an excellent team player, a very good listener. Of course he has his opinions, but he doesn't force them down our throats, and he is happy to have them subjected to debates. And at the end of the day, he yields to superior arguments. So how can people describe such a man as having an 'I know it all' attitude? He is not autocratic...he gives everybody the chance to voice out his or her opinion, before a decision is taken. For instance, he threw the idea of the Policy Councils

open for debate. We signed off, after a robust debate, because we saw the wisdom, the reasons constituting the councils was the way to go. And being a confident man, who trusts his appointees, he doesn't chair any of them. A control freak won't go that way. That's Mallam for you.

From your answers he is not arrogant. He does not have 'I know it all its attitude' but of course out there, these are reasons why he is constantly being attacked.

But why should his confidence be a problem to anyone?

Between you and Nasir El-Rufai, who is more pro-women?

This is not a competition so I'm not sure that I'll be able to do an assessment of myself, but I can tell you without hesitation about Mallam El-Rufai. Mallam, holds the distinction, a record for being pro-women, in words and actions. There is no leader today that compares to him when it comes to women rights. He is the true example of a 'He for She' that we have all been talking about. His is beyond just rhetorics, when it comes to opportunities for women, including their welfare. He has walked his talk, he has promoted, and made conscious efforts, to get women into politics. You would have noticed that this time around that more women sought positions in the local governments, which wasn't the case before now. And this is because of his belief in the capacities of women. He is far ahead of his contemporaries on the issues concerning women. It goes beyond appointments; it is about fundamental policies. You can't find a better advocate for women and girls rights, than Mallam.

Aside appointing women into various positions your government has abolished school fees for female students. There's also six months paid maternity leave for public servants. You're a medical doctor. What are your comments on these policies?

Yes, but initially the abolition of the school fees in our secondary schools was for female students, but since 2020 it was extended to include boys. These policies have drastically increased the enrolment of girls in our schools. I'm happy to let you know that the recent survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and the Bureau of Statistics, revealed a dramatic narrowing of the gap between girls and boys to about 51 to 49%. This is very encouraging for us in view of the relentless campaign to encourage girls to enrol and get education before other things, because of the benefits, especially as women make up 50% of the world's population. The implication of not educating girls is better left imagined. We can't afford to suffer the consequences.

Statistics from the Ministry of Human Services and Social Development have equally shown that the Kaduna State Women Empowerment Fund, which the Kaduna state government provided the N200 million seed money, is making the desired impact. The first tranche and the second tranche have been disbursed to women with micro, small, and medium enterprises, registered as cooperatives or individuals, to either start up or expand their businesses. So, from whatever angle you look at, we owe him a debt of gratitude. But the Mallam that I know would not want to hear that from us, because he is doing it out of the beauty of his heart. We also have a scholarships programme, and we have tried as much as possible to encourage girls and women to study courses that will be relevant for Kaduna state today and tomorrow. We have developed the Kaduna State Development Plan, which captures our desire and vision. The Child Welfare Act was recently amended...and the amendment to the Penal Code law 2020, prescribes castration/death for anyone who commits rape of a child below age 14.

Ma, I agree with you that rape is a crime...but I can see some mischief when you talked about castration.

It is a heinous crime. Why should it happen? These policies are unprecedented. We will continue to appreciate His Excellency for his efforts.

Are women of Kaduna state a threat to the men?

It depends on how they want to take it, but we will prefer that they see us as partners. We are not a threat to them. But when they see us as such, then the more we will be to them in their subconscious.

And you are wining?

I don't know...the battle of the sexes. I don't know if we are wining, but I just want everybody to look at the whole scenario and try to situate himself or herself in that situation. In one word, humanity is winning. What we want is development for the state and for the country at large. So, it's important we work as partners and I want men to have this at the back of their minds, that it doesn't matter who takes the glory as long as we achieve the result. I hope the men are listening to me.

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Human Extra



By Hon. Femi Kehinde

Ibadan, epicentre of several firsts, blazed the trail in several strides and endeavours, in Nigeria's early growth and development.

Cocoa house, like several others were prime ingenuity, political sagacity and economic wizardry of the early pathfinders of our regional growth, ably led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

The 26 storey building was proposed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, with proceeds from Cocoa exportation. Cocoa house was commissioned in 1965, at a height of 105 metres. The initial name given to the 26 storey building was "ile awon agbe", translated from Yoruba to English, to mean house of farmers. The name was later changed to Cocoa house, because it was built from the proceeds of cocoa exportation and also because it was built in front of a cocoa tree, just in front of a water fountain.

It was once the tallest building in Nigeria and the first sky scrapper in West Africa. It is located in Dugbe- a major commercial area in Ibadan, Oyo State. Dugbe market began in 1919, on the site of a small market and slab. Dugbe is believed to have been one of the traditional gate markets along the tall wall of Ibadan.

The building of the railway station nearby in 1901, was of a great significance, as the nearest market to the main means of long distance transport. The Obafemi Awolowo Government had an economic blue print in his Western Region Development plan from 1955 to 1960. The development plan, emphasised, property development, through the Regional Government and thus the need to set up a property development company, known as National Investment and Property Company (NIPC). The motto of the Action Group was "life more abundant"

Following the promulgation of the Banking Ordinance, forbidding banks from being directly involved in property acquisition and development, the echelons of the Action Group, with major support from the leader- Chief Obafemi Awolowo, incorporated the National Investment and property Property Company on the 18th of April, 1958, to take over the functions of the property development and acquisition, which had hitherto been rendered to the Action Group by the National Bank of Nigeria, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Akinola Maja. The National Bank, established in 1933, had other directors - T.A Doherty, called to the Bar in 1921, Akin Adeshigbe, Olalniyi Johnson and Hamzat Subair Akinola Maja, qualified as a medical doctor in 1918, from the University of Edinburgh.

The NIPC had four directors and shareholders as-

1. Dr. Akinola Maja (Chairman)
2. S.O Gbadamosi, an astute business man.
3. Chief Alfred Rawane (who was also the M.D of WNDC)
4. Chief S.O Shonibare (Secretary, NIPC and managing Director) with a paid up capital of 100, 000 and paid up capital of £25, 000 each.

It could be safely concluded, that the NIPC was formed to continue from where the National Bank stopped, as the financial pillar of the Action Group. Between May 1959 and May 1962, the NIPC had given the Action Group over £4, 000, 000. The company was often directly or indirectly involved through the interlocking relationship of its directors. The company had hardly been incorporated when it started to borrow money from the marketing board. The company had, on the 25th of April, 1958 through its M.D, Chief Shonibare, forwarded a letter to its marketing board, setting out a comprehensive programme



COCOA HOUSE IBADAN:

Mansion in the sky, reminiscences and metaphors

of development. The properties listed were as follows-

1. 5 storey building (208-212 Broad Street, Lagos)-£120,000:000
2. 4 Storey Building (128-130 broad street, Lagos)-£60, 000:00
3. 3 18 storey building, (8-10 Broad Street and 68-70 Campbell Street)-£1, 500, 000
4. 80-82 Broad Street, Lagos £500, 000
5. Apapa Ware House and Offices £100, 000
6. Barclays Bank site and British and French Bank Site, Ibadan-31,200, 000
7. 6 Storey Department store, Kingsway store, Ibadan-£500, 000.

This list was later amended to substitute some items with others, which then brought in the idea of a skyscraper to be called cocoa house. There can be no doubt, that most of the properties were prime ones and the viability was never at anytime in doubt. The contractors of Cocoa House, were Messers Cappa and D'Alberto- a construction firm, established in 1932, by two Italian men- Pietro Carlo Cappa and Viginio D'Alberto.

Chief Shonibare, the Managing director was a property development guru, the owner of Shonny investment and Property Company, which was developing an extensive estate in

Maryland, Lagos. He had worked with the United African Company (UAC).

Alhaji Sule Oyesola Gbademosi was an astute businessman, and was reputed to be very wealthy. He attended Baptist Academy, Lagos. SLA Akintola was his teacher in school. He went into early commerce after school and prospered. He established Ikorodu Trading Co. Ltd, in 1933 and thereafter, a textile mill. He was the Treasurer of the Action Group. Chief Rewane was the Chairman of the Western Nigeria Development Corporation and a

business guru in his own right. Alfred was tall, shimmering, ebony black and stately, that one could easily, be hypnotised by his presence. His commanding presence was however dwarfed by the arresting power of his intellect. A man of deep integrity, Rewane insisted on paying the WNDC, despite being its M.D, for the use of its transport to convey his children to school and his pets to the Veterinary Doctor. Such was the way he ran his affairs. At the end of his tenure, which came rather abruptly, the corporation owed him.

Alfred Rawane, was no doubt one of the ablest and most astute businessmen, Nigeria could boast about during that period.

Chief Awolowo had picked the best and ablest men for the task of the returns of their investment and this proved his choice was right. There was a time when Nigeria asked for and secured the service of a Dr. Rao, as economic adviser to the government, some expatriates in the country at that time, wondered why a

country that had men like Rewane, Shonibare and Gbadamosi, needed an expatriate economic adviser. All the government needed to do, was to get them together in a room for some days and task them to produce an economic blue print for the country. A brain that had the foresight of entrepreneurship, to invest in Maryland, when it was a desolate and out of the way area, is incontestably, a genius of the highest order. So were almost all the men Chief Awolowo had picked. It was to his eternal credit, that he had chosen such men to run the company. If he had the company being set up for business, it would have succeeded astronomically, but it was not set up for business as such. Its history and the circumstances for its formation show that its raison d'etre was to provide the AG with the fund it would need to carry out all its activities.

The NIPC, awarded the building contract, for Cocoa House, to a firm of constructors- Messers Cappa and D'Alberto. The firm of Cappa and D'Alberto, a leading building and Civil Engineering firm, was established in 1932, by two Italian men- Pietro Carlo Cappa and Viginio D'Alberto.

Cocoa house was ready for delivery to the NIPC in July, 1964, but due to the turmoil and political divides in the Western Region, the Cocoa house edifice could not be commissioned until the 10th of July, 1965, by the then Premier- Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, coincidentally, on his birthday. SLA Akintola, was born on the 10th of July, 1910, in Ogbomoso.

The Akintola Government had set up an enquiry to establish the real owners of the cocoa house. Chief Obafemi Awolowo at the time of the official commissioning of the cocoa house in 1965, was already in jail in Calabar prisons, for treasonable felony.

The Western Region at this point was getting adrift and only two people could avert this sinking ship- the two people were Awolowo and Akintola, but unfortunately, the centre could no longer hold.

The state of the growth of the Western Region, before the crisis and political dispersal was phenomenal. The Western Region Government had established the first Television Station in Africa on the 31st of October, 1959. This was enhanced by a legislative enactment, that removed broadcasting from the exclusive list to the concurrent list. The WNTV, was in partnership with Overseas rediffusion, U.K. Anthony Enahoro was the Honourable Minister of Information.

In 1962, to popularise the Television services, the WNTV started television viewing centres in Omi Adio and Lalupon. Liberty Stadium, the first of such in Africa, was also built in 1959 in honour of Nigeria's independence, coming up in 1960. The 25, 000 sitter capacity stadium, patterned after Wembley stadium in the United Kingdom, hosted the first World title boxing Tournament on the 10th of August, 1963, between Nigeria's own Dick Tiger and Dene Fulmer of the United States. In 1959/60, 20 farm settlements and 5 Agricultural institutes were created by Awolowo to encourage educated young minds to make a profitable career in farming. Life was rosy and robustly cheerful. Men married many wives, and life flourished abundantly. Awolowo's 5 years development plan, from 1955 to 1960, was to enhance a steady rise in income, and the general standard of living of the people. The Western Region Government was paying 5 Shillings as daily wage for its daily wage workers, when the Federal Government, paid 3 Shillings.

The farm settlement, was patterned after the kibbutz agricultural system of Israel, with Chief Akindeko, minister of Agriculture as the pivot. The Western Region Government had established, the first Housing Estate in Nigeria- the Bodija Housing Estate, the first dual carriage way in Nigeria, the Mokola Queen Elizabeth Secretariat Road, the first modern parliament- the Western Region House of Assembly and House of Chiefs, the first modern Secretariat in Agodi, Ibadan, Reddiffusion Radio- a one channel radio station, had come in 1955, through the same partnership of Reddiffusion company in the united kingdom.

The University College Hospital, Ibadan, an affiliate of the University of Ibadan, a 1,000 bed research and teaching hospital, was also established by an August 1952 Act of parliament and was formally commissioned after completion on the 20th November, 1957. Ibadan blossomed!

The Cocoa house became a honey pot and a centre for attraction and tourist delight. Its presence, encouraged Dugbe to be the economic nerve centre of Ibadan. In the cocoa house neighbourhoods, were the ancient homes of the Syrians and the Lebanese, that is- the Assad Zard, the Moukarim, the J. Allens, the Gamras and their Cocoa stores, ware houses and showrooms, which made the place- Ibadan business nerve centre and commercial hub. The hub takes you to

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The Saturday Interview

Maurice Iwu shocker:

Nigeria spent N84 billion for voter registration that cost us N3 billion



•Maurice Iwu

Tells his 2007 polls story

- Explains why elections are contentious in Nigeria
- Says 'If parties had internal democracy governors will not be too powerful'
- Reveals how lawmakers lobbied for contracts
- Wikileaks published my only 'offence'

Since he left office as Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission years ago, Professor of Pharmacognosy, Maurice Iwu, refused to talk to anybody on the controversial 2007 poll that brought the late President Umaru Yar'Adua and Vice President Goodluck Jonathan to power. He reveals a lot in this 2014 interview he granted Ikechukwu Amaechi and Ben Duru. All the points he made are still relevant today. Excerpts:

Since you left office in 2010, many Nigerians have not heard much from you; what have you been doing?

First of all, I have been following with keen interest what is going on in our country. But more importantly, I am a pharmacognosist by training and I have a business that is about 20 years old.

So, I went back to my business to take care of things. We have been involved in research on natural products, on sustainable use of biological resources. Recently, we decided to go into proper manufacturing. We manufacture dietary supplements and healthy living products. We pioneered a lot of work on Nigerian products and much more importantly, we have created a lot of jobs. We are taking the natural products agriculture to the next level.

But politically, there was tactical decision on my part not to get involved with politics for a while. I didn't want a situation where we lose the main focus. It is the system and not individuals that is really the key issue. And I deliberately allowed some time to pass. Let everybody have their say, let people make their comments and at the appropriate time, I will be able to make my own position known.

In 2015, Nigerians will go into another round of elections. How prepared would you say INEC is?

It is really difficult from outside to know what is happening inside; what preparations INEC is making. They must be doing a whole lot that we don't know about; but with time, what they are doing will manifest. Between 2005 and 2007, we laid the basic infrastructure that will help Nigeria for a long time to keep on conducting better elections.

It is like building a house. If you get the foundation right, which was what we did, then you have no problems. It is better that you have a very solid foundation, and that foundation we laid at the time helped us to have the successful election we had then. We hope it will keep making the election process in Nigeria better.

You just said the 2007 election in Nigeria was successful, but it remains one of the most controversial ever in Nigeria, and there are people who insist it is the worst.

That is really a very interesting position to take by some people. But we did something that was strategically different. It was the first time that science came into play in elections. It was also the very first time that Nigerians transitioned from one civilian regime to another. We were in a very difficult position that even the people who were supposed to participate in the election did not want the election to take place. All they were interested in was to score one goal against their supposed opponents.

But when you have a situation like that in your hands, you take into consideration the big picture. What will Nigerians benefit if strategically we didn't have that election, and our main focus was for that transition to take place?

But then, there are people who would tell you that the ballot paper did not arrive on time, or that and that didn't happen. These are matters of details. What we did was to lay a foundation. Foundation digging is not a clean job. It is messy, but somebody has to do it. But once that foundation is properly laid with all the dirt that came with it, the building stands strong.

If I may ask, what have they been able to change structurally since I left office? Nothing! It is seven years since that election held and we are still using the same database structure. It doesn't matter if you purge a database and put new one. We built an institute for electoral studies. We now have a director-general that is in charge of the institute. We were able to make INEC independent by insisting on the appointment of the secretary of the commission. The National Assembly is now trying to even give them powers to be able to renew the appointment. But somebody came up with the very first idea. We were able to also change the people who conduct elections by bringing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) personnel into election practice, and all these changes were monumental. You can't take them away. When you analyse 2007 elections from the point of statistics, there was nowhere people scored 90 per cent and above as it happened in 2011. It was not possible. The 2007 election met all the standards.

Yes, we had problems, but at the appropriate time, when I will be able to address the nation in detail to be able to call names, I will do that.

But President Goodluck Jonathan, the primary beneficiary of the 2007 elections, said recently he was ashamed of the election that brought him and the late President Yar'Adua to power?

I reserve my comment about what the president said, for very many reasons. One is

that, no matter how rascally your child is, you don't disown him. I can't disown the fact that Jonathan and Yar'Adua were products of the election that we conducted in 2007 and that we believe they won.

Whether they are embarrassed or ashamed, it is left for them. But the one that amused me was the former Senate president, Ken Nnamani, who presented a report of a supposed stakeholders' forum. Am I not a stakeholder? Nobody consulted me to ask what happened during the election and then use that as premise for making his recommendations. Recommendations were made on totally empty and unsubstantiated premise.

In what manner did the lobby come?

It was very obvious that some people go into elections not hoping to win but praying for their opponents to stumble, and if their opponents didn't stumble, then they would want something else to happen.

I said at the time that it was only the PDP that was prepared for the election and I still maintain the position.

If ACN was able to win the election on its own, why did it merge with CPC and ANPP? They simply didn't have the numbers. Some of them restricted their campaigns to the North; some restricted theirs to the West. You cannot win election in Nigeria without having the totality of the country behind you and, yet, they were prepared to bring down the house because they lost election.

And if we don't look at the bigger strategic goal of any country, if you compromise because of short-term gain, if you compromise because Prof. Iwu wants to look good, that I cancelled the election because I didn't like the face of Yar'Adua and Jonathan, I will be a hero among the so-called opposition parties and that will really be sacrificing the future of a people for short-term gains. The average Nigerian anywhere I go on the streets is very proud of what I did, that I kept Nigeria going; I didn't allow the ball to drop from my hands.

Why are elections so contentious in Nigeria?

Elections are contentious in Nigeria because

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we are backing the wrong horse. The problem is with the political parties. You cannot give what you don't have. There is no internal democracy in all the parties. If you now have your selection process for candidates not based on popular mandate, whoever you elect subsequently is unpopular. He comes there with a handicap because he didn't come through popular will.

So, the contention starts from the parties. That is why you see people migrating and because of the excessive powers of the governors, if it is a true democracy, it should be the other way round. The governors should be fighting to remain loyal to the party, to be in the party's good books, but it is the other way round.

So, who is to blame for bad elections in Nigeria: the umpire or politicians?

The Nigerian election management body, INEC, is one of the best in the world. Look at the calibre of staff they have, the structure and the wherewithal. America does not have a national voter register. Britain does not have a national voter register. They compile them in segments, in units and they still don't have a voter card. In Britain, all you need to do is to identify yourself.

But one thing is for the umpire to be ready. The nature and beauty of the play still rest with players. If Nigerian politicians don't want any rigging to take place, it will not happen. Read the interview by the former governor of Cross River State, Donald Duke; he made it very clear. It is they (players) that decide to do the rough tackle. It is neither the umpire nor the coach. It doesn't matter what the coach tells you, when you enter the field of play, you are on your own. It doesn't matter how rigid the umpire is, all he keeps doing is to blow his whistle. But some players are so rough that they don't mind how many times you blow the whistle against them or ultimately remove them from the game, but they will still make the game rough.

But your successor, Attahiru Jega, has equally said that what he met on ground was not an ideal umpire. He has particularly criticised the voter register that INEC under you prepared. Of course, we had the issue of foreign celebrities having their names in the register, what went wrong? Were the politicians also to blame for that anomaly?

I don't want to join issues with my successor, Prof. Jega. We are friends and I know him very well.

It is rather an unfortunate statement because the voter register we had in 2007 was a gold standard. The register can be compared to any register anywhere in the whole world. What happened was that sometimes people want to play to the gallery. We know what happened in Anambra State when they conducted the last election. We saw the mess in the INEC register, but it is not the fault of the INEC chairman.

I didn't know that Nigeria was stupendously rich and wasteful. There was no need to have spent N84 billion which they claimed they spent on voter register.

If a register is bad, if a database is bad, what you do is to purge it and then refill it; you don't remove the infrastructure and re-do it. Where is the young man, the Kenyan, who led them into it? Ask government and INEC where he is now.

The problem with this country and why I have refused to talk is that we are in a situation where people don't follow logic. It is he who shouts loudest that wins the argument. That is why I don't have the time to get into that. I am busy with my own professional work.

I didn't get into the business of database for the first time. I had done bigger database in Cameroon at the KORUP forest where we did a database of plants and we were able to count them and know where each plant stood, let alone human beings who can talk and will be able to tell you, you gave me wrong name.

The cardinal issue – if you call it a mistake, but it is not a mistake because I will do it again – is the fact that my administration was nationalistic. I did three things. I refused to share that database with any foreigner because the fingerprints of Nigerians were there.

If you read Wikileaks, you would see that the offence I committed was that I refused to share the database with anybody. Second, throughout my tenure, I had a policy of not awarding contracts to foreigners. All the projects, all the contracts, were done by Nigerians. The reason was very simple. You create jobs for our people and you are able to learn from our mistakes.

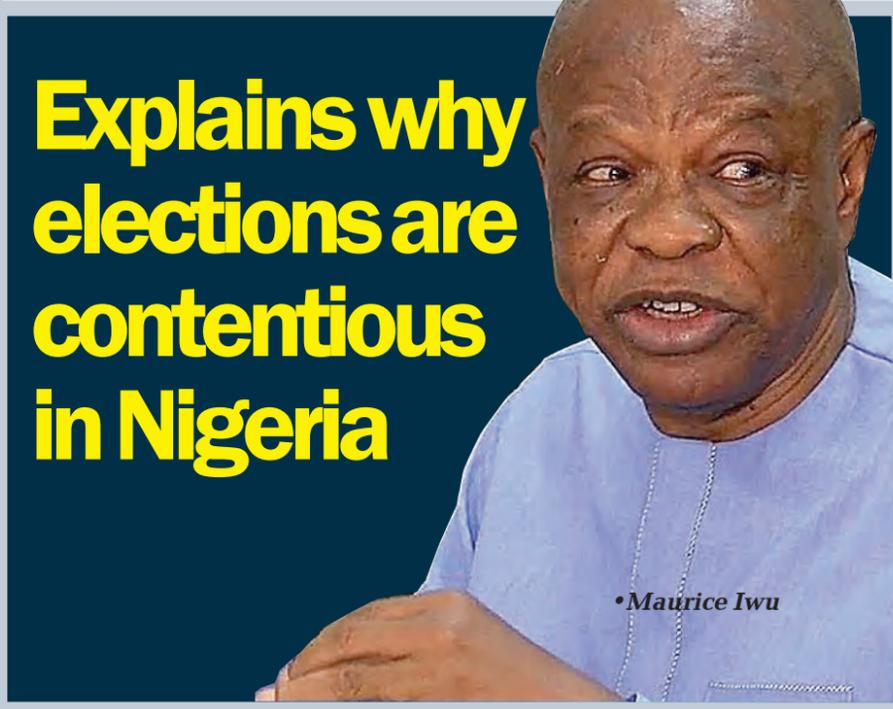
Third, I was convinced that the white man is not better than me, that we can do it on our own. We were asked to take technical advice from Europe. I rejected the advice. There was no need for that. We went to the same school. Is it because of my skin colour?

Now, do you hear about Save Nigeria Group (SNG)? Do you hear about 3Gs, all those flight by night organisations that were sponsored to orchestrate a campaign against Iwu, where are they now?

So, I don't want to join issues with Jega. You can talk to INEC staff. Just go to INEC now and conduct a referendum. They are the professionals. Ask them, Prof. Iwu's time in INEC and now, which is better? But I don't want to go there. I just want to see how Nigeria can be made better; how we can stop the senseless waste of lives.

The 2007 poll still remains a landmark. They cannot remove it. It was the first transition from civilian to civilian regime; so it was not supposed to be easy. And it was not easy. But by

The Saturday Interview



• Maurice Iwu

Explains why elections are contentious in Nigeria

God's grace, we did it. Let Nigerians compare that election and every other one that we have had. They will understand that we were firm, resolute, knew exactly what we wanted to do, and achieved what we wanted to do, namely to transit Nigeria from one civilian regime to another.

There was the issue of inadequate funding of the 2007 elections. How were you able to conduct those elections with such paltry sum compared to the money INEC got in 2011?

That is an issue for Nigerians to debate. We did it with less than 10 per cent of the current INEC budget. And people were shouting. *Even when we asked for N3 billion for the same voter register that they now spent N84 billion on, it was in all the newspapers that Iwu asked for more money.* It is Iwu, not INEC. But now, nobody talks about Jega or any other person. They talk about INEC.

The issue there is that we were able to do what we did because our whole focus was on delivering that transition from civilian to civilian regime. It was surprising to the whole country that I was not involved in the issue of the ballot paper that was used for the election, which was supposed to be done by our MINT – Nigeria Security Printing and Minting Company (NSPMC). It was the Nigerian MINT that we contracted it to, based on the same philosophy that we didn't want to have any foreigner involved in anything.

If you say you have this technology, we will say get a Nigerian to bid for the job. That the MINT contracted it to a South African firm, we were not involved. So you can see the level of detachment we had in that whole process. I didn't ever get involved in contracts. All I did was to be focused, and my colleagues and I were focused on making a successful transition.

The kind of sacrifice people made was unbelievable. The national commissioners slaved themselves. One Ekpenyong almost slept at the airport waiting for those ballot papers that were to come from South Africa.

Remember, it is just four years apart – 2007 to 2011 – but the cost was monumental because, first of all, as soon as the estimates were made, the foreigners said "pay up quickly".

So, as I said, I don't want to join issues with my successor; but I am prepared, if they want to join issues with me.

But if the 2007 elections were as credible as you insist, why were many of the results upturned by the courts.

Read our Electoral Act. The review process is part of the election and I instructed people who worked with me to allow the courts access to all information they needed. If you cannot sustain the election, then it should be upturned. I had no problems with that. It is the system; it is not the individual. The system allows for a review and the people knew that if they try XYX, it will not be sustainable in court.

But subsequently, the commission did not give information in the election conducted after we left office. For instance, in the last presidential election, INEC denied the

opposition information. If it were during our time, they would have asked for my head. The same court didn't call for any indictment on the commission. We gave access to everything we had, warts and all. It has to be a transparent process.

Many politicians, especially those from the South West, still insist that you are the worst thing that happened to INEC.

Well, they should go ahead and ask people at the INEC and ask Nigerians. They have their say and I have mine. I don't want to join issues with anybody because I keep making the point that it has nothing to do with individuals. The system needed to be fixed and we succeeded in doing what we had to do.

Of course, they wouldn't be happy that we didn't blink. If ACN was in a position to win the election, then why did they merge to form APC?

How independent is INEC?

Compared to many other jurisdictions, INEC is independent. I don't see what Jega can do to influence the outcome of an election because

the structure is so wide that there is nothing somebody from Abuja can do; absolutely nothing.

What is annoying is the level of sacrifice one made to make sure that this same election that so vilified us was held.

Is it true that some politicians didn't actually want the election to hold? And what was their game plan?

It was very simple. A lot of people didn't want the election for different reasons. Some people believed that they were not ready and they wanted the status quo to remain. Some people believed that the best way to achieve their objective (whatever that was, I wouldn't know) would be for that election not to hold.

We were having stumbling blocks at every corner. You mentioned,

for example, the voter register in Ondo that had names of Mike Tyson and others; somebody inserted those names and it couldn't have been the INEC chairman. Somebody went to Canada to ask for software and boasted about that.

So, there were intrigues all over the place, but why I have not talked and why I will still keep my cool after this interview is that some of the people concerned are still active players in the political arena. I don't want to ruin anybody's political career. My joy is that despite all their machinations and intrigues, we were able to transit. We should be grateful to God, but there are lessons.

I am more interested in the lessons that Nigerians should learn. One is that you cannot have a good outcome in elections without internal democracy in the parties. The parties must be made to be democratic. Let our politicians have the courage to accept whoever wins elections.

I was very happy with the process of the PDP primaries in Ekiti State where Ayo Fayose

emerged against the feelings of most of the people who contested with him. If they had done it by the so-called consensus, he wouldn't have emerged from what I saw. But doing it based on democratic norms, he emerged winner. The same thing happened in Osun.

So, if they can keep that up all over the country, that will be fine. The second issue is the sanctity of the ballot itself. We have had a situation now where people come together and then there is accreditation, and voting is done. If the voting that is done is held sacrosanct, the outcome of the ultimate election will be different. They know as much as I know that there is voting after voting, and there is nothing INEC can do about it. They know and Nigerians don't know that it is security agencies that determine the movement of people and materials during elections and there is nothing the INEC chairman can do about it.

We put into play, when I was in office, enough electronic surveillance to make it possible to announce the elections simultaneously from every local government. That was why when we were doing the collation during our time, people said I announced results early. I did that because electronic data came before the paper work. It is just like your GSM. Even now, the system we have, if I tell you that there is actually no need for voter card, you will be surprised. But because we are used to the ritual, you must have a permanent voter card and so much money is sunk into it because what we have now is almost a modified Option A4. Everybody is there to do accreditation and vote. So, all that huge investment on permanent voter card and so on may not be necessary.

But do you think that 15 years into this democracy, Nigerians have learnt or are even learning these lessons you talk about?

Nigerians are learning the lessons, but the political elite are so bent on holding all of us to ransom. They are so bent on making sure that Nigeria doesn't rise. They are so bent on making sure that the will of the people is never realised. It is a cabal. They are into a bubble of their own. They know what they want.

So, how can you change that? The president cannot do it. INEC chairman cannot do it. It is the Nigerian political elite. When they are ready, the changes will happen. But they are not ready.

But there is the impression that Obasanjo didn't actually want a successful transition in 2007. As INEC chairman then, did you have that impression?

I cannot discuss individuals now. Like I said earlier, if there are issues to be discussed, I would rather face that.

Why are you shying away from discussing the challenges you faced conducting the 2007 polls, even when every blame for the systemic failure is laid at your doorstep?

I will talk, but there is nothing I can say in abstraction, and since I will mention people's names, I would rather leave them until when we get there.

You mentioned the issue of funding. Remember INEC issued a cheque that bounced? Yet the same INEC, when I was in office, returned billions of naira that was erroneously credited to us but nobody gave us credit for that. And yet, we were being starved of funds. There were so many things and we were also mindful of the sanctity of life.

I am a Christian; a knight of the Catholic Church. I cannot allow one individual to die just because of my carelessness. How many people died following the 2011 elections? Instead, their families were paid compensation. Over 500 people died immediately after the elections. Is that a good way to judge the success of an election? So, from my own humanistic Christian point of view, I cannot even begin to compare the impact of 2011 election to 2007, which was peaceful despite all the problems we had. When the time comes, we will tell the full story.

There was also the politics of Atiku candidacy. There was a list of those said not to be eligible to contest election. How did that come about and what role did INEC play?

You touched again on one sensitive area that I wouldn't want to discuss. Atiku Abubakar was the vice president of Nigeria, and I believed and still believe that he needed to be treated with decorum. That the system that compiled that list, I think, it emanated from government itself. And then the government went to the EFCC under Nuhu Ribadu and sent us the list.

One of my national commissioners, the lawyer from Bauchi, was detained because of that list. We looked at the list and turned it back to them, saying we have read the law and it says that these people must be indicted by a panel. There has to be an indictment. Within 10 days, some of the superstars who were parading themselves – I have the names of everybody in that committee – sat and convicted these people and published a White Paper. White Papers are to be obeyed. They issued a White Paper. What was INEC supposed to do? A White Paper issued by the Attorney

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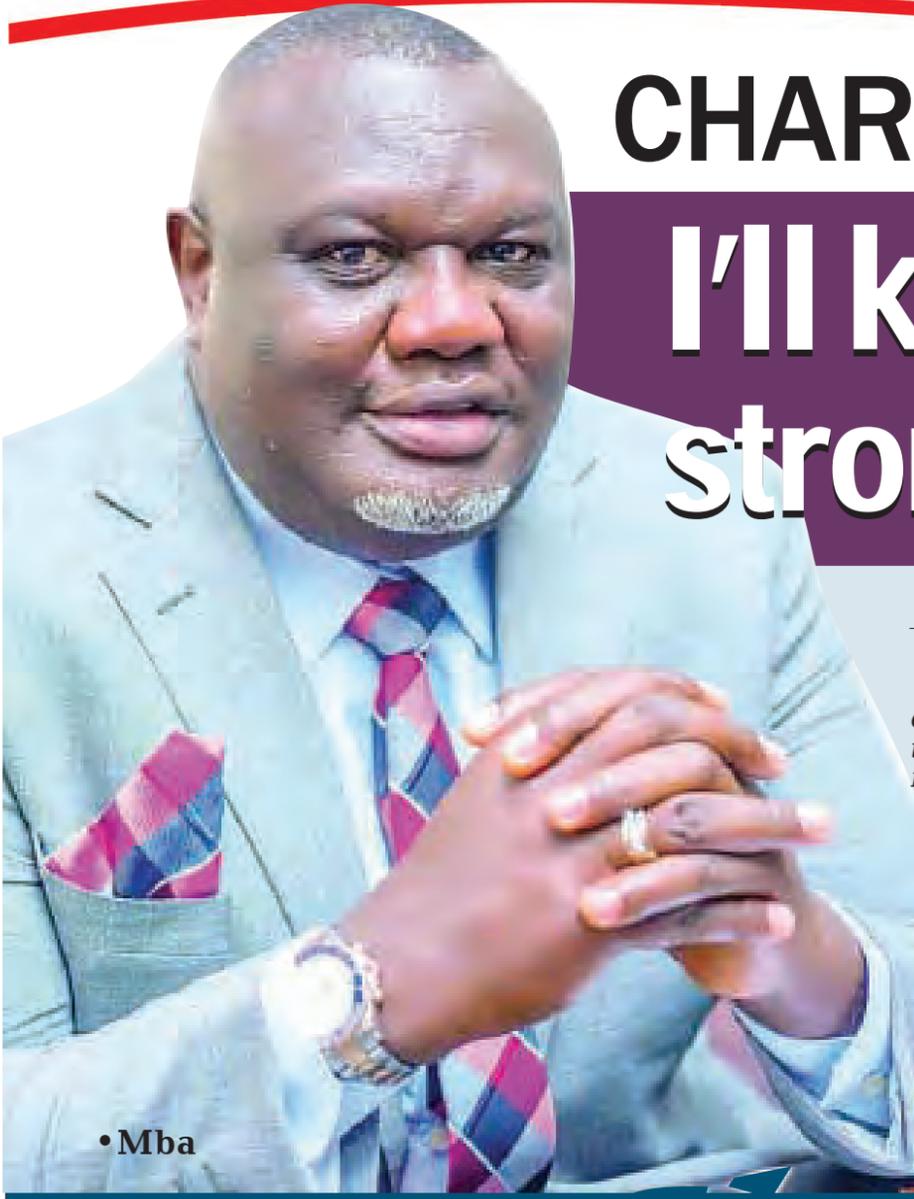
The Saturday Interview

CHARLES MBA @ 50:

I'll keep finishing strong until I'm 100

By Charles Kumolu, Deputy Editor

Chief Charles Mba is the Chief Executive Officer of CDV Properties and Development Limited, a real estate development company. In this interview, Mba, who clocks 50 today, tells his story, revealing how he became one of the biggest real estate gurus in Nigeria.



• Mba

You are 50 today...

It is great to be 50. I regard it as a golden age. It is half time. Even in the Bible, 50 is golden. Attaining 50 years means a lot to me. It is a time someone could say that he has advanced reasonably in life. I feel great at 50. But at heart, I feel as if I am 40 years old. I don't feel I am 50. My birth certificate is 50 years but when I think, I think more than a 50-year-old. When I act, I act like a 40-year-old. God has granted me good health. I don't have any kind of underlying ailment. I have no issues. So, I feel great to be 50.

Are you fulfilled at 50?

I feel fulfilled. I am so grateful to God for keeping me alive till 50. I have lost some friends. Even at the age of 40, some died. I have lost close friends who didn't get to 50 but for me, the most precious thing God has done for me is keeping me alive and healthy to attain 50 years. I know he will continue to keep me until I am 100 years old. I have achieved a lot. I have done so well in my area of discipline and other areas. God has been so kind to me and things have been working so perfectly for me.

When you talk about achieving a lot, do you mean materially?

The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively. So, achievements generally could not necessarily be achievements in terms of material things. There is a way I look at achievement. How many people have you impacted in life? How have you changed situations around you? These are areas where one needs to perform well before he is called an achiever. We have been able to give scholarships to different people, especially indigent people. We have been able to train people who are graduates. Today, they are fending for themselves. Some are employed in our establishment, working for us and earning a living. These are civil engineers that graduated from reputable universities. We have been able to take care of people including the sick and the needy. We have also been able to provide amenities for our community. We have been able to construct roads. We are building a church. These are what I call achievements, not personal acquisitions.

We have expanded our company, CDV Property and Development Limited. We have built the company from scratch to where it is today. And by the grace of God, it is one of the outstanding building and real estate companies in Lagos. We have delivered a lot in the industry.

Can you share the memories of your

early years with us?

I was born on December 4, 1971. I was born in Nsukka, Enugu State. It is a university community. That is the town that houses the University of Nigeria. I had my primary school in Nsukka and also my secondary education at St. Theresa's Secondary School, Nsukka. I proceeded to the prestigious University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where I read Microbiology. Growing up in Nsukka was a lovely experience.

It is indeed a lovely place. It was a place that molded me to become who and what I am today. I am from Orba in Enugu State and you know our people naturally are good. We are very resilient and forthright.

We are highly respectful, sincere and we were taught a lot of morals. We take things easy and are never in a hurry to make money or do anything evil to achieve greatness. We were taught that hard work leads to success and that was the way I grew up. I was born in an average family with a civil servant father while my mother was a caring housewife. We had that basic home training of an average family where we had very close and tight family values. We were all brought up with discipline and did everything together as a family. My parents weren't that rich but they made us believe that there is dignity in labour and that with determination we could be whatever we want to be. We could achieve our dreams and that is why everybody in the family is doing his or her best. We were trained to have self-confidence, self-reliance, believe in ourselves and believe in what we can do and not depend on people for arms. We learned to always be the best at whatever we do.

So, that is the way we were taught while we were growing up. I imbibed it and till today it is working out. I believe I can do it once I remain focused and keep my eyes on the ball. I will achieve what I want to achieve. My growing-up experience molded me so well. More importantly, the university I went to assisted a great deal. We had good lecturers and a serene learning environment. We were taught very well and today the results are obvious.

How did a microbiologist become a leading name in Nigeria's real estate sector?

I like watching things grow. I like to watch things move from one point to the next point. I liked playing with objects as a child. I never knew I would end up in the real estate sector. I thought I would be a medical doctor. I intended to study Medicine but I ended up where I am today. But I always had this building tendency in me. I grew up dismantling and rebuilding things. As a child, I liked playing with objects and drawing different designs of homes. So, that habit of building by myself made me embrace the building profession.

The first house I built, I was building it to live in it, but somebody came and said he was interested. He asked if I could sell the house to him. I agreed and sold the house to him. I bought another piece of land and started building again. You know when you are building to live, you put in all the best in the house and that is still my secret till today. Any house I am building, I build it as if I would live there. I want to make sure I use the best of standards so that even if someone doesn't buy it, I would be proud to own it. I can confidently tell you that this is my house and I will keep it for myself. From that moment, we started building houses to be sold.

Turning point

My turning point was when I moved from high-profile buildings to medium-income homes. Though we started well in building luxurious houses, when the economy of the country started nose-diving, we switched to building affordable homes that more people can acquire because the economy wasn't good enough to support the market for luxurious homes anymore. So, that was when we developed this idea of building terrace houses which are cheaper, affordable and less expensive for people to buy. When you watch the population of the country and you watch the distribution of wealth, you would see that the people in the average class are more than the people that can afford luxury. The market is huge in that average class. Switching to affordable terraces was the turning point for the company.

When you look back, would you say there were things you would have done differently?

There is nobody who doesn't have what he wished for in life. It may not be regret in that sense, but not doing what one wanted to do at the right time isn't fulfilling. The only thing I call regret is that I would have studied Civil Engineering instead of studying Microbiology. But I have made up for that. I have employed the best civil engineers working with us. I would have been so much fulfilled if I was a professional civil engineer. Apart from that, there is no regret as every other thing has been moving according to plans.

Did you embrace philanthropy simply because it is fashionable among the rich?

When we were growing up, I saw all the challenges people encountered. I saw poverty. I saw intelligent people who couldn't go to school because their parents could not afford it. I saw smart kids who dropped out and today they are riding Okada and

tricycles. It was not because they are not smart but because there is nobody to take care of them. I saw people who were held back in hospitals because they couldn't pay hospital bills. I saw all those things. I didn't need anyone to tell me that it was time to give those people the basic things they need. It is always nice giving back to society.

We started giving qualified students scholarships to study professional courses in the university. We have a board whose duty is to conduct the interviews, verify the students and make sure they are worthy of the programme and also ready to go to school. After that, we would give the person a scholarship on behalf of the company. There was a time we had a terrible experience. That was about five years ago when one of the beneficiaries got admission to study Medicine at the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus. This guy's result was excellent. The guy enrolled in medicine, we trained him in the first year, second year and third year. We didn't know the guy failed the second MB and dropped out of school. We were still paying and sending money to him. Eventually, one day, one of his classmates called me. I did not know how she got my number. She told me that this boy was no longer in school and that she noticed that the boy had been collecting money from me. I quickly called my coordinators and they went to his school and verified. It was true, this guy was out of school for almost two years and we have been running bills on him for those two years, waiting for him to graduate and become a medical doctor. So that was how we stopped the payment.

Notwithstanding, it did not make us change our attitude to others but now we have put a stiffer means of checking that kind of people. When we are training anyone anywhere, we put proper checks to be sure he or she is truly going to school and still doing well in the school. It gives me joy to see people go to school and come out because that is the first investment and first capital every human being needs. That is someone's first start-up capital. Once one has education, that knowledge makes the person versatile and he will excel once he is focused and committed.

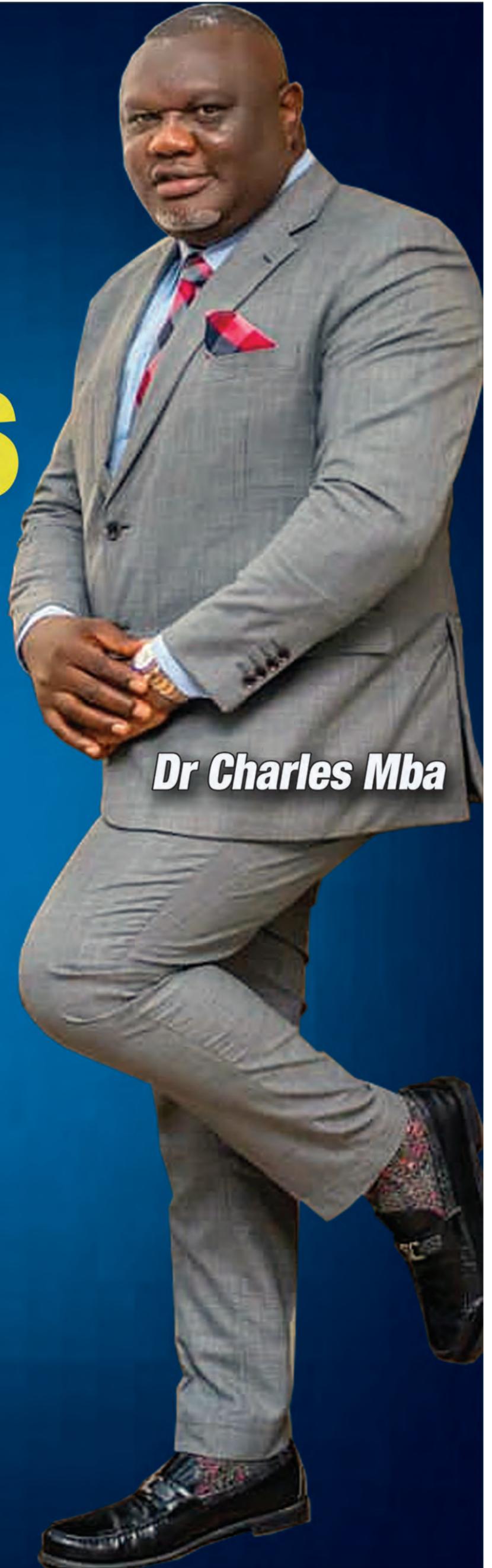
Young people

My advice for young people is to stay away from drugs. Drugs are ruining our kids these days. Our younger generation should stay off drugs so that they would be normal and act like normal human beings. What I see on the streets now is horrible and if not properly checked, it might ruin the nation. A lot of young kids are going into hard drugs.

What do you think could be responsible for that?

If the country is frustrating you, would you further frustrate yourself by going into drugs? It doesn't make sense for you to further frustrate yourself. You should try and find a way to come out of the frustration by being self-reliant and focused on what you can do to bring a change. There is no job that doesn't give returns. For instance, a welder starts with nothing but it doesn't take long for him to buy a car, land and build a house. It is because he is committed to his job. It is the same with bricklayers and carpenters. Tillers come from Cotonou, they come here and in a short time they buy cars and build houses for themselves from what they make in Nigeria. But when you are on drugs, you can't do all these types of technical jobs.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS CHARLIE



Dr Charles Mba

May you be comforted by His presence in your life, and always follow His guiding light. Amen.

May God bless you today on your birthday and every day after.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO THE GOLDEN MAN.**

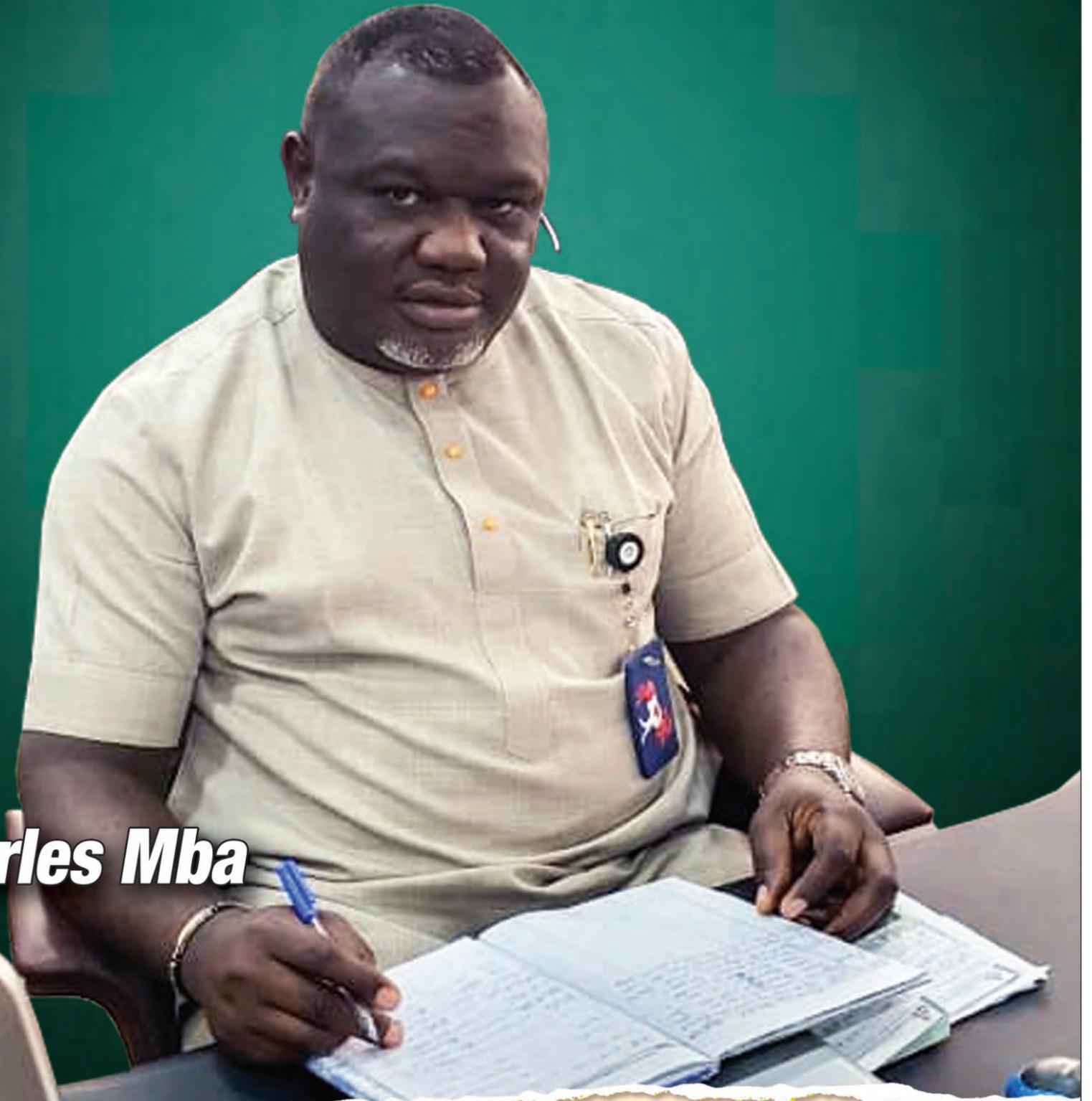
Signed:

Sir Andy Onoh
(Bugzy)

Chief Obiora Iwuchukwu
(Amuru onye na ego Nsukka)

BIRTHDAY *Greetings* Charlie

Dr Charles Mba



*Congratulations on your 50 years on planet earth with exceptional accomplishment.
Your new age blessed, amen.*

Signed:

Emeka Coleman Uche

Sir Greg Ugwueze

Chief Emeka Uzoeto (Ede Azia)

Ello Ohanugo (Akuekulie) na Nawfija

Ojimba Chibike Chris

Happy
50th

Birthday!

to a
Serial
Achiever

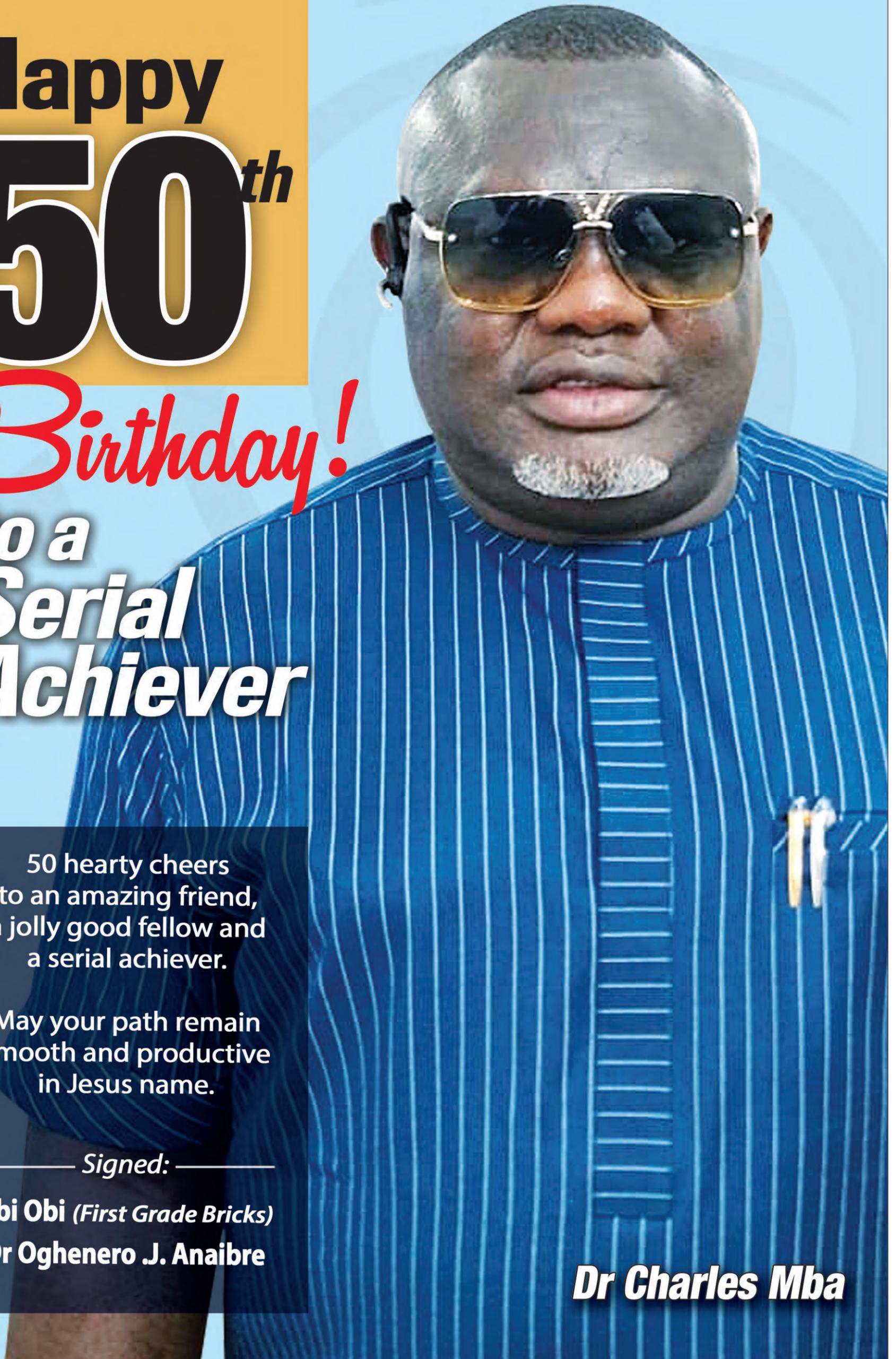
50 hearty cheers
to an amazing friend,
a jolly good fellow and
a serial achiever.

May your path remain
smooth and productive
in Jesus name.

———— *Signed:* ————

Obi Obi (First Grade Bricks)
Dr Oghenero J. Anaibre

Dr Charles Mba





Dr Charles Mba

Best
Wishes
Dr. Charlie
@ 50

You have given so much to the society and deserves more on your 50th birthday. We honour you today and wish you God's protection in your service to humanity.

Signed:

- Sir Chijioke Dike**
- Hon Obinna Chidoka**
- Chiedozie Innocent Mba**
- Azuka Anichukwu**
- Frank Ugwenweze (Ezeumuaga)**

BIG

Congratulations

to

Charlie

@

50

May this milestone translate into more blessings and more reasons for celebrations in your life.

Happy 50th birthday my dear friend.

Signed:

Dr. Ifeanyi Harry Jeffery (CEO, Ocean Group)

Emmanuel Ugo Nnodim

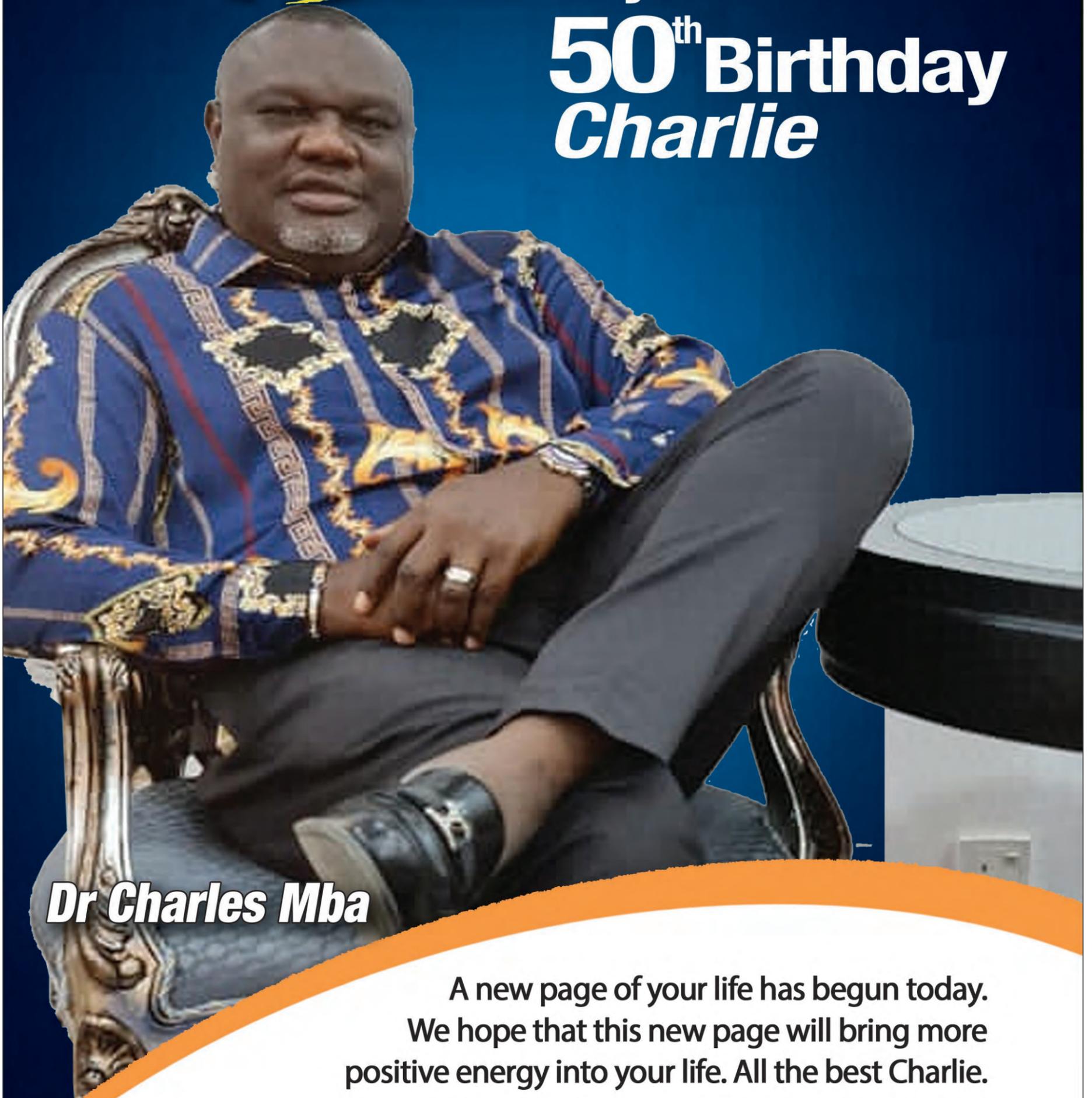
Dr Charles Mba



Congratulations!

on your

50th Birthday
Charlie



Dr Charles Mba

A new page of your life has begun today.
We hope that this new page will bring more
positive energy into your life. All the best Charlie.

Signed:

Van Daniels Properties

Chief Emeka Ilonze (Mkpume Ojoto)

CONGRATULATIONS

on your Special



It's been 50 years of blessings,
favour and mercy of God
upon you.

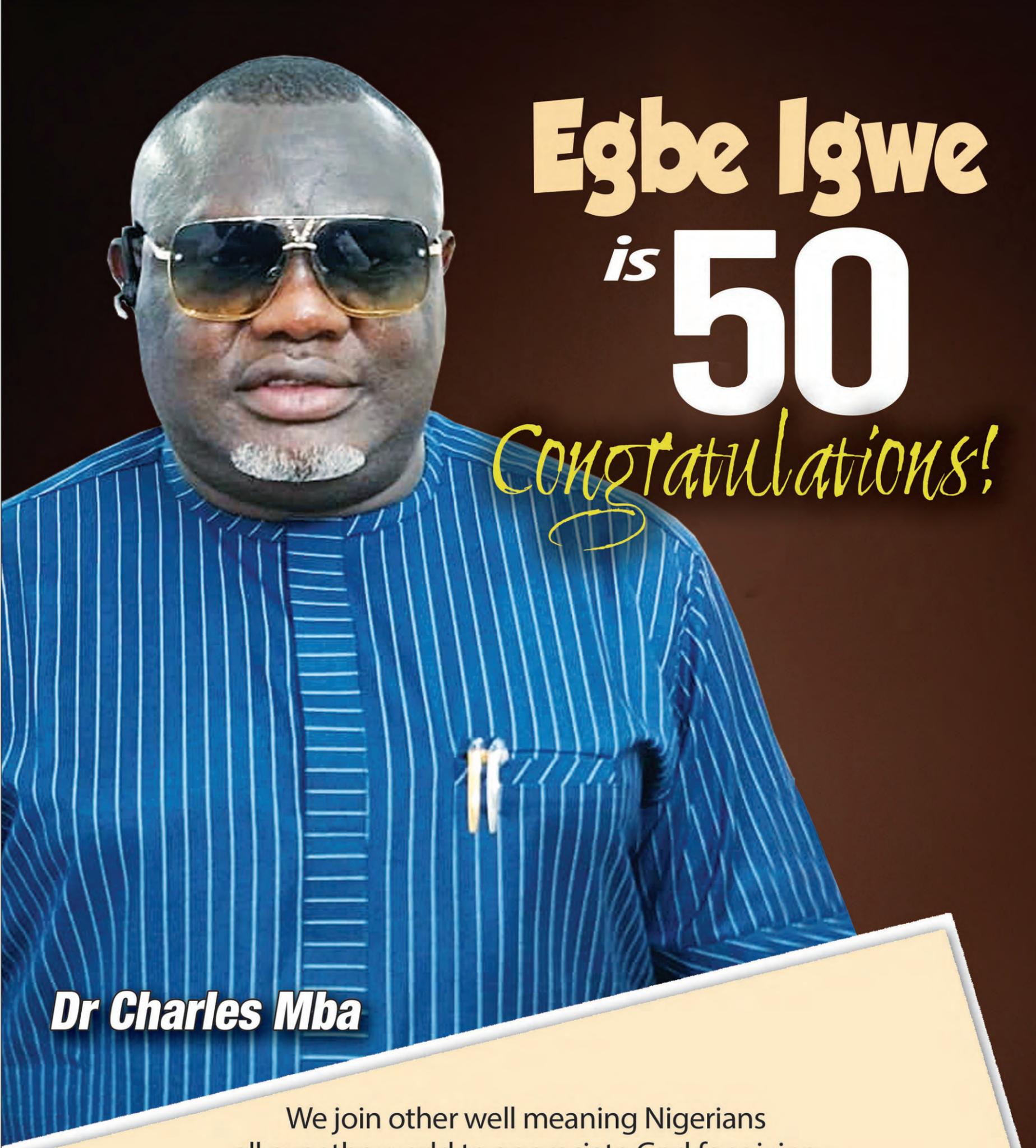
May God grant you good
health to enjoy the fruits
of your labour.

May He answers all your
secret prayers and give you
joy unspeakable in Jesus name,
amen.

Dr Charles Mba

Signed:

Davitech Oil & Gas

A portrait of a man with a shaved head, wearing sunglasses and a blue and white striped shirt. He is looking directly at the camera.

Egbe Igwe

is **50**

Congratulations!

Dr Charles Mba

We join other well meaning Nigerians all over the world to appreciate God for giving you the grace to celebrate 50 years on earth.

Keep enjoying God's grace in your life dear friend as you celebrate your Golden Jubilee.

Signed: _____

Hon. Dr. Olisaemeka Ugwunze,
(Ovuteozuruoha 1 of Ezikeoba)
MD/CEO,
Meskana Day by Day Transactions Ltd

Stephen Owolabi Martins

Congratulations
ON YOUR **50**TH
BIRTHDAY



Dr Charles Mba

Special day,
special person and
special celebration.

We are wishing you an
unforgettable day of joy,
an amazing year of bliss
and a lifetime of happiness.

Signed:

Nze Ebuka

Chuks link Automobile

Prince Ezemma Amos Okechukwu

FIFTY

HEARTY CHEERS

Dear Charlie

As you clock 50 today, we appreciate the Lord for his mercies on you. We thank Him for bringing you this far. We also praise him for using you as a helper of many destinies. Joy, celebration and breakthrough shall not cease in your life.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

Signed:

Dr Kelvin Ayogun (Okpoko 1)

Dr Mike Ezeaju



Dr Charles Mba

Happy Golden Jubilee



Dr Charles Mba

***You will enjoy the supernatural speed of God.
The Lord will continue to keep you safe. The favour of God
will rest upon you and the Holy spirit will give you
an edge in all your endeavors, amen.***

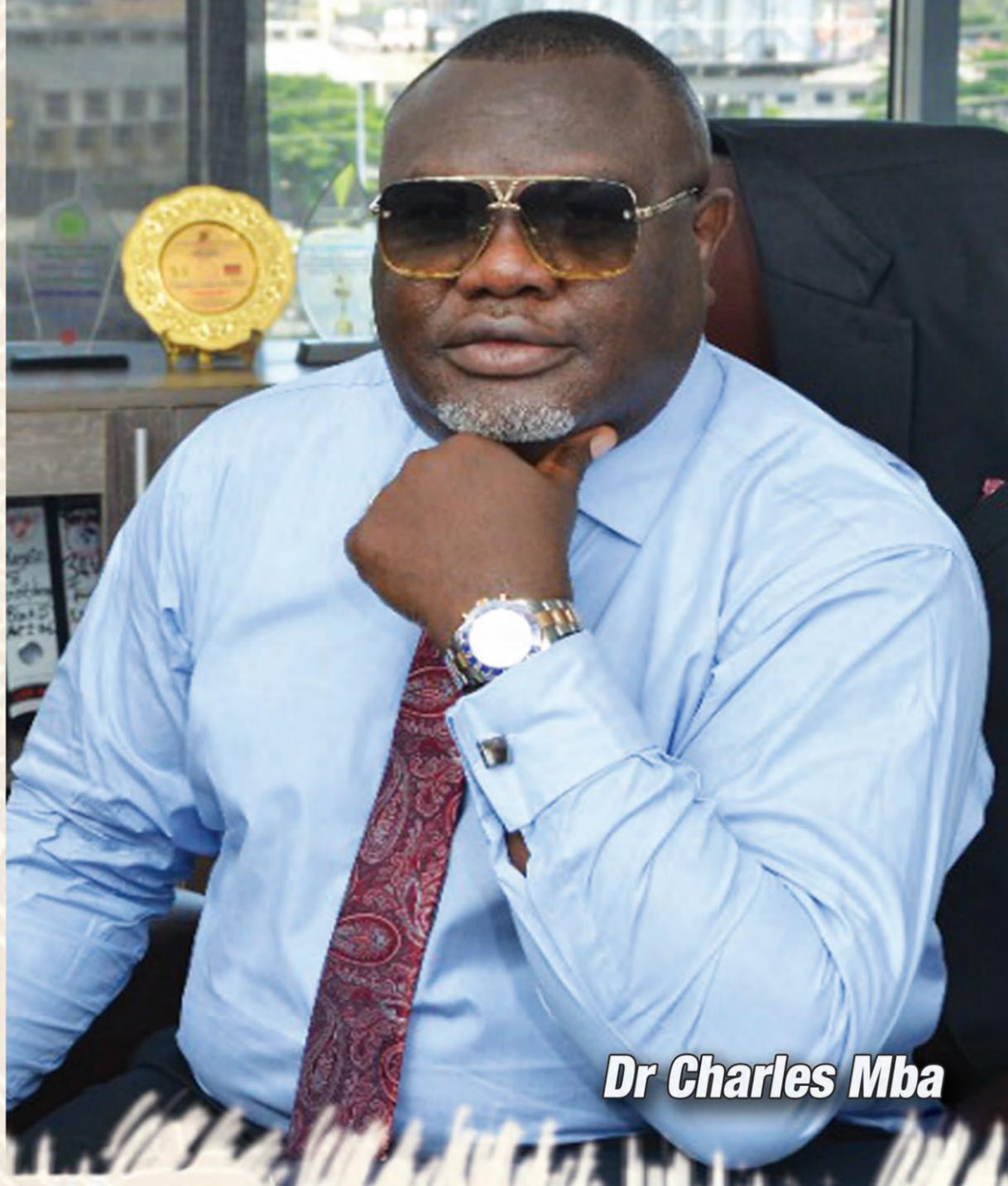
Signed:

***Martina Favour Oni
Bunmi Obakoya
Omeya Sunday OJI EFI***

***Nick Omeye
Collins Otegbulu***

Happy 50th Birthday

to a Gifted Friend



Dr Charles Mba

Congratulations on turning 50 Dr Charles Mba.
We wish you all the good things in the coming years.

ENJOY THE JOY THAT COMES WITH TURNING 50.

Signed:

High Chief **Samuel Okwudili**
Odinamadu (*Ikeora idemili*)

High Chief **Chukwuma Emmanuel**
Okafor (*OFUNWA OJOTO*)

A Jolly Good Fellow *Charlie* @50

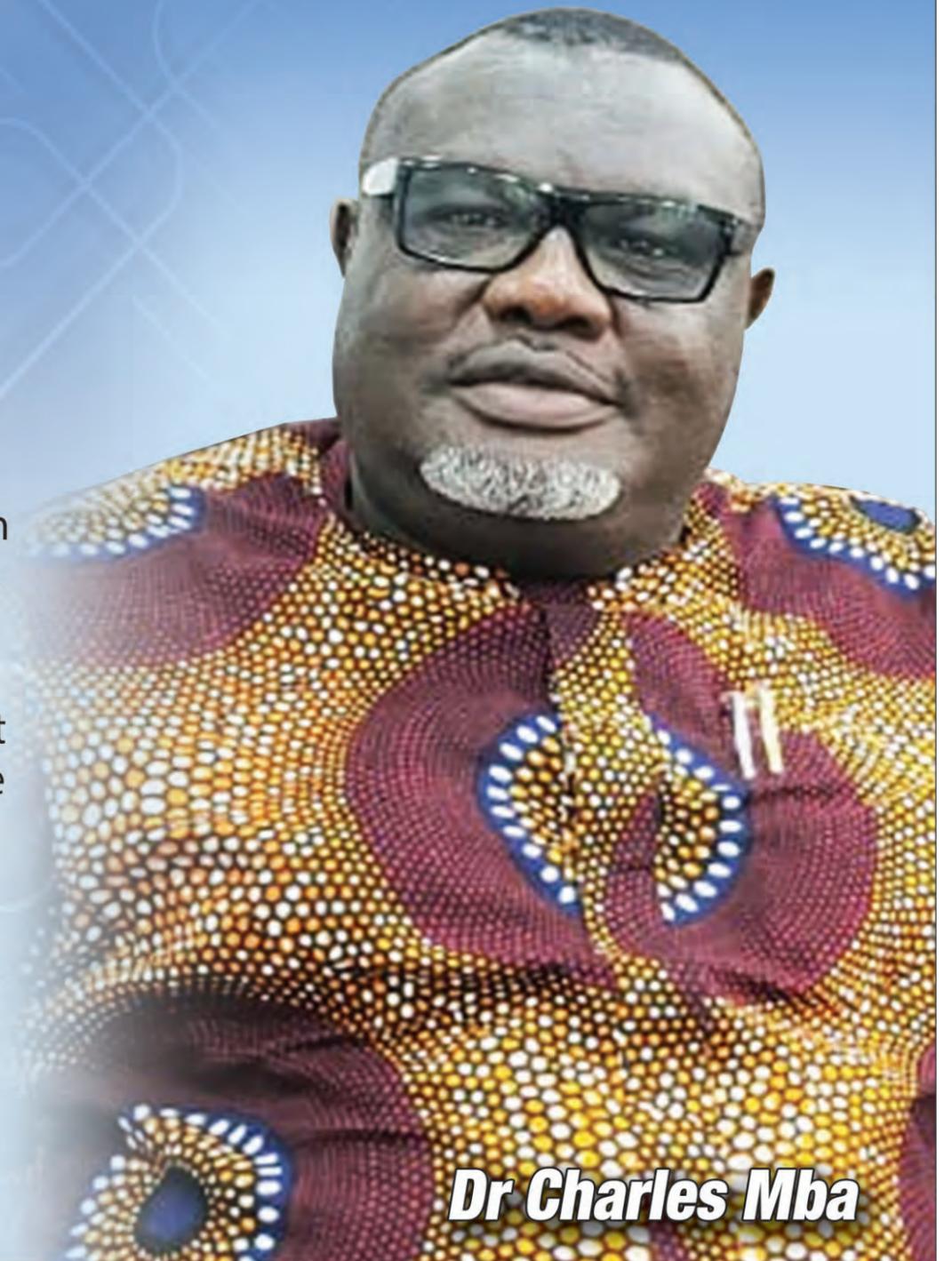
Today, marks a milestone in your life. The importance of this day is rooted in the smiles you have put in many faces in your various endeavors.

Your name and record are already cast in stone as one of those that make the difference in their area of influence.

Enjoy the fun and wisdom that come with the golden age our dear founder of the great Nsukka connect family.

Cheers!

Signed:



Dr Charles Mba

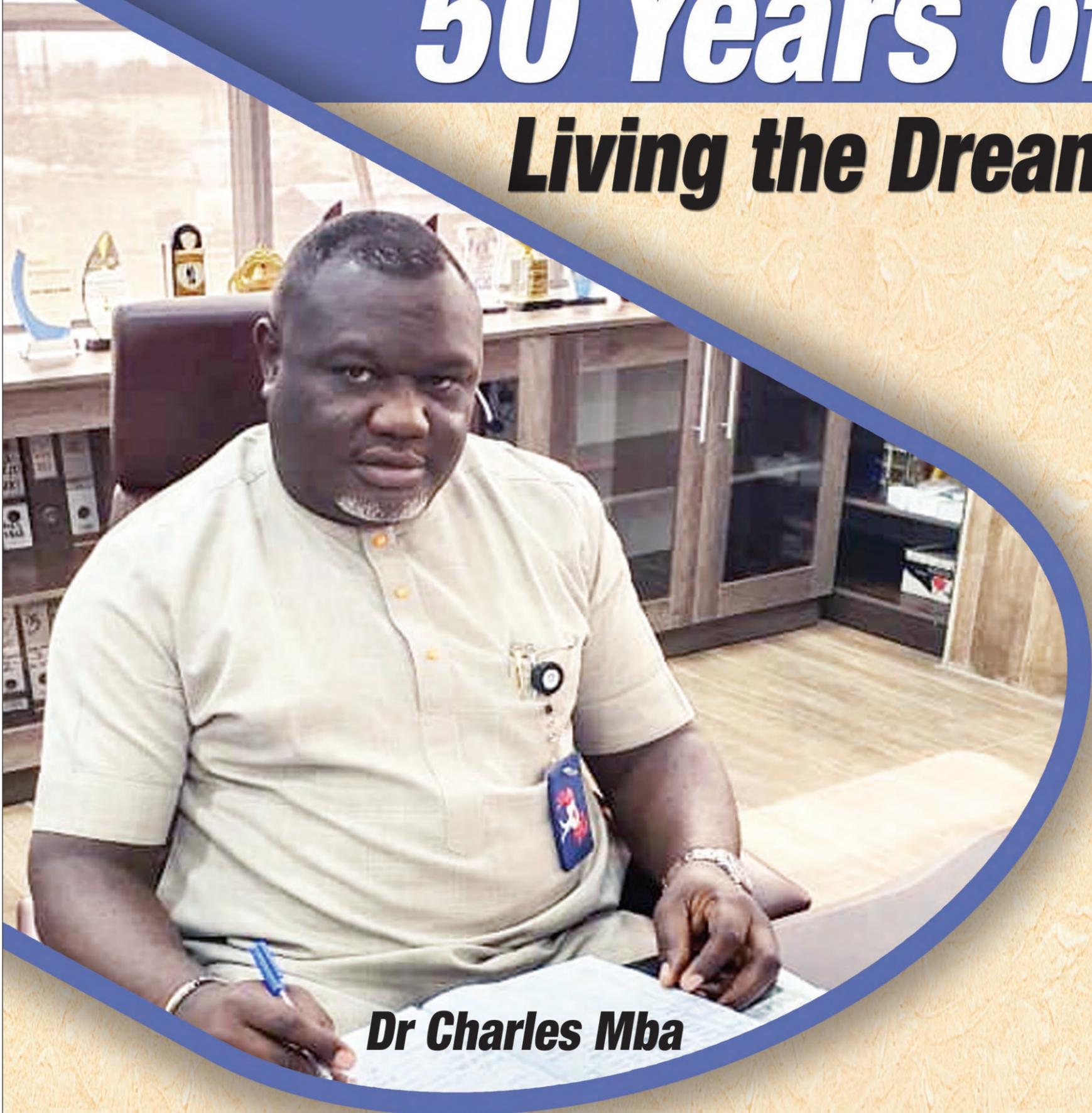
MEMBERS OF NSUKKA CONNECT FAMILY

Pharm Ajuluchukwu Mba
Chief Raphael Omeili (*Chunky*)
Sir Ikem Omeje (*Ijele*)
Ejike Ekekwe (*Alligator*)
Engr Ndubuisi Nebo
Chimezie Mba
Barr kingsley Chidiebere Onyeke
Nnaemeka Itanyi (*Yaro*)
Hon Tony Okechi Ugwu
Col Goddy Nwamba
Rt Hon Dr. Chinedu Nwamba
Chief Emeka Ugwu (*Lion king*)
Ibekie Peter Nwakasi
Onyema Ugwu (*Ghadafi*)
Tony Itanyi (*Atiro*)
Ugochukwu Ene

Pharm Fabian Ozioko
Obiora Ngwu
Kanayo Mba
Hon Peter Okonkwo (*Ohamadike*)
Chief Chudi Ugwuada-Ezirigwe.
Theodora Obiageli Obi-Okeke
Barr Chidiebere Asogwa
Chief Ejiofor Omeje (*Ojinnaka*)
Prince Emeka Okwo (*Ogbodu-Aba*)
Chief Dr Nick Ogbonna JP
Ugo Ogbu (*Igwe Ochendo*)
Barr Ken Agbo
Tony Anikwe (*Tee*)
Tony Idoko
Prince Nnaemeka Asogwa
Hon Bob Itanyi
Dr. Kingsley Nebo

Ndidi Ugbor
Hon Onyema Idoko (*Mayor*)
Chief Chukwudi Ugwu C.C
Emeka Akwanwanna
Barr Ken Uba
Engr Eddy Ajibo
Mazi Chidi Ogbaji
Dr Uche Ogbu
Chioma Eemma
Chief Okey Agu
Nnamdi Nzute
Nnaemeka Otagburuagu
Engr. Nnaemeka Onaga
Hon Chidozie Ogbu
Chief Mattew Ogbonna (*Omengboji*)
High Chief Chibuzor Okolo
Chief Victor Obuna

Dr Charles Mba: 50 Years of Living the Dream



Dr Charles Mba

What a privilege it is for us to wish you a happy birthday
and also congratulate you on turning 50.

You are such a special person who has been an amazing influence in the lives of many.
We wish you great things. Cheers!

Signed:

Sir Emeka ifeacho
Sapelli Luxury Furniture

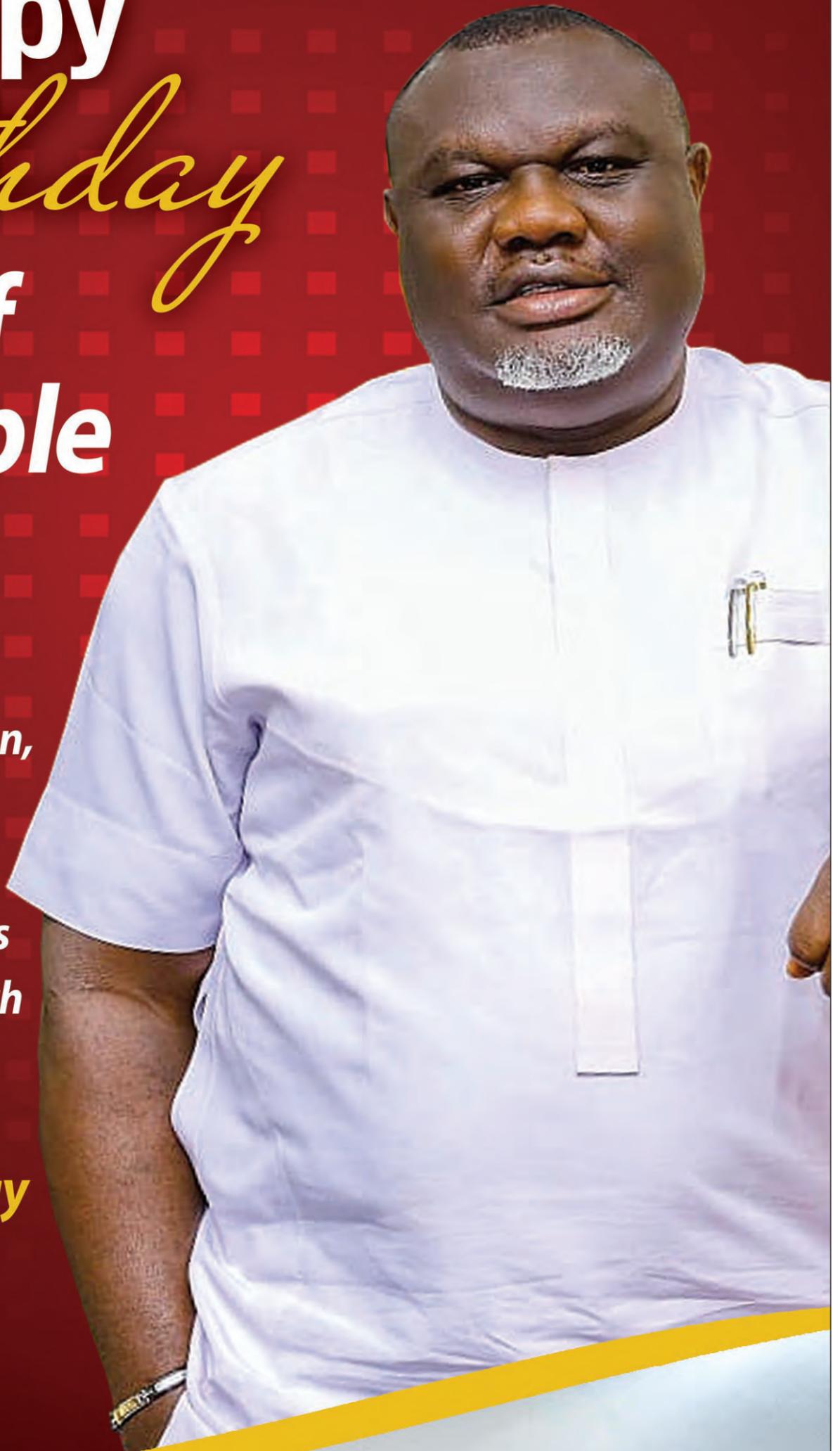
Mark Chidi Obetta
Chike Okechukwu Agbakoba

Gridema Nig Ltd
Danny Nwafor (*D boy*)

Happy
Birthday
to a
**Man of
the People**

*May the grass beneath
your feet always be green,
may the skies you walk
beneath always be blue
and may your life always
continue to overflow with
happiness and love.*

**Happy 50th birthday
Dr Charly!**



Signed:

Dr Murphy Osuala (*Odokaraomee National lord*)

KC Ekegazie (*ArabMoni*)

Many Happy Returns Egbe Igwe



Dr Charles Mba

We are so proud to be associated with you Dr Charlie.
May lines continue to fall in pleasant places for you, amen.

H A P P Y 5 0 T H B I R T H D A Y .

Signed:

**Emeka Itanyi
Mazi Chidi Ogbaji
Chijioke Edeoga
Bakel Virginus
Larrion Kelvin Agbo**

**Chief Austin Asianya (Ifemenankiti)
Andrew Azike Onwurah
Chief Kelvin Omeje (Onuoha Ubogidi)
Onuoha Ugbogidi
Hon. Ayodeji Amodu**

Congratulations
on your **50th**
BIRTHDAY!!



Dr Charles Mba

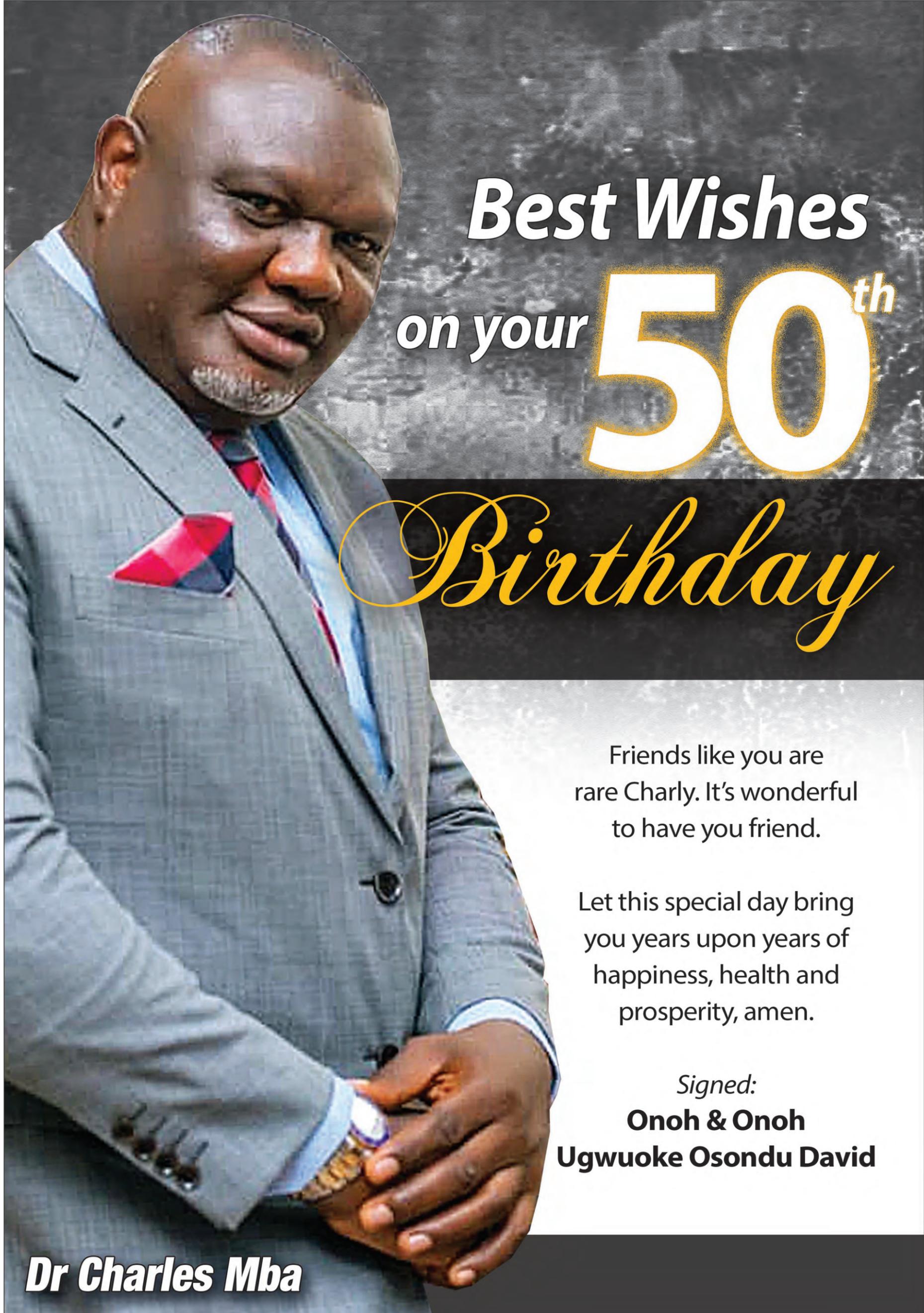
What a great pleasure and opportunity to celebrate a man who has achieved so much in the last five decades.

You are no doubt a blessing and inspiration to many youths.

Best wishes for the years ahead.

Signed:

Ugochukwu Kelvin Okonkwo,
MD/CEO
Def Skilz Global Inc.
Elevators, Doors, Railings and Real Estate Development.



Best Wishes
on your **50th**

Birthday

Friends like you are rare Charly. It's wonderful to have you friend.

Let this special day bring you years upon years of happiness, health and prosperity, amen.

Signed:

Onoh & Onoh
Ugwuoke Osondu David

Dr Charles Mba

WELCOME to the **Golden Club**



Dr Charles Mba

Congratulations on your special birthday. It's been 50 years of blessings, favour and mercy of God upon you.

May God grant you good health to continue to enjoy the fruits of your labour, amen.

Signed:

Iyke Edoga (Edge)

Gerald Azonobo

Theodora Alumona Obi-Okeke

Okwui Ubosi

Dom Obetta Asogwa

Samson Nnadi

Mark Chikani

Happy 50th Birthday to a Wonderful Friend

Dr Charles Mba



You have worked hard enough to be celebrated at 50.
May your birthday be blessed. May you feel the love of those around
you and may the light of the Lord shine on you.

Signed:

Quincy Patrick Nippon, Founder, Nippon Group LTD

Josiah Mgbemena (Okenwa Nneni)



50

Still Counting

May you live the next 50 years with the same fun, great attitude and super results as you did in the first.

Happy birthday Charlie.

Signed
Chief C.J Muonagolu, Chairman Richbon Group

HAPPY *Birthday* to a **Great Philanthropist**

Happy 50th birthday
to an amazing man
who has touched lives
in so many ways.

You deserve more than
the joy, happiness and love
that you spread
in the last 50 years.

Signed:

Ugochukwu Ene

Chimezie Mba

Kanayo Mba

Prince Frank Ugwu Esq

Emeka Oparaji (Ememos)



Dr Charles Mba

Human Extra

By Samuel Oyadongha, Yenagoa

As national and global attention is focused on the Santa Barbara River in the mangrove swamp of Nembe in Nembe LGA where a ruptured wellhead has been spewing crude oil into the creeks, rivers, rivulets and gradually to the Atlantic ocean, another oil related inferno has devastated a vast stretch of the luxuriant rainforest around the Okpotuwari/Ondewari corridor along the Ossiam Creek in the deep swamp of Southern Ijaw Local Area

This swathe of land, known as the Okpotuwari/Ondewari forest is home to several species of wild life, farms, fishponds, raffia palms and palm wine tapping camps and have been left in ruins and may take several years to restore the heavy impacted and scorched environment to its former level.

Saturday Vanguard finding revealed that Ondewari and Okpotuwari are not only neighbouring communities in Olodiama clan but also sister communities from same ancestry (Olodi) separated by the enthralling Ossiam Creek. They not only share common boundaries, but also shared same negative impacts from oil industry induced pollution, especially from the Ogboinbiri/Tebidaba pipeline owned by Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) over the years.

Interestingly, the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN), Head of Bayelsa office, Mr. Alagoa Morris had visited several oil spill impacted sites within this environment and documented same.

According to the renowned environmentalist, "while some of the spill incidents are officially declared on Joint Investigation Visit (JIV) reports as caused by third party interference, ERA/FoEN is also aware that a good number of the JIV reports indicated some of the spill incidents to have occurred as a result of equipment failure." Morris who led some journalists including this reporter to the deep of the scorched forest lamented that instead of proper cleanup and remediation of oil spill impacted sites, the negative practice of setting ablaze of such environment in the name of cleanup or whatever has turned out to be the norm in the Niger Delta leaving the environment further degraded. "This recent one in Ondewari and Okpotuwari environment has become one too many associated with Agip," he lamented adding that the same area had in the past experienced two major fire incidents before the latest one. To buttress his claim, he cited the JIV report dated 22nd July, 2008 in connection with the spill of 12th July, 2008 along Agip's 14" Ogboinbiri/Tebidaba pipeline which recorded 20 barrels as quantity of crude oil that spilled. Another JIV report with reference No. 2015/SAR/105/150 associated with the same 14" Ogboinbiri/Tebidaba pipeline indicated that a spill occurred on 14th April, 2015 and 45 barrels of crude oil spewed into the environment.

Also, along the same 14" Ogboinbiri/Tebidaba pipeline belonging to NAOC, a major oil spill was recorded in July, 2015. The JIV for that spill indicated 2015/SAR/193 as Reference number and, date of spill as 19th July, 2015 with quantity of spilled crude oil recorded as 100 barrels.

Morris asserted: "While ERA/FoEN is aware that issues relating to date of incident and volume of spilled crude oil are not factual (as volume spilled are recorded lower than actual and dates on incident pushed forward all in favour of the operator); what these three incidents cited here share in common is that; they were all recorded in the JIV as EQUIPMENT FAILURE incidents. And there are more such incidents of equipment failure in the same environment.

"However, the spill impacted sites of the incident of 12th July, 2008 and that of 19th July, 2015 were also set ablaze; affecting vast expanse of land/swampy environment and destroying several economic trees and palm wine/local gin brewing camps."

Lamentation

While locals are insisting that the current spill was first noticed in July, the JIV report which excluded community folks recorded 18th September, 2021 as date of incident. The JIV also indicated that the spill was caused by third party interference.

The visibly disturbed indigenes of Ondewari and Okpotuwari who spoke to Saturday Vanguard at the scorched site condemned the act of burning the oil spill impacted environment and beyond, especially at it destroyed their economic trees and other property.

Madam Domotimi Yeiyei, a native of Ondewari and a co-owner of the devastated forest, aged 64 and mother of seven who spoke in her native Ijaw dialect said: "as you can see the fire has destroyed our farmland and means of livelihood. All my cassava, cocoyam and sugar cane have been completely burnt down. How do I cater for my children," she lamented using a stick to scoop up the soil.

At the spill site were French Okoloko, Dennis

OIL SPILL FIRE:

My means of livelihood destroyed, how do I care for my children

—64-year-old mother of 7 laments

***All my cassava, cocoyam, sugar cane completely burnt down**



•Duomotimi Yeiyei



•At the impacted site

can no longer take this because it is a negative environmental practice, further degrading the environment and this is happening in this country because the regulatory agencies have not been able to follow through. If you look at the JIV reports they will tell you that after they have taken the volume of spill and everything they will follow up with immediate clean up which is the recommendation of NOSDRA and Ministry of Environment and the DPR before it was scrapped but that will be the end of reaching that site leaving the communities to contend with these giant oil companies. Nobody knows what happened after that time. The local people have been denied their means of livelihood just as you see here.

Woes

"Today you can see the woes and environmental tales of the people of Okpotuwari and Ondewari, how they have been shortchanged, the heavy health bills. They don't have clean drinking water, their farms, fish ponds and livelihood threatened.

The conclusion of the matter is that, Agip should be held accountable considering the fact that the action of an agent is tied to the principal. Besides, it has increasingly become a trade mark for Agip oil spill sites. One such incident led to the death of a young man returning from farm/fishing at Emago-Kugbo as fire and smoke prevented him from going back home and he suffocated and

died. The practice of using fire as cleanup or to conceal and reduce volume of spilled crude oil in impacted sites is inimical to sustainable environment and it is condemned no matter who causes it directly or indirectly.

Our Plea

"Agip is culpable, including oil industry regulators who only go to site for JIV and fail to follow through to ensure impacted environment are properly cleaned and remediated. This scenario gives cleanup contractors liberty to resort to unwholesome practices and smile to the banks while the environment suffers increasing degradation and denial to the people. This is environmental injustice.

"We are calling on the Federal Government that arrogates to itself the power over everything about oil and gas to prevail on the Nigerian Agip Oil Company to come back to site and do proper clean up of the oil spill impacted environment and pay compensation. Apart from their right of way that is still heavily polluted, you can see the presence of hydrocarbon outside the right of way with damaged and burnt off economic trees, farms and fish ponds all destroyed. This practice is condemnable, unacceptable and they need to be penalized."

He therefore urged the Federal Government to look seriously into this and other related matters with the urgency it deserves and also called on Bayelsa State government to take appropriate steps to make sure nothing less than proper cleanup and remediation of the impacted environment is done by Agip. According to him, "there is no other way than plead when human beings and all-powerful corporations have resorted to this wicked expressions, to protect their interests and fully legitimizing environmental terrorism on a people. The destroyed property and fully wrecked forest standing for all to see are lasting scars which will take several years to heal."

Elliot, Captain Golio, Youth President, Dingo Isoko, Ayibaemi Thompson Ibiado, former CDC Chairman, Tontiemotei Yeitei, Field Officer of Ondewari Health, Education and Environmental Project (OHEEP), and Mrs Nimiem Morris also of (OHEEP).

Others from Okpotuwari include Tiger Moses (Paramount Ruler), Ebiki Christopher (Financial Secretary), Ebiki Jacob (Treasurer), Chief Joel Keke (Deputy chief of the community), Gbodoghe Sanugba (CDC Chairman) and Ogugu Jacob (Youth President) who came late to the scene looking shell shocked.

Though the spill was reportedly discovered by the locals around July, 2021, Saturday Vanguard learned that the oil firm and regulators went for JIV without informing or involving the communities.

Chief Tiger Moses, the paramount ruler of Okpotuwari, while lamenting the sad turn of event said their economic trees, farmlands, fishponds and fishing traps have been destroyed noting that they were not involved in the JIV report as it was secretly done by the firm without their knowledge.

Also the deputy paramount ruler, Chief Joel Keke decried the practice of setting fire on spill site under the guise of clean up exercise and called on the company to come to their aid.

Captain Golio, Youth President, Ondewari

community described the incident as one catastrophe that has taken them back many years and would take years to recover, adding that their socio economic life have been disrupted.

He said, "it is more painful knowing our problem is man-made and not nature that man has no control over. The spilled crude should have been recovered, dumped in a burrow pit and later evacuated into barges at their water front for onward disposal in an environmental friendly manner instead of setting same ablaze".

The natives said they were surprised when a cleanup contractor approached them for the cleanup job around the second week of November, 2021. They said after engaging some persons from both communities for the cleanup exercise, the contractor said it was okay after three days work. It was alleged that the contractor engaged some persons to later set fire at the spill impacted site. Though the name of the cleanup contractor was not mentioned during the site visit, it was alleged that he was instrumental to setting the site ablaze.

Describing the incident as one too many, Morris, said: "The practice whereby oil spill environment are being burnt off is not needed. This is the sad reality we have endured for too long and the world need to hear. We are now here in Okpotuwari and Ondewari environment. We



This recent one in Ondewari and Okpotuwari environment has become one too many associated with Agip

JAILBREAKS: Aregbesola in the Eye of a Storm

Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola, has come under barrage of criticisms over incessant jailbreaks across the country amid allegations of political misuse of the personnel of the NSCDC, Daniel Ogbemor dissects the many issues surrounding jailbreaks in Nigeria.

A Spree of jailbreaks

By the admission of the Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, at a recent Ministerial Press Briefing at the Aso Villa, 4,860 inmates of the Nigerian correctional centres have escaped from those facilities between 2020 and 2021 alone following successful jailbreaks in Benin, Owerri, and Oyo, among others. Also, only 954 of that number have been rearrested. That was before the recent jailbreak at the Jos Medium Security Custodial Centre, which resulted in 9 fatalities and escape of 252 inmates. The 252 on the loose are apart from the 10 rearrested.

As the man, who seats at the helms of the supervising Ministry for the Nigeria Correctional Service (formerly Nigeria Prisons Service), Nigeria Immigration Service, Federal Fire Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Aregbesola has faced scathing criticisms, over alleged failings of the Ministry in its critical roles in the nation's internal security, including the management and protection of the nation's correctional centres.

Lawyers, NBA, AfBA, others Cry Out

Civil Society Organisations, lawyers, among others, believe that poor leadership, poor welfare of inmates, injustice, slow pace of justice, congestion, and poor security of correctional centres are at the root of the menace.

Yunus Uztaz, SAN, believes wants security agencies to work in harmony, saying, "If the security system is intact, all these things will not happen".

Human rights lawyer and Welfare Secretary, Nigeria Bar Association, NBA, Kunle Edun, said overcrowded correctional centres overwhelm the security architecture in the prison.

President of the African Bar Association, AfBA, Hannibal Uwaifo, harped on poor security, corruption, and poor welfare of inmates, also blaming nepotism in the appointments and promotion of men and Women of the correctional services.

Distractions by local politics

However, the Special Adviser on Education to the Osun Governor, Alhaji Jamiu Olawumi, believes that the Minister of Interior is being seriously distracted from doing his job by the crises in the Osun State All Progressives Congress.

Speaking on a Rave FM, Oshogbo political programme, Olawumi said: "What is happening in Osun State is also affecting the Federal Government.

How many prisoners have we lost to the crowd? Over 4000. We have never had it so bad in Nigeria because he has distracted himself with happenings in Osun. The Minister for Interior is distracted. He has capacity but is distracted. Prisoners are jumping fences and he is helpless. He is distracted by the crisis he is instigating in Osun. In this crisis, you cannot find any masquerade behind it other than Ogbeni Aregbesola".

He advised the Federal Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission against the use of the men of the Civil Defence Corps for monitoring the 2022 governorship poll in the state, saying being an organisation under the Ministry of Interior.

"By the time they bring a fake uniform person to Osun, it will not only affect APC, but it will also affect PDP. That is why I am shouting out now because somebody is trying to dig a hole on the ship of progress while on the deep sea.

"INEC should listen and FG should take heed to what I want to say. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is being misrepresented in certain functions in Osogbo. They will not be able to supervise the election here come next year because we are seeing some people, perhaps fake Civil Defence officers, carrying guns and covering their events".

Misuse of NSCDC worsens jailbreaks-HURIWA

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Writers Association, HURIWA, has petitioned President Muhammadu Buhari linking the poor security at the correctional centres and consequent jailbreaks to the misuse of the personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) for political gains in Osun State, allegedly by Aregbesola, when the situation in the country demanded a beef-up of security around the correctional centres.

In the petition, which was made available to newsmen at a press



•Aregbesola

Civil Society Organisations, lawyers, among others, believe that poor leadership, poor welfare of inmates, injustice, slow pace of justice, congestion, and poor security of correctional centres are at the root of the menace

conference addressed in Abuja by its National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, HURIWA said: "We wish to draw your attention to the clear and unambiguous symptom of a failed leadership in the Ministry of Interior due to political distraction on the side of the Minister, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola and the need for the Minister to be called to order or asked to quit and face local Osun State politics.

"It is worrisome that in the face of the implications of the successful and attempted jailbreaks reported across the country in the last eighteen months, which have been adjudged to be the highest so far in the cycle of any administration since the return to civil rule in 1999, the Interior Minister, Rauf Aregbesola, appears more concerned with allegedly misusing the personnel of the security agencies under his Ministry for political gains in Osun State rather than fully deploy them appropriately where they are needed to secure the Correctional Centres that are the cornerstone of Nigeria's judicial system.

"HURIWA has observed that reportedly, on a weekly basis, particularly on Thursdays, that armed men from the Correctional Services and those of the Nigeria Civil and Security Defence Corps (NSCDC) are stationed at the venues where The Osun Progressives (TOP); a caucus of the Osun State All Progressives

Congress suspected to be loyalists of Rauf Aregbesola who are laying claims to the leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state hold their meetings.

"Again, reports have it that on Saturday, August 14, this group, alongside some suspected political thugs under the protection of the armed men from the Nigeria Civil and Security Defence Corps (NSCDC) allegedly attacked the state secretariat of the All Progressive Congress, wherein some persons were reportedly injured in the process.

"Also, on the 16th of October, 2021, while the State APC held its State Congress at the Osogbo Stadium where all heads of security agencies in the State and INEC were present, only the NSCDC personnel went to another part of the State to provide cover for alleged Aregbesola's political loyalists who also claim to be holding a parallel state congress.

"More worrisome is that there are indications of clear communication gaps between the Office of the Commandant General and the Minister's Office for the deployment of tactical and combatant teams of NSCDC to all Correctional Centers in Nigeria, which was allegedly declined by the Minister.

"It has therefore become pertinent that Your Excellency implements sanctions in calling the Minister to order and direct him to appropriately deploy personnel of the Security Agencies under his Ministry to fortify prison security and other critical national assets rather than being deployed for political assignments.

"Deploying sanctions in calling Rauf Aregbesola to order would provide accountability for and be a deterrent to anyone involved in using their position to divert the attention of security agencies to personal interest".

In the same vein, HURIWA has also petitioned the Minister of Defence and Chairman of the Presidential Think-tank on Defence and Security, Major General Bashir Magshi (Rtd.), alleging arbitrary

use of power, intimidation and harassment of Osun residents by men of the NSCDC.

HURIWA charged Magashi to protect the political rights of Osun people by calling the Commandant-General, Ahmed Audi, and the Commandant of the Osun State Command of the NSCDC, Emmanuel Ocheja, to order.

Aregbesola Fires Back

Meanwhile, Aregbesola, however, argues: "Whatever we are witnessing is a fallout of challenges we are having nationally".

"Yes, attacks could be for specific causes in the centres or simply to harass the government.

"But how long can they continue to run from the state? The state is a patient bird. You can run but you can never hide. Whenever and wherever they appear to transact any business, their cover will be blown", he said.

Also, Aregbesola's media aide, Sola Fasura, has equally countered Osun Governor's aide, saying Olawumi was not in a position to determine the agency of government to monitor election in Osun.

Fasura said: "What is happening is not jailbreak, but an attack on correction facilities and it is novel. The facilities were not designed to deal with such attacks with the military ordinance and other heavy military equipment.

"He (Olawumi) also has no right to determine which agency will be involved in election duty as long as it is within the responsibility of the agency".

Meanwhile, as Nigerians expect President Buhari to immediately address the gale of jailbreaks, while the concerns over alleged rampant political misuse of the NSCDC continue, analysts believe that the buck stops at the President's table.



Monday sit-at-home:

S/East: Killings continue as commercial activities resume

By Vincent Ujumadu, Steve Oko, Peter Okutu, Chinonso Alozie

AFTER four months of the commencement of the weekly Monday sit-at-home ordered by the leadership of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, in sympathy with its detained leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, full commercial activities have finally returned in the South East. However, the sour point remains that the zone still experiences occasional attacks on security operatives, which many people attribute to the action of some of the security personnel manning numerous checkpoints in various parts of the zone.

At some point during the weekly sit-at-home, there appeared to be a divided operational approach to the enforcement of the order, as a splinter group in IPOB started dishing out counter orders against the ones coming from the recognized leadership of the pro Biafra group.

While the sit-at-home lasted, groups that ensured that it succeeded included transporters who refused to bring out their vehicles, traders who, out of fear, refused to open the markets, banks which decided not to open for business and most importantly, security operatives who disappeared from the roads every Monday.

ABIA

In Abia State, normalcy has fully returned in Umuahia, the state capital while Aba, the commercial nerve center of the state is picking up after witnessing the most-observed sit-at-home among the cities in the South East. Schools, markets and banks no longer shut down on Mondays, unlike before when such places were deserted in total compliance with the sit-at-home ordered by IPOB.

People now go about their normal businesses in and around Umuahia on Mondays without intimidation or harassment by any lockdown enforcers. The situation, however, differs in Aba as some parts of the commercial city are still deserted on Mondays for fear of the criminal elements who had hijacked the enforcement of the suspended sit-at-home.

While major markets including Ariaria International Market, Cemetery Market, Ekeoha Shopping Plaza remain open on Mondays, traders and customers on their own still stay away, obviously for fear of the unknown. The Coalition of South East Youths Leaders, COSEYL, has however challenged IPOB to rise against those whose activities are denting the credibility of the movement.

National President of COSEYL Comrade Goodluck Ibem argued that IPOB stood in a better position to stop those hiding under its cloak to unleash mayhem on the hapless citizens. "IPOB should know how to deal with anyone moving against what it stands for. It was IPOB that called for sit-at-home in the first place, and now those elements trying to hijack the exercise, which has long been suspended should be called to order. IPOB

should not allow criminals use its name to unleash mayhem on the people".

The COSEYL president, however, blamed the persistence of the menace on what he called lack of coordination and synergy among South East governors who, he alleged, had placed their political and pecuniary interests above the interest of the region.

ENUGU

In Enugu state, normal life is gradually returning as some business outlets and civil servants have started going to work.

Last Monday morning, there was remarkable improvement in commercial and social activities in the capital city. Schools opened for normal academic activities and markets opened too.

Tricycle operators who hitherto were reluctant to hit the streets commenced normal operation.

However, banks and big transport companies that operate interstate were yet to open for business.

EBONYI

In Ebonyi State, the euphoria behind the sit at home order has completely vanished as residents have since relegated the order to the background. The usual beehive of activities has commenced every Monday in all parts of the state, with residents, commuters and workers going about their normal daily activities.

Even when the IPOB's directive was prevalent, activities in Ebonyi were usually not completely grounded as economic activities normally start building up in the afternoons and later stretch into the evening period. As both human and vehicular activities resumed in full force in the state, there have not been any reported case of violence or attack associated with IPOB's sit-at-home order in the state.

IMO

In Imo State, the sit-at-home order has ended in most parts, including Owerri, the state capital, although few people still observe it in parts of Orlu and Okigwe zones. However, some residents, traders, motorists, banks do not open on Mondays out of fear, with some of the people complaining that they were still experiencing some level of insecurity. Some of them claim that they hear of stories of alleged kidnappings and killings, which tended to create some tension, particularly anytime the so-called enforcers of the sit-at-home order stormed their streets.

"The unknown gunmen usually come out to shoot and fight with the security men and we hide in our houses to avoid being killed by stray bullets," some residents in Orlu said.

Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State was worried that the Monday sit at home was



• Uzodimma

hurting the economy of the people. At a meeting he held with traders at Ariaria International Market in Aba, the governor reminded them that they might not understand the negative impact of the sit-at-home in the immediate, adding that while the business activities in the South East zone were on the downward trend, those in other zones of the country were growing.

"Our traders should try and understand the situation because we have been hurting ourselves by shutting our markets every Monday. How do we build our economy if we continue to shut our markets? Setting our brothers' businesses on fire and causing loss of jobs and rise in crime cannot help us. The Igbo must not throw away their strength.

"Our opponents are happy that we sit at home and if it is easy for them, they could have created an alternative market where our traditional customers can go and buy from. Other people are happy that we close our schools every Monday, while their children go to school. Our people are marginalized, but if we start crisis in our land, we will be exposed to our enemies and create division among us", the governor said.

ANAMBRA

But while normalcy appears to have returned in the South East, the reported attacks on the police still pose a problem. Early this week, the social media was awash with gory pictures of two policemen killed, beheaded and burnt by a group of hoodlums at Orsumoghu in Ihiala local government area.

Although the Anambra State police command said it is on the trail of the killers, the fear is that innocent people often suffer the actions of these unidentified hoodlums who often claim to belong to IPOB, even when the leadership of IPOB had denied any involvement in such acts.

The Ihiala killing, as well as the clash between the soldiers and civilians at Awomama

in Imo State which led to loss of lives and destruction of property worth millions of naira has attracted enormous condemnation from the people, with some of them urging the police to ensure that those behind the action were made to face the full weight of the law.

Mr. Fabian Ndife, a resident of Awka described the incident as man's inhumanity to man, adding that those involved might have been under the influence of a hard drug.

"That video in the social media was something that should be condemned in its entirety. The worrisome part of it was that the miscreants relished in their dastardly act and eventually put it out for the whole world to see. This kind of thing has the tendency to cause disharmony in the country considering what the people were saying in the video".

Another respondent, Mr. Chijioke Nnadi said the incident was capable of jeopardizing the lives of Igbo people residing outside the South East and urged the leadership of youth wing of Ohaneze Ndigbo to prevail on their fellow youths to stop these killings. He however argued that attacks on police would stop once extortion by the police at checkpoints stop.

He said: "For some time, passing through Ihiala in Anambra State has become nightmarish because of what soldiers and police do at the many checkpoints in the town. Often times, the vehicular queue could stretch for about a kilometer and those manning the checkpoints appear to be deriving joy in seeing people suffer. In the heat of the unknown gunmen, commuters from Onitsha were usually forced to alight from their vehicles, frisked and made to trek past the checkpoint. The situation is usually chaotic.

"This year alone, no fewer than 50 lives have been lost at the Ihiala checkpoints and the disturbing aspect is that once it happens, the soldiers and the police run away, leaving the victims to their fate".

The member representing Ihiala Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Hon Ifeanyi Momah had to bring the issue of the Ihiala checkpoint deaths on the floor of the national assembly after several people lost their lives there on Sunday. In an emotion-laden voice, Momah told his

colleagues that the people of his constituency were experiencing hell at the checkpoints mounted by security operatives in the area. Chronicling what has been happening at the Ihiala checkpoints, Momah said: "On Saturday, 30th May, 2020, a police makeshift road block caused a fatal accident at Ihiala which led to the death of a trailer driver and his conductor and over 10 bus passengers.

"On Thursday, 4th November 2021, an accident involving three vehicles on the Ontsha-Owerri road at Ihiala claimed the lives of nine people, three children and six adults as the driver, sighting the road block, was unable to control the vehicle as he was descending the hill. On Saturday, 28th November, 2021, a trailer carrying a container load of goods ran over 20 road users who all died on the spot at the checkpoint".

He called on the lawmakers to urge the IG of Police and Army authorities to, as a matter of urgency, remove the checkpoint and the Army checkpoint in front of Abbot Boys Secondary School, Ihiala, to a suitable location that would be safer for motorists and road users to forestall future accidents.

Meanwhile, IPOB has dissociated itself from those masterminding various heinous crimes in the South East zone. IPOB Media and Publicity Secretary, Comrade Emma Powerful accused those opposed to the release of its leader as masterminds of the current insecurity to implicate IPOB and the Eastern Security Network, ESN.

He said that the nonviolent philosophy for Biafra restoration had not changed, insisting that those who unleash mayhem on innocent citizens in the name of enforcing non-existent sit-at-home are not its members, but criminal elements allegedly recruited by the enemies of the struggle.

He said: "The attention of the Indigenous People of Biafra has been drawn to the allegation by the Minister for Information, Lai Mohammed that we are responsible for the beheading of security agents in a viral video being circulated. We, therefore, wish to dissociate both IPOB and ESN from those criminal elements in the said video.

"We don't know who they are, and they are not IPOB or ESN operatives. IPOB has remained a non-violent movement since inception.

"It is clear to all and sundry that IPOB and ESN do not engage in senseless killings going on in our land. ESN's mandate is to resist terrorists and jihadists invading our ancestral land and destroying our crops and raping our sisters and mothers. IPOB members are not killers, but freedom fighters struggling for the peaceful restoration of the Independent state of Biafra.

"We are however not surprised at the desperation of our enemies to renew their carnage and atrocities in our land. Their intention has always been to create the wrong and negative impression that IPOB is responsible for the growing insecurity in Biafra land. They are looking for occasions to implicate us but they will continue to fail.

"We only pity the gullible minds that cannot see between the lines. We know the antics of our enemies. They are vexed with the recent move by some respected Igbo Elders and Bishops to secure the release of our leader. And one of their strategies perhaps, is to increase the wave of violence and barbaric acts, including gruesome killings across Biafran land to create the impression that his followers are violent. They want to justify his continued detention and make efforts to release him difficult if not impossible. But we understand their game plan.

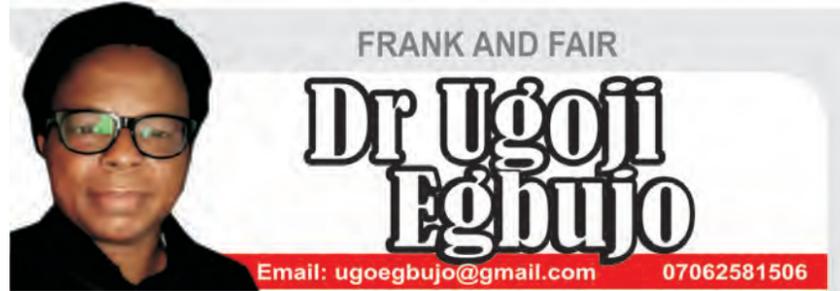
The EFCC has an impossible task. It must stop thieving politicians and yahoo-yahoo boys. It must do so against the backdrop of a police force that is so badly funded it cannot conduct any diligent prosecutions. The EFCC is hamstrung. It must hobble along without the weak criminal justice crutches.

Despite the general indignation of the youths about a country damaged by their fathers and uncles, it is difficult to find and hire upright young men who will live with humble wages while resisting the temptation of getting fattened by promiscuous politicians and yahoo-yahoo boys. So while the EFCC looks different, it's only a one-eyed agency in the land of blind and dissipated policing agencies and public institutions.

To find vigour, the EFCC must search and find internal maggots burrowed in its system. These maggots and tapeworms which seem to populate the legal dept of that agency sabotage the organization from within. So while hunting yahoo-yahoo bush-rats the EFCC must deworm.

Sometimes the EFCC must watch its best effort frustrated by the many Brother Jeros masquerading as lawyers and judges in the country. Often some of the country's best lawyers feel nothing while undermining the criminal justice process. There are only a few courts in Nigeria that are bribe resistant. The average Nigerian is bothered more about hunger than mounting a social sanction against his neighbour who is a corrupt politician or a yahoo-yahoo expert cum philanthropist. Yes, rampant counterfeit philanthropism by crooks sways public opinion. The task of the EFCC is therefore complicated from within and without.

Besides corruption-induced slovenliness, there is the other problem of ineptitude. Lack of capacity. The EFCC cannot defeat crime, win cases if it doesn't choose its staff by academic and moral merit. A poorly conducted investigation and a poorly laid out prosecution will always fail against good defence lawyers. Criminal trials are adversarial. Crooks always hire the best lawyers. If the EFCC



The EFCC and hotel raids

hires through a quota system then it is not prepared for the contest. The culture of merit will enthrone the culture of excellence. Without the culture of excellence in investigations and prosecutions, the EFCC will perpetually remain one step behind the crooks. A culture of excellence will do something else. It will seek to protect the prestige of the agency and resist all actions the could be misread as partisanship.

With a tattered societal moral fabric, limp criminal justice processes and malnourished recruitment process, the EFCC is forced to be inventive. In an environment where public trust is indispensable, that creativity sometimes harms the agency's reputation. In trying to secure convictions and create deterrence with blunt tools, the EFCC leans towards crime control ethics rather than due process. And that is where the door is opened for critics to come in.

Recently the EFCC raided hotels.

Ordinarily, that's puzzling. A law enforcement agency must possess the surgical skills to go in and extract rather than run through all rooms indiscriminately, dehumanizing many innocent guests. But the task of the EFCC

is peculiar. Look at this. In an incident in Owerri, yahoo-yahoo boys rented almost an entire hotel and converted it into a workstation. The hotels should know their guests. The hotels should know, to some extent, what activities the long-stay guests are engaged in. When the EFCC came calling this hotel, the hotel staff couldn't provide the identities of the guests. If the hotels demanded identification documents and kept watch over the activities of their guests and their internet traffic, the EFCC would be receiving tip-offs from the hotels rather than storming hotels hunting fraudsters.

The hotels and the EFCC must find a



Without the culture of excellence in investigations and prosecutions, the EFCC will perpetually remain one step behind the crooks

Is Nembe Oil Spill being hijacked, politicised?

By Mallam Kabiru Yusuf

IT is an indisputable fact that the hydrocarbon industry which powers human civilization is a complex, specialized, and strategic arena in the energy space all over the world. As such, incidents that arise in the course of crude oil exploration and exploitation need to be professionally managed. Arguably the most unwelcome distraction in the serious business of incident and crisis management is irresponsible politicization of difficult and highly technical issues by entities or persons with poor or no understanding of the key issues. In doing so, these unwelcome and ill-informed distractions create nothing but divisions where none exist.

The recent Nembe oil wellhead blowout and spillage incident are a prime example of how genuine and expert interventions already deployed should not be politicized, discredited, or hobbled by hostile fringe industry interests.

The OML 29 Well 1 platform, which is operated by Nigeria's largest indigenous oil firm, Aiteo Exploration and Production Company Limited (AEEPSCO), a JV with the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) experienced a wellhead gas/crude blowout.

On November 5, AEEPSCO reported a major oil leak from its Oil Mining Lease (OML) 29, the Santa Barbara South field, in Nembe, Bayelsa State from a blowout which was spewing oil into the immediate water bodies and contiguous communities and fumes in the air. Following available information, the well in question is a non-producing well in respect of which no production had taken place before 2015 when the company assumed operatorship. Terminal.

Aware that the spill situation was time-sensitive and rightly so, Aiteo activated technical containment measures and quickly invited highly competent foreign based technical experts with experience of managing emergencies of this nature to help arrest the situation. The firm has since mobilized to ground zero and has fully deployed measures to contain the leak including an effective fast-track spill recovery programme. In addition to this has been high level, community targeted community-targeted measures that has been providing provide relief



Nembe oil spillage

and health related support to those immediately affected.

But for some wholly incomprehensible reasons, several forces have equally deployed their armaments to smear and damage not only the image of Aiteo, but its quite considerable efforts. From peddling specious information that the spill has led to losses in excess of two million barrels, some have alleged that over 500,000 barrels were spilled, while some have suggested figure stupendous loss of some 200,000 daily.

According to the Director General/Chief Executive Officer, National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA), Idris Musa, who spoke last week on a national TV show, "It is absolutely wrong and preposterous for people to make false speculations over the oil spillage in Nembe communities of Bayelsa State."

This brand of speculative mumbo-jumbo continues to be circulated the fact that competent regulatory agencies exist that can provide the appropriate and correct information but are hardly approached to do so. To show the extent of mischief, few have asked how many barrels the well was producing prior to the blowout. Credible information confirms that before its shut-

down prior to 2015, the well produced about producing 700 barrels daily. In the light of this disclosure, it is simply incomprehensible that there can be any truth to the volumes being misleadingly bandied about.

This wretched attack is, quite simply, a disgracefully organized conspiracy to put down Aiteo. Despite efforts by Aiteo to professionally contain the spill in Nembe, some see this incident as an opportunity to attack the company. Some interests are even, curiously, putting out old spill videos to create a negative false impression of the extent incident.

It certainly cannot be overstressed that what is playing out appears like well-choreographed intrigue at work to undermine Aiteo and besmirch ongoing efforts to contain the leak and mitigate the impact on communities around the location of the well. First was the exaggeration of massive oil spill, which some compared to Hiroshima Atomic Bomb catastrophe. Comparing the Nembe oil spill to the Hiroshima, is taking mischief to a dangerous level. Worse, it betrays crass ignorance. Clearly, it is scandalous to liken it to Hiroshima. Except one has a very bad motive – there can be no purpose to such a destructive allegation. Not surprisingly, after putting out

way to curb the conversion of hotels into yahoo-yahoo workstations while protecting the privacy of guests. The raids can't continue.

There is this story of an award night in a hotel in Abeokuta. Youths gathered to recognize those who have excelled in a certain art/ trade. The informed say the endeavour being recognized approximated the ability to pickpocket people on the internet. The EFCC got wind of the dubious fellowship and came to harvest souls with whips and handcuffs. While trying to gain access and make the arrests, someone alerted the army. That is the other problem. Stealth is difficult here. Fraudsters move around with police protection which must be consulted before an arrest can be made. Sometimes these uniformed mercenaries frustrate the EFCC. At this Abeokuta hotel, innocent guests of the 5-star hotel were forced to witness a nightmare before they squirrelled into hiding like chickens. In the aftermath of that raid, the earliest reactions were condemnation for the EFCC. The condemnation seemed justified. Turning hotel upside should only happen in a banana republic. But after the EFCC publicized their haul, folks simmered.

The EFCC must audit its systems. While it may be necessary to let drowsy superiors know that men are at work, haphazard and noisy operations that raise unnecessary dust damage public confidence in the institution. The EFCC must remember that charlatans and clowns work noisily. If the EFCC hires on merit and installs the culture of excellence, half its problems—which are from within—would be solved. While chasing around yahoo-yahoo boys whether in deference to the Broken Windows Theory or in an attempt to placate or woo Western grant donors, the EFCC must lay a siege on Nigerian banks. If the EFCC chases around banks staff and books half as much as it chases yahoo-yahoo boys, there will be no breathing space for thieving politicians. The politicians can't steal a farthing without the active collusion of the bankers. If the EFCC makes the sanitization of the banks its priority, we will see monthly convictions of top bankers. And until that begins to happen, the EFCC is chasing rats.

this narrative, these same hostile forces of divisiveness who apparently have an axe to grind with Nigeria's biggest indigenous oil company started circulating old spill videos to fuel to their plot and set the communities against the company. By circulating false videos to various social media platforms, they have sought to create the impression that there has been massive environmental damage to the ecosystem. Even Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State who is not a petroleum engineer has demonstrated a disturbing disposition to his contributions to the public discussions by misguidedly alleging impossible scenarios. Douye Diri is a 1990 Bachelor of Education and Political Science graduate from the University of Port Harcourt with no previous knowledge, experience, or involvement in either oil production or the environment. Yet he has manfully opined that the Nembe spill is worse than the Gulf of Mexico spill. From a person in authority of such elevation, this is extreme misinformation stemming from willful ignorance or dark motive.

To place matters in context, the April 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico is considered to be the largest marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry and estimated to be 8 to 31 percent larger in volume than the previous largest, the Ixtoc I Oil Spill, also in the Gulf of Mexico. Comparisons between the two or three scenarios with the Nembe incident bespeaks nothing short of a wicked, mischievous conspiracy.

More importantly, when journalists finally visited the location yesterday, they realized that the extent of spill had been greatly exaggerated beyond what the reality they met on ground. The questions are; Who are those behind this plot? Who is paying for it? Who benefits from these damaging stories based on ignorance and outright fake news?

The governor's posture and utterances call for closer examination. By his own admission, the governor was outside Nigeria on holidays when this spill happened.

Read more: www.vanguardngr.com

*Mallam Kabiru Yusuf, President Arewa Consultative Youth Movement and Convener Association of Northern Youth Groups.

Professor Emma Okocha is dead and alive. After surviving the Asaba Genocide, he lived long enough to bring the World to Asaba majorly through his best seller, 'Blood on the Niger'.

On November 29, 2020, Okocha returned to his creator. Although he was buried on December 18, 2020, his works have literally kept him living. Family and friends are warming up to honour this icon on December 18, 2021. He died in Asaba and the Memorial is billed for the same place.

His wife, Tayo who sent me a mail from her United States base summed it all up. "He lived in the US for many years but couldn't stay away from his beloved Asaba," she wrote.

I was over the moon. I honestly did not know of Okocha's wife. Many thought he refused to raise a family due to trauma that followed the October 1967 Genocide. Okocha lost family and friends. It was difficult probing this part of him.

Great relief to hear that Tayo and hubby have a son. I am sure this will also be good news to many of his friends and admirers. While we mourn, we are also celebrating. Okocha took the world to Asaba.

The globe lived in denial until 'Blood on the Niger' was published. The Civil War was a genocidal masterpiece. Civilians were massacred, markets were bombed, churches were razed, mostly on the Biafran side. The world looked away.

Okocha told the Asaba side of the massacre. And the universe went cold. While Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, a Civil War Commander had earlier dismissed it as minor incident, he had cause to set up the Oputa Panel in 2021, which confirmed all that Okocha had written.

Another Civil War Commander, Ibrahim Haruna saw it as part of war. He apparently forgot that Sandhurst



Asaba agog for Okocha

taught him Rules of Engagement. Unfortunately, the GOC of the Nigeria Army Second Division, Murtala Mohammed, was Haruna's course mate at Sandhurst.

Murtala, as GOC stayed in Umunede while one of his officers, Ibrahim Adetunji Taiwo rushed to Asaba to shed blood, enough to turn River Niger red and change the blue sky to crimson red.

It was inhumanity. Entire families were wiped out. There were no adult males left standing. The burial party consisted of girls and women, a taboo among the Igbo. At a time, it was said that Asaba was a town of landladies. That legacy belongs to Taiwo who was known as 'Ibrahim Kagara' at Provincial Secondary School, Bida, the Alma mater of Ibrahim Babangida and Abdusalami Abubakar.

Babangida's father-in-law,

Ogbueshi Leonard Nwanonyei Okogwu was murdered. His daughter, Mariam was in Kaduna. And IBB was fighting from a different front.

Philip Asiodu was on the Nigerian side as Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industries. Taiwo and his soldiers went after his brother, Sidney Asiodu, a Tokyo '64 Olympian who also captained Igbobi College Lagos sports teams and was the School's Senior Perfect.

Olisa Chukwura lived in Ibadan as a lawyer. He had played for the Nigerian national team, UK Tourists in 1949. The soldiers killed his brothers Chris and

Eddie, World War veteran and Engineer. Their wives and sisters could not help. When their father asked questions, he was equally gunned down.

The Chukwuras lost six family members. Charles Okonkwo, who



Family and friends are warming up to honour this icon on December 18, 2021. He died in Asaba and the Memorial is billed for the same place

The world has seen a lot of massacres, but rarely have members of a nation's armed forces or para-military, massacred fellow citizens; the same persons they are paid to protect.

Massacre? That is a particularly dirty word for it involves an "indiscriminate and brutal slaughter of many people" as a dictionary describes it. It involves mass murder, mass destruction, wanton annihilation, large-scale extermination, liquidation, decimation of peoples. It tells of unbridled carnage, of Dark Age butchery, a bloodbath or bloodletting unfit for the modern age. And it hints of wildness, cruelty and viciousness; things not supposed to be found in the mind-set of trained soldiers and policemen.

As the to-ing and fro-ing continue over who killed defenceless Nigerians at the Lekki Toll-Gate, and the Lagos State Panel Report, the state White Paper on it and Federal Government's dismissal of Lagos State, its panel, its findings and the White Paper, Nigerians should remember that their country and its Army are showing their true colours. So, how could such persons turn their weapons against fellow Nigerians? And here we are talking about protesters who were singing the National Anthem and waving the National Flag. Really, this beats all understanding. It befuddles all imagination and overwhelms the mind. How on Earth could anyone understand it?

I sincerely hope that those who have pointed out flaws in the report should go ahead and damage the credibility of that Report, for they would be doing Nigeria a world of good by really proving beyond every reasonable doubt that no security agents behaved with such animal savagery that night...at Lekki-Toll Gate.

I wish all those nay-sayers who are opposed to the report every good wish. They may not know it, but they are helping Nigerians to retain their sanity and their belief that we actually have a country. But if they fail in their great duty and it becomes obvious that Nigeria actually killed her own children, her own youths, then Nigeria is dead. And a country that cannot tell itself the truth is no country at



#Endsars protest killings: Like Lekki, like Asaba massacre

all for there is no future for her.

Let us begin from the banal: "Following the incidents of Police brutality which resulted in the #EndSARS Protest, the Powers conferred on the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu (Mr. Governor) by Section 1 of the Tribunal of Inquiry Law, Cap T7, Laws of Lagos State, 2015, The Governor constituted The Judicial Panel of Inquiry and Restitution for Victims of SARS related Abuses in Lagos State and appointed The Honourable Justice Doris Okuwobi, a Retired Judge of the Lagos State High Court as Chairperson of the Panel".

My interest in the opening section of the Panel's report quoted above is just this: the Nigerians who were murdered at the Lekki Expressway toll-gate on the bloody night of Lekki Toll Gate on the 20th of October, 2020 were actually protesting against Police brutality. And a worse form of brutality did them in.

Only in Nigeria!

This fact alone has been the cause of the endless anguish any patriotic Nigerian should feel at that sad and saddening event. See it this way: there



I wish all those nay-sayers who are opposed to the report every good wish. They may not know it, but they are helping Nigerians to retain their sanity and their belief that we actually have a country

was already outrage at the way some members of the Nigeria Police Force were behaving while on duty and such fell short of what was expected of members of Nigerian security agencies. And then, what happened? Some of the same protesters who were complaining against Police highhandedness ended up being killed, by some members of the same Police Force, according to the Report.

Beyond that heartlessness, some soldiers also, according to the report, came to the Lekki Toll-Gate scene where protesters had gathered, and what follows is actually unbelievable; opened fire at defenseless Nigerians.

The Lagos State White Paper on the Panel Report has rejected the finding that nine persons were shot at the Toll-Gate that night. That is the easy part; the real

later played for Enugu Rangers and Green Eagles, was born of a Chukwura. The Ojogwus fared worse, 10 lost. For the Mordis and Nwosas, the death toll was shared 8-8. The Okonjis counted seven members gone, the same number recorded by the Isicheis.

Through Okocha's efforts, scholars from the University of South Carolina dug deeper. Professors Elizabeth Bird and Frasser Ottanelli unearthed more chilling accounts. America and Europe could not ignore them. And that made the Asaba man a hero.

He was honoured as Ikemba Ahaba by the Asagba, King of Asaba, Prof. Chike Edozien who was forced into exile during the war. The royal father will be at the St. Joseph's Pro cathedral Catholic Church to honour his departed subject. A Memorial Lecture follows at Grand Hotel.

Things happen. While the killing grounds in Asaba are marked for posterity, the spot where Taiwo was murdered in 1976 is a no go area. Located in Amberi, along the Ajase Ipo-Offa Road in Ilorin, it is a den of armed robbers. The community built schools there but they were abandoned.

Taiwo was governor of Kwara State and was assassinated same day as Murtala on February 13, 1976. Both were aged 38. Today, Taiwo's widow, Margaret lives in America, just like Tayo, Okocha's widow.

Okocha married a Yoruba woman. Prof. Edozien's wife, Modupe is Yoruba. Asiodu chose a Yoruba wife, Olajumoke. Yoruba land seems to be unhappy with Taiwo. Following his death, the family became homeless after being thrown out of Queens Drive Ikoyi.

That was how the children found themselves in Ajegunle. In 2020, Taiwo's son, Gen. Ahmed Taiwo who was cool headed and doing well suddenly appeared after the Lekki shootings, to defend the Army. The world is watching as the globe remembers Emma Okocha.

hard part is to convince Nigerians that the Lagos State told the truth in that White Paper.

And has the Army and the Police set up their own internal investigations to ascertain what actually took pace that night?

Talk of massacres in modern times and your mind would go to Wounded Knee in the United States of America, to the Nanjing massacre in China and to Mai Lai in Vietnam.

Wounded Knee: On December 29, the U.S. Army's 7th Cavalry surrounded a band of Ghost Dancers under BigFoot, a Lakota Sioux chief, near Wounded Knee Creek and demanded they surrender their weapons. As that was happening, a fight broke out between an Indian and a U.S. soldier and a shot was fired, although it's unclear from which side. A brutal massacre followed, in which it's estimated 150 Indians were killed (some historians put this number at twice as high), nearly half of them women and children. The cavalry lost 25 men.

Nanjing Massacre: On December 13, 1937, Japanese troops under Matsui Iwane, commanding general of the Japanese Central China Front Army, massacred 100,000 to 300,000 Chinese. Shortly after the end of World War II, Matsui and Tani Hisao, a lieutenant general who had personally participated in acts of murder and rape, were found guilty of war crimes by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and were executed.

My Lai Massacre: US soldiers of Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 11th Infantry Brigade, killed as many as 500 unarmed villagers on March 16, 1968, during the Vietnam War. Capt. Ernest Medina was the Company's commander.

Result: Medina and another officer, along with nine enlisted men, were charged with crimes in connection to My Lai.

Facts abound about every massacre except in Nigeria. Yes, this is Nigeria...which has not officially accepted that a massacre took place in Asaba during the Civil War, 5-7 October 1967. So, if Nigeria denies the Lekki Toll-Gate Massacre, it will be acting true to character. But the official government version will never become the truth if it is not the truth.

THE social media has its uses and abuses. Its strengths and weaknesses. For starters, you don't need to be a professional journalist to become a practitioner as was the case in my time. So all those who have always wanted to write or be a social commentator can now have a platform for the asking. In the past, the rich and powerful international media owners who operated mainly from the Western bloc, largely determined global news. They fed us with stereotypes and gave us templates for different parts of the world. For example, many of us grew up believing communism to be evil. Many grew up believing the Eastern bloc to be the axis of evil. Many grew up believing nothing good could come from Africa – we were people living on trees remember? Many grew up seeing the Western bloc as the perfect model for the rest of the world. This was the lens with which we saw the world and our place in it. This was the psyche under which some of us grew up. We even blamed ourselves for our colonial past and the slave trade from which Africa has never fully recovered.

The social media is helping to change many of these narratives. It is one of its strengths. At a click on a link, one can read about the partition of Africa and the cheap labour that developed Europe. Thanks to the unfettered nature of the social media, we know more about the three Super Powers - China, Russia and America. In fact, we know many more things than they would want us to know. We now know that none of them can hold up as a model and that all of them have their internal contradictions. More importantly, we know none of them really cares about Africa beyond seeing it as a cow to be milked.

The #End SARS movement which shook the nation last year showed the power and potential of the social media to sensitise, mobilise and possibly revolutionise a society. That was a strength that almost became a weakness. By the time the movement culminated at the Lekki Toll Gate, many law abiding citizens had been cowed as more and more streets were taken over by hoodlums. By the time Lagos State imposed its curfew, a self-imposed curfew

If anyone expected the Mustapha Audu led faction of the All Progressives Congress, APC national executive to act beyond its press conference where it sacked the Mala Mai Buni led exco, they probably would have been asking for too much.

However, even in going as much as sacking Buni, exerting itself as a factional executive and censuring President Muhammadu Buhari, the group may have shocked many.

The sacking of Buni by Audu again demonstrated the historic fracture in the APC. It is a perspective that has led many to assert that the APC as it is, is comparable to a speeding vehicle without an engine.

Mustapha Audu, the new factional chairman, has had a long family feud to settle with President Buhari. Many will remember how his father, the irrepressible Prince Abubakar Audu collapsed and died in 2015 in the middle of the election he was about to win as the governorship candidate of the APC in Kogi State.

That election which was the first major election conducted by the Mahmood Yakubu led Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, also introduced the narrative of inconclusive elections in the political lexicon of the country.

Many will remember that Buhari, while still basking in the joy of his enthronement as president did not come to campaign for the late Audu.

Audu, who was backed by Asiwaju Bola Tinubu for the governorship according to nearly everyone was also not the candidate of President Buhari.



All lives should matter everywhere

was already on by people afraid to venture out. A revolution of sorts was brewing. The social media was also at work in the collation and dissemination of information that was to run contrary to the government's position on the shooting at the Toll Gate.

How much of that information was true and how much was manipulated will remain part of the strengths and weaknesses of the social media. It used to be said that photographs don't lie. Not any longer. Social media photographs do lie. And within hours of the year-long investigative panel's report being handed over to the Lagos State Government, a leaked version of it was on everybody's phone. That was in contravention of the normal process. This lack of restraint is a weakness of social media. Ordinarily, a report of such a sensitive nature would be vetted and harmonised by another independent body and recommendations made in a White Paper. Those that leaked the report might have wanted to force the hands of government which could be understandable given existing trust

issues between government and the people. But it instead exposed some biases in certain areas of the report.

The US Secretary of State came to town at the time the report was being handed over and used the opportunity to give



In the past, the rich and powerful international media owners who operated mainly from the Western bloc, largely determined global news

us a lecture on the need for democracy, probity, accountability and full implementation of the panel's report. He did not urge for patience and the need for government to first study the report. He did not talk about the impropriety of leaking a report that had barely reached the hands of government that authorised it in the first place. Americans and indeed the whole world waited in bated breath to receive the Muller Report on Russian interference that had taken more than two years to investigate. Yet, despite the world-

wide interest in the report, the system was allowed to play out. No wholesale leak of the report within 24 hours was reported. The system was respected even when the Attorney General was trying to use parts of the report for the administration's advantage. That is how institutions are built.

There is no sane Nigerian who does not



The anatomy of the parallel APC national exco

Indeed, Audu won the party's ticket in the view of many in spite of Buhari who simply could not do anything about it.



Many allege that it is the failure to stop the Tinubu momentum that has forced the party leadership into the dithering procrastination about the convention.

Meanwhile, Tinubu had also positioned his Man Friday, James Faleke, a Kogi indigene who was then and just as now, representing the Ikeja, Lagos Federal Constituency. He has held the seat for about three terms on the goodwill of Tinubu.

Indeed, when the intrigues broke out after Audu died in the midst of the election, many Kogites were troubled with the suggestion that Tinubu's personal and political

emissary would be their governor.

Those so troubled with that prospect found traction with political enforcers in the Presidential Villa

who quickly resurrected the campaign structures of Yahaya Bello who had made a popular but failed bid for the governorship ticket of the APC during the APC party primaries.

It was in the midst of the intrigues that Yahaya Bello became candidate despite every effort of the Tinubu camp to foist James Faleke with Audu's son, Mohammed as running mate.

Some allege that it was not difficult for Buhari to turn against Faleke.

First, the villa it was said, did not want Tinubu to extend his political boundaries beyond the Southwest into Kogi.

Even more, some allege that Buhari may not have forgiven Abubakar Audu for the betrayal of 2003. Despite being of the same political party, All Nigeria Peoples Party, ANPP, Prince Audu as governor of Kogi State was believed to have supported President Olusegun Obasanjo against his party's presidential candidate, Buhari, in that year's presidential election.

It is instructive that the bad blood has now spilled even nationwide as internal APC critics have tapped Mustapha Audu to lead the insurgency against the Buhari led mainstream in the APC.

Mustapha is indeed a good choice

abhor the police brutality that led to the #End SARS movement in the first place. There is no decent Nigerian who does not regret the way the protest degenerated into looting and carnage around the country. There is no rational Nigerian who does not detest the brutish way the protesters were dislodged at the Lekki Toll Gate. Or the needless deaths the protests caused. But we do not need a sheriff to come to town and lecture us on law and order. We do not need anybody to stand on a moral dais to talk down. Thanks to the social media, we now know more about 'Black Lives Matter' and how lives are snuffed out by the American police. We now know how high handed America can be with protesters. In fact, the week Mr Blinken was lecturing us about democracy, certain key allies of ex-President Trump were being invited to give account of their roles in the attempted coup of January 6. And within days of his preaching to us, an 18 year old who had walked armed into a protest killing two people about a year ago, was acquitted of all charges and treated as a hero in Blinken's America. Nobody asked what an 18 year old was doing with an assault rifle. Or that the people he killed were unarmed. If this had happened in Nigeria, we would have received a lecture. And a travel alert against us if a gun had gone off at a Nigerian airport as it did in Atlanta recently. The fact is that all lives should matter everywhere.

There is a lot wrong with Nigeria that needs to be corrected. But it would help if these things were pointed out to us in ways that give us dignity. It would probably be more effective if an engagement of equals was made to discuss our short comings. After all, the last time I checked, we were a sovereign nation. Thanks to the unfettered social media, we now know about the decadence in some of these hallowed countries; and about the frailties of their leaders.

Come 2023, I pray for the kind of purposeful, knowledgeable and patriotic leadership that will make us proud and make other countries respect and take notice of us. I pray for an untainted and cerebral leader who can stand tall in a comity of leaders. May the days of leaders who bow to the dictates of the West – or the East – be over soon. And may the tribe of those who think our salvation lies in the West or East, grow less. Our destiny lies in our hands.

for such a rebellion. He is one who has in the past looked beyond blood relationship in politics.

In 2019 he did not mind contesting against his brother, Mohammed Audu and an uncle in challenging Yahaya Bello for the APC ticket. In the end, all three Audu relations were disqualified ahead of the APC governorship primaries.

In his press conference last Monday, he articulated several reasons for sacking the Buni led mainstream executive.

In fact, just like many other party leaders, he did not need to speak much because the facts are simply obvious.

Besides the factionalisation of the party in more than 20 state chapters with party leaders at daggers drawn, the party has not been able to form a Board of Trustees, BoT.

A BoT is the conscience of the party which should step in at any time to proffer advice on whatever issues that may trouble the party. However, since the party came to power it has not been able to inaugurate one. A National Executive Committee, NEC meeting which many parties hold with ease is one that is a rarity for the APC.

Is it therefore a wonder why the nation is drifting if the party that is in government is unable to organize itself?

The plans for a national convention according to multiple party sources are wrapped in intrigues as a cabal in the party is overstretching itself to frustrate the emergence of an executive that will be favourable to Asiwaju Tinubu.

Many allege that it is the failure to stop the Tinubu momentum that has forced the party leadership into the dithering procrastination about the convention.

The words of the Mustapha Audu executive last Monday appeared to be sharpened by the frustration of many in the party.

The scant regard for Buhari at that press conference is ominous for the president and his legacy. It is time that he begins to address the rebellion using the leverage of good governance and empathy that many are complaining as missing in governance today.

The Saturday Interview

Says 'If parties had internal democracy governors will not be too powerful

Continues from page 14

General of the Federation? What was INEC supposed to do? Not to obey it? When we obeyed it, of course, the Supreme Court turned down that ban on Atiku Abubakar. But they did it so late; four days to the election, and that was a major problem that we had.

We insisted that we had to obey the Supreme Court judgment. We had other choices; postponing the election, but the fear of postponing that election by one day was so huge.

The tension was so high that any slightest blink would have ignited a whole lot of things. People would take it that we didn't want to hold the election, or that we connived with the Supreme Court, and people would be on the streets.

Could you believe that on the eve of the governorship election in 2007, Sheik Adams was killed while preaching in the Mosque on a Friday? We couldn't sleep, because something as localised as that could ignite a whole lot of trouble.

From my little background in Social Science – I am not a sociologist, I am a pure scientist – it is the fact that two cardinal functions of government are security of the citizens and to create the enabling environment for social harmony. And those two were uppermost in my mind. There was social harmony. Yes there was bickering, but people settled it. Not what is happening now; the country is completely polarised.

At what point then did you threaten to quit as INEC boss and address a world press conference, and what led to that threat?

You are again touching on areas I would rather not discuss now. There were some serious issues that I didn't agree with at the time. One particular thing I was very sensitive about was Orji Uzor Kalu. I insisted that he had to contest the election for a totally different reason. If he represented a segment of the political grouping, it was necessary for him to contest. It was also necessary for Theodore Orji, the current governor of Abia State, to contest. The reason was that I didn't want these people to feel the impotency of having lost the civil war.

They should be as equal as any other person. If a senator from Osun could be allowed to contest election even when he was under indictment for murder, why should Orji, who

had not been found guilty of any offence by our law, not be allowed to contest? Those were the kind of things I don't want to get into for now.

Was there anything you did in office as INEC chairman that you would have done differently today?

Nothing!

Any regrets?

I have no regrets, but there were many surprises. First of all, I didn't know that Nigeria had this capacity for brutality and waste of lives. I didn't know that and it re-enforces the fact that the decisions I took were correct. **The other surprise is that I didn't know that Nigeria is so rich; that people would not mind spending the kind of stupendous amount they spent in conducting elections.**

We were very frugal in the management of resources. Those were the surprises, but I have no regrets.

How important is the independence of INEC to the credibility of elections?

Well, it is neither here nor there. INEC is independent. There are countries where the electoral management bodies are part and parcel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and they still have credible elections. There are associations where whenever they want to hold elections, they just appoint few people from among themselves to hold the elections.

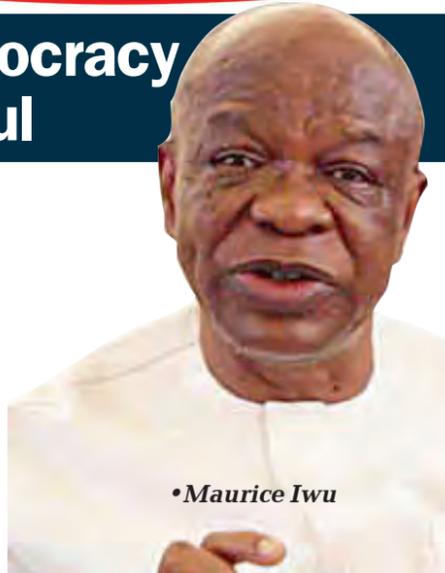
The commitment to electoral reform is not there. People can subject their individual ambition to group interest, then we will achieve something.

Actually, democracy is Africa. Africans think collectively. Collective interest outweighs personal ambition, but these people, for reasons best known to them, are so blinded by power that they don't care.

Do you think the crisis we face every four years all in the name of election is worth it? Is there the possibility of having a different succession model in Nigeria?

If your calculation is every four years, then that is not too bad; but from where I sit, election never stops in Nigeria. Once one government is elected, those who lost will start fighting the government for two years, then they start the battle for the next election. So, there is never really a gap.

I had a discussion once with an ambassador



•Maurice Iwu

from a foreign country. I applied for his country's visa and he insisted on seeing me personally, and I was rather worried. But when I saw him, I was still in INEC; he apologised that I shouldn't be offended, but he just wanted to know how we do it. For a country to have this continuous turmoil or election hiatus, he asked how we govern.

I answered that it is questionable if we really have time to govern because they have this pressure to be seen as if they are succeeding within their short term in office. They claim all sorts of things. They build a bubble of success around themselves and those who are not in that clique are said not to be successful.

Can election management be better in Nigeria?

Of course, election management can be better any time, but election management in Nigeria is good. It is just that the politicians are rotten. I am not saying some of them are rotten. Nigerians politicians are rotten. But these are some of the issues we can draw lessons from. ... The people who shout the most are the culprits. They commit the crime and they come out and start shouting.

Did politicians actually mount pressure on you for contracts?

I had no interest in contract awards, but many of them mounted pressure on my staff. Of course, they won't use their names to do it, and once you don't give them the contract, they summon you the next day before the National Assembly,

and that was a merry go round. Once they are not given contracts, I knew I would appear the following week.

The criticism against the 2007 elections was not limited to Nigerians alone. Almost all the international organisations that observed the poll condemned it. How do you explain that?

They had a misconception of what happened. You cannot judge an election by one incident. Nigerians led them on and when the sing-song started, everybody joined the chorus.

But most importantly, I offended those international agencies. I refused that Nigeria's election would be monitored. Maybe they can come as observers but you have no business being election monitor. It is only Nigerians that can do that. You remember I also set up an Election Monitoring Board and said only Nigerians can monitor and certify our elections.

I asked: who monitors British, American, Russian and Chinese elections? I think probably I am a Nigerian of a totally different class. I do not accept being inferior to the white man. So, they said I was arrogant. I worked in their best institutions for years and some of them were under me. So, what is it that they are going to tell me that I cannot get from my brothers? What is it? So, from that point, I offended them.

I offended them again when I refused to make the voter register to be an all-for-all issue. Third, I offended them because I also said no foreigner should get contract. Ask the president, when they travel, these foreign heads of state give them letters asking for projects in Nigeria. All presidents do it. They use foreign policy as enhancement of their economic interests. I know of two presidents that sent letters to me through our own president asking for projects. I refused all such requests. It is not enough that you want to serve your country, you must have the courage to do the right thing.

Are there some amendments you wanted effected in the Electoral Act?

So many.

Like what?

Like the issue of primaries. Let it be done at the constituencies and be collated nationally. It will separate the boys from the men.

And it will become the people's primaries. That alone will make a huge difference. Second is the election proper. Let us institute professional election managers which we started. Let us now become a force of law that people should be trained. Third and perhaps much more controversial, we need to completely decentralize the electoral process.

Does decentralization mean there will be no INEC?

No, there will be INEC but the electoral process itself will be decentralized. INEC will just collate the results like we used to have in the FEDECO days.

***EDITOR'S NOTE: This interview, first published on May 4, 2014, by online platform, TheNiche is as relevant today as it was seven years ago.**

By Marie-Therese Nanlong

Jos – Residents of crises-prone areas of Jos, Plateau State are very familiar with sounds of gunshots which could come at any time.

Concerted efforts of genuine stakeholders have helped to quieten things in recent times but on Sunday evening when these sounds came from a "very unlikely" area, many did not know what was happening until it was established that the Jos Custodial Centre of the Nigerian Correctional Service was under attack by gunmen.

This is not the first time the Jos facility, established in 1953 has been attacked. But the more than one-hour shootings were the worst the people in the area have experienced because the neighbourhood had been largely peaceful even when other parts of the city were boiling.

This sense of security had made residents ponder why such a facility, surrounded by different security agencies like the Police headquarters, Police CID, A Division, DSS, Police and Correctional Service barracks and a stone throw from the Headquarters of Operation Safe Haven could be so easily and successfully attacked and the attackers disappeared without even one being arrested.

At the time of this report, one armed guard of the Service, nine inmates and one assailant were killed, one personnel of the Service and seven inmates were hospitalized and 252 inmates escaped, out of which only 17 have been recaptured.

Residents have expressed fears that crime rates would definitely rise as these escapees would be engaging in criminal activities to raise money after being out of circulation for a long time.

The frequency of these jail breaks, they say, is worrisome as they tasked relevant authorities to stop the trend.



JOS JAIL BREAK:

We heard gunshots, saw first, second sets escape before a bullet hit me, inmate recounts

They wondered if escapees have ever been recaptured in any substantial number, recalling that available records show that in 2010, Bauchi prison was attacked and 721 inmates escaped while five were killed and six injured.

Similar incident occurred in Ogun in 2013, when Sagamu custodial centre was attacked and 20 inmates escaped. In the same year, Olokuta Custodial Centre in Akure, Ondo State was attacked and no fewer than

175 inmates escaped. Two were killed and one person injured.

Lagos State also had its share in 2014, at the Kirikiri Medium Security custodial centre; the incident left 20 inmates dead, 80 others injured and 12 inmates escaped. The same year, Kogi too was affected as the custodial centre in Koton-Karfe was attacked and about 144 inmates escaped while one was killed.

In the same year, custodial centres at Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State and Minna, Niger State

were attacked. 341 inmates escaped, one official was killed in the Ado Ekiti incident while in Minna, about 270 prisoners escaped and one official was injured.

In 2016, there was a jailbreak at Kuje in the Federal Capital Territory. Two inmates escaped through the fence and another unsuccessful attempt was carried out in the same facility in the same year.

In 2020, it was the turn of Edo as about 1,993 inmates escaped from two centres in the State.

In this year there have been attacks on the Owerri Custodial centre in Imo State and no fewer than 1,844 inmates escaped.

The recent incident in Jos has made the authorities of the Nigerian Correctional Service cry out for adequate funding saying, without that, there is no way technology could be deployed to assist in manning custodial centres.

The Controller General of the Service, Haliru Nababa through the Deputy Controller General, (Operations), Mohammed Tukur who visited the facility and the injured in the hospitals said, "if we don't have enough releases from the government, there is no way we will be able to cover all our custodial centres with CCTV."

Meanwhile, an inmate (name withheld) who survived the invasion with bullet wounds and broken legs has narrated his experiences from the hospital bed.

He said, "That evening, we were in the yard and I was standing close to where we play table tennis near the mosque. We heard gunshots and people started running everywhere.

"Where I was standing was close to my cell and I was trying to run to the cell, suddenly, we saw the gate open, the first set of people ran out. Immediately, the second set also rushed out, as I was heading inside, I was pushed into the gutter in the yard. When I made efforts to come out of the gutter, I was shot on the leg."

The NCoS has undertaken to foot their bills and feed them hence treatment has commenced.

Healthy Living

By Shola Ogundipe



By Sola Ogundipe

The frenzy that has gripped the world since the emergence of the newly discovered Omicron COVID-19 variant spilled over into Nigeria on Wednesday, December 1, 2021. At the crack of dawn, Nigerians woke up to the cheerless news that the dreaded mutant virus had been discovered in the country.

Omicron, the latest coronavirus variant and feared to be potentially the deadliest, continues to ignite fresh concerns across the world. The federal government had earlier denied the presence of the new variant in the country, only to reverse itself less than 24 hours later.

A statement issued by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, NCDC, confirmed that three cases of the Omicron variant had been detected in the country among air travelers with history of travel to South Africa.

The news rapidly went viral as Nigerians feared the worst. It was the second time that emergence of a potentially deadly variant of the COVID-19 virus was being confirmed in the country. The first time was in June when the highly contagious Delta variant was first detected.

Once again Nigeria is in the eye of the COVID-19 pandemic just as it was precisely a year ago, at the peak of the pandemic when the number of new cases spiked around the Yuletide. The discovery of Omicron variant only adds a new alarm in the pandemic.

A number of persons expected that Nigeria would be officially included on the list of countries from which flights are restricted and persons with travel plans during the Yuletide particularly had cause to worry. They were proved right when announcements of flight restrictions from Nigeria and other affected countries began making the rounds shortly thereafter. Three days earlier, Indonesia had announced flight restrictions from Nigeria and seven other African countries.

Around the same time, Canada said it had confirmed the Omicron variant in two persons with travel history to Nigeria within the last 14 days. On Wednesday, Ghana also confirmed the Omicron variant in travelers that had been in Nigeria and South Africa within the fortnight.

Since the emergence of the new mutant virus, the USA, Canada, European Union countries, Israel, Indonesia, Australia, and several African countries have restricted or outrightly banned flights from countries recording cases.

Travelers face increasing uncertainty in the coming days and weeks as more countries restrict flights in the bid to keep the Omicron menace at bay. As countries are rushing to impose travel bans on inbound flights amid border closures and revised entry requirements, some Nigerian travelers have already been left stranded even as those with trips planned to affected destinations cannot take off or make alternative arrangements.

The grounding of flights has caught many off guard. With the ever-changing COVID-19-related travel restrictions, taking trips for the rest of 2021 and into 2022 is going to be rather complicated.

Controversy over travel bans

Concerned watchers have described travel bans as unnecessary, and even the WHO urges that borders be left open. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has discouraged travel bans on countries that reported the new variant. It said past experience shows that such travel bans have "not yielded a meaningful outcome."

Nevertheless, there are suggestions that travel restrictions may help curb the spread of new coronavirus variants by helping to reduce the number of imported cases and delay the potential outbreak.

But researchers argue that travel restrictions alone are not a panacea, rather, reducing community transmission rates are more important.

A senior scientist at South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases, Jinal Bhiman is against travel bans.

"I don't think travel bans are the best way to

OMICRON: Explosion fears spread as Nigerians in S/Africa return for Christmas

- Nigeria in the eye of the storm
- More cases imminent despite restrictions
- Controversy over travel bans
- Don't travel this Yuletide, Expert warns
- How they named new variant, Omicron

combat the new variant. After all, we saw with delta that by the time the variant is identified, it's already there, it has spread. The first infections take place much earlier," he stated.

Other experts say the border closures would wreak havoc in African countries that were counting on reopening. For instance in Nigeria, December is traditionally a season for high domestic and international travel and a surge in visitors from across the world is expected.

Besides, only 10 percent of people in Africa have received one dose of a vaccine. Just 2 percent of Nigerians have been vaccinated, shortages and vaccine hesitancy have not helped. There are calls for ramp up of testing and vaccinations rather than travel bans.

According to Joseph Fauver, an assistant professor of genomic surveillance at the University of Nebraska Medical Centre: "If all we do is a travel ban, and we don't increase testing at airports or provide resources for people to isolate if they do test positive so they can justify missing work—all of that would have to be happening to reduce community transmission."

Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University, warned that travel bans created a false sense of security.

"The notion of having a global map of where the variants are and aren't is just fantasy. I don't think the travel bans really have much of an impact, other than answering the political pressures that inevitably arise when a new variant emerges."

Shabir Madhi, a virologist at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, cautioned that the Omicron variant could yet fizzle out, as other seemingly worrisome versions of the virus had done.

Avoid traveling this Yuletide

The Chairman of Bio-vaccine Board, and a board member of the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunisation (GAVI), Prof. Oyewale Tomori, however says that banning of flights is not out of place.

Tomori, a foremost Nigerian virologist advised Nigerians in Diaspora not to consider travelling out of their respective locations at the moment.

"If I am a Nigerian that is outside the country, I will suspend my coming this Christmas because of the current situation. But unfortunately we are going to have influx of people and those officials at the port of entry may not do the right thing while some people will not go for isolation. If I had the power, I will say stop people from coming in."



Beware of Omicron, WHO warns

On Monday, the World Health Organisation issued a red alert on the marauding mutant variant warning that it poses "very high" risks and is likely to spread globally. Scientists continue to analyze data to assess whether Omicron is in fact more contagious, causes more severe disease or increased risk of reinfections, as compared to other variants.

Although the virulence of the variant is yet to be established, the WHO said Omicron has a potential for mutation and more transmissible than the Delta variant that emerged a year ago in India and quickly became the dominant strain.

Scientists say that they would know within next few weeks to what extent Omicron can evade the immunity generated by vaccines or prior infection, and whether it leads to worse clinical symptoms than other variants.

The WHO designated Omicron a Variant of Concern on advice of its Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution (TAG-VE).

It is not yet clear whether Omicron is more easily spread from person to person compared to other variants, including Delta. The number of people testing positive has risen, but it is also not yet clear whether infection with Omicron causes more severe disease compared to infections with other variants, including Delta variant.

Omicron, what's in the name

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has a tradition of naming variants of the coronavirus after the Greek alphabet. The first 12 letters had been used to name the previous strains of the virus, but in mid November when the WHO was choosing a name for the recently discovered variant, it skipped the 13th and 14th letters in the Greek alphabet - Nu and Xi - that were next in line.

Rather, the 15th letter in the Greek alphabet - Omicron, which means "small" was chosen. One of the reasons for this deviation was the need to avoid confusion and stigmatisation of any particular region.

Saturday Vanguard gathered that the 13th letter, Nu, was dropped because it sounds like "new" which could lead to confusion, while the 14th letter "Xi" was avoided because it is part of the name of Chinese president, Xi Jinping.

Clash of the variants

Omicron variant (B.1.1.529): First identified in November in southern Africa, days after researchers raised alarms

about the variant's high number of mutations, it was being reported in more than 12 countries.

In South Africa—where nearly 25 percent of the adult population is fully vaccinated, the variant has spread rapidly. Omicron's genetic profile is unique from other circulating variants. It is a new lineage of the virus.

Classified as by the WHO as a "variant of concern," omicron has a worrisome number of mutations, including up to 32 identified in the spike protein, the part of the virus that

binds to human cells. There is concern that this could make it more transmissible and adept at evading the body's immune defenses, but exactly how it behaves remains unknown.

Delta variant (B.1.617): First detected in India, in October and contributed to a devastating surge in infections. It has been reported in no less than 23 countries as at Thursday. Nigeria and Ghana confirmed cases on 1st December.

Mu variant (B.1.621): First reported in Colombia in January and classified as the 5th "variant of interest" by the WHO. It has been identified in more than 39 countries so far. It shares similarities with the beta variant, and appears vaccines may have a diminished impact.

The original variant (D614G): This variant, known to scientists simply as "G," was discovered in China in January 2020. The "G" variant has become ubiquitous. By July 2020, about 70 percent of the 50,000 genomes of the coronavirus uploaded by researchers worldwide to a shared database carried the variant.

The G variant was the dominant strain when 2020 vaccine trials took place. This coronavirus mutation has taken over the world. Scientists are trying to understand why.

More cases expected

Thousands of Nigerians in South Africa and other affected countries are planning to return to Nigeria to spend the Yuletide with their loved ones. Thousands of Nigerians live in South Africa and many always return for Christmas every December. 61 passengers that arrived Holland earlier in the week from South Africa tested positive to Covid-19 at Schiphol Airport. No flight restrictions have been announced by Nigeria, but with more people travelling down, there are fears that Nigeria might record an explosion of cases in the coming days.

Nigeria was first to detect the Omicron variant in West Africa. According to the NCDC, with Omicron spreading rapidly globally, it is preparing to identify more cases.

"Our focus is to complete sequencing of recently accrued samples of SARS-COV-2 positive travelers from all countries, especially those from countries that have reported the Omicron variant already," the NCDC said.

For travelers into and out of Nigeria, the NCDC says it is restoring a mandate to show proof of vaccination or a negative test taken 48 hours before departure. Before arriving in Nigeria, inbound travelers are required to book day two and day seven tests too. The three positive Omicron cases were the result of day two tests.

The Saturday Interview

KADUNA: Rape a girl below 14, face death or castration

Continues from page 11

Madam Deputy Governor, you recorded a number of firsts. First elected female deputy governor in North-West, first deputy governor to present a budget to the Kaduna State House of Assembly. Definitely these memories would forever be green. But the flip side, your lowest moment either as deputy or as acting governor?

Low moments, for me are the energy to push on. I don't have any and I don't intend to have any.

You must have lost some weight as the Chairperson of the Kaduna State Task Force on Covid-19. You provided leadership, you held the state when the governor was affected. You were everywhere!

Hahahaha, I was at the Katsina border most of the time...Katsina and Abuja borders. Did I take the time to check? I must confess that some of my dresses became slightly loose. But I didn't take the time to check, because we had a duty to serve humanity. It was a trying period for each and everyone, but we were committed to putting in our best, so we didn't mind if we lost weight. ... the survival of our people was paramount.

Covid-19 where are now?

Covid - 19 is still a big threat. We have experienced, the first and second waves. We are presently experiencing the third wave. We have eased the lock down, but that is not an indication that we are out of the woods. We will continue to encourage people take personal responsibility... to use face mask, observe physical distancing, regularly wash their hand, avoid overcrowded places etc. We don't want our collective efforts undone by those who refuse to take personal responsibility for themselves, for their families and for the society at large.

Covid is still very much with us, we have continued to record some cases, but not as much as we recorded during the first and second waves. There are various variants, like the delta variant that was recently discovered. Now there is Omicron. We will continue to appeal to our people to adhere to the guidelines of the FOWARD campaign and we will keep advising people to take personal responsibility, until a large percentage of our population are vaccinated. We are yet to get there.

Okay, give me your assessment of the PHC under one roof policy, you were there as the Executive Secretary. Has the integration addressed all the fundamental issues, inadequate medical personnel, poor referral and the availability of drugs and the initiative to use technology to get drugs to hard-to-reach places?

In 2016, there was a PHC Under One Roof

score card, which ranked Kaduna state 15 out of the 36 states. But before I left the agency, we changed the story, we were able to move to the top 5 States in the country. Presently, the Kaduna State Government is building a new complex for the agency to create that enabling work environment to boost productivity. We have fundamentally addressed other issues that were holding us back. The objective is to have same standards for the PHC's across the state.

Have you finished the 255 PHC's. And are you taking up another 255?

Under the Ward Health system, which Nigeria adopted in 2001, there is a guideline where facilities should be sited. There is supposed to be one Primary Health Care Centre, which is the apex primary health care facility within the ward, with six primary health care clinics at equidistant areas within the ward. In Kaduna, what we have done is to take one Primary Health Care Centre as the apex facility and put it right to ensure integrated services provision that they can take referrals from all the Primary Health Care Clinics within the ward. So now we have done an assessment of all the other primary health care clinics and we found that they need some upgrades. Thankfully, we've finished with the centres, we're taking at least one primary health care clinic and we will move on until we complete them. ...the Clinics are not as big as the centres, so we hope and pray that we would get adequate funding so we can finish them.

The big one, Urban Renewal Program, Kaduna, Kafanchan, Zaria. Scope, certainly beyond what people imagined. Are you satisfied with the progress of work?

Absolutely yes. Recently there was a little tweaking of the Leadership of the various councils. Initially I was at the Human Capital Development Council and the Procurement Council...now am chairing the Infrastructure Council, and am in a position to assert, that were it not for the devastating impact of the covid -19 on economic activities, many more projects would have been delivered. And we wouldn't have had to step down some other projects. Overall, we are extremely happy with the execution of the various projects. The people of Kaduna state deserve these world class projects...not just roads, but roads with pedestrian walkways, traffic lights, duct pipes for telecommunications and other relevant infrastructure that will promote growth and development of the State. We intend, by the Grace of God, to finish them. As His Excellency, Mallam Nasir will say, we intend to finish as strong as we started.

For emphasis, because people are



worried...are you sure these road projects will be completed within the lifespan of this administration. But I know one project that the next administration will certainly have to complete and that's the fourth water treatment plant for Kaduna State, It's dam and Water Treatment Plant.

Yes, we are certainly sure of that.

Your Excellency, definitely it can't be all rosy. Is there any area the Nasir El-Rufai administration in its own assessment, believes it hasn't done well or better put given adequate attention to, either in the area of policy or implementation?

Yes, we've done quite a lot like you said. And in so many areas. The one area I think we want to do more is in community engagement, to close gaps for mischief makers to misinterpret government policies. This is why we have developed a community engagement policy and strategy. It will help us change the narrative. ...we have been doing this with the budget, we do radio interviews...but it can never be too much. Our agenda is "Putting People First". Nothing will be too much. So, expect more community engagement activities...stakeholders' and town hall meetings because they are very critical to us.

The Federal Government itself has indicated its intention to embark on the rationalization of the public service. Does

that in any way make Kaduna State Government feel vindicated?

Maybe. But the Kaduna State Government doesn't seek vindication for its policies. We do things that we feel are right and we do things that we believe are for the greater good of the people. So, whether the Federal Government does it or not, we have done what is right for Kaduna state. And we are seeing the results, in terms of quality service delivery. Kaduna state is uniquely Kaduna state...so we take very difficult decisions, which is the hallmark of good governance.

Let me ask you, are you a bunch of heartless people?

I don't think so. We are not. But we are a bunch of people who believe in doing what is right for the people. And that is why they elected us. The difference between us and others is the willingness to take very difficult decisions. Before us, there were reports on the need to look at the quality of our teachers, but the needful wasn't done. And Kaduna State children paid the price. We are not heartless. We want our children to be global citizens and a solid education, is the starting point.

When you hear people say the Nasir El-Rufai administration is heartless, do you look at yourself and say what are these people saying? Am talking about the teacher's competency test, the public service renewal and rationalization programme. Clearly I see the influence of the late Prime Minister of Singapore on Mallam.....

Like I had earlier said, there's absolutely nothing that happens in the Kaduna state government, that is not backed by evidence. So, we don't just wake up one day and take out people from the service without justification. We take very hard look at issues, the benefits to the generality of the people. So, whatever the issue, it is backed by evidence. We are not heartless. We are very compassionate people, but when the need arises, we administer the necessary injunction.

Finally, what will be the legacy of the Nasir El-Rufai administration.... policy or projects?

Both. I think we're giving a very good account on both fronts.

With the reforms that we have put in place and the policies that are on ground, I'm very sure about that. We have changed Kaduna state. People will think twice before building on public land or building without building permit. Public servants, understand that they must continuously improve themselves, the era of entering the public service with school certificate is gone, the minimum entry requirement is OND.

It's not boasting when we say we have restored the confidence of the Kaduna state people in government. Now they know that government can work, that it's left to them to entrust it into the hands of committed leadership, like Mallam has demonstrated. People are paying their taxes, because they know that the reform has criminalized cash collection and that monies are put to good use. We have increased school enrollment, because of the reform of the educational sector and this is because Mallam believes that the children of the poor should have access to education. We're providing free health services and ensuring that pregnant women deliver in a safe environment, well equipped and with the requisite manpower.

Mansion in the sky, reminiscences and metaphors

Continues from page 12

the market, the Barclays Bank-now Union Bank, the rotund standard bank-now First Bank, the Cooperative Bank, the Radio Nigeria,Aje House, PZ and John Holt. Natives and non-natives thrived, without let or hindrance.

The eminence of cocoa house in Ibadan, was not rivalled until 1982, when a 12 floor glass house building was officially opened. This structure, popularly called "broking house" or "glass house" or "Femi Johnson", was built by the popular insurance and risk management mogul-Late Femi Johnson. The building is mostly built of glass. It is a beauty to behold. The building was formally declared opened by Femi Johnson's bosom friend-Chief Bola Ige, then Governor of Oyo State. "Glass House" was the former site of Paradise Hotel, where Eddy Okonta and numerous musicians played.

At the official commissioning of the building, Chief Bola Ige said he would have been the Master of Ceremony (MC), if he was not occupying the office of governor of Oyo State. Femi Johnson was a prominent member of the Ibadan literary and drama world, through his membership of the Ibadan Players of the dawn group, with others like- Christopher Kolade, Segun Olusola, Yemi Lijadu, Sola Rhodes, Wole Soyinka, Wale Ogunyemi and the likes.

Femi Johnson was also, a hunting maverick, with the likes of Wole Soyinka

and some of their Hunter Friends., hunting for animals in their hunting expeditions, as their interesting pass time.

Femi Johnson, senior brother of Mobolaji Johnson, former governor of Lagos state, was born and bred in Lagos state. He attended CMS Grammar School Lagos, and read private books on insurance; he joined the law union and rock Lagos, from where he was later transferred to Ibadan to manage their branch. He later set up his insurance firm, known as Femi Johnson & Co. He died in the year 1987 at the age of 53.

In January, 1985, the 26 storey cocoa house, suffered a mishap. The entire building was gutted by fire. It temporarily lost its beauty and elegance to the inferno. The fire was said to have consumed everything in the building, because the fire fighters in Ibadan did not have the equipment or the skill to put out a raging inferno in a sky scrapper. Unfortunately, some fire fighters, caught in the inferno, were consumed by the fire. Col. Oladayo Popoola, then military governor of Oyo state, was on a tour of Oke-Ogun in Oyo State, when he received a radio message, that cocoa house, the pride of the Yoruba nation had been burnt, perhaps beyond recognition, according to his then Chief Press Secretary(CPS)- Oloye Lekan Alabi.

Governor Popoola arrived the scene of the incidence at about 7pm and lifted the morales of the fire fighters, to continue with their efforts, to rescue this pride of the Yoruba nation. It was suspected, that this fire incidence of January 9 1985,

began in the top floors from a mal functioned electrical equipment, from the administrative office of the National Bank on the 13th Floor. The building was immediately closed for public use until August 1992, when it was again re-opened for commercial use.

The Military Governors of Oyo, Ondo and Ogun States, had set up an enquiry, comprising of the top echelons of the Nigerian Institute of Architects, Nigerian Institute of Engineers, to advise the Government as to its next line of action on Cocoa house.

It was safely concluded, that the cocoa house should not be pulled down, but rehabilitated and its glory and beauty restored. The fire inferno, did not affect the foundation. The Western states government set up the rehabilitation fund, raising committee to rehabilitate, and restore cocoa house.

In its rehabilitated form, rather than its hollowed side earlier look, cocoa house now looks like a cocoa pod. Cocoa house was also not rivalled, until 1979, when the NECOM building was completed in Marina Lagos and houses the headquarters of NITEL. The NECOM building on 32 floors was constructed by Constain West Africa Limited- a foreign construction company, that was incorporated in 1948. The lightings at the top of the tower, serves as a light house beacon for the Lagos harbour. The building, with a height of 160 metres, was constructed with concrete, and then over took cocoa house, to become the

tallest building in West Africa, at the time of completion.

Like the cocoa house, NECOM building suffered two fire incidences, in 1983 and 2015, respectively. Interestingly, the Burj Khalifa, peaking at the height of 2,217 feet, stands as the tallest building in the world, standing on 160 floors.

Cocoa house Ibadan and the recently collapsed sky scrapper in Ikoyi Lagos, provides a great study in contrast and metaphor.

It would not be too farfetched, that the Ikoyi building collapsed, because it could not withstand the forces of nature, or gravity or as a result of substandard building materials or the combination of the three factors, or not sticking to the specifications approved Cocoa house still stands as the rock of Gibraltar!

May you, Cocoa house, continue to stand tall and erect, as the first of such edifices in the sub Saharan West Africa, and in the fondest memories of those that conceptualised you, towards the economic prosperity of the Western region of Nigeria, in the days of yore...

Cocoa house, continue to dance in the sky as one of our first childhood fancies.

**HON. (BARR.) FEMI KEHINDE
LEGAL PRACTITIONER AND
FORMER MEMBER,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
ABUJA, REPRESENTING AYEDIRE/
IWO/OLA-OLUWA FEDERAL
CONSTITUENCY OF OSUN STATE.**

Weekend Thrills

Nigeria today is like a yarn — Cyprian Ekwensi

Uzor Maxim Uzoatu

All the demented facets of Nigerian life today, from brazen kidnappings and robberies to rampant prostitution and political heists, are like the many wonderful tales of Cyprian Odiatu Duaka (COD) Ekwensi who died on November 4, 2007.

The man simply known as Cyprian Ekwensi lived a charmed life as a pathfinder in the annals of African literature, and it is a striking tribute that the current shenanigans of Nigeria read like the yarns of the popular writer.

Ekwensi was arguably the most prolific author in the comity of Nigeria's first generation of acclaimed writers.

A novelist, short story writer, children's literature master, journalist, pamphleteer, columnist etc, Ekwensi gave the world a formidable body of work that can never be wished away.

He was a nonpareil craftsman of popular literature who got to the heart of his readers without any unnecessary dabbling into obscurantism and self-serving ambiguities.

Cyprian Ekwensi is Mister Nigeria, born in Minna in the North on September 26, 1921 of Igbo parentage and lived most of his life in the Western part of the country.

Ekwensi was without question the most Nigerian of Nigeria's tribe of writers.

He was versed in Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba cultures, as much as he equally dwelt on the life and mores of the minorities.

He deservedly earned his celebration across the length and breadth of the country as a pan-Nigerian phenomenon.

His work has been acknowledged all over the world such that while I was in Canada as a Distinguished Visitor, I was told by Professor Peter Desbarats, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario, that Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* was the only book from Nigeria he had ever read.

Some critics tagged Ekwensi as Africa's Daniel Defoe, after the irrepressible author of such classics as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*.

Ekwensi was a progenitor of Onitsha Market Literature when back in 1947 he published *When Love Whispers* to spur the market literature that flowered in the Nigerian city of Onitsha after the Second World War.

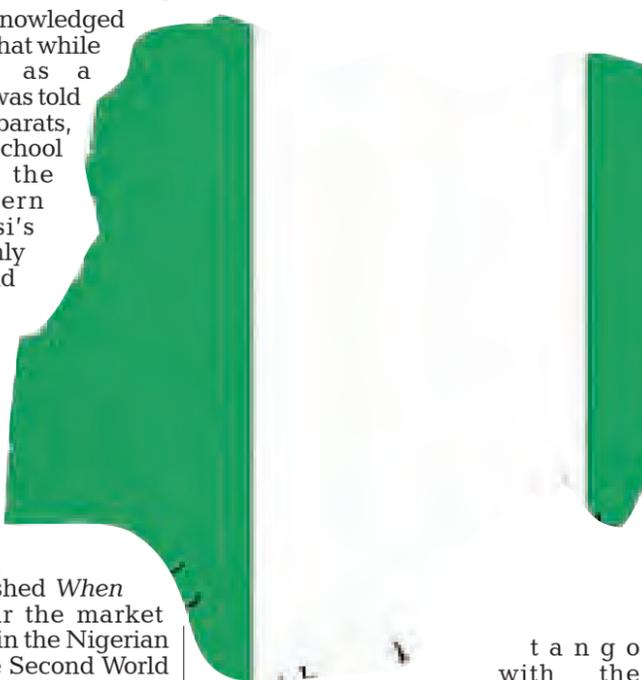
His novel *People of the City* became one of the pioneer titles of Heinemann's African Writers Series, such that alongside Chinua Achebe he gave the world a different view of the canon.

The versatility of Ekwensi can be seen in his novel *Burning Grass* that helped in no small measure to put the Fulani nomads in the global map of literature.

The disease of wandering known as "Sokugo" was popularized by Ekwensi but let's not go there because of the wandering president!

It is in the documentation of city life that Ekwensi earned lasting plaudits from the literary critics.

Jagua Nana dwells on the travails of the eponymous ageing prostitute and her



tango with the young and dashing Freddie.

The book attracted sustained film interest from overseas, and it was debated in the Nigerian Parliament of the First Republic which stopped its filming by an Italian film company.

Ekwensi eventually wrote a sequel of the novel, *Jagua Nana's Daughter*, published by Joop Berkhout's Spectrum Books, Ibadan.

A yarn-spinner with legendary page-turning intensity, Ekwensi authored *The Passport of Mallam Illia* which remains an everlasting adventure story that grips the reader from the first page to the last.

Ekwensi's titles such as *An African Night's Entertainment* and *The Drummer Boy* are ever-present staples in the junior secondary school

curriculum in Nigeria.

An old title of his written early in his career but not published, *For a Roll of Parchment*, was released by Heinemann, Ibadan, and it bore all the hallmarks of the Ekwensi mystique in Nigeria's promotion of paper qualification.

For a man who had his training as a pharmacist and worked in forestry, Ekwensi astounded the world with his high literary output.

Some critics like Bernth Lindfors had said harsh things about the quality of Ekwensi's writings while other equally eminent literary scholars such as Ernest Emenyonu rose up solidly in defence of the man from Nkwelle-Ezunaka in Anambra State.

Ekwensi maintained a home in the very heart of the city of Lagos, at Ojuelegba Road to the very end.

His service in the public sphere had been stellar. From 1957 to 1961, he was the Head of Features at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.

He later earned the distinction as the first Nigerian Director of Information in the Federal Ministry of Information.

He was the Director-General of Radio Biafra during the Civil War and became the Chairman of the East Central State Library Board after the war.

He would later become the Managing Director of the Star Printing and Publishing Company, Enugu, publishers of the Star group of newspapers.

He was appointed Information Commissioner, Anambra State, in 1983 and reputedly coined the acronym WAI - War Against Indiscipline - that the military regime of General Muhammadu Buhari put into effect.

All the kidnapers, robbers, debtors, looters, and ill-assorted brigands and prostitutes being paraded all over the nation today are quintessential Ekwensi characters! He created all of them in his many fictions before he died.

This way, Cyprian Ekwensi can never really die!

Catholic Church celebrates 40 years of Rev. Monsignor Gabriel Osu

By Sam Eyoboka

REVEREND Monsignor Gabriel Sunday Osu was born on Sunday, September 5, 1954 under the Zodiac sign of Virgo in Lagos to a family of Delta State to be precise, Ubulu Uku in Aniocha Local Government Area of the state.

He was ordained Catholic priest 40 years ago. He began schooling in Saint Themas Aquinas School, Surulere, Lagos from 1960 to 1968 and proceeded to Saint Theresa Minor Seminary Oke-Are, Ibadan from 1969 to 1974. He moved to Saints Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Ibadan from 1975 to 1981.

In 1978 he did a diploma course at revered University of Ibadan and proceeded to Pontifical University Urbaniana in Rome in 1981; Academia Alfonsiana, Rome, 1987. He returned to Nigeria and was made the Administrator, Holy Cross Cathedrals from 1983 to 1985; Chaplain, Saint Gregory's College and Holy Child College, Lagos, 1987 from 1994; Parish Priest, Saint Theresa, Maroko, 1987 to 1994; Parish Priest, Immaculate Conception Parish, Ibonwon-Epe, Lagos from 1994 to 1996.

He was appointed to head the Social Communication, Archdiocese of Lagos as well the Parish Priest, Saint John The Evangelist, Oshodi-Lagos.

He soon became an associate to the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations; International Catholic Organisation for Radio and Television; International Union of the Press, 1987 to 2000.

He was the Editor-in-Chief, The Catholic Herald, as well as the publisher of the Living Beyond Sanity, Tonimatt Promotions, Lagos, 1999; How to Fight Drug Abuse, Tonimatt Promotions, Lagos, 1999; People



• Rev Monsignor Osu

Prayer Book, 1988 and Revised, 1993, Lagos.

His hobbies include reading, writing and travelling.

He was still the Social Communications Concepts, St. Agnes Catholic Church, P.O. Box 10, Maryland, Ikeja, Lagos until recently when he transferred as Parish priest of Our Lady of Star of the Sea Catholic Church which is at Lekki in Lagos, and he is greatly loved by many, including Catholics and non Catholic because of his immense contribution towards the growth of Christianity in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

The Director, Staff and management of the Directorate of Social Communications, Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos, also felicitate with their former boss, Very Rev. Fr. Gabriel Osu on his 40th ordination anniversary.

Speaking recently he said: "As a young man, I was always fond of watching our

political leaders make promises, especially during election campaigns. Even as an adult, I observe that not much has changed. It is still the same culture of promises failed. A typical campaign rally is very interesting to behold. Venue is a large expanse of land flowing with party faithful and rented crowd for the purpose of adding some credibility to the whole show.

There is usually a heavy presence of law enforcement agents positioned at strategic locations. Close to a high, well-decorated elevated platform is a popular musician hired to thrill the crowd to frenzy. Decked in colourful but flowing agbada and babariga attires, the politicians soon take time to climb the stage one-by-one, chanting party slogans and mesmerising the crowd with their rhetoric. Many of them are truly gifted orators, who can compete with the best of actors on stage. They tell their followers what they want to hear: free education for all; free healthcare for every citizen; uninterrupted electricity; thriving industries; employment for all. They promise to even build houses for the masses on planet Mars. All they ask of you in exchange is your vote.

Now, in a democracy, like the type we practise, there is really nothing wrong with anyone or a group of people aspiring for public offices in a legitimate manner. It is the norm in most leading economies of the world. But our own case as a nation is very peculiar. Why? Very few of our public officers fulfil their campaign promises when they get to power. Indeed, our politicians are best at making empty promises and taking care of their private and family needs at the

expense of the masses that voted them into power.

"If you doubt me, take another look at the history of our political landscape over the years and tell me if we have truly advanced in any of the areas they often hammer on during their campaigns. Do we now have housing for all? Are our healthcare centres better? Are there thriving job opportunities for our teeming graduates? When are we likely to get to the Promised Land? I doubt if it will happen in our generation.

"Some may ask why are things this way? Could it be that most of our politicians are ill-prepared or ignorant of the expectations from a public officer? Or, like someone once opined, could it be that they are wired with a different type of gene once they clinch political positions, such that they lose touch with yearnings of the masses? Now that we are getting ready for another election season, the political climate is getting charged with all forms of nocturnal meetings, promises, alignments and realignments. As usual, they will come up with all forms of promises to lure the electorate. The latest craze is the

buying of votes. We saw it recently during the Ekiti election, when agents of the two leading political parties openly doled out cash for electoral votes. The implication of this is horrendous for our democracy. We must not allow this to continue. The onus lies on the electorate and the civil societies to stand up against this sort of illegality in our polity. They must cry out and insist that the right thing is done to protect our hard-earned democracy. They must realise that left for the politicians alone, the rot can go on, so long as their individual and collective interests are protected. We must wake up and do the right thing in the interest of our country.

There is usually a heavy presence of law enforcement agents positioned at strategic locations

Bill for additional female lawmakers good, but...

By Stella Odife

As chairperson of a non-governmental organization that focuses on women's rights, this article appears to be one of the most difficult coming from our stable, Women Organization for Gender Issues (WOGI). The reason is not hard to fathom, which basically stems from the problem with writing an article that may be misconstrued against women's interest on one hand and taking slightly different stand on a Bill that is well intended and probably appreciated by Nigerian Women, as a whole, on the other hand.

The Bill titled, "A Bill for An Act to alter the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, to create additional special seats for Women in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly," is sponsored by the Deputy Chief Whip, House of Representatives, Honorable Nkiruka Onyejiocha. If passed into law, it will create an additional 34 seats in the Senate and 74 seats in the House of Representatives.

Although the sponsor means well, the move, however, is against the dictates of economic realities on ground. While we at WOGI congratulate and thank Honorable Onyejiocha for her bold and inspiring move towards sponsoring the said Bill, our stance on any issue remains to always look beyond the superficial perspectives/realities surrounding an issue. We seek to highlight deficiencies (where they exist) and suggest ways to cure the defects.

Firstly, it is important to note that in a country where less than one third of the population constitute 100% of the work force, the country cannot be said to be operating optimally and will always remain incapable of feeding its entire populace. Global statistics show that about half of the population are women (48%) and while they represent circa 47% of today's workforce, this seeming equality does not portend in key leadership positions across all sectors of the economy and most especially in the three tiers of the Federal Government.

For instance, of the 42 ministers in the current government of President Muhammadu Buhari, only Seven are females. Similarly, of the 109 senators, seven are females while 22 out of 360 House of Representatives members are women. - Therefore, what women are asking for is an equal partnership and level, playing field for social and economic development of the country. It is for this reason, we believe, that Honorable Onyejiocha decided to sponsor the Bill.

But while this is a well-intended proposition for gender inclusiveness, it appears not to bode well with the economic realities the nation currently faces. Presently, we have 109 Senate seats and 360 House of Representatives seats at the National Assembly. The passing of this Bill will increase the Senate seats to 143 and the House of Representatives'

seats to 434, bringing the total number of the Federal lawmakers to 577 as against the current number of 469.

Does this Bill help the women? Yes, but who bears the cost of this increase? While the intent can be seen as a step in the right direction, the resultant effect however, does not solve our problem. It is like treating a serious ailment with pain medication without getting to the root of the pain to ensure its complete elimination. While we welcome this relief given to the women by Honorable

Onyejiocha, we must go further to cure the defects in our system, if the women must progress.

We believe the Bill would have been more appropriate if it is stated thus: "A Bill for the Reservation of 111 (Hundred and Eleven) seats in the current House count, which will NOT preclude women from vying for the other remaining seats in the chambers."

The good role women play in governance cannot be over emphasized. They tend to mellow the tempo of strife, bitterness and rancor among various contending political gladiators. We need women to balance the equation with men, especially when it is obvious that women are more committed to delivering good governance than their male counterparts.

The first obstacle for women starts at the political party structure. Using the two dominant political parties, APC and PDP, as an example, the framework of these political parties placed men at the pinnacle of the party hierarchies starting at the Ward Level while the positions of Woman Leaders are reserved for women. And yet the decision as to who becomes the candidate for any position is taken by the party executive, despite the pretense that the decision is done through

primaries. This mischief is shrouded under the clause that allows for 'indirect primaries' in the party constitution. To cure the defect in the selection process, women must be appointed to some of the key positions of the party structure.

Following the manipulation at the party primaries is the money politics. Only very few women can compete with men when it comes to finance. Everything about Nigerian politics is money. It is this that has excluded the real technocrats and eminently qualified men and women from getting into any political position.

Nigeria copied American democracy but failed to copy that most important aspect of their democracy that gives a level playing field to anybody seeking an elective position. Control of Campaign funding is what made it possible for a person like Barack Obama to run against the likes of billionaire Mitt Romney, John McCain etc. and win the election.

The party must fund the candidates, government must fund the parties and parties and aspirants must work together to seek for funds for the parties to conduct elections. Such monies collected must be accounted for by parties and individuals at the end of every election. And finally, there must be no inducement for the electorates who are exercising their civic responsibility. There must be strict and enforceable penalties for those who go against such regulations. We look forward to having Bills to cure these defects.

Going back to the matter of the cost for



•Nkiruka Onyejiocha

•Buhari

way party politics and electioneering campaign processes are handled in Nigeria. The subsisting scenario in which money bags hijack political party structures and campaign initiatives make it difficult for women to

the increase, we are uncomfortable with the Bill because of WOGI's research findings on the salaries and the emoluments of our National Assembly members. The research revealed that our lawmakers are the highest paid in the world. What Nigerians have been clamoring for is a reduction of the number of the National Assembly members and a drastic cut in their salaries and emoluments. Some have called for a part time seating of members to reduce the cost.

Currently, the National Assembly is run with annual budget of N134 billion. This is outrageous considering the biting economic crunch experienced by majority of the citizenry and the inflation rate devastating the economy. An increase in the number of the Federal lawmakers is the last thing Nigeria needs now. We believe that a more responsive and result-oriented approach in terms of inclusiveness of women in the decision-making process of government should start at the political party level. This is usually the starting point of empowerment in all democratic setting. We run a patriarchal party system in which women are tactically excluded from decision making. And this is exactly why women are underrepresented in politics.

WOGI research shows that appointing more women in key positions in the party's structure

at the Ward, State and Federal levels would ensure their engagement in the decision making process in the party administration. This in turn guarantees the actualization of the much-needed gender diversity and balanced perceptiveness on the issue of governance.

We need a radical departure from the

have access to key political posts.

Godfatherism is a plague militating against the participation of women in politics. When selections are made based on competence as a result of collective decision by party members instead of powerful individuals, the chances of getting the quality of men and women who would impact positively on governance are profound.

The parties should also design certain mechanisms for proper analysis and evaluation of candidates' antecedents and qualifications to checkmate moves by

419 individuals with money to impose themselves or their cronies on the party. This is one of the ways of ensuring that credible and responsible women assume positions of authority.

Finally, we must continue to use the affirmative action program for the reservation of certain positions for women until we meet the UN mandate on gender equality. We have been clamoring for women inclusiveness in politics and decision-making process because studies have shown that gender diversity enhances greater delivery of democratic dividends across all strata of the society.

We are not opposing the Bill for lack of merit. Indeed, it is a bold step, but it will add more economic burden on our wobbling economy thereby rendering the whole exercise counterproductive. Women should insist on having the 111 members extracted from the existing 469 members.

•Barr. Stella A. Odife, Chairperson, Women's Organization for Gender Issues (WOGI) writes from New York, USA.

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Entertainment Plus

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Funke Akindele-Bello

Nana Akua

Rita Dominic

AMAA: How Rita Dominic, Funke Akindele-Bello, Ghanaian actress, Nana Akua Addo stole the show!

By BENJAMIN NJOKU

It was yet another biggest night in the African entertainment circuit as movie stars from across the continent made their way down the red carpet at the popular Marriot Hotel, Lagos, last Sunday night.

The event was the 17th edition of the prestigious Africa Movie Academy Awards, AMAA. It was held a week after Nigeria's commercial capital was also shut down for four days by music superstars following the hosting of this year's All Africa Music Awards, AFRIMA, at the Eko Hotel and Suites, Victoria Island.

Like AFRIMA, this year's AMAA paraded the best of fashion, style and good looks. For those who were privileged to grace the glamorous event, which had the likes of Governor Babajide Sanwo Olu of Lagos State among other dignitaries in attendance, it was a night that the stars came out to play. And of course, some female celebrities stunned in their ravishing outfits.

Wearing everything from sheer ensembles and high slit dresses to over-the-top gowns, they dazzled in designer duds at the event. Particularly, beautiful Rita Dominic, Funke Akindele-Bello and German born-Ghanaian actress Nana Akua Addo's outfits were the most talked about at the show with each wearing their stunning and jaw-dropping design interpretation.

Known for enviable dress sense, Rita Dominic stormed the award night, rocking an over-the-top flowery gown, a custom-made creation by a Nigerian label, the Studio

by Me. She paired the outfit with sparkly heels, a stony purse and wore her hair in a super high ponytail.

The actress, who's being rumoured to have taken in for her heartthrob, made one of the incredibly grand entrances of the night. Her appearance either helped to dispel the rumour, or better still heightened it as tongues started wagging that she used her outfit to conceal her growing baby bump. But Rita was not bothered as she made sure everyone got a good look at every detail of the gown. Indeed, she got the attention she deserved as one of the best dressed celebrities on the night.

Funke Akindele-Bello's arrival with her husband, JJSkillz was heroic. She turned everyone's head as she showed off her curves in a red outfit, complimenting her dress that featured crystals and a long feather train with a hairstyle that caught the attention of everyone in attendance. But comedian AY later revealed that the star of 'Jenifa' wore the same outfit to his movie premiere recently.

"See as you carry my premiere dress to another event... you will hear from my lawyers," AY wrote on Instagram.

Meanwhile, it was Ghanaian actress Nana Akua Addo's outfit that got everyone talking throughout the night. She's kind of rivalled Rita Dominic and Funke Akindele-Bello, making a grand entrance in a stunning pink gown. The actress and style influencer, who's known for her remarkable red-carpet appearances served the best look of the night, rocking a butterfly-like, voluminous gown that is a custom-made creation by Rikaoto by Me. Her look was finished off with a matching clutch bag and silver

TK star trends with 'Open my Eyes'

Singing duo, Abubakar Taiwo Hassan, and Abubakar Kehinde Hussien a.k.a TK Star are currently trending on the music scene with their new song, 'Open my Eyes.'

The indigenes of Ikare, Ondo State teamed up with their brother, Abubakar Fatai Olanrewaju popularly known as Freaky G to release the new song.

Speaking on the new song, TK Star said "Open my Eyes has really shed more light to the masses about how simple life is. We proved our street credibility on how we rose from grass to grace." The new song currently has a video, which was directed by TK star's older brother, Abubakar Femi aka Femi Febian. TK Star and their brother Freaky G are currently signed on



an indie record label, Freedom Record Enterprise.

Born in Lagos state, TK Star attended the Lagos State Model College Meiran, after which they proceeded to Esep Le Berger University in Benin Republic, where they graduated with a BSc in computer science.

Winning Boomplay Campus Music Star a dream come true —Emmanuella Adejo

Twenty-year-old Emmanuella Adejo, a 200-level student of the University of Abuja who emerged winner of the maiden edition of the Boomplay Campus Music Star, at the grand finale which was held last week has described her victory as a dream come true.

Adejo won the reality show following her exceptional performance of Nosa's 'Pray for You.' She beat five other finalists to become the next music star.

Expressing her joy, she stated that she didn't know how to feel. She had earlier thought of herself as the winner, but got disappointed when she didn't make top four.

She, however, decided to give her all when she was given another chance to compete among the top six.

In an Instagram post, she wrote: "It's my winning season! Thank you @boomplaymusicng @shareitlite for this experience." While Iroenyenwa Nzubechukwu from Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri emerged 1st runner-up,

Godswill Sarah Iruoma from Yaba College Of Technology Level was the 2nd runner-up.

According to the marketing manager of Boomplay Nigeria, Afuape James, Boomplay Campus Music Star

was borne out of the need to help discover talents in Nigerian universities. He noted that there are several talents in tertiary institutions but they find it difficult to groom themselves due to the pressure from academics, thereby neglecting their talents.

Following this, Boomplay Nigeria began an intentional mission in October to discover music talents by physically going to Ten Nigerian Universities starting from University Of Ibadan.

"The boomplay campus music star is a nationwide university campaign, we decided to go into universities in order to pick students that are musically talented and give them a platform to showcase their talent. We started in October with UNIBADAN and went to ten universities in Nigeria physically," he said.

Speaking in the same vein, the General Manager Boomplay Nigeria, Kadiri Ibrahim noted that Boomplay is contributing massively to the Nigerian society by making another music star with the Campus Music Star campaign.



African countries should work together to boost the creative industry —Sanwo-Olu



While speaking at the event, Governor Babajide Sanwo Olu stressed the need for African countries to work together to boost the creative industry, saying "there is power in oneness."

According to him, Lagos state government is making a commitment to host AMAA for the next three years in the bid to strengthen African unity through creativity.

He said that the creative sector has been very instrumental to the growth of the State and had contributed immensely to the entire Africa continent through impressive and captivating storylines portrayed on the screen "This is the time for us to come together. And with the creative world, you can see that when we work together, there is power in unity in Africa; there is power in oneness. That's why the Lagos State government is making a commitment to host AMAA for the next three years," the governor said. This year's AMAA, held amid gaiety had in attendance movie stars, producers and directors across Africa, government officials, stakeholders and captains of industry.

In her opening speech, the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Pharm. Mrs Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf described the choice of Lagos as the venue for this year's AMAA as a well-thought-out idea, considering the strategic place Lagos occupies in the entertainment industry, adding that the state harbours the most successful movie producers in Nigeria.

The night was ruled by Nigeria's "Eyimofe" and Somalia's first-ever submission for the Academy Awards 'The Gravedigger's Wife.' While 'The Gravedigger's Wife' won five awards, "Eyimofe" also known as 'This Is My desire' directed by Arie Esiri and Chuko Esiri won four awards, including Best Nigerian Film, Best Director, Best Achievement in Sound and Best first feature film.

PEOPLE PLACES

By Juliet Ebirim
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Night of glory, as Paul Adefarasin returns with The Experience



• Pastor Paul Adefarasin

The Experience," an all-night gospel music concert hosted by Pastor Paul Adefarasin, The Metropolitan Senior Pastor of the House on The Rock Church, held on Friday, December 3, 2021.

The 16th edition of the concert which held at the Rock Cathedral, Lekki, is a hybrid event that streamed live online and around the world.

The maiden edition of The Experience in December 2006 attracted a crowd of 40,000 people. Since then, the music festival has grown exponentially with hundreds of thousands of worshippers flocking to Tafawa Balewa square and millions more congregating online. Setting aside class, race, tribe, tradition, colour, religion or weather, people gather to worship and praise from dusk till dawn, making it the biggest gospel concert globally.

This year's festival featured Online and Live ministrations from gospel ministers such as Travis Greene, Sinach, Don Moen, Nathaniel Bassey, Dunsin Oyekan, Donnie McClurkin, Tim Godfrey, Eben, Sidney Mohede, Ana Paula ValadaoBessa, Sheldon Bangera, Mercy Chinwo, William McDowell, Chevelle Franklyn, Chandler Moore, Nikki Laoye, Kike Mudiaga among others.

Music, cocktails, as 2Baba, Ebuka, Sharon Ooja, others party with Schweppes

OX Restaurant and Lounge, Victoria Island, Lagos was last week transformed into a visual spectacle for the official launch of Schweppes new Ginger and Zobo variants.

Hosted by Nancy Isime and Ebuka Obi - Uchendu, the event was attended by industry favourites including the delectable duo of Schweppes ambassadors; Sharon Ooja and Mike Edwards. They were joined by Derin Odugbesan-Thomas, Mimi Onalaja, Idia Aisien, Jemima Osunde and many more.

Guests were welcomed with a resplendent display, before culinary maestros served up the most exotic hors d'oeuvres paired with unique cocktails. Mesmerizing performances from award-winning music sensations 2Face Idibia, Wande Coal, Reekado Banks and Johnny Drille were the perfect accompaniment to the picturesque, star-studded night.

Building on an effervescent history of over 200 years and a remarkable renaissance in Nigeria, Schweppes has established itself as a cultural icon in the drinks industry. Its robust catalogue of flavours enabled it lay claim to high-end mixology, winning the hearts and palates of cocktail aficionados and dilettantes alike.

How we're changing lives through aesthetics —Olatawura

Laserderm Aesthetics Academy, a subsidiary of Laserderm Group is not resting on its oars in re-inventing and re-defining the beauty and aesthetics industry in Nigeria.

The Chief Operating Officer of Laserderm Group, Omolade Olatawura, re-iterated this at the academy's maiden Open Day, held in Lagos recently.

She said the academy was established specifically to bridge the skills and knowledge gap in the industry. "The aesthetics industry in Nigeria is on a steady rise with increasing awareness, acceptance and demand for non-invasive aesthetics procedures by Nigerians who are now more attentive to the appearance, condition of their skin and general disposition to aesthetics."

On her part, the Head of School, Laserderm Aesthetics Academy, Omotoke Sikaiye stated that the beauty industry in Nigeria is still growing, with untapped potentials and so many opportunities for job seekers.

"The industry is still largely unregulated in Nigeria but there are so many places for people to work or even teach if they want to. It's a big industry in and outside Nigeria, begging to be filled with the right people," she said.

She added that the option of aspiring medical aestheticians looking for certification and training outside the country could also be achieved locally. "We want to change the lives of Nigerians, one aesthetician at a time. We are currently bridging this gap with our internationally accredited and professional aesthetics institution here in Nigeria. We offer internationally accredited courses with certified trainers."

The academy, which was birthed in February, 2021, also has facilities in Ikeja and Accra, with global recognition, having been accredited by American Aesthetic International.



• Omolade Olatawura

• Funmi Ayinke

• Sharon Ooja



• Pastor Ituah Ighodalo receiving the award

Oluyinka Adewoye celebrates Ogun First Lady, Pastor Ighodalo, others

As part of her commitment to women empowerment, Chairperson, Lawrence Grace Foundation - Oluyinka Adewoye has appealed to government at all levels and policymakers to provide laws designed to eradicate unfair practices against widows.

She made the appeal at the foundation's fourth anniversary, dinner and award ceremony held at the Wheatbaker Hotel, Ikoyi, Lagos. Revealing how her passion for widows, indigent school children and the less privileged led to the birth of the Lawrence Grace Foundation, Adewoye said

"When we die, we won't be remembered by how much material things we possess, but by the number of lives we touch. With outreaches in over eight locations within and outside Lagos, Lawrence Grace Foundation has empowered over 1,000 widows in the last two years, with free medicals, empowerment programmes and food items".

Highlight of the event was award presentation to prominent individuals and corporate bodies, who have been consistent in supporting widows and less privileged over the years.

They include the First Lady of Ogun State - Mrs. Bamidele Abiodun; Pastor Ituah Ighodalo of Trinity House Church; Abiodun Olaturji (SAN) Partner Abdulahi Ibrahim & Co; Chairman Jus Partners Cosmopolitan Ltd, Mr Adedoyin Adesina and CEO of Knight Frank, Mr Frank Okosun.

D'banj, Teni, others to thrill at FunmiAyinke's 'The Journey'

Popular music superstars, D'banj, Teni Entertainer, Jaywon, among several others have been confirmed to perform at the album launch of inspirational writer and soulful singer, Engr. Dr. Funmilayo Waheed-Adekojo popularly known as FunmiAyinke, scheduled to hold in Lagos on Sunday, December 5, 2021.

The highly anticipated 15-track album features award-winning act - Tunde TDot of Styl Plus fame; popular comic act cum singer - Klint D Drunk; Magnito and legendary singer, Chief Ebenezer Obey whose career has lasted several generations.

Commenting on her forthcoming album release, the multi-talented FunmiAyinke who also doubles as the founder of FunmiAyinke Records and FunmiAyinke Humanity Foundation (FHF) said "I decided on the album after taking a deep reflection on how I can impact the larger society besides what I do at the FunmiAyinke Humanity Foundation (FHF)." she said.

On her choice of features, she said; "I grew up listening to Chief Ebenezer Obey whose career has lasted multiple decades. It was a dream come through having him on the album."

FunmiAyinke started doing music in early 2020 having established herself as a respected motivational speaker, writer, and public figure who is passionate about impacting humanity positively.

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Love & Life



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KAYAMATA: Facts, myths in the world of sex stimulants

Continued from last edition.

Hi,

Most common of these aphrodisiacs in the North is the Kayamata or Kayanmata, believed to be entrenched in cultural practices spanning over 500 years. Kayanmata literally means, the property of a woman or things of women. It means, the things women take to their husband's house, or use in their husband's house to maintain themselves. The use of Kayamata by women in this part is perhaps most necessary because of traditional and religious disposition towards polygamy. For instance, a man with four wives and perhaps a couple of concubines on the side, needs a little over the average sexual appetite and stamina to deal with the issues involved. Similarly, because of the stiff competition between the women, they are taught the importance of keeping their men happy in bed with the use of these herbal concoctions to perpetually keep them in the mood for sex. It will not work in any woman's favour if she turns her husband down when he has to warm her bed.

Thus, simply put, Kayamata has become the name of several herbs and concoctions targeted at enhancing the responsiveness of women to their men, to make them more pliable for sexual activities. Kayanmata comes in various forms, such as perfumes, make-up, lubricants, insertions, powers and spices. Some are even consumed as whole meals or taken in oral forms like medicinal drinks. The objective here is to enhance sexual experience of the partners. Along with the Kaya Mata is a sex ritual performed for young women and according to sources, especially for very young girls who don't know anything about sex before being married off. I mean, child brides. The herbs are either taken raw, with beverages or cooked as a whole meal to be eaten alone by the bride. The most popular of these is the one cooked with chicken. After the meal, the bones are buried and the bride is sent to her husband. The ritual is to help the young bride perform her sexual duty without resistance or pain, as she will constantly be in a state of sexual arousal, ready for her husband.

There are other varieties like the sweet, the groundnuts and even chewing sticks. Interestingly, just as Kayamata is associated with the Northern part of Nigeria, so is Adodun to South West Yoruba society or the famous



Fattening Rooms of Eastern Nigeria, all geared towards the same objective, to prepare women to please their men. In recent times however, Kayamata has become so popular such that it's users extend beyond Nigeria's shores, and is a multimillion Dollar industry. This sharp spike in fame and patronage cannot but be credited to the entrance of young entrepreneurs such as Mrs Hauwa Hamed also known as Jaruma Empire and Mrs. Deborah Erioluwa Ajayi, known as Omoshola's Place, Oji Oghenetajiri of Tejigold and Ademola Olonilua amongst others who have modernised and repackaged a trade once shrouded in secrecy and mystery. The internet and social media platforms have not only caused increased visibility for these products, the fact that clients do attest to using them and also confirm their efficacy for public viewing, gives authenticity to the powers these aphrodisiacs are said to possess. Added to this is the introduction of a spiritual twist to what Kayamata is or is capable of evoking. For instance, Kayamata as now being advertised, has the power to bewitch a partner such that he will have no interest in any other woman

forever. It has the powers to make a man give its user anything demanded from him. Thus, it is believed that when a woman applies certain types of Kayamata they can change her fortune. These claims of spiritual powers unfortunately are the major reason some others condemn the use of Kayamata, describing it as witchcraft and demonic practices.

Does Kayamata possess spiritual powers?

Kayamata on its own does not possess spiritual powers. They are simply herbs, roots and leaves given to man by mother nature which men have over the decades discovered their secrets and applied for some benefits. The fact that most of them are in their raw forms does not make them unholy or demonic. Interestingly,



Most people are no longer playing hypocrites, they want to enjoy their sexual experiences as much as possible

it is these claims by Kayamata vendors of the fetish powers they have invoked into these products that is responsible for their popularity among the women folk. While we cannot rule out the fact that there are spiritual forces which can be manipulated by those who have knowledge of them, the guarantee that these products possess such powers remains largely unverified. Social Media world as we know it, is a world of make-believe and should be approached with some caution. The recent drama between popular Kayamata Vendor, Jaruma Empire and Nollywood actress, Regina Daniels is a confirmation of this fact. There are other instances where a number of these aphrodisiacs vendors have been called out on social media for scamming and hoodwinking unsuspecting, gullible costumers, to milk them of their hard earned money.

Why the rush for Kayamata?

Let me go down to the basics here. There is no changing the fact that every woman wants a nest of her own where she can reign supreme. It is also a fact that good men are scarce to find. So, if a woman finds one, she may want to keep him to herself by all means. Secondly, the veil has finally been lifted off sex, sexuality and related matters in Nigeria. Most people are no longer playing hypocrites, they want to enjoy their sexual experiences as much as possible. Again, the competition is stiff out there, with many women, young and old, ready for the asking. The older ones don't want to leave the market scene while the younger ones are ready to wrestle the men from their grips. The terrible economy is another driving force as everyone wants to 'make it' as they say in local parlance. If Kayamata can indeed assist a woman to 'catch' a 'big man', tie him down to her bed and make him forget his wife and family, or simply make him do her bidding which is mostly material gifts; perhaps no price is too much to pay. And as they say, if you do not buy a lie, you may never get to buy the truth.

Hmmm! Do have a wonderful weekend as we meet here again next Saturday for the concluding part of this article!

The Lagos Story

Why I can't accept Lagos Endsars panel report —Oshoma, Lagos lawyer

By Prisca Sam-Duru

Since the Lagos State government released its White Paper on the report submitted by the Judicial Panel of Inquiry set up by the government to look into issues surrounding the Lekki Toll Gate saga, which took place October 2020, debates and conversations on the issue have taken a fresh dimension.

The White Paper indicated that out of the 32 recommendations by the Panel, 11 were accepted in totality, six were accepted with modifications, one was rejected and 14 others which are outside the purview of the state, would be forwarded to the federal government for considerations. The Lagos State government rejected the findings of the panel that there was a 'massacre in context'.

Blaming the Panel for the use of the word 'massacre in context' which he described as a strong word, Nigerian lawyer, Liborous Oshoma said he does not fault the Lagos State government on the content of the White Paper, saying that with the inconsistencies in the Panel Report, no reasonable lawyer would accept that as fact.

"After reading the leaked report, my first thought was, I pray this is not what was submitted to Lagos State government because

with the inconsistencies on what transpired at Lekki Toll Gate, no reasonable lawyer will accept them as the gospel truth. But it turned out to be same report submitted to Lagos State", Oshoma who was guest on Arise TV's 'The Morning Show', said

He further said, "I can't fault the Lagos State Government because of the inconsistencies; in one breath, you accepted the evidence of the pathologist, Prof Obafunwa which indicated that 90 bodies were picked up from Lagos as incontrovertible and in another breath, you said that people died. What the Panel should have done would have been to leave out the issue of massacre and concentrate on the fact that the army was sent to the toll gate, whether with blank or live bullets and, the fact that the protesters were unarmed. If the panel had discussed it from that perspective, we won't be having the debate on was it a massacre or not. And that's where I consistently faulted the panel, but on every other findings, fantastic. I give kudos to the efforts of the Panel, I also believe the job was enormous, there ought to have been two panels".

Oshoma also said that "If you remove the word massacre which is such a strong word, both parties admitted that the Army were there



• Oshoma

and shots were fired" stressing that "You admitted in one breath that the evidence of Prof Obafunwa was incontrovertible, which said three persons died at the Lekki shooting out 90 bodies from over Lagos, that is enough to declare a state of emergency. "Now everybody is fixated on the Lekki issue, nobody is discussing about the remaining 87 deaths recorded in Lagos. The other people that died are also Lagosians. Even if it is one person that died we should talk about it as well as other issues that led to the EndSARS protest-the Nigerian police, the Army, and Nigerian society". The fact that no one is talking about the other 87 deaths, he noted, could be

intentional.

"The narrative has been narrowed to the Lekki issue and then the panel has, with their own report, discredited whatever narrative said to have transpired at the Lekki toll gate. Now, we are left to debate that narrative until we completely forget that there were 87 other bodies that died as a result of our security operatives not being top notch in what they should do and, that we are supposed to reform our police".

He however insisted that while discussions on Lekki shooting continue, the word massacre should be left out since the Panel Report itself had not been able to establish the 'massacre' because of lack of evidence. "Let's leave out the contentious issues for another day and concentrate on the ones we all agree to and find a way to heal the land", he added.

Oshoma also described the planned peace walk as too premature since all the issues are still hanging.

Also sharing reasons why the Panel Report was rejected, Attorney General of Lagos State and Commissioner for Justice, Moyosore Onigbanjo said the position of the Lagos State Government was based entirely on the Panel Report which was full of inconsistencies, submitted by itself. According to him, "In one instance at page 288 paragraph M of the report, the judicial panel said they found the evidence of Prof. Obafunwa, the pathologist who conducted autopsies on all the bodies picked up all over Lagos during the protest, not just in Lekki and they found his evidence, credible and that there was no evidence to the contrary. "Prof. Obafunwa said of all the bodies he conducted autopsy on, three came from Lekki, out of the three, only one had gunshot injury. In law, it means what Prof Obafunwa said outweighs any other evidence. Then the panel goes on to say there were nine deaths. If you look at that page where they listed out 11 deceased persons from Lekki Toll Gate, they didn't explain how they arrived at that conclusion, how they came about the names, who and when they were shot. That's a contradiction". Onigbanjo argued that the Panel said nine people died but ended up awarding compensation to only one, what of the other eight persons. In law, all those contradictions make the report unreliable".

2023:

'Why we want to stop Orji Uzor Kalu's return to the senate'

By Steve Oko

A group in Abia State has vowed to stop the reelection of Senator Orji Uzor Kalu in the 2023 elections.

According to the group known as Abia North Restoration Movement, the Senate has 'completely swallowed' the former Governor, thus rendering the entire senatorial district "voiceless" at the upper chamber of the National Assembly.

The group accused Senator Kalu of "not being vocal enough on issues that affect the people of the zone."

It also accused Senator Kalu of "getting distracted with his rumoured 2023 presidential ambition instead of concentrating on his law-making mandate".

The former governor in the recent times, has taken a number of chieftancy titles particularly from Northern States where he was also 'turbaned', a move analysts believe is not unconnected with his 2023 presidential project.

Senator Kalu had spent more than 100 days of his two years and half sojourn at the red chamber in the Kiri Kiri maximum prison following his conviction for N7.1 billion fraud allegation while in office as governor.

Justice Mohammed Idris had on December 5, 2019 sentenced the former governor to 12 years in prison for allegedly stealing public funds while in office.

Kalu's company, Slok Nigeria Limited, was ordered to be wound up and its assets forfeited to the Nigerian government.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had brought the criminal charge against the former governor and his ally, Mr. Ude Udeogu, for conspiring and diverting N7.1 billion from the coffers of Abia State.

However, the conviction was later quashed by the Supreme Court on the grounds that Justice Idris was already a Justice of the Court of Appeal as at the time he delivered the judgment sentencing the appellants.

The apex Court held that a Justice of the Court of Appeal cannot operate as a judge of the Federal High Court, and ordered the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court to reassign the case for retrial.

But when EFCC brought the matter for retrial, Justice Inyang Ekwo of Abuja High Court stalled the move, ruling that while Udeogu was the Appellant in the said appeal that was decided by the Supreme Court, Kalu and his firm, were only cited as Re-

spondents in the matter.

Justice Ekwo held that it would be legally wrong for Kalu and his firm to be subjected to fresh trial when the apex court did not make such order while deciding Udeogu's appeal.

Meanwhile, the Abia North group in a press statement jointly signed by Chief Dan Ikwaagwu; and Comrade Maduka Okorie, its President and Secretary respectively, "noted with disappointment that despite the rising insecurity in the zone occasioned by the activities of Fulani bandits particularly around Isuikwuato axis, the Senator has not courageously moved a motion on the floor of the Senate for intervention".

According to the group, "the recent abduction of lecturers and students of Abia State University Uturu as well as other commuters on Okigwe-Uturu, and Uturu/Isuikwuato roads; the killing of a final year student of Marist Comprehensive Academy en-route Uturu Road by Fulani bandits; plus other menacing activities of Fulani herdsmen in the zone without any motion on the floor of the Senate confirm our fear that Abia North has lost its voice."

The group compared the performance index of Senator Kalu and two House of Representatives lawmakers from the zone - Rep. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, and Rep. Ben Kalu respectively - who also belong to Kalu's ruling All Progressive Congress, APC, and found the former governor lagging.

The group said that "but for the appreciable efforts of Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha representing Isuikwuato/Umunneochi federal constituency, and her Bende federal constituency, Hon. Ben Kalu, Abia North senatorial district would have been completely forgotten at the current National Assembly".



•Orji Uzor Kalu

According to the group, instead of drawing the attention of the federal government to address insecurity, erosion menace and various other challenges bedevilling the zone, "our senator was busy proving how electronic transmission of election results was not possible in Abia North, yet money can be transferred and received electronically in every community in Abia North."

The group without equivocations, declared that Kalu is wearing oversized shoes, and represents dormancy at the red chamber especially when juxtaposed with former occupants of the coveted seat.

Some of his constituents are also yet to forgive him for his position on the controversial Ruga settlement.

The statement read: "Abia North has before now, produced vocal senators whose voices reverberated at the Senate, hence, our puzzle on why the zone will suddenly take the back seat."

"How can the zone that produced the likes of Senator Gen. Ike Nwachukwu; the late Senator Uche Chukwumerije; and Senator Mao Ohuabunwa, suddenly go on silent

mode?"

The group vowed to collaborate with other stakeholders to rescue the zone from political merchants and restore the zone's prestige come 2023.

For Abia North Restoration Movement, only seasoned folks with legislative prowess and competence will be sent to represent the district hence-

forth.

"In 2023 we want the return of people like Senator Mao Ohuabunwa at the Senate who was the first to move a motion for the state of emergency on erosion in Abia North. Even if he doesn't want to run again because of how he was betrayed in 2019, we will force him to reconsider in the interest of Abia North.

"Things can't continue this way. Abia North is currently on mute at the Senate. Our voices must be heard again."

The group said that although it did not expect the Senate Chief Whip to become an opposition senator against his ruling All Progressive Congress party, "our take is that the interest of Abia North should not be sacrificed on the altar of party politics."

"Without bias Abia North and by extension the South East geopolitical zone need somebody like Mao

Ohuabunwa at the Senate to restore the voice of the zone which has now gone mute. We've never had it this bad!"

In 2019, Senator Orji took over from Senator Ohuabunwa who had defeated him twice.

Ohuabunwa had rejected Kalu's victory arguing that Kalu ought not to have been declared winner of the contest but a run-off election conducted as the margin of lead was far less than the total number of cancelled votes.

Legal fireworks however ensued as Ohuabunwa who occupied the

seat then under the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party PDP, headed for the tribunal but he eventually lost at the Appeal Court Owerri which affirmed Kalu's victory.

But in less than two years to go, Kalu's constituents feel that he has not given very good account of himself at the senate although his supporters believe otherwise.

According to a report on the Score cards of former governors in the current ninth Senate entitled: "REPORT CARD OF 9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY VOL. 1. NO. 1 (JUNE 2019 - MAY 2020) HOW FORMER GOVERNORS STAND IN BILLS CHART OF THE 9TH SENATE." Orji Kalu's name was conspicuously missing on the score sheet.

Kalu's successor, Senator Theodore Orj representing Abia Central came top on the Legislative Productivity list with a total of seven bills already passed into law to his credit as at May 2020.

Another ex-governor, Senator Abdulahi Adamu (Nasarawa West), Nasarawa State, also had seven bills to his credit while Senator Aliyu Wamakko (Sokoto North); Senator Gabriel Suswam (Benue); and Senator Ibikunle Amosun (Ogun); all had four bills each.

Senator Danjuma Goje, former Governor of Gombe State (Gombe Central, APC) has three bills standing in his name; while Senator Kabiru Gaya (APC) Kano South; Senator Ibrahim Gaidam (APC) Yobe East; Senator Samuel Egwu (PDP) Ebonyi North; Senator Adamu Aliero (APC) Kebbi Central; and had two bills to their credit.

Just like Kalu, Senator Rochas Okorocho, another APC ex-governor from South East in the current senate, according to the report was yet to sponsor any bill.

Airport Concession: Don't compromise our national security by handing over our airports to foreigners ... stakeholders

By Lawani Mikairu

Stakeholders in the Aviation industry have called on the federal government not to compromise the nation's security by handing over the operations of the four International airports earmarked for concession to foreign companies.

The four major airports slated for concession are those of the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos, Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Lagos, Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano, and the Port-Harcourt International, Port-Harcourt.

According to those who spoke with Saturday Vanguard, airports are gate ways to every country and the architecture and operations of such gateways should be handled by nationals who have the security interest of the country at heart.

Speaking with Saturday Vanguard, a retired Engineer with the defunct Nigeria Airways, Mustapha Bello said security and national interest should be the first consideration when handling national assets.

According to Bello, "Nigeria should not forget the experience of Uganda during the reign of late General India Amin. The Etebbe raid was successfully carried out because the Isrealis had the architectural plan of the Uganda Etebbe international airport in their palm.

"Since there are some Nigerian companies who have successfully operated airport terminals, like Bi-Courtney Aviation Services who are currently running Muritama Muhammed Airport terminal 2, MMA2, Lagos, they should be considered first."



"There is another successful Nigerian whose company is operating at the Gatwick Airport in United Kingdom, UK. Such companies owned by Nigerians should be considered first".

Also speaking with Saturday Vanguard, a Chief Executive Officer of an aviation company based in Lagos, said indigenization of national assets is very important in order to create jobs for the teeming population and prevent capital flight.

According to the CEO who craved anonymity for "obvious reasons" according to him, "It is necessary for the airports to be concession to local firms with track records, merit and competence, rather than foreign companies that you

cannot vouch for.

Some of the foreign companies being touted don't have the required records"

"Bi-Courtney Aviation Services, BASL, has proved to be the best private terminal manager in the last 14 years and so should be supported by the government because of its antecedent in terminal management. Luckily, I was informed that they also bid for the terminals to be concessioned".

When Vanguard reminded the CEO that

Bi-Courtney had been locked in legal battle with the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, FAAN, and the federal government may be biased against them in the bidding process, he said most of the legal issues at MMA2 have been resolved in favour of BASL.

He said the late President Musa Yar'Adua set up a reconciliation Committee that resolved most of the disputed sections of the concession agreement.

"On MMA2 terminal, as a stakeholder in the aviation sector, I learnt that from the outset, both parties BASL and the federal government set up a Coordinating Committee, comprising BASL, FAAN and an independent body to address any challenge that may arise from the agreement on MMA2. On each occasion that the committee was called to address some of the challenges emanating from the concession, judgments have been in favour of BASL".

Recall the Minister of Aviation, Senator Hadi Sirika recently announced that at the end of the submission of interest to bid for the four International airports in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Kano, some foreign companies also submitted bid.

Meanwhile, interestingly, the foreign bidders in the process are already creating problem as they have been accused of breaching the process.

Recall Femi Falana's Chambers recently

wrote the Minister of Aviation, Senator Hadi Sirika alleging that three foreign bidders for the four airports to

be concessioned have violated the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (Est.) Act 2005 and The National Policy on Public-Private Partnership (N4P).

He therefore called for the disqualification of the three firms from the bidding process to avoid litigation which might derail the entire exercise.

WAR AGAINST OPEN DEFECACTION:

Is Nigeria winning or losing it?

By Prisca Sam-Duru

Since 2019, Nigeria has been occupying a very shameful position in global ranking of countries with highest number of people practicing open defecation. It became worst in 2020, when the country overtook India which occupied the worst position in the global Open Defecation, OD, index.

Surprisingly, the Minister of Water Resources, Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu on November 19, 2021, during the commemoration of the 2021 World Toilet Day and second anniversary of the 'Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet Campaign, disclosed that FG is optimistic of declaring Nigeria Open defecation free by 2022. The Minister's statement as reported by Channels TV, sounds good to the ears and must have elicited thunderous applause from listeners but how realistic is that optimism. If you juxtapose that motivating statement with that of a UNICEF resource person, Sam Adejo Okedi, who said during a workshop marking the 2021 World Toilet Day in Enugu, that "Nigeria is in a crisis situation as it has now become the number one country in the global Open Defecation, OD, index", and the fact that so much still needs to be done to address the issue, you'd simply regard the Minister's statement as mere rhetoric.

From the look of things, Nigeria could instead, be heading for an award for worst open defecator (if there's something like that), if nothing is done urgently to stem the tide.

Those early days in Imo State, people had to engage in serious environmental sanitation exercise around their compounds to ensure cleanliness as well as escape being fined by environmental sanitation officers. They were called *Nwa'ole ala*. People dreaded them! They came from the local government area, and inspected the community once a month, particularly on Saturdays. Sometimes they announced their visits, sometimes they didn't. The major thing those officers checked was



whether families had toilet facilities or not. There were many families who couldn't afford the pit latrine which was in vogue at the time and they were fined after several warnings. The pressure mounted by the sanitation officers made many families to comply while those who had the pit latrines upgraded to water system as time went on. There were such exercises in other parts of the country then. They were called *Wole Wole* in the southwest. Why can't there be similar inspections now?

Check out shops and business outfits even in the cities, and you will be surprised to discover that many of them do not have toilet facilities. So how or where do the occupants relieve themselves when pressed? Nobody cares! Yet we are optimistic that open defecation will end in 2022 which is not even up to 2 months from now. The sanitation officers in Lagos State for instance, are more concerned with

collecting bribes from shop owners who fail to clean up their premises during Thursdays' sanitation exercise.

There's a lot of difference between yesteryears when the *Nwa'ole ala* and *Wole Wole* operated and now. Even when modernisation hadn't reached the villages the way it has now, open defecation was done in the bush and in darkness. But what do we have now; pictures of adults and children defecating by the side of the roads, gutters, canals, under the bridges etc. Too bad how fast People lose their sense of decency! The tanker drivers who stay on Lagos roads for days do it by the road side.

There's this Baba (names withheld), who owns 17 shops without a toilet on a corner-piece along Gberigbe road, Ikorodu. While most adults who trade in the shops either defecate in poly bags right inside their shops, few others

either rush home or use nearby bushes when seriously pressed.

The children on the other hand, do their thing in the open. It's worse with food sellers whose children defecate right in front of their shops while customers purchase food. The faeces are usually flung into the gutter and parts of bad spots overtaken by stagnant flood. Baba's case is same with so many shops in most areas in the city and it is as a result of nothing but greed, otherwise, why would someone build shops for which he collects rents monthly or yearly and not provide toilet facilities? Sadly, this is happening in the city not rural area. And this is reason relevant authorities should begin monitoring homes and business spaces to ensure there are toilet facilities.

The statistics of the number of Nigerians who engage in open defecation is absolutely terrifying. According to a July 2019 report, the Federal Capital Territory Water Board said that "About 50 percent of schools and 25 per cent of primary healthcare centres in the country need to be provided with toilet facilities in order to deal with the problem of open defecation". The Board also stated in that report that "the toilets' provision was necessary as around 87,000 children below five die in Nigeria annually from diarrhoea" and that "Water and sanitation facilities in schools contribute to 15 per cent increase in school attendance for girls." That means open defecation has also been a hindering factor to girl child education.

Did you know that? The report went further to state that, "Although significant progress was made in recent years, Nigeria may not reach 100 per cent open defecation-free status by 2025 without a change in strategy. Presently around 50 million defecate in the open and another 68 million are likely to be added between now and 2030." Can you beat those outrageous figures, as well as the likelihood of an increase in the number of people who engage in open defecation? Rather than the figures diminishing, they are increasing! Ironically, this came from the same board which is optimistic about Nigeria becoming open defecation free next year. You'd ask yourself, what exactly has changed.

Weekend LIVES

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The best you can be in a relationship is yourself!

There comes a time in a woman's life when she has to decide who to settle with and make a go for him. Laila was once briefly engaged to her childhood sweetheart who took off with one of her close friends. Now approaching 30, she's been involved with Joseph, a photographer who runs his own studio. "He specialises in society events and sells photographs to most of these society magazines", explained Laila. "He'd taken so much time and money setting up his business that he didn't give marriage a thought until he was convinced he could look after a prospective family.

"Thanks to his job, he took me on a few society events that gave me a peep into the world of the other half – and how they live. It was at one of these events, a society wedding, that I met Taofik. A strictly-by-invitation event, Joseph had wangled a card from one of the organisers, and that was how I found myself sitting at this table with beautifully dressed guests. I wasn't bad looking myself. Thanks to the lady I worked with who recently passed me a few of her clothes, I matched what most of the women were wearing and my freshly fixed hair attachment shone.

"The wedding reception was straight out of the pages of a magazine. The bride wore an obviously expensive gown and the wedding train was not disappointing. 'I could get used to this', I thought, sipping a glass of cold wine. By the time the

meals arrived, I was already charged up and chatting with a couple of men on my table. At first I didn't notice Taofik who was seated at the table next to mine but as the evening wore on, we ended up sitting next to each other. 'Are you related to any of the celebrants?', he asked seriously. I shook my head and took a closer look at him. He was smart and courteous – and handsome to boot. 'The groom and I work in a big legal firm. I'm a solicitor', he offered.

"I nodded calmly as if it was nothing to me that he was a high-flying lawyer. He went on to tell me he was working hard towards being made a partner of the firm and my heart started thumping. I might be onto something good here, I thought to myself. I could tell he liked what he saw too as he couldn't take his eyes off me and kept filling my glass. But would his interest last when he discovered what I did for a living? That I was a sales assistant to a boss who ran her shop from home? So when he asked what I did, I blurted out I worked for a businesswoman as her PA. That she has an office in her house. There was no need to let on my job entails, no typing or telephoning – just persuading grumpy customers to buy enough stuffs so I could get paid at the end of the month.

"I'd arranged to go home with one of my friends as Joseph would have to take some photographs to clients' offices that very day. When



Taofik asked if I had my own transport, I shook my head and he offered to give me a lift. But I told him I'd already arranged for transport. If he took me home, he would realise I was obviously beneath him. I was already regretting the half truth about what I did. After all I worked very hard and was earning an honest living.

"As we left the venue, he asked me out and I agreed. One date led to another and each time I saw him, I fell for him a bit more. And that was even before I saw his flash jeep and ultra-modern flat. If I'd owned up straightaway about deceiving him, I could have made a joke of it. But every time I was about to tell

him, I thought about how successful he was and the words stuck firmly in my throat. I lived in fear of him phoning to say he'd meet me from work, so I kept a smart skirt, top and pair of heels there, just in case. I even added to my lies that I lived in a flat when all I had was a one-room apartment.

"Then out of the blues, he wanted to know what I thought of marriage. Both of us weren't getting younger, he said, and the earlier we set plans for a wedding rolling, the easier it would be for us to save for it. Part of me was walking on air, glad he thought we had a future together. But part of me

panicked. From where would I get money for a fancy wedding? A few months later, he wanted to know how much rent I paid. By this time, he'd assumed I lived in one of my boss's flats where he'd picked me up from work a few times. If he could arrange for us to buy a government flat, the rent on my flat combined with our salaries and the rent from his fancy pad, should be enough for us to afford the mortgage.

"That brought me down to earth. I don't have a fancy 'salary' – just cash payments that barely covered my rent and food. There was no way I could take on any mortgage! I blustered some excuse about how we shouldn't rush things, but a few months later, Taofik is now suggesting we go and check out some estate agents his office uses from time to time. If I refuse, he'll wonder why. But if I go, my secret will be revealed as soon as we meet his lawyer friends.

"I really love Taofik, but our whole relationship is built on sand. I can't keep up this pretence any longer. At first I was ashamed to admit what I did for a living. But now, I really have something to cringe about – all the cowardly lies I've told. I'm scared stiff they're going to cost me the man of my dreams. All those posh lifestyles, fancy parties and generous cash gifts will end. And as for Joseph, the way I treated him when I landed Taofik, he would be a price fool if he as much as looked at me."

How to give your boobs the right lift

One of Oprah Winfrey's show once devoted a whole episode to women often wearing the wrong size bra and ruining their otherwise lovely figure. You're probably wearing the wrong size bra if you notice any of the following problems:

You see deep strap imprints on your skin when you take off a bra; your chest looks saggy under clothes; you pull up your bra straps or tighten them; you feel your bra ride up in the back; your breast spill over the cups.

For a comfortable you, the first thing to do is learn how to measure yourself properly. Even if you think you're wearing the right size, experts suggest you take your measurements at home to be sure. First find your band size by tightly wrapping a tape measure behind your upper back, using your underarms as an anchor, and around your sternum.

This is your band size. To find your cup size: Take a looser measure across the fullest part of your bust. Subtract your band size from this new measurement. Use the answer to find your cup size: 1 inch (A); 2 inches (B); 5 inches (DD) and 6 inches (ODD).

Are your boobs big? If you feel you're not getting enough lift from the thin band and low-cut cups of your bra, plus there is too much space between the cup, which makes the breast

say, you should change the type of bra you wear. Go for bras with thick straps that won't dig into the shoulders and will help support extra weight. High-cut cups will also give more coverage so breasts won't spill out of them. Finally, bend over while putting on your bra; this will keep the wire under your breasts so it doesn't cut across the bottom of them.

If you have small breasts, baggy unstructured bras that bunch will make fitted clothes look bumpy and the flimsy fabric doesn't provide enough coverage. Go for bras where the centre and side panels will sit flat against your body so bra-wrinkles won't show through your clothing. A foam fabric that has some stretch will contour to your breast and fill out cups, even if one breast is smaller than the other. To stop show-through, cut a small piece of nylon from an old underwear and slip into the cup of a sheer bra.

According to Hane, author of: Playtex and Just My Size, to make sure you've got the right fit, try these real solutions:

Problem: Your bra rides up your back.

Solution: Your straps are adjusted too short or your bra may not be hooked tight enough. Try a smaller band size.

Problem: Your breasts spill

out of the top of your bra.

Solution: Your cup size may be too small or try a bra with more coverage.

Problem: Your straps cut into your shoulders.

Solution: Try a style with cushioned straps or a bra designed for more support.

Problem: Your cup is wrinkled, not filled.

Solution: Try a smaller cup, a cup with padding or lining or a stretch cup.

Problem: Your bra does not lie flat against your body between the cups.

Solution: Try a larger cup size or a different style with more coverage.



L-R, Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, Company Secretary/ Legal Adviser, Temitope Hassan, Awardees HR/ Admin Staff, David Aranmonise, Dangote Sugar Refinery, Group Managing Director, Ravindra Singh Singhvi at the presentation of the 3rd quarter Dangote Sugar Refinery Staff Motivation Awards, in Apapa Lagos on Wednesday.



From left: Denis Onoise, Child protection specialist UNICEF; Rev Fr Dr Cyril Ochia, Executive producer, the Oratory; Mr Gbenga Adebija, Chairman organizing committee the Oratory movie premiere and Anthony Oche, delegate Superior Nigeria Donbosco during the press conference on the Oratory premiere movie in Lagos.

There are several investment opportunities in Akwa Ibom—Ukpeh

Stories by Moses Nosike

Mr. Gabriel Ukpeh is the Chairman, Akwa Ibom State Technical Committee on Foreign Direct Investments.

In this interview with Nosike Moses, he discussed the numerous investment opportunities awaiting investors in Akwa Ibom. Excerpts:

What are the main objectives for establishing Akwa Ibom State Technical Committee on Foreign Direct Investments?

When Governor Udom Emmanuel assumed office in 2018, one of the major thrusts of his administration was industrialization, and to achieve that, he established three committees. One was on a deep seaport; the deep seaport is critical to the industrialization of the State and hopefully, construction will start in the first quarter of next year. The other committee he set up was on agriculture; he said, "We must provide food for our people," we cannot be buying food outside for our people. The third committee was on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and he invited me to head the committee on FDI. My job is to act as a liaison for investors when they come to Akwa Ibom State; work with them until they start business in the State.

What successes has the committee recorded since it was established?

We have recorded a lot of successes; we have the largest and best flour mill factory, we have the largest shipbuilding company; we have opened up in terms of shopping; we have a large shopping mall there. We have gone a long way in terms of integration; we have started palm kernel crushing; we are doing cassava crushing and many agricultural things are going on in the State. We have the \$1.4 billion ammonia plant going on in Ikot Abasi. There is the Sterling Company which has 12 companies in different areas. A company is partnering with the International Finance Corporation to start a methanol plant. We have the largest reserves of oil and gas in the country; anything oil and gas, we are in it. The Bua Group is coming in to start a refinery in the State; they have signed an agreement to build a refinery and petrochemical plant. A lot of things are happening in the State and these things take time to come to fruition; it is not an overnight thing. It takes time for the decision to be completed; financing to be done; technical issues to be sorted out; plants to be manufactured and brought into the country installed and started. The government of Udom Emmanuel has started the solid industrialization of Akwa Ibom State.

What specifically has the committee done to attract foreign investment to the State?

That was the question I have just answered; I have mentioned the things the committee has done and a lot more investments are coming to the State. Companies said they want to come and start operations in the State. Somebody said they have a poultry business and they want to come and start; another said they have a petrochemical company and want to set up a branch here; there is a company that manufactures deep freezers,



they want to come and establish here; because of the long maritime asset, they want to come and start a cold room business in the State. They want to start processing fish in the State.

What action is the government taking to ensure adequate power supply in the State?

The governor has a project, "power for all by December 2021", as we speak, Akwa Ibom is the only State that has its power plant; it has 191 megawatts. It is supplying 120 megawatts per day and the government has guaranteed that any company that comes will get power 24/7. Without power, we cannot do anything.

What other areas is the government working to enhance the activities of investors?

Another area the government is working on is security. We have an Israeli company that set up a Safe City in Uyo, the capital city where there are cameras everywhere. This will be expanded to all parts of the State, especially the free trade zone area. This is in the bid to attract investors.

What other things are you doing to ensure that investors have a friendly environment to operate in?

Investors have a conducive environment to operate; the government is providing that in terms of utilities; there is adequate electricity; adequate security is there; good road networks are there. Accessibility in and out of the state is there; they can ship goods in and out of the state freely. Ibom Air is there; they can ship out their goods out of the country through the seaport and jetty we are building. Those things provide an enabling environment for investors in the State. We have a one-stop committee headed by me, so they do not have run-around ministries; they just work with me and start their businesses. We have a governor that understands the language of business; so they can come and discuss and if we have an agreement, off we go.

Will this translate into youth employment for young people in the state?

The essence of industrialization is not just to improve the economy; it is to create jobs. If you cannot create jobs for the people, why are you in government? That was why the governor took industrialization and he is creating more jobs and not only that, he is tinkering with education not to produce just administrators, but also to produce entrepreneurs, who can start their own businesses. Between 2015 and now, well over 20,000 SMEs have started in Akwa Ibom State. These are people who have started their own businesses and are employing others. That is encouraging; many economies depend on SMEs; SMEs are the backbone of any economy. Between 2015 and now, over 50,000 SMEs have registered in the State to pay tax. That means they are doing business. That area is one big aspect. He has turned the education system around such that if you come out of secondary school and cannot further your education, you can start your own business other than sit down doing nothing. Tinkering with the vocational institutions and the entrepreneurship schools, graduates can go in there for six to nine months and acquire skills in a particular area, become an entrepreneur and be useful to society. The governor is streamlining things so that when graduates come out they are well toiled and get into the industries that are being set and the employment they need is being provided.

What are you doing to protect local investors?

The good thing about not just Akwa Ibom but Nigeria is that the market is huge. We have a population of over 200 million people; the market is there. Nobody is producing enough to satisfy the market. So whether you are foreign or local, there is a market for you. Whatever you produce will be taken. For instance, even though we have palm oil, we still import palm oil; over 9000 tonnes of palm oil is imported into the country

read more on www.vanguardngr.com

Farmforte unveils 5400MT cashew factory in Edo State



L-R: Farmforte's Executive Director, Charles Ojei; Farmforte's Co-CEO, Uyi Wenses; Edo State Governor, His Excellency, Godwin Obaseki; Farmforte's co-CEO, Osazuwa Osayi at the commissioning of Farmforte bCashew Factory in Benin City, Edo State recently

Farmforte Agro & Allied Solutions Limited, has unveiled a new Cashew Processing Facility in Benin city, Edo state. The facility was commissioned by the Governor of Edo state, His Excellency, Godwin Obaseki, on Saturday, November 27, 2021, in the presence of Senator Matthew Urhoghiye and other distinguished guests.

This is a major milestone in line with Farmforte's commitment to consistently ensure market access for over 112,000 smallholder farmers within the agriculture value chain. The processing facility is equipped with state-of-the-art machinery that has a production capacity of 24MT per day that will provide jobs and enterprise opportunities for the youths and people of Edo State.

Speaking on the acquisition, Osazuwa Osayi, Farmforte's co-Chief Executive Officer, said: "This new processing facility is in line with our long term commitment to continuously create sustainable outcomes in the agri-value chain. We believe that this facility will enable us to increase cashew nut processing capacity and export less raw commodity; thereby increasing Nigeria's access to the global market."

The Executive Governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki, stated that "the government will

continue to support the private sector to enable them create more job opportunities, expand into new markets and reduce risk. With this new facility, Farmforte is adding value and encouraging farmers to increase the harvesting of cashew nuts and fruits, enabling Edo State to become the number one cashew producer in Nigeria."

Despite being one of the largest producers of this crop, Nigeria is yet to tap into the economic value that can be derived from locally processed cashew nuts. Currently, raw cashews are being exported and processed into cashew nuts by foreign countries then sold to Europe and back to Nigeria. This is an economic challenge Farmforte is working towards change.

Uyi Osayimwense, co-Chief Executive Officer of Farmforte, iterated that quality was a major factor in their operations. "At Farmforte, we are reinventing Nigeria's cashew industry by investing in a state-of-the-art processing plant that can process large amounts of cashew at export standard. Presently, we source raw cashew from local smallholder farmers and make sure Kernel out-turn ratio (KOR) is 49 and upwards to ensure maximum quality."

The facility includes machines that will carry out various processes from cleaning of raw cashew nuts to the packaging of edible cashew nuts (kernels).

SoftLetset to become Nigeria's AirBnB

With the aim of connecting guests to decent and budget-friendly short-term accommodation, SoftLet, an innovative digital platform, has launched its portal.

Created by a team of digital enthusiasts, the Prop Tech platform is set to ensure people can access secure and comfortable temporary homes in choice areas of the country.

Presently, the platform boasts of listings across the city of Lagos and has been simplified to give tourists, guests and travelerseasy access to various affordable and decent short-term accommodation.

CEO / co-founder of SoftLet, Chigozie Okwara, said that the platform was set to become the 'AirBnB' of Nigeria. "The original AirBnB is over a decade old and the initial idea was to offer short let accommodation for people who couldn't afford hotel rooms. Now, AirBnB is a public company. The truth is that hospitality is big anywhere in world. Nigeria is not left out.

"These days, people want to have more control over their vacation experience and frankly, hotels have a lot of rules and regulations. So, people can now enjoy the comfort of 'home' with all the perks like cooking yourself,

bringing your pet, having your children play in a homely environment and so on. It's also financially beneficial for the property owners as they get paid rent. Where we come in is making the whole process easy by ensuring guests find accommodation of their choice easily," he said.

SoftLet currently has over 100 different apartments listed in various locations; mainly Lekki, Victoria Island, Ikoyi and Lagos Mainland. Apartment sizes range from one-bedroom apartments, two-bedroom apartments, three-bedroom apartments, family homes to penthouses and lofts.

Booking on SoftLet is very straightforward and easy with the full listing of accommodation, prices and accompanying Ts and Cs.

Popularly termed AirBnBs, short-term rental apartments are fastbecoming alternatives to hotels especially for holiday makers, company expatriate workers and travelers.

Globally, the hospitality industry is one of the largest sectors and this is largely driven by tourism. Currently, Nigeria remains an important market in the West African region and Africa at large.

The Saturday Issue

By Marie-Therese Nanlong, Jos;
Luminous Jannamike, Abuja
Olayinka Latona, Lagos

The Anglican Bishop of Asaba Diocese, Rt. Rev. Justus Mogeke, last week declared that henceforth before members of the Diocese could partake in Holy Communion, which a Christian religious obligation, they must have obtained their Permanent Voter's Card, PVC, for the purpose of voting during elections in the country. The Bishop who gave the exhortation in a sermon on Sunday on the occasion of the Christian Community Platform, CCP, prayer conference, held at the Great Anointing Favour Bible Church International Incorporated, Effurun, Delta State said Christians must actively get involved in politics to enthrone good governance at all levels. He therefore enjoined every preacher in Delta State to make it mandatory for their members to have the PVC before they could participate in Holy Communion.

Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria and coordinator of the CCP in the Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Very Reverend Fr. Kofa Ithanasius, of St. Benedict Catholic Church Patani, who spoke in the same vein insisted that "it is a sin not to register to vote". He said, "Pastors should ensure their members get their PVC before they take their Communion and do other worship services in the household of God. As Communion is important to us as Christians, which makes us healthy, spirit-filled, and to be very strong, it is such with the PVC which makes us enthrone good governance at any level".

Top Nigerian clerics are however divided over the directive leaving millions of followers of Christ confused whether to heed the order or not. Some of the pastors encouraged their teeming members to follow the instruction, others lampooned the order, urging all Christians not to heed such a directive but to seek God irrespective of what men want.

Good Christians take civic duties seriously - Hayab

In his reaction, the Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria, Kaduna State, Rev. John Hayab, told Saturday Vanguard in an exclusive interview that a good Christian will naturally obey the law of the land and take his civic responsibility seriously.

He said, "A Christian who has attained the age of having a voter's card and refused to do so is ignorant of what God wants him to do and the Bishop as a shepherd has the spiritual and moral responsibility to correct such believer. The Bishop knows how members appreciate participating in Holy Communion and is using it to remind them to act responsibly to national issues. Because when we take communion and fail to do our civic role, the challenge of bad governance may make us put our hands in doing evil which can make our communion unholy. As a pastor and a State Chairman of CAN, I wish more religious leaders will take measures within their denominations to guide members and especially communicants to wake up from their slumber, discharge their civic responsibility and save this country from bad governance which is almost leading us to be a failed state."

It is demonic, evil - Obaje

However, the former Aso Villa Chaplain, Rev (Prof) Yusuf Obaje, said that he wouldn't promote such a stance, adding that the church should always be open to anyone without prejudice.

"Any church that does that is not a church. The door of the church should be open to anyone who wants to come in there, because if there is any message that is divine, whatever your needs are, when you enter the church, God of the redeemed persons is capable of bringing transformation to that personal or communal problem," he said.

You can't deny people their rights - Bishop Adegbite

Like Obaje, Methodist Bishop of Ikeja, The Rt. Rev. Stephen Adegbite told Saturday Vanguard,

"that is embarrassing and unscriptural. It is an unbelievable anathema that any man of God will use voters' card to deny people access to the means of grace. The Holy Communion is a grace from God and the highest commandment given by Christ that we should do it as often as possible till he comes again. For anyone to deny any member of the Christian congregation the means of grace is unbelievable. You cannot use something as earthbound as PVC to deny people of their religious rights. Any Minister that is doing that must be questioned. CAN frowns at such directives and practices. It is against the law given to us by God. So, no Christian is expected to do such a thing."

PVC, a symbol of patriotism - Rev. Prof. Agang

But the Provost, Jos ECWA Theological

2023:

Clerics disagree on 'No PVC, no Holy Communion' order

Seminary, Rev. Prof. Sunday Agang, said having a valid PVC symbolised patriotism. According to him, "I didn't listen to Bishop Mogeke directly but here is what I think: If I love Nigeria, I will love to participate in choosing who pilots the affairs of the nation so that honest people of virtue and truth who love this country, and can fight against ethnic and religious divisions while promoting the unity of this nation can be elected."

Denying faithful Holy Communion unfair—Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo

The State Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo however argued that, "most Christians see politics as dirty and that there is no hope for free and fair election looking at what is happening in our country and possibly in Africa at large. As Christians, we believe that something can be done and we are hopeful. Therefore to participate in politics and to bring a change there is a need to have your voter's card for that is a weapon to change the change that is required positively. But to deny a person Holy Communion because of voter's card is unfair to him or her spiritually. Persistence and more emphasis on the need for voter's cards as a weapon for positive change can do better. How I wish it is collection or offertory that will not be received than talk about heavenly food. Remember that some are members but not communicant, what happens then to such?"

Such directive is an error—Pastor Esther Ibanga

Pastor Esther Ibanga added; "Absolutely not! There are two major ordinances established by the Lord Jesus which He commanded the Church to observe; one is Baptism and the other is Communion. Jesus said: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit," (- - Matthew, - 28:19, - NKJV), "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." - - (Luke, - 22:19, - NKJV,). We are accountable to God to adhere to these two ordinances. The Church primarily has the responsibility to teach and encourage us to obey these teachings. No condition was given, it was to be obeyed out of love for our Lord Jesus who said if you love me, you will obey my commands. There is no compulsion in love. For the Bishop of Asaba, with all due respect to use the ownership of a PVC (which is purely an earthly political matter) and tie it to a spiritual requirement by the Lord Jesus is an error. While I understand the Bishop's passion for Christians to be politically aware and active, I do not support this stance because it is unscriptural. Ministers of the Gospel have no right to deny any Christian their religious and

Top Nigerian clerics are however divided over the directive leaving millions of followers of Christ confused whether to heed the order or not

spiritual rights in this context. You can also have the PVC and refuse to vote. Will he now follow you to your house to ensure that you vote? Or you can have the PVC and vote and your vote is not counted because of rigging, so what has now been achieved? I think the Church should teach Christians to do the right thing and leave every man/woman to their conscience."

Not collecting PVC is disobedience to God—Pastor Funmi Olanrewaju

To Pastor Funmi Olanrewaju, "Romans 13:1-2 says: "Obey the government, for God is the One who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power. So those who refuse to obey the law of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow. Not registering or collecting your PVC is disobedience and disobedience is a sin before God. 1 Samuel 15:22. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. "It is your civic right once you attain the age of 18 years as a Nigerian. We keep complaining of being ruled by bad leaders, the only way to elect good ones is through voting and prayers for your vote to count. Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. Nigerians are difficult, take for instance the NIN registration, if it is not because it will affect them in doing other things, they just won't get it. The Bishop knows his people very well and he also knows better on how to get them to carry out instructions."

In his reaction, Pastor Emmanuel Anoke stressed, "I would have suggested a mild way (probably he must have done that and it failed). As pastors, we can educate our members on the need to vote but not deny them their religious right."

The directive is absurdity, should be condemned in totality—Rev. Obed Ezeonye,

According to the Lead Pastor at Heaven's Gate Church Worldwide, Rev. Obed Ezeonye, "if the Bishop actually gave the directive, then it is serious and should be condemned in totality in all intents and purposes. It brings a lot of questions on the table. Who are these religious leaders? Are they well tutored to occupy the positions they are occupying? Apostle Paul warned against giving positions of authority to novice who are not well schooled in the things of God, lest, they be lifted up with pride and cause damage to the truth of God. Many people are involved in divide-and-rule tactics, even in the church. They stage-manage their way to the top and begin to exercise authority they don't understand its usage. The second question is, what is Holy Communion to place PVC as condition to receive it? It's "The Lord's Body and Blood, "The strength of our Christian Faith," "The Sacrifice." It's a sacrifice freely given to us while we are yet sinners. To place a condition on it by mere voting is absurdity. If truly this Bishop made the statement, he must be called to order or possibly recalled for proper tutoring. People should stop ridiculing our faith and giving rooms to the enemy of our faith to mock the Christian Faith. If the Bishop is passionate about changing the corrupt electoral system in the country, there are so many ways to do that and not to connect it with our core sensitive religious rituals and beliefs. There are other ways to carry out enlightenment and educational programmes on the Christian members of the faith.

Nobody should be denied religious right because of PVC—Very Rev. Ohaeri Nnaemeka Ndubuwa

Very Rev. Ohaeri Nnaemeka Ndubuwa, Lecturer at Methodist Theology Institute, MTI, Sagamu said,

"Nobody should be denied of any religious right because of PVC, rather effective orientations should be organized to educate people on the need and necessity of possessing the PVC as a political right and prerequisite to exercising one's civic duty for national political and economic development.

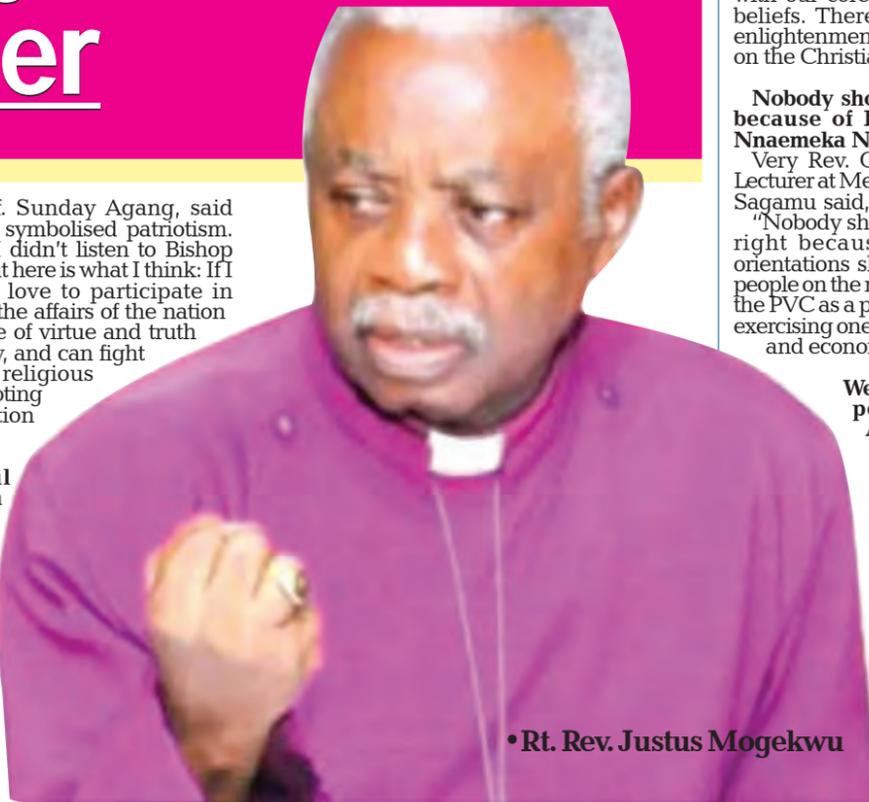
We can't force people, we can only persuade them—Pastor Akindele Olanrewaju,

Pastor Akindele Olanrewaju, Redeemed Christian Church of God, RCCG, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, said, "in my own opinion, it is the duty of every Christian to perform his or her civic responsibility or to exercise his civic right either to vote or be voted for. I know that before we can exercise this right or perform our civic responsibility we must have Permanent Voters Card, it is therefore important for every Christian to possess one so that they can participate in the electoral process and elect the leaders of their choice. As good as it is that

clergymen should encourage their sheep to register and have their Permanent Voter's Card, I don't think it is correct to hinge their participation at the Communion table on it. The best the clergymen can do is to encourage and persuade their sheep to have PVC, many people are not willing to participate in the electoral process again because of a lot of anomalies in the system, we can't force people, we can only persuade them.

Individuals have rights to vote or not to vote—Rev (Dr) Esemé Unen

According to Rev (Dr) Esemé Unen, Senior Pastor, Grace Impact Church, and Chairman, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, Ifako Chapter, "it's within the rights and obligations of every Christian to perform his civic responsibility by voting and /or stand for election at any level in the country. Therefore, possession of the PVC is a civic obligation of all responsible citizens. Like all others, Christians are expected to exercise the power to make necessary changes so desired in national leadership. Oftentimes, people complain about bad governance but forget that they failed to use their voting power given to them by law to make that change. So to avoid crying foul later, it is very important that all responsible citizens get their PVC, not just getting it but also participating in the voting exercise, otherwise the PVC is useless. In the just concluded gubernatorial election in Anambra State, only 10.27% of registered voters came out to vote. The remaining 89.73% stayed away, yet they will be affected by the decision of the minority that voted. If more people had turned out maybe the result would have been somewhat affected. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that Prof Soludo wouldn't have won, I am only saying that the non involvement of the larger percentage of the electorates is too significant to be ignored. Notwithstanding, it is still within the rights of any individual to vote or not to. Therefore, insisting or denying people the right to participate in the fellowship of Holy Communion for non possession of PVC is what I cannot explain. There are scriptural requirements for one to partake in the Lord's Table.



• Rt. Rev. Justus Mogeke

Saturday NEWS

Buhari, Emenike's billboards destroyed as hoodlums attack Abia APC office

By Steve Oko

THE giant billboard bearing the images of President Muhammadu Buhari; and Leader of the All Progressive Congress APC in Abia State, Chief Ikechi Emenike, was destroyed as hoodlums attacked the State secretariat of the party in Umuahia.

According to eye witness, the hoodlums numbering over 20 stormed the APC State Secretariat located at Uyo Street Umuahia, around 1:00am Friday morning and attempted to gain entry into the two-storey building housing the office but could not.

The security personnel guarding the premises said the attackers were armed with dangerous weapons and chanted war and anti-Emenike songs.

According to the security guard who said he saw the hoodlums from his hiding place explained that when they could not gain access into the building, they resorted to cutting the flag poles and destroying the giant flex billboard.

The security man said that the attackers threatened to burn down the secretariat in their next visit.

Confirming the attack, the Administrative Officer, Mr. Stanley Chidi, told newsmen that he was shocked when he arrived at the office on Friday morning and discovered that only the stumps of the 10 flag poles hoisting APC and Nigeria flags remained.

His words: "The flags were no where to be found while the giant flex bill-



Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu (4th right) flanked by his Deputy, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat (4th left); Chairman, Lagos State Science Research and Innovation Council (LASRIC) & Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, Prof. Oluwatoyin Ogundipe (left) and beneficiaries of the Innovation category of the LASRIC grant during the presentation of cheques at the opening of the "Art of Technology (AOT) Lagos 3.0" Conference themed: "Funding & A Connected Lagos" at the Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, on Friday,

board bearing the images of our state party leader, Chief Ikechi Emenike and the national leader, President Muhammadu Buhari were pulled down and torn to shreds."

When contacted, the state Organising Secretary of the party, Mr. Obinna Atuonwa said that the attack could be a way those who were unhappy with the outcome of the just-concluded APC congress which was swept by the loyalists of Chief Emenike.

He noted that since after the congress they had been receiving threats as Emenike's congress was one recognised by the na-

tional leadership of the party.

"We have been receiving threats since our congress was recognised by the national leadership of our great party.

"Now that the threats have started manifesting in vandalism, the Abia APC leadership will, without delay, petition the police and ask for protection before things get out of hand".

Chief Emenike who is the husband of the Nigeria Ambassador to the United States of America is also the Chairman, Governing Council of the University of Nigeria Nsuka.

He has since after the congress taken over the control

of APC in Abia, a development that may have led to the rumoured defection of other big wigs of the party not in his camp.

Some leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party PDP led by the incoming National Secretary of the party, Senator Samuel Anyanwu met with the Senate Chief Whip, and former governor Orji Uzor Kalu, to woo him back to PDP.

The fate of other APC chieftains in the state especially those with governorship ambition seem to be hanging in the balance.

Tech company to install 1,000 CCTV cameras in UNN

By Ikechukwu Odu

In an effort to beef up security at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, UNN, an indigenous technology company, Bionomics Nigeria Limited, on Friday, donated 1,000 Close Circuit Television, CCTV cameras to the institution.

The company which signed a Memorandum of Understanding, MoU, with UNN on the project, said the cameras would be installed at the Nsukka campus, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, UNEC, and the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, UNTH, Ituku Ozalla, within the next eight months.

The Managing Director of the company, Onyedika Ugochukwu, said that the MoU was informed by the need to provide security across all the tertiary institutions in the country to check cultism, criminalities and other vices on campus-

es. While explaining why UNN was chosen for the project, he said "UNN has a very rich and diverse cultural heritage; it is the first indigenous university in Nigeria. If you want to do anything in Nigeria without starting in UNN, you are not correct. We intend to take this technology across all the universities in Nigeria. All the universities need improvement in security.

"We as a business also want to generate revenue. We have students and people who want to advertise their products. We want to use this as a step to reach out to all the universities in Nigeria.

"UNN would provide the administrative support and the brand that we need as a company, while we provide the funding and the infrastructure. Without the University of Nigeria, we don't have a product to sell. We have over 60,000 students in this university using different products. This cluster provides the right

opportunity to build this infrastructure and deliver advertising to them.

"We are going to have CCTV cameras installed across the entry points, junctions and other relevant points in this institution. What this would do for the institution is that whatever happens on these campuses would be known and observed. So, when there is an incident, the university security can simply record

Sanwo-Olu urges religious, community leaders to join crusade against sexual, gender-based violence

LAGOS State First Lady, Dr. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu on Friday called on religious and community leaders in the state to join the ongoing massive campaign to end violence against women and girls, especially rape and all forms of sexual and gender-based crimes.

She also urged parents and guardians to be watchful and do everything necessary to protect their children and wards from sexual predators.

The First Lady spoke separately at the Interfaith

Parley of Religious Leaders with Mr. Governor, organized by the Lagos State Ministry of Home Affairs, held at Intercontinental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, and during the official flag-off of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Week held at Ikorodu.

She said as the first point of call in the communities, religious and community leaders have key roles to play in stepping up the fight

what happened, play it back to find out exactly what happened. Men with guns on the roads cannot provide security anymore. They will complement cameras that cannot be bribed, negotiated with and which cannot sleep or slumber," he explained.

He challenged Nigerians from all walks of life to start contributing solutions to our peculiar domestic challenges.

He challenged Nigerians from all walks of life to start contributing solutions to our peculiar domestic challenges.

World leaders must work in partnership to address humanity's common challenges – Buhari

By Johnbosco Agbakwuru

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari has called for global collaboration and partnership to curb the catastrophic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Buhari made the call on Friday at the Nigeria Day during the ongoing EXPO DUBAI 2020, holding in the capital of the United Arab Emirates, Dubai.

Speaking against the background of the recent surge of COVID-19 cases globally, the President noted that understanding and partnership among leaders of the global community, aimed at fighting common adversaries like the pandemic, would make the world a better place.

The President in a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Chief Femi Adesina, noted that the theme of EXPO DUBAI 2020, "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" has placed a moral burden on all relevant stakeholders, across national boundaries, to urgently work together for a better and brighter future.

The President was quoted as saying, "The concerted efforts by world leaders, working together, enabled us to limit the catastrophic consequences of this pandemic.

"Such level of continuing understanding and pragmatic partnerships are needed and must be reinforced to ensure that our world is a better place that addresses humanity's common challenges to guarantee sustainable development and progress for the global community."

He told the EXPO that Nigeria, like other countries in the world, was impacted negatively by the COVID-19 pandemic, compounding national efforts in addressing insecurity, fighting corruption and diversifying the nation's economy.

Nonetheless, he noted that the present administration in Nigeria has registered significant progress within a short period of time and is still making headways in key sectors of the economy.

"Therefore, the Nigerian delegation is participating in this EXPO with great prospects for positive outcomes, while assuring the world of our determination and readiness to partner with relevant investors in our bid to tackle a number of challenges to make Nigeria a better country.

"Nigeria is participating in this epoch-making event in order to explore opportunities that are capable of unlocking the huge potentials that abound in our country, as it makes conscious efforts to be a strategic partner of choice for the global community.

"It is my pleasure, therefore, to invite all participating countries, organizations and other private sector operators to take full advantage of opportunities being provided by the EXPO 2020, by linking up with the Nigerian team, to collaborate with us in diverse areas of interests for our mutual benefits", he said.

The Nigerian leader thanked Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), for inviting him to the Expo and especially to attend Nigeria's Day event, which offers a great opportunity to show-case the potential of Africa's largest economy.

The President described Expo Dubai 2020 as the single most important global event of its kind to take place in the Middle East, Africa and the South East Asian regions in recent years.

"We are proud to be a part of this dynamic evolution of pragmatic partnerships that are both creative and innovative for the progress of the country.

"I heartily congratulate the UAE authorities for the painstaking work to create this state-of-the-art complex that has connected our world within our fingertips as we share international best-practices as well as opportunities that abound in all our countries", he said.

against rape, defilement, and associated crimes.

"There is a zero-tolerance to rape in Lagos State. We are serious about stamping out domestic violence, gender-based violence, and associated crimes in Lagos. We don't pray for rape and similar crimes but they do happen and most times religious leaders and community leaders are the first point of contact.

"When you have such cases at hand, whoever has been attacked should not

bathe, douche and they should not change their clothes. If the rapist used a condom, and you have it, do not destroy it but go straight to the hospital to have a test in order to preserve the evidence.

"If a child is raped and the mother quickly bathes for her, you have lost the evidence and you can't win the case because you don't have evidence. So, when you are talking to people in our communities, please mention these things," the First Lady said.

I was planning to get married only to be detained for 15 years on the allegation that I was a member of MASSOB

By Vincent Ujumadu,
Awka

MR. Ikechukwu Chikwem, who hails from Obazu Mbieri in Mbaitolu local government area of Imo State was among the 19 suspected members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, discharged and acquitted by Justice Nicholas Oweibo at the Federal High Court, Awka after 15 years of detention and trial.

Chikwem, a spare parts dealer in the commercial town of Nnewi, Anambra State had on the fateful day he was arrested, gone to carry out his business, not knowing that it was the last time he would be seeing his shop and the goods he had bought for sale.

"I was about to get married that time. The lady waited for me for three years before she got married. In fact, I was the one that encouraged her to get married, assuring her however that I would still marry her if she was not married by the time I was free, not knowing that I would be in prison for 15 years. I thank God she is married and I will now look for another person to marry.", Chikwem said after being discharged.

On his next move, Chikwem added: "I went back to my store after discharge and everything had changed and the house rebuilt. The owner of my store had died and his children had sold it. Even in that neighbourhood, I could not identify anybody. Where I was living, the house had also been sold and I could not lay hands on my property.

Fifteen years in prison is not fifteen days. Even if I lay hands on those properties I left, they won't be useful to me now. But I believe that with God, I can still make it. What I need is assistance"

Narrating his pathetic story to Saturday Vanguard, Chikwem said that when he was asked to follow two policemen to the station, he thought that it was a mission that would last for only few hours because, according to him, there was no untoward issue he was connected with.

He said: "On 11th April, 2007, I came to my shop at about 9am to open for business and all of sudden two police came and said that I was needed at the police station. I wondered if I was owing anybody or quarreled with anybody because my conscience was clear, I told my neighbor what the policemen told me and that I would be back and soon after following then to the station. I never knew that for the next 15 years, I would be incarcerated in prison.

"When I got to the station they put me behind the



From Left; Dr Tilewa Amusu, Chairperson Organising Committee, Dr Ibronke Sodeinde, Acting President, Medical Women's Association of Nigeria, [MWAN], Dr Oluchi Kanma-Okafor, Chairperson Publicity Sub-Committee, and Dr Yetunde Ayo-Oyalowo, Chairperson Protocol Sub-Committee, During the Press briefing on the Fothcoming 22nd Biennial Conference /Annual General Meeting Lagos State Branch of Medical Women's Association of Nigeria, [MWAN]. Held on Thursday at Nigerian Medial Association Office Surulere, Lagos. PHOTO: Kehinde Gbadamosi

counter. They did not put any handcuff on me. I was there from that morning to evening before one bus came into the police station and they said I should enter. They took me to the state CID in Awka and that was when they put me inside the cell and I passed the night there. "The following morning, they took me to Awkuzu SARS and before I knew what was happening, I saw a group of men who started asking me, where is the white man? Before I could ask which white man, they started slapping and beating me. That was too much and one man came and asked them to take me to the hall. They tortured me and eventually my hands were paralyzed. From that day, all the statements I made both in Umuahia and Abuja, I couldn't sign them because my hands were paralyzed.

"On 10th December, 2007 I was arraigned at Nnewi High Court. After one year, they said the court had no jurisdiction because, according to them, the offense was treasonable felony. On 2nd December 2008, they discharged us and as we were outside the court hall, they rearrested us and said that the IGP needed to see us. We were returned to the cell.

"On March 6, 2009 they took us to the Federal High Court Awka. We had five lawyers who perhaps felt that the matter would not end soon, abandoned us and we were left with only Barr Meze who saw us through to the end. We did not pay him any dime from that period to 2020 when another lawyer came".

Mr. Chukwuemeka Meze, the lawyer who defended the suspects for 14 and half years said he stood firm in the matter because he believed they did not commit the offense they were charged.

He said: "I was merely two years old at the bar in 2007 when I was briefed to help some young men and

women who had been in detention for two and half months. So I got to the court before Hon. Justice Paul Obidigwe and demanded that those people should be discharged because there was no proper charge.

Immediately they were discharged and came out of court, the Army and Police rearrested them and took them back to prison. For nearly four years after the case was struck out by Justice Obidigwe, they remained in prison without trial.

In 2009, they were formally arraigned at the Federal High Court before Hon Justice Peter Olayiwola who is now retired. We applied that the matter be struck out and up to 2012, another Judge, Justice Ijeoma Ojukwu took over the matter and she handled it for about 8 months before she was transferred.

Another Judge, Mohammed Abubakar took over the matter for about five years, but it was Nicholas Oweibe that did justice to it.

"At a time there was no Judge handling it, I had to write the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Abuja

to assign a judge to handle the case. The application remained there for more than one year.

At that time, the 19th defendant, Ojemba Anyanwu, had become deaf in prison custody. We put in our witnesses and we addressed the court on 23rd July, 2021 and the matter was adjourned for judgment on 2nd October, 2021.

"Later, the judge said that he would not come because of the governorship election in Anambra State. And on 23rd November, it was a special day as Justice Nicholas Oweibe in a three hour judgment ruled that there was no evidence to show that the defendants committed offense of treason, treasonable felony and terrorism and he accordingly discharged and acquitted all of them.

"They carried me shoulder high round the court premises and the important thing was that I handled this matter all these years free of charge, I was even feeding their families. As a Knight of the Catholic Church, I took this matter as charity work and thank God it ended in glory. I spent 14 and half years working for humanity".

Oil/gas leaks causing cancer in Bayelsa, activist raises alarm

By Prisca Sam-Duru

PROJECT Officer and Head of the Niger Delta Resource Centre at Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, Nigeria, Morris Alagoa, has raised the alarm on the level of environmental degradation in Bayelsa State, saying that people are coming down with cancer as a result of oil spills and gas leakages. Citing the gas leak which he said is ongoing in Sangana area from Conoil, Alagoa who shared his thoughts on the unfortunate state of Bayel-

sa State, on Arise TV, disclosed that the health implication which is not only affecting Sangana community, is enormous even as the land and water have also lost their security.

His words; "Few days ago, there was a major oil spill from Agip's well head in Wambiri, and the whole environment was highly polluted and the spills continue. Talking about the gas leak ongoing in Sangana area from Conoil, that one is not just affecting only Sangana community because it is air and water borne so, it is affecting several communities along the coast line even into Southern Ijaw from Brass local gov-

Boko Haram attack Mallam Fatori LGA of Borno

By Ndahi Marama, Maiduguri

BARELY 24 hours after insurgents attempted to infiltrate military base in Rann which led to the killing of 7 soldiers including Commanding Officer and scores of terrorists, another set of armed members of ISWAP group has infiltrated Mallam Fatori, the headquarters of Abadam Local Government Area of Borno state.

Mallam Fatori shares international border with Niger Republic where Governor Babagana Zulum in his quest to close IDPs camps on or before December 2021 had personally led troops for clearance of the ghost town few weeks ago with a view to restore civil authority.

Most fleeing residents of Mallam Fatori town had spent years in Bosso region of Niger Republic, Unfortunately, in storming the ghost town, the governor was lucky to escape unhurt as the terrorists fired grenades into the town that fateful day.

Sources yesterday said, "presently Mallam Fatori is under Boko haram attack with firing of arms coming from different directions."

Mallam Fatori is about 250km drive north of Maiduguri, but due to closure of roads, motorists have to take through Yobe state- Bosso in Niger Republic before maneuvering into the town.

As at press time, number of casualties could not be ascertained as the fight was still ongoing between the invaders and the troops without telecommunication network.

All efforts to get confirmation from the Police Public Relations Officer ASP Sani Shatambaya proved abortive at press time.

Obaseki boosts economic activity in varsity community with completion of 4.86km Ekosodin road

THE Edo State Government, through the state's Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOGPADEC), has completed the 4.859km Ekosodin and adjoining roads in the University of Benin, (UNIBEN) area of Ovia North East Local Government Area of the state.

The adjoining streets include Ehigeagba, Osanidowonyi, Boundary and Edo Streets, as well as Main Ekosodin road and Newton Road.

In a statement after an inspection tour of the newly completed road project, the Commission's Chairman, Pastor Kennedy Osifo said all is now set for the commissioning of the project.

Osifo expressed satisfaction with the successful completion of the road by the contractor, adding, "What has been done by EDSOGPADEC is attributed to the developmental drive of His Excellency, Mr. Godwin Noghghase Obaseki, whose administration is desirous of bringing dividends of democracy to all economic sectors of the state to align with the Make Edo Great Again (MEGA) Agenda."

The Commissioner representing EDSOGPADEC on the Board of the Commission, Mrs. Omosede Obamwonyi noted that the completion of the main Ekosodin road and adjoining streets is the phase one of the project, adding, "the phase two of the Ekosodin road project, which is the entire University of Benin internal roads, has also been approved by Mr. Governor and currently under construction."

She further stated that "the road construction project, which was awarded on May 05, 2020, was as a result of Mr. Governor's desire to bring about relief to the residents of the area who have been suffering undue hardship due to the bad shape of the road, which made the road a death trap, as cultists and other criminals took advantage of the road condition to perpetrate crimes of various degrees."

ernment.

"Every now and then we have one oil facility pulling crude oil and gas into the environment in Bayelsa State. If you go to a community called Ikarama in Yenogoa local government where so many sites have been affected years ago, and you dig the ground, you will see crude oil even though Shell said they have cleaned up those impacted sites. We went to those places and dug raw crude oil from the ground and Shell was dumbfounded. "That community is also having incidence of cancer; young people coming up with cancer here and there. And then, the land and water have

lost their security".

Alagoa also disclosed that it has been discovered that once clean up contract is issued to a contractor, the place will go up in flames and it will destroy vast expanse of lands, adding that economic trees are burnt completely while farm crops are destroyed. "These things are happening in our swamps where our people do raining season fishing; they have special fish traps that the women always prepare. The traps as well as different types of trees including those for timber and even palm wine trees used for brewing local gin, all get burnt.

I lifted Ganduje from political obscurity— Kwankwaso

By Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo

FORMER Governor of Kano state, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, has said that the current crisis brewing in the 6ano state chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) did not come to him as a surprise.

Senator Kwankwaso blamed the incumbent Governor of Kano state, Abdulahi Umar Ganduje, saying his alleged selfish attitude was responsible for the crisis.

Kwankwaso told the BBC Hausa service in an interview that he knew it was just a matter of time that there would be an implosion in the ruling party in Kano state due to series of internal wranglings.

According to him, "whoever failed to embrace the person who was kind to him over the years, even he, himself has testified that I was kind to him, and when he got the opportunity for once, he could not sustain Kwankwaso and the Kwankwasiyi movement, you should know there won't be a peaceful coexistence."

Senator Kwankwaso explained further that the internal crisis in the ruling party was exacerbated by a deep sense of selfishness, winner takes all attitude and impatience, adding that the development further gave credence to what he had in mind.

He likened the situation to a Hausa proverb that can be loosely translated as "no matter how far a lie can go, truth must prevail." In the BBC Hausa interview, Kwankwaso said he was de-



From left: Alfred Olajide, Managing Director, Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited; Patricia Obozuwa, Vice President, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Coca-Cola Africa; Matthew Segun, Managing Director, Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) Ltd.; His Excellency, Prof Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President Federal Republic of Nigeria; and Ambassador Segun Apata, Board Chairman, NBC, at the 70th Anniversary Gala of the Coca-Cola System in Nigeria held in Lagos.

lighted with the kind words of a former governor of the state, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau who spoke well about him, pointing out that whoever got such an eulogy would definitely be happy.

"I was told about what he said regarding me but I was full of gratitude to Almighty Allah. It is like he was not aware of things before, but now Almighty Allah has enlightened him. Every sane person will be happy. Besides making such comments in his position, I know he is serious and deeply concerned about it. If politics reunite us, it's good to go. If that couldn't be, we should thank Almighty Allah since we've made progress. In his thinking, he has explained how the situ-

ation is," he said.

How Ganduje betrayed me

Responding to a question on whether he saw Ganduje's felicitations on his 65th birthday, Kwankwaso said he had not seen the birthday felicitations because he was busy doing other things.

"I was busy working, I never know. If he was like that since the beginning, things wouldn't have got to this level. Whoever knows, no one will believe Ganduje would be castigated before me and I will heed to that. All the commissioners know as well as other workers and the Kano people too. There will be problem if someone did a wrong and you decided to look at him as some-

one who did multiple wrongs."

"I had a cordial relationship with people including Ganduje, that was how I left the state government and went to the Ministry of Defence. We arranged and he went to Chad, I then asked him to come back home so that we could work together. He came back and I gave him the form for the position of Deputy Governor. I did that because he was the eldest, without paying a single kobo. This is because in our Kwankwasiyi movement, we don't ask for a kobo. Kwankwaso however regretted that despite his kindness to his former Deputy Governor (Ganduje), they are now at serious loggerheads.

Oyo govt approves 76.7Km Iseyin-Fapote-Ogbomoso Road for N43.1bn

OYO State Government, on Friday, approved the award of the contract for the construction of the 76.7km Iseyin/Fapote/Ogbomoso road at the cost of N43.1billion.

The Commissioner for Public Works, Infrastructure and Transport, Prof. Daud Sangodoyin, who made this announcement, while briefing journalists after the executive council meeting held at the Oyo State Secretariat, Agodi, Ibadan, said that the construction is expected to be completed in 13 months.

A statement by Mr. Taiwo Adisa, the Chief Press Secretary to Governor 'Seyi Makinde, indicated that the road was awarded to two contractors to ensure timely delivery.

The commissioner said: "Today, at the 14th meeting of the Executive Council of Oyo State, we approved the award of the construction of Iseyin/Fapote/Ogbomoso Road,

which is 76.7kilometres.

"The road is split into two simply because we want the road to be completed on time and to have quality construction. We also want it to be completed within 13 months.

"The first half is from Iseyin, where we have the Ansarudeen Mosque at Atori junction to Apinwo village, which is about 38.1kms.

"The other half is from Apinwo village to Randa Ogbomoso, which is about 38.7km. These two roads have two bridges, one each. The one on the Iseyin to Apinwo Road is 65 metres span, while the other one at Apinwo/ Randa axis is about 45 metres span with an underpass at the end of the Ogbomoso side.

"The total value for the road is about N43.1b. "The first half is N20b while the other is N23.1b. "The commencement of the process is immediate because

the government is going to give an advance payment of thirty percent to the contractors.

"In January, we will also advance them another 20 per cent so that they must have done almost 75 per cent of the job before they can request for any other payment from the government.

"We are also trying to

expedite the work during the dry season so that before we get to June/July, the substantial part of the work would have been done.

"The first part of the road is awarded to Messrs KOPEK Construction and the second part is awarded to Messrs Kremborg construction Ltd. These two contractors will be mobilised next week and hit the ground running on the job."

Policeman kills rig operator, shoots driver in Osun

By Shina Abubakar, Osogbo

THERE was pandemonium at Ota-Efun area of Osogbo, Osun state capital on Friday when a policeman killed a rig operator and shot the truck driver.

Angry residents then descended on the policeman, beat him to stupor before he was taken to the police station, with the body of the rig operator.

Kabiru Bapai, the rig's Chief Operator was shot on the chest after protesting the shooting of the driver, Harisu Musa.

It was gathered that the Shekeenah Zelter global concept's rig truck driven by Musa developed fault at Ota-Efun area of the state capital and after efforts to repair it proved futile, the driver attempted to make a detour back to the office and the engine went off.

Woman escapes from captors custody

By Shina Abubakar, Osogbo

A woman abducted by unknown gunmen on Wednesday has escaped from her abductor's custody. The woman, Blessing Omoru, was abducted with her husband, London Omoru, at their farm settlement home at Ori-Omi Pupa, Agric, Esa-Oke in Obokun local government area of Osun State, while their abductors demanded N37 million ransom.

Police, local hunters, security arm of Kiriji Heritage Defenders, as well as Oodua Peoples Congress commenced combing the forest areas mounting pressure on the abductors since Wednesday night when the victims were kidnapped.

Sources in Esa-Oke disclosed that the woman escaped from the kidnappers due to pressure on them by security operatives.

Confirming the incident, Director General, Kiriji Heritage Defenders, Dr Ademola Ekundayo confirmed that the wife had escaped from their captors. He stated that the woman was rescued at Ijebu-Jesa by residents and handed over to the police after she had walked for several kilometres from the forest

"It is true the wife has escaped from her abductors in the early hours of Friday and was found at Ijebu Jesa by some persons. She was handed over to the police. Our men in conjunction with police and other security outfit are still combing the forest for the kidnappers with a view to rescuing the husband, London Omoru. The operation is ongoing", he said.

Those fighting Aregbesola are selfish, wicked-former Deputy Speaker

By Shina Abubakar, Osogbo

THE former Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Hon Lasun Yusuf has disclosed that those fighting former Osun State Governor, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola within the state chapter of the All Progressives Congress, APC, were selfish and wicked.

Speaking on Rave FM talk show monitored by Vanguard on Friday, he said the former Governor sacrificed alot to get the state back for the progressive party, hence, should not be shut out of event in the state politicking.

"In the quest of claiming Osun for progressive, Rauf Aregbesola did very well, he led from the front, he fought the battle together since November 2004 to 2010 when we were declared winner. That man is a fantastic human being, whether we are on the same page or not, he fought me, we had our differences and I never blamed him, he did so well.

"Whoever declared Aregbesola personal non-granta is selfish, self-centred and wicked. We knew what we went through before we could get Osun state to the progressive fold, it was horrible", he said.

Gbajabiamila commissions 5 roads in Ikorodu

By Bose Adelaja and Levinus Nwabughioqu

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, on Friday commissioned five roads facilitated by the Chairman of the House Committee on Defence, Rep. Babajimi Benson in the Ikorodu Federal Constituency of Lagos State.

The road projects, which involved the construction

of link roads in the Sabo area of Ikorodu, linked Ayangbadejo street, Kaz Avenue, Ajeborigbon Street, Nike Olubodun Street and Ajoke Oduyebo Street.

At the event, which had in attendance traditional rulers led by the paramount ruler of the Ikorodu division, the Ayangburen of Ikorodu Kingdom, Oba Kabiru Adewale Shotobi, APC Lagos State Chairman-Elect, party leaders, officials of the Lagos state government and residents, the Speaker congratulated the people for being beneficiaries of the projects and commended Rep. Babajimi Benson for representing his constituents well.

He said: "I am here to support Rep. Babajimi Benson and the people of Ikorodu on the commissioning of these roads. I am happy when my members are doing well and Rep. Benson is doing well. He has proven himself as a good representative, even in Abuja."

An eye witness disclosed that some policemen in a commercial mini bus known as Korope were allegedly chasing suspects along Osogbo Ikirun road when they stumbled on the truck.

"The bus parked, maybe because the suspects manoeuvred through their way past the truck, and about three gun-wielding policemen alighted from it and confronted the driver.



Matters arising in Nigerian sports — a mixed grill!

NIGERIAN sport is on break. With the seeming lull in sporting activities across the land, that's what it looks like. Covid-19 is not going away and not helping matters, at all.

Aside that, the global environment is pregnant with despairing news of serious and unending crisis and conflicts - political, economic, social, health, cultural, and even spiritual.

There does not seem to be any remedies in sight, of some grand plan or design, to put in place structures and policies to harness the opportunities that abound in this industry despite the evidences all around in the global theatre of sport.

Sport may be already a 4 trillion-Dollar industry, but it is still virgin in many parts of Africa, including Nigeria where the industry has not even scratched the surface. Despite the best intentions by the current Sports Minister, the ship of sport continues to rock dangerously, tilting and lurching, from side to side in dangerous waters.

But for the undefined spirit of resilience of Nigerians, their country would have fallen from the precarious edge of a cliff where it had continued to perch dangerously into the abyss of despair down below. They have mastered the art of staying alive, scarred but undaunted,

still ranking high in the global index of 'happiest people in the world'.

Sport does not have immunity from the general affliction.

Gernot Rohr may not go! Take football for example.

Following the angry reactions that trailed the performances of the Super Eagles some two weeks ago, it is hard to believe that the German coach who should have been history by now, is still straddling the Nigerian football scene, and the world did not end.

Nigeria is like a pregnant woman who, after delivering her baby, quickly forgets the painful experience and returns with a smile to the procreation bed.

Two weeks after all that noise about firing Gernot Rohr, the discussions about how to do it without collateral damage is still ongoing, even as the man continues to seat on the saddle, and has returned to his 'vacation' job in Europe. It is reported that he has even sent the list of players he would be taking to AFCON to his employers, the NFF.

No one should be surprised to find the German leading the Super Eagles to Qatar in November next year. As for AFCON, that is already a fait accompli.

Endless NBBF crisis When the crisis in the Nigerian Basketball Federation was at nerve-breaking



Aruna Quadri

point a few weeks ago, everyone thought the world would end. The last board's tenure ended without an election conducted, and the Sports Ministry stepped in and created a Caretaker Committee, embraced by everyone, to avoid a vacuum in administration and a breakdown of law and order. People thought the end of the crisis was in sight.

It is now several weeks after. The caretaker committee's tenure has been terminated. Elections have not been held. Old and buried crisis have resurrected their ugly head again.

Nigerians have mastered the art of staying alive, scarred but undaunted, still ranking high in the global index of 'happiest people in the world'

FIBA, the international body for basketball, has been drawn into the fray and is breaching its own fundamental, non-interference-by-any-third-party, rule.

FIBA has seized on the opportunity created by the communication to it of a 'Third-Party' (the sports ministry) to infringe on its own rule and interfere in

the business of an Independent member. Or how do you describe FIBA's threat and its instructions to a non-existent board on when and with what instrument (statutes) an election by its independent member must be conducted?

The Ministry keeps committing the fundamental error of communicating directly with FIBA, trying to get them to understand the reasons for the ministry's 'interference'. That is surely not the way to go as the recent response from FIBA to the ministry confirms.

Meanwhile, in the peculiar environment of Nigeria, the sports ministry is not a 'Third-party' but an involved major stakeholder, their role and place entrenched in the statutes. Furthermore, the authenticity of the constitution which FIBA INSISTS dictatorial must be used is being challenged by some legitimate stakeholders, and may not even reflect the fundamental vision for the sport of basketball by the country under whose sovereign laws the sports federation has to operate, or it fails to exist.

At this point, except the sports ministry wants to 'surrender' the sovereignty of Nigeria to an international organization (a power it lacks), and to create a dangerous precedence that will affect and consume other federations down the line, it must stand up to the 'blackmail' of FIBA, and challenge them for infringing on their own fundamental rule of interfering in the domes-

tic power-struggle in Nigerian basketball.

FIBA must steer clear and let the NBBF solve her own internal problem.

The sports ministry must also desist from communicating directly with FIBA and indirectly arming them with the excuse to get involved. The sports ministry must take up its role as a legitimate stakeholder and deploy internal measures to tackle the issue of these elections once and for all, and be damned.

After this, I will pass no more comment on this particular matter because I am an involved stakeholder by virtue of my acting Chairmanship of, probably, the biggest basketball club in Nigeria. For two years, this crisis has held down the domestic game and the lives and careers of basketball players. It must come to an end, but not under the threat by an external-party that FIBA has become.

Table Tennis lights up Nigerian sports

As these other challenges are simmering, through the dark clouds bursts out a ray of sunlight to brighten the sky over Nigerian sport.

It came totally from the blues.

This past week, table tennis came forcefully to the front burner of Nigerian sports, capturing the country's attention in a vice-like grip, and serving as a reminder that other minor sports need attention. Table tennis was not minor during an era in Nigeria's sports history. It competed in popularity and followership in the Lagos area with athletics, boxing and basketball.

Last week, the game returned with a bang into Nigerians' consciousness in faraway Houston, Texas, USA, venue of the just-concluded World table tennis championships.

After his performance at the championship, a lone figure has mounted the rostrum of unprecedented achievement by an African by ending up as the 13th

ranked best player in the world.

Nigeria's Aruna Quadri became the first African in history to get to the quarter-finals of the championship. Indeed, he was only a few unlucky shots away from earning a place in the semi-finals, if only he had managed to beat the bugs of excitement at earlier unprecedented victories and adopted a more conservative style to tackle his young 19-year old conqueror from Sweden.

Aruna put up some of the more memorable performances at the championship, a ruthless, unadulterated, all-attacking style of play that left the audiences breathless and commentators searching for superlatives to describe it. His performance was a great advertisement for the sport of table tennis in the United States and, indeed, for the Third World.

He has written his name in the history books, and at 33 and is still going strong, he will be around for several years to come inspiring a whole new generation of Nigerians to new heights in the world.

As if there is a conspiracy of the elements, even in administration table tennis rose up to decorate plenty of Nigerians.

At the last count, 4 Nigerians have been appointed into committees of the International Table Tennis Federation. A Nigerian, former president of the Lagos State Table Tennis Association, and current Executive Deputy-President of the African Table Tennis Federation, was also elected in a landslide victory, as the new Vice-President of the International Table Tennis Federation. He thus becomes the second Nigerian in history to attain that height after Engineer Segun in the 1980s.

So, I congratulate Wahid Enitan Oshodi, and pray that from his exalted seat he will influence and bring bountiful benefits to table tennis in Africa as a whole, but, particularly, to Nigeria.

Toro kicks against 2-yearly World Cup proposal

AGainst the backdrop of a recent wholesale approval by the Confederation of African Football to the proposal by the Federation of International Football Association, FIFA to stage a 2-yearly FIFA World Cup, a former Secretary General of the defunct Nigeria Football Association,

Alhaji Sani Ahmed Toro has disagreed with the continental football body. In a chat with Sports Vanguard, the veteran football administrator gave reasons for his opposition to the FIFA proposal.

"I am in total disagreement with CAF support for FIFA to stage every 2 year FIFA World

Cup because apart from the already congested football calendar, the players will be overstressed, and above all, the revered tournament will lose its glamour and credibility," he said.

"The clubs too will be short-changed as they will be denied the use of their best players

during the World Cup."

The FIFA proposal, Toro said if it sails through, "designated host countries "will not get the required time and funds to prepare and provide the required FIFA standard facilities."

Other reasons adduced by Alhaji Toro include a drop in the required revenue to participating countries and the negative effect a biennial World Cup would have on domestic football leagues across the world because of the inevitable adjustments to the football calendar. Hon Sani Ahmed Toro, one time Secretary General/CEO, Nigeria Football Association, 1993 to 1999

Boost for Eagles: Osimhen set to return to training

SUPER Eagles have been handed a huge boost ahead of the Africa Cup of Nations after it was revealed that Victor Osimhen could make an early return to training.

Osimhen suffered an injury to his left cheekbone and orbit after colliding with Milan Skriniar in Napoli's Serie A clash against Inter Milan at the San Siro.

As a result, the former Lille star went through a successful but complicated surgery. Napoli announced their star striker would be out for three months following the surgery, ruling him out of next year's Africa Cup of Nations.

However, according to La Gazzetta, as per Tutto Napoli, Osimhen could make an early return to action earlier than scheduled.

The Nigerian has already had his stitches removed and will undergo another X-ray on Tuesday. Should the result be positive, Osimhen will return to training, albeit with

a protective mask.

This latest development could see the former Lille striker turn out for the Super Eagles at AFCON, which begins on January 9.

Covid-19 variant, Omicron forces wrestling federation out of C/wealth Championships

By Solomon Nwoke

THE latest Covid 19 variant, Omicron has forced the Nigeria Wrestling federation (NWF) to call off its earlier plan to participate in the Commonwealth Wrestling Championship scheduled for December 2 - 5, 2021 in

South Africa.

President of NWF who is also the Bayelsa State Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Dr Daniel Igali in a recent chat with Sports Vanguard had yesterday said, "we are no longer attending that tournament. because of Omicron Covid 19 variant in

South Africa" Dr Igali however disclosed that they had plans for a National Championships in the middle of the month in Bayelsa State and reeled out other programs lined up ahead of next year.

He also spoke about his plans to get elected into Bureau of United World Wrestling as a member.

"We have never had any person like me in the Bu-

WORLD Boxing Federation (WBF) International title welterweight contender, Justice "Quick Action" Addy of Ghana, has vowed that reigning champion, Nigeria's Rilwan "Baby Face" Babatunde will be defeated in double quick time when the meet at GOtv Boxing Night 24 on 24 December.

The six-bout event, slated to hold at the Molade Okoya-Thomas Indoor Sports Hall of the Teslim Balogun Stadium, Lagos, will stage two other title fights.

Speaking on the phone from his Accra base, Quick Action said he is coming to Nigeria to claim the title, boasting that Baby Face will

GOtv Boxing Night 24: Ghana's Quick Action vows to floor Baby Face

not last beyond two rounds.

"I'm not going to Lagos for Christmas, but for the serious business of the WBF title. Baby Face will be down and out by the end of the second round. The reason I'm called Quick Action is that I dismiss my opponents quickly. Baby Face will be my next victim," boasted the Ghanaian.

Two domestic title bouts are also scheduled, with one a rematch between Segun "Success" Olanrewaju and Adewale "Masevex" Masebinu in the light heavyweight division. In the previous fight, a challenge, Olanrewaju defeated Masevex. The second, another grudge encounter, will see Abiodun "Infiniti" Afinni attempt to avenge his defeat, by knock-out, to Michael "Emirate" Godwin in the cruiserweight category."



PASTOR MRS.

Mina Dugoabere Cofe

AGED 77 YEARS

SERVICE OF SONGS

Saturday, December 4, 2021 | **5pm**

RCCG Central Parish, 1249 Aminu Kano Crescent
Wuse 2, Abuja.



TRIBUTE NIGHT

Monday, December 13, 2021 | **5pm**

RCCG City of David, COD Church Road,
Dideolu Estate, off Ligali Ayorinde St,
Victoria Island, Lagos State.



SERVICE OF SONGS

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 | **5pm**

RCCG King's Palace, 6 Benjamin Okpara Street,
Elechi, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.



LYING-IN-STATE

Saturday, December 18, 2021 | **7am**

Jack Compound, Abonnema, Rivers State.



FUNERAL SERVICE & INTERMENT

Saturday, December 18, 2021 | **12noon**

KNC Field, Buguma Rivers State.



THANKSGIVING

Sunday, December 19, 2021 | **10am**

RCCG Overcomers Parish,
Abonnema, Rivers State.

LIVE STREAMING ON <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3L22RU5VcCANitDGxsGjrw>

Saturday Vanguard Sports

Viera set sight on Joe Aribo

Patrick Vieira's Crystal Palace are keeping a keen eye on Rangers star Joe Aribo who is also drawing interest from other EPL clubs. According to the Daily Mail, Premier League side Crystal Palace are targeting the Rangers star.

The 25-year-old joined the Scottish Premier League champions from Charlton Athletic in 2019. He emerged as a key player for the Ibrox based outfit and took his game to the next level under former manager Steven Gerrard.

Aribo has around 18 months left on his current deal, and this has given interested parties some ammo to use in negotiations. Having found the net 21 times and has assisted 18 more in just 116 appearances, Aribo has made a name for himself in the Scottish Premiership.

Despite Gerrard leaving the Ibrox for pastures new, Aribo has continued to impress under new boss Giovanni Van Bronckhorst. The Nigerian was named the man of the match in Sunday's 3-1 win at Livingston. He scored an excellent goal on the night and appeared to have convinced his new manager that he should play a more advanced role in the attack.

While Rangers would loathe losing a player of his ability, Aribo is not short of options. Apart from Palace, Brentford and Watford are also seeking his services. Aribo has certainly learned from one of the best midfielders of his generation in Steven Gerrard at the Ibrox. Whether another legend, Patrick Vieira, will deliver more lessons at Selhurst Park remains to be seen.

This summer, Palace have made some wise investments, signing Michael Olise, Marc Guéhi, Will Hughes, Odsonne Edouard, and Joachim Andersen. While it does give Vieira a talented young core to work with, he may need a new midfielder next summer.

This is because one of Palace's top performers, Conor Gallagher, is on loan from Chelsea and still harbours hope of making it at Stamford Bridge. His seemingly imminent departure could leave a huge void in the Eagles squad that the opposition can exploit. Palace have shown excellent potential this season and could develop into a formidable side with the right investments.

Aribo's ability to dribble and make key passes and an eye for tackle makes him an all-rounder for Rangers in the middle of the park. The foundation he provides aids players ahead of him to make an impact. And Palace could certainly do with just that. With options on the table, where the Nigerian decides to go remains to be seen.



EAGLES: Govt prefers indigenous coach to succeed Rohr

• Minister insists 'No decision yet on Rohr's sacking'

By Jacob Ajom, Lagos and Luminous Jannamike, Abuja

waste time before getting Gernot Rohr, a coach whose previous experience in African football had not been so successful with Niger and Burkina Faso. Even without any outstanding resume, the NFF boss trusted the Franco-German tactician more than any indigenous coach.

The amount of energy he exerted in pursuing Rohr underlined his reluctance in seeing off the German even in the face of dwindling performances. Indeed, Pinnick was Rohr's greatest defender following public outcry after some shambolic performances by the team he has been midwifing since 2016. Despite the Super Eagles woeful outing in Russia 2018 World Cup and the attendant criticisms of the coach, the NFF boss defended Rohr and went ahead to placate him with a contract renewal. That singular act put Nigeria in the present situation where Rohr has become an albatross. The latest decision by the NFF to do away with Rohr was triggered by the recent home loss the Eagles suffered in the hands of minnows, the Central African Republic in Lagos and the unimpressive 1-1 home draw with Cape Verde in the Qatar 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

Before the Thursday meeting, the NFF were unbending in their stand on hiring a foreign coach to succeed Rohr. "They had even approached a number of coaches abroad but the only obstacle was the hard stance of the minister of Sports, Mr Dare," our usually dependable source hinted.

At the Thursday meeting, the Minister insisted that the NFF must go for an indigenous coach. "Some names of prominent Nigerian ex-internationals-turned coaches were mentioned and the minister made it clear to them that the government was no longer interested in funding the employment of foreign coaches, hence the NFF must look inward."

Our source informed that the minister's stance informed the vague admission of a concession by the NFF President who spoke to journalists after the meeting. Said Pinnick, "We have discussed with the Minister. We have a new direction, I have to discuss with my Executive Members. I will also come back to give feedback to the

Minister."

He continued, "We are working in close harmony with the sports ministry. We don't want to hurt Nigerians. We are looking at our decision from an objective perspective. Trust me, whatever we are doing, it will be in the interest of the country."

"We have looked at all the documentation. I can assure Nigerians we will have a clear direction soon," he added. Pinnick did not reveal if the NFF already has a replacement lined up.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, has said that no decision has been made about the sacking of Super Eagles coach, Gernot Rohr.

There are reports that Rohr's reign as Eagles' handler is over and the Nigeria Football Federation is on course to hire a new coach, pending the ratification of contract documents.

But Dare insists that no decision has been made on the future of the German football handler with the Super Eagles.

"Yes, we had a meeting with NFF led by its President, Amaju Pinnick, about our journey to the Cup of Nations and the World Cup. The meeting was to review developments around the technical coach and also around issues that have dominated the public space."

"What I can say is that consultations are on going. There's no final decision yet. There are so many things to consider, and I can assure Nigerians that the decisions that will be taken will be in the best interest of our football, the footballers themselves, and the nation. We have identified key factors that must be dealt with in a couple of days before we arrive at a decision."

"We don't want to be stampeded. The NFF has a responsibility, and they also have experts. So, they will consult and check what need to be checked and come back finally with a decision which I

believe will serve the best interest of our football development. We are properly guided by history. We don't want to make the mistakes we made in the past. We want to make sure that whatever we do this time are decisions based on factuality, best practices and not sentiments," he told journalists in Abuja on Friday.

Group urges Presidency to probe \$2.2m Kwese deal

Stake holders in Nigeria Basketball have called on President Mohammed Buhari to set up a machinery to unravel the mystery surrounding the over \$2 million sponsorship money for the defunct Kwese Male Basketball League.

The group under the aegis of Friends of Nigeria Sports urged the Presidency to institute a probe into the accounts of the Nigeria Basketball Federation under the previous board which brokered the Kwese sponsorship deal.

Spokesman of the group, Akeem Busari stated thus, "As genuinely concerned Nigerians, we want Nigerians and particularly, the presidency to ask these pertinent questions for answers from the leadership of the former board of the NBBF which account was the Kwese money paid into?"

The group demanded for documents relating to the Kwese sponsorship deal which was a major bone of contention between the former board led by Tijani Umar and the board that succeeded them led by Musa Kida.

Reacting to the allegation, former media officer and member of the Tijani Umar board, Patrick Omorodion said the money in question was never remitted enblock as the sponsors were releasing the money piecemeal. "Remember, they never

EPL sack race: Benitez tipped as heavy favourite



December is here and that means that clubs in the Premier League will be taking stock of how the campaign has panned out so far. Parting ways with managers has become a key part of life in the professional game as clubs lean towards a 'grass is greener' approach to on-field matters.

Watford were the first team to jump this season and got rid of Xisco Munoz

at the start of October.

Steve Bruce was then sacked quickly after the takeover that saw Newcastle become the talk of the town and Eddie Howe has been drafted in.

Nuno Espirito Santo was shown the door by Tottenham recently and was replaced by Antonio Conte.

And three more clubs have since been forced into action as Norwich sacked Daniel Farke, Dean Smith left Aston Villa and of course, Manchester United sacked Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. That has seen fresh faces as Eddie Howe, Steven Gerrard and Smith were reintroduced as managers and already kicked off their first games in the league with a flourish.

Managers across the league will be looking over their shoulders as we approach the hectic festive period with one man under more pressure than most.

According to the latest odds from Sky Bet, the manager who is most at risk is Rafa Benitez.

The Everton boss has endured a torrid run of results and unless they can address the slide soon he may be the next boss out the door.

The Spaniard is now thought to be on the brink after a 4-1 loss to his former club Liverpool in the Merseyside derby at Goodison Park.

Ralph Hasenhuttl at Southampton is also under pressure, as is Claudio Ranieri who could be a victim of Watford's hire-and-fire approach.

Leicester City have fallen short this term which means that Brendan Rodgers' position could be under scrutiny, as could Marcelo Bielsa's role with Leeds United looking like a shadow of the side who took the Premier League by storm last term.

Next permanent Premier League manager to leave

At the other end of the list are Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp, Chelsea's Thomas Tuchel and City gaffer Pep Guardiola who are near-certainties to keep hold of their prestigious roles.

David Moyes' heroics at West Ham have also seen his job become secure.

Aiboni rates Lagos women run high

Elohore Aiboni, the first ever woman to become Shell Petroleum Development Company managing-director, has sent messages of commendations to the organisers of the of the only women run in sub-Saharan Africa, the Lagos Women Run, headed by Ms. Tayo Popoola.

The Shell Petroleum Plc boss, expressed her delight on the professional manner the run was conducted, much all activities of the event went on perfectly from the start point at the Funsho Williams Avenue, in Sunlure to the finish line at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan.

She said: "There was a television monitor of the race stationed at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena that caught all the actions of the women run. Here, I saw dedicated women ran a 10kilometre race with total resilience, dedication, commitment and determination to win. Which tells a lot about the true life activities of hard



working Nigerian women in all spheres of life. From the family to professional activities, administration and service to humanity, women have always distinguished themselves."

Aiboni who was dressed smart in a black T-shirt over black track down with a black canvas to match ready for the activities of the Lagos Women Run as a Special Guests of Honour, was elated at the wild celebration and continuous applause given her by the over 2000 women runners at the finish point.

"I promise to join you to run next year. I was encouraged seeing women who are over 50 years old run the 10kilometre course at their own pace. I will do the same in the next edition of the women run, since I am not yet 50 years old I have a better chance to finish well." Adding that: "The Lagos Women Run is very important as women run against Human Trafficking of the Girl Child, Violence against women and the emancipation of women in the society. These are very important reasons to run a 10kilometre race," Mrs. Aiboni said.

AFCON: Dessers can be last-minute star for Super Eagles

striker Cyriel Dessers whose unfinished business with the Super Eagles may well not be consigned to the history books owing to his killer Super Sub role for his Dutch side this season.

The former Heracles Almelo striker had been pursued by embattled Eagles handler Gernot Rohr as he consistently hit the target for his Dutch side before his switch to home town club KRC Genk, but he failed to provide the much expected spark and the international victories was not

Eredisevise goalgetter as his goals have continued to make bold comeback statements and fire the Rotterdam side up the ladder.

Interestingly, Dessers' style is unique on his return to "home" Holland, having emerged top scorer for Heracles Almelo few seasons ago—as he fancies leaving it late before killing off his opponents in superb regular fashion.

His consistency in keeping up his Super Sub role for Feyenoord could make the renowned ex-Liverpool's Israeli striker Ronnie Rosenthal green with envy and most importantly grabbing the winning goals.

His winning goals have one unique mark—hitting them in the

added minutes and he has put four of his seven late minute efforts in the 92nd minutes after coming on as a substitute.

His 92nd minute late hurrah began with putting the icing on the cake for Feyenoord as they hit four past PSV Eindhoven in the Dutch Eredivise's exciting top-of-the-draw clash on September 19.

The Eagles could be the biggest winners of Dessers' unique style when the drums roll out in Cameroon as the three-time African Champions go for broke to shade the record third best in the continent.

With Osimhen most likely to be unavailable, returnee Odion Ighalo will expectedly get his top marksman's role back, while Onuachu and Leicester City striker

Kelechi Iheanacho will step up the supporting roles depending on the formation either Rohr or the new coach will employ.

Dessers' magic could well be relied upon if he makes the cut to Cameroon, in the last 15 minutes to bring "Feyenoord" to Cameroon to break hearts.

Consistently grabbing late winners is no mean effort and should he continue this for the rest of the season for the Rotterdam club, Dessers may well have entered the Guinness Book of Records and who says he will not do same for the Eagles in Cameroon?

He's out to prove a point—that he isn't a spent force as Genk coach John van der Brom and Eagles handler Rohr may want to believe and another chance in Cameroon may well be golden for the former NAC Breda striker.

Rangnick does not rule out staying on as Man U coach

Manchester United interim boss Ralf Rangnick has not ruled out staying on as manager beyond his initial six months in charge.

Rangnick has succeeded Ole Gunnar Solskjaer until the end of the season before moving into a two-year consultancy role at the club.

"If everything goes well I might make the same

recommendation that I did at RB Leipzig twice - that it might be a good idea to keep working with me for one year - but it is all hypothetical," said the 63-year-old German.

Rangnick was at Old Trafford on Thursday to watch United beat Arsenal 3-2 in the Premier League and his first game in charge will be at home against Crystal Palace on Sunday at 14:00 GMT.

"The people with whom I have spoken have been very clear we are speaking of a six-month role as manager," he said.

"We have never spoken about what will happen in the summer."

"Right now, I'm fully aware that they might be looking for a new manager. If they will then speak with me about that, I will see."

"For me, now it is about winning the next games and this is the major focus."



The expected absence of Super Eagles star striker Victor Osimhen who may at the 2021 African Cup of Nations finals in Cameroon may well be forgotten when hostilities begin January 22, 2022, with retinue of strikers in the tanks waiting to continue the fire power where the injured Napoli star left off.

One of such strikers is Feyenoord

Saturday Vanguard Sports

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While Rangers would loathe losing a player of his ability, Aribo is not short of options. Apart from Palace, Brentford and Watford are also seeking his services. Aribo has certainly learned from one of the best midfielders of his generation in Steven Gerrard at the Ibrox. Whether another legend, Patrick Vieira, will deliver more lessons at Selhurst Park remains to be seen.

This summer, Palace have made some wise investments, signing Michael Olise, Marc Guehi, Will Hughes, Odsonne Edouard, and Joachim Andersen. While it does give Vieira a talented young core to work with, he may need a new midfielder next summer.

This is because one of Palace's top performers, Conor Gallagher, is on loan from Chelsea and still harbours hope of making it at Stamford Bridge. His seemingly imminent departure could leave a huge void in the Eagles squad that the opposition can exploit. Palace have shown excellent potential this season and could develop into a formidable side with the right investments.

Aribo's ability to dribble and make key passes and an eye for tackle makes him an all-rounder for Rangers in the middle of the park. The foundation he provides aids players ahead of him to make an impact. And Palace could certainly do with just that. With options on the table, where the Nigerian decides to go remains to be seen.

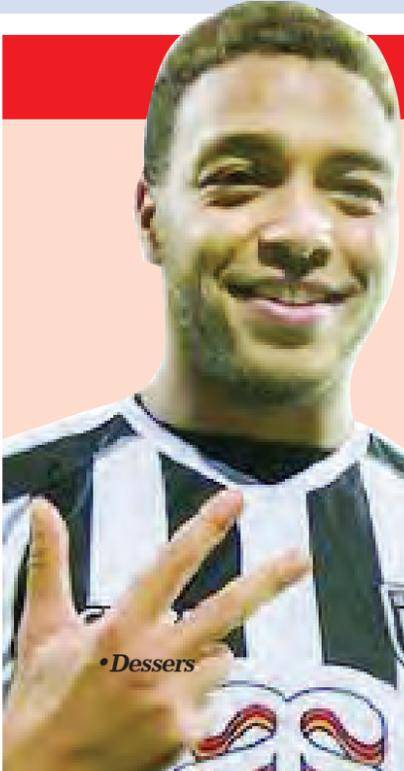


The meeting between the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare and the hierarchy of the Nigeria Football Federation Thursday, was more of showdown talks regarding the fate of the national team coach, Gernot Rohr and the way forward for the senior men's national team, Super Eagles. Gernot Rohr, the coach has been told to handsoff the team, but the lingering issue of paucity of funds to effect his pay off and the question of his successor have seen the man still clinging to his job, albeit, precariously. Given the team's looming international commitments in the Africa Cup of Nations, coming up in January in Cameroon and the Qatar 2022 playoff billed

for March, 2022, the meeting between the Minister and the football leadership was crucial. In attendance at the closed door meeting were the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Amaju Pinnick, and General Secretary, Sanusi Mohammed. Also in the meeting were the Permanent Secretary, Alhaji Isma'il Abubakar, and Chief of Staff to the Minister, Abba Yola. The discussion was frank and straightforward. Sports Vanguard gathered that in the course of the meeting, the government team made it clear to the NFF leadership that considering the limited time between now and the Africa Cup of Nations tournament in January, it would be counter productive to hire a foreign coach who, when employed, would take some time to understand the team; a scenario that would not favour the Super Eagles' campaign in Cameroon. In the minister's belief, it was no use putting Nigeria's AFCON campaign fortunes in the hands of a foreign coach

when there were a number of competent Nigerians who could do the job at almost the same - if not higher - level with a foreign coach. "The government said that, given the present situation with the national team, the general expectations placed on the Eagles had already dropped and only the engagement of an indigenous coach could speed up the team's recovery because it would be easier for him to understand the team. It is expected that he would use the Nations Cup tournament as a dress rehearsal, before the World Cup play off in March," our source said, adding, that "the minister contended that the team would have stabilised after the tournament in Cameroon and can stand any opposition in the play off." The Minister's position was at variance with the thinking at the football house in their consideration of who they wanted as Rohr's replacement. For one, the NFF President Amaju Pinnick has never hidden his disdain for indigenous coaches. After the relationship between the last indigenous coach of the Super Eagles, Sunday Oliseh and the football house became strained and his eventual resignation, Pinnick did not

AFCON: Dessers can be last-minute star for Super Eagles



striker Cyriel Dessers whose unfinished business with the Super Eagles may well not be consigned to the history books owing to his killer Super Sub role for his Dutch side this season. The former Heracles Almelo striker had been pursued by embattled Eagles handler Gernot Rohr as he consistently hit the target for his Dutch side before his switch to home town club KRC Genk, but he failed to provide the much expected spark and the internal virtues was not

Eredievise goaledor as his goals have continued to make bold comeback statements and fire the Rotterdam side up the ladder. Interestingly, Dessers' style is unique on his return to "home" Holland, having emerged top scorer for Heracles Almelo few seasons ago - as he fancies leaving it late before killing off his opponents in superb regular fashion. His consistency in keeping up his Super Sub role for Feyenoord could make the renowned ex-Liverpool's Israeli striker Ronnie Rosenthal green with envy and most importantly grabbing the winning goals. His winning goals have one unique mark - hitting them in the

added minutes and he has put four of his seven late minute efforts in the 92nd minutes after coming on as a substitute. His 92nd minute late hurra began with putting the icing on the cake for Feyenoord as they hit four past PSV Eindhoven in the Dutch Eredivise's exciting top-of-the-drawer clash on September 19. The Eagles could be the biggest winners of Dessers' unique style when the drums roll out in Cameroon as the three-time African Champions go for broke to shade the record third best in the continent. With Osimhen most likely to be unavailable, returnee Odion Ighalo will expectedly get his top marksman's role back, while Onuachu and Leicester City striker

Kelechi Iheanacho will step up the supporting roles depending on the formation either Rohr or the new coach will employ. Dessers' magic could well be relied upon if he makes the cut to Cameroon, in the last 15 minutes to bring "Feyenoord" to Cameroon to break hearts. Consistently grabbing late winners is no mean effort and should he continue this for the rest of the season for the Rotterdam club, Dessers may well have entered the Guinness Book of Records and who says he will not do same for the Eagles in Cameroon? He's out to prove a point - that he isn't a spent force as Genk coach John van der Brom and Eagles handler Rohr may want to believe and another chance in Cameroon may well be golden for the former NAC Breda striker.

The expected absence of Super Eagles star striker Victor Osimhen who may at the 2021 African Cup of Nations finals in Cameroon may well be forgotten when hostilities begin January 22, 2022, with retinue of strikers in the tanks waiting to continue the fire power where the injured Napoli star left off. One of such strikers is Feyenoord

where he wished for himself thereafter. A wicked combination of poor form and superb scoring form of compatriot Paul Onuachu conspired to make him look like an upstart at Belgian KRC Genk and ultimately dimmed whatever remained of his Eagles lights. But the lights seem to return to shine on the erstwhile Dutch

Rangnick does not rule out staying on as Man U coach

Manchester United interim boss Ralf Rangnick has not ruled out staying on as manager beyond his initial six months in charge. Rangnick has succeeded Ole Gunnar Solskjaer until the end of the season before moving into a two-year consultancy role at the club. "If everything goes well I might make the same

recommendation that I did at RB Leipzig twice - that it might be a good idea to keep working with me for one year - but it is all hypothetical," said the 63-year-old German. Rangnick was at Old Trafford on Thursday to watch United beat Arsenal 3-2 in the Premier League and his first game in charge will be at home against Crystal Palace on Sunday at 14:00 GMT.

"The people with whom I have spoken have been very clear we are speaking of a six-month role as manager," he said. "We have never spoken about what will happen in the summer. "Right now, I'm fully aware that they might be looking for a new manager. If they will then speak with me about that, we will see. "For me, now it is about winning the next games and this is the major focus."

EAGLES: Govt prefers indigenous coach to succeed Rohr

• Minister insists 'No decision yet on Rohr's sacking'

By Jacob Ajom, Lagos and Luminous Jannamike, Abuja

waste time before getting Gernot Rohr, a coach whose previous experience in African football had not been so successful with Niger and Burkina Faso. Even without any outstanding resume, the NFF boss trusted the Franco-German tactician more than any indigenous coach.

The amount of energy he exerted in pursuing Rohr underlined his reluctance in seeing off the German even in the face of dwindling performances. Indeed, Pinnick was Rohr's greatest defender following public outcry after some shambolic performances by the team he has been midwifing since 2016. Despite the Super Eagles woeful outing in Russia 2018 World Cup and the attendant criticisms of the coach, the NFF boss defended Rohr and went ahead to placate him with a contract renewal. That singular act put Nigeria in the present situation where Rohr has become an albatross. The latest decision by the NFF to do away with Rohr was triggered by the recent home loss the Eagles suffered in the hands of minnows, the Central African Republic in Lagos and the unimpressive 1-1 home draw with Cape Verde in the Qatar 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

Before the Thursday meeting, the NFF were unbending in their stand on hiring a foreign coach to succeed Rohr. "They had even approached a number of coaches abroad but the only obstacle was the hard stance of the minister of Sports, Mr Dare," our usually dependable source hinted.

At the Thursday meeting, the Minister insisted that the NFF must go for an indigenous coach. "Some names of prominent Nigerian ex-internationals-turned coaches were mentioned and the minister made it clear to them that the government was no longer interested in funding the employment of foreign coaches, hence the NFF must look inwards."

Our source informed that the minister's stance informed the vague admission of a concession by the NFF President who spoke to journalists after the meeting.

Said Pinnick, "We have discussed with the Minister. We have a new direction, I have to discuss with my Executive Members. I will also come back to give feedback to the

Minister."

He continued, "We are working in close harmony with the sports ministry. We don't want to hurt Nigerians. We are looking at our decision from an objective perspective. Trust me, whatever we are doing, it will be in the interest of the country.

"We have looked at all the documentation. I can assure Nigerians we will have a clear direction soon," he added.

Pinnick did not reveal if the NFF already has a replacement lined up.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, has said that no decision has been made about the sacking of Super Eagles coach, Gernot Rohr.

There are reports that Rohr's reign as Eagles' handler is over and the Nigeria Football Federation is on course to hire a new coach, pending the ratification of contract documents.

But Dare insists that no decision has been made on the future of the German football handler with the Super Eagles.

"Yes, we had a meeting with NFF led by its President, Amaju Pinnick, about our journey to the Cup of Nations and the World Cup. The meeting was to review developments around the technical coach and also around issues that have dominated the public space.

"What I can say is that consultations are on going. There's no final decision yet. There are so many things to consider, and I can assure Nigerians that the decisions that will be taken will be in the best interest of our football, the footballers themselves, and the nation. We have identified key factors that must be dealt with in a couple of days before we arrive at a decision.

"We don't want to be stampeded. The NFF has a responsibility, and they also have experts. So, they will consult and check what need to be checked and come back finally with a decision which I

believe will serve the best interest of our football development. We are properly guided by history. We don't want to make the mistakes we made in the past. We want to make sure that whatever we do this time are decisions based on factuality, best practices and not sentiments," he told journalists in Abuja on Friday.



• Benitez

December is here and that means that clubs in the Premier League will be taking stock of how the campaign has panned out so far.

Parting ways with managers has become a key part of life in the professional game as clubs lean towards a 'grass is greener' approach to on-field matters.

Watford were the first team to jump this season and got rid of Xisco Munoz

at the start of October.

Steve Bruce was then sacked quickly after the takeover that saw Newcastle become the talk of the town and Eddie Howe has been drafted in.

Nuno Espirito Santo was shown the door by Tottenham recently and was replaced by Antonio Conte.

And three more clubs have since been forced into action as Norwich sacked Daniel Farke, Dean Smith left Aston Villa and of course, Manchester United sacked Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

That has seen fresh faces as Eddie Howe, Steven Gerrard and Smith were reintroduced as managers and already kicked off their first games in the league with a flourish.

Managers across the league will be looking over their shoulders as we approach the hectic festive period with one man under more pressure than most.

According to the latest odds from Sky Bet, the manager who is most at risk is Rafa Benitez.

The Everton boss has endured a torrid run of results and unless they can address the slide soon he may be the next boss out the door.

The Spaniard is now thought to be on the brink after a 4-1 loss to his former club Liverpool in the Merseyside derby at Goodison Park.

Ralph Hasenhuttl at Southampton is also under pressure, as is Claudio Ranieri who could be a victim of Watford's hire-and-fire approach.

Leicester City have fallen short this term which means that Brendan Rodgers' position could be under scrutiny, as could Marcelo Bielsa's role with Leeds United looking like a shadow of the side who took the Premier League by storm last term.

Next permanent Premier League manager to leave

At the other end of the list are Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp, Chelsea's Thomas Tuchel and City gaffer Pep Guardiola who are near-certainties to keep hold of their prestigious roles.

David Moyes' heroics at West Ham have also seen his job become secure.

Group urges Presidency to probe \$2.2m Kwese deal

Stake holders in Nigeria Basketball have called on President Muhammadu Buhari to set up a machinery to unravel the mystery surrounding the over \$2 million sponsorship money for the defunct Kwese Male Basketball League.

The group under the aegis of Friends of Nigeria Sports urged the Presidency to institute a probe into the accounts of the Nigeria Basketball Federation under the previous board which brokered the Kwese sponsorship deal.

Spokesman of the group, Akeem Busari stated thus, "As genuinely concerned Nigerians, we want Nigerians and particularly, the presidency to ask these pertinent questions for answers from the leadership of the former board of the NBBF which account was the Kwese money paid into?"

The group demanded for documents relating to the Kwese sponsorship deal which was a major bone of contention between the former board led by Tijani Umar and the board that succeeded them led by Musa Kida.

Reacting to the allegation, former media officer and member of the Tijani Umar board, Patrick Omorodion said the money in question was never remitted enblock as the sponsors were releasing the money piecemeal. "Remember, they never

believed our board could secure such a huge sponsorship until the 2017 Congress when they saw facts and figures. From then on, they did everything to disrupt the league. The first season ran its full course and winners got N20 million, N15 million for runners up and N10 million for third oklaced teams. They have tried everything to discredit our board and they have not succeeded," Omorodion said.

Aiboni rates Lagos women run high

Elohlor Aiboni, the first ever woman to become Shell Petroleum Development Company managing-director, has sent messages of commendations to the organisers of the of the only women run in sub-Saharan Africa, the Lagos Women Run, headed by Ms. Tayo Popoola.

The Shell Petroleum Plc boss, expressed her delight on the professional manner the run was conducted, much all activities of the event went on perfectly from the start point at the Funsho Williams Avenue, in Surulere to the finish line at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan.

She said: "There was a television monitor of the race stationed at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena that caught all the actions of the women run. Here, I saw dedicated women ran a 10kilometre race with total resilience, dedication, commitment and determination to win. Which tells a lot about the true life activities of hard



• Aiboni

working Nigerian women in all spheres of life. From the family to professional activities, administration and service to humanity, women have always distinguished themselves."

Aiboni who was dressed smart in a black T-shirt over black track down with a black canvass to match ready for the activities of the Lagos Women Run as a Special Guests of Honour, was elated at the wild celebration and continuous applause given her by the over 2000 women runners at the finish point.

"I promise to join you to run next year. I was encouraged seeing women who are over 50 years old run the 10kilometre course at their own pace. I will do the same in the next edition of the women run, since I am not yet 50 years old I have a better chance to finish well." Adding that: "The Lagos Women Run is very important as women run against Human Trafficking of the Girl Child, Violence against women and the emancipation of women in the society. These are very important reasons to run a 10kilometre race," Mrs. Aiboni said.

2021 For the Love of Golf Charity tourney tees off December 11

The atmosphere is already enveloped in excitement ahead of the 2021 For The Love Of Golf Charity Tournament which will hold on Saturday December 11 at the Ikeja Golf Club Lagos.

The charity event which debuted a year ago against all odds in view of the pandemic and the poor economic situation in the country, the second edition will be holding with the aim of raising funds for Paediatric Cancer patients and an orphanage home for challenged children in Lagos State. Last year, One Million Naira (N1,000,000) and a fridge being proceeds from the tournament were donated to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) Paediatric Cancer Ward.

However, the 2021 edition is targeted at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) Paediatric Cancer Ward and Triple Passion Home Initiative, an orphanage home for challenged children. Dr. Adesola Falaiye, the initiator of the charity project in a recent interview said that the 2021 edition would be done with emphasis on the charity projects rather than spending so much on hosting the tournament as funds realised would be invested in the project's target - meeting the needs of the hospital and the orphanage.

In the first edition, there was some

sort of razzmatazz - we made T-shirts and other give-aways, but in this 2021 edition we're going to cut down on tournament expenses and focus specifically on the cause of the project; the funds realised at the end of the day will be expended towards getting the needs directly to the Paediatric Cancer patients and the orphanage. They have given us lists of their needs and we shall get as much as we can, if not all for them by the grace of God" Dr. Falaiye emphasised. "She also revealed that the tournament will feature the MD 404B2 Nigeria of the International Lions Club in this year's

tournament. "In this regard, Dr. Falaiye in her appeal for support towards a successful hosting of the 2021 edition of the 'For The Love Of Golf Initiative' Paediatric Cancer Charity Tournament, painstakingly reiterated the objectives of the organisation and its progress so far.

For The Love Of Golf Initiative" is an organisation set up for charity purposes. We held the first edition of the charity tournament on Sunday, the 6th of December 2020.

In this year's event, golfers will participate and compete in a unique Strokeplay format to raise funds to augment cost of treatment for paediatric cancer patients and orphanage children."

Saturday Vanguard Sports

**Boost for Eagles:
Osimhen set to
return to training**



EAGLES:

Govt prefers indigenous coach to succeed Rohr

• Minister insists, 'No decision yet on Rohr's sacking'

DETAILS INSIDE



Toro kicks against 2-yearly W/Cup proposal

TODAY'S FIXTURES

EPL		
West Ham	vs Chelsea	1.30 pm
Newcastle	vs Burnley	4 pm
Wolves	vs Liverpool	4 pm
Southampton	vs Brighton	4 pm
Watford	vs Man City	6.30 pm
La Ligaa		
Sevilla	vs Villarreal	2 pm
Barcelona	vs Real Betis	4.15 pm
At. Madrid	vs Mallorca	6.30 pm
Sociedad	vs Real Madrid	9 pm
Serie A		
Milan	vs Salernitana	3 pm
Roma	vs Inter	6 pm
Napoli	vs Atalanta	8.45 pm
Bundesliga		
Hoffenheim	vs Frankfurt	3.30 pm
Augsburg	vs Bochum	3.30 pm
Leverkusen	vs Furth	3.30 pm
Arminia	vs Koln	3.30 pm
Mainz	vs Wolfsburg	3.30 pm
Dortmund	vs Bayern	6.30 pm
Ligue 1		
Marseille	vs Brest	5 pm
Lille	vs Troyes	7 pm
Lens	vs PSG	9pm



AFCON: Dessers can be last-minute star for Super Eagles

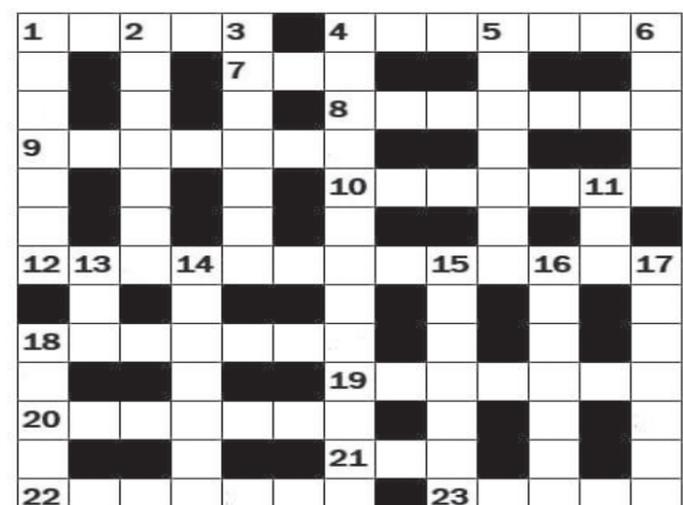
SEGUN ODEGBAMI: Matters arising in Nigerian sports — a mixed grill!

EPL sack race: Benitez tipped as heavy favourite



ACROSS	DOWN
1) President, England Football League (EFL), Mr. Rick_(5)	1) President, Nigerian Football Federation (NFF), Mr. Amaju_(7)
4) French Commune(7)	2) American City and State Capital(7)
7) Local Government Area in Kwara State(3)	3) Former Nigerian Vice President, Mr. Shehu Musa_(7)
8) Chinese Prefecture-level City(7)	4) Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL) Club-Side(7,6)
9) Special Assistant to the Presidency on Public Affairs, Mr. Ajuri_(7)	5) Italian River(7)
10) Afghani Province(7)	6) Former Nigerian President, Rtd. General Yakubu_(5)
12) Turkish City and Provincial Capital(13)	11) Commercial City in Abia State(3)
18) Former British Prime Minister, Mr. Stanley_(7)	13) Local Government Area in Benue State(3)
19) Town in Lagos State(7)	14) Germany Full Back and Chelsea Defender, Antonio_(7)
20) Malaysian Currency(7)	15) Former Zimbabwean Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Isaak Stanislaus_(7)
21) Protein Source(3)	16) The First President of Liberia, Mr. Joseph Jenkins_(7)
22) South African Municipality(7)	17) Chief Press Secretary to the Ogun State Governor, Mr. Kunle_(7)
23) German City and District Capital(5)	18) Ethnic Group in Nigeria(5)

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



SOLUTION ON PAGE 8

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