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By: VICTOR DAZANG, Kaduna

The Arewa Youth Forum has expressed dissatisfaction with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) over poor publicity and sensitization ahead of next year's general elections and the use of Biometric Voters Accreditation System (BIVAS).

The Acting President of Arewa Youth Forum, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Zagi, expressed this in a statement

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APC Responsible For Our Member's In Oyo, PDP Alleges

**Tasks Police to investigate killing*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday, alerted of the alleged assassination of one of its members, Mudashiru Baraka in his family house at Oyo township.

PDP in a statement by its Oyo State Publicity Secretary, Engr Akeem Olatunji alleged that the PDP member was assassinated in the early hours of the day.

The party stated that during the attack on the late PDP member, other members of the party at the scene of the attack escaped with various degrees of injuries.

PDP in the statement stressed that the late Alhaji Baraka who hailed from Ward 4 Tengba, Oyo East Local Government Area of the state had gone to his family house in the spirit of the Yuletide to celebrate with his parents

The party maintained that eye witness accounts said the deceased was rounded up and threatened by notorious thugs after which the deceased reported the threats to Operation Burst in the area, with the security personnel accompanying the deceased back to his family house to effect necessary security action, but the assailants had absconded

PDP added that after the Operation Burst men departed the area, the assailants returned back to the family house of the deceased where he was reportedly murdered in cold blood.

"The gruesome killing of our member, Mudashiru Baraka, a PDP member from Ward 4 Tengba, Oyo East Local Government Area is one that will not be allowed to be swept under the carpet. This is so because we have consistently raised series of alarms to

forestall such ugly occurrence with no definite outcome", it said Oyo PDP added, "these have further emboldened APC in Oyo state and some of its candidates perhaps in the consciousness that it controls government at the centre to recklessly engage in such dastardly acts all in the spirit of winning elections at all cost"

"We need to once again remind APC in Oyo state that it is not the only opposition party in the 2023 race and must not turn Oyo state to a theatre of political war with the needless attacks and killings of perceived superior opponents'.

The party pointed out PDP that the assassination of the PDP Chieftain has already been reported at Durbar Police Station in Oyo, and that the state Commissioner of Police should "immediately step in and expedite action that will guarantee culprits of Baraka's gruesome murder are brought to justice."

"We call on the state Commissioner of Police who has done creditably well to bring about the relative peace in the state, to immediately step in and expedite action that will guarantee culprits of Baraka's gruesome murder are brought to justice."

The party while lamenting the sustained attacks allegedly backed by some individuals in the opposition party urged the Commissioner of Police, CP Adebowale Williams, to bring culprits of the dastardly acts to justice expeditiously.

Sources close to the Oyo State Police Command said the matter has been reported at the Durbar Police station in Oyo town and that investigation is ongoing on the matter as at the time of sending this report.

el-Rufai Signs Kaduna's N376.4bn 2023 Budget Into Law

By; FUNMI ADERINTO, Kaduna

Kaduna State Government has budgeted N376,456,634,924.66 for the year 2023 and Governor Nasir el-Rufai has signed the appropriation bill which was passed by the state House of Assembly on Wednesday, three days to the New Year.

Commissioner of Planning and Budget, Hajiya Umma Aboki, who made this known at a press briefing on Thursday, noted that the 2023 budget prioritizes health and education sectors as 43.70% has been earmarked for the two sectors.

Giving a breakdown of the budget, the commissioner said that "15.70% of the total budget has been allocated to Health and 28% of the total budget is allocated to Education, bringing the total allocation to Health and Education to 43.70%."

"This is consistent with the state government's commitment to allocating a minimum of 15% and 25% of its total annual



budget to health and education respectively," she added.

The commissioner pointed out that an allocation of about 3% of the total budget to social welfare and pro-poor interventions has been spread across various implementing ministries, departments and agencies, in line with government's policy of leaving no one behind.

Hajiya Umma further disclosed that the capital expenditure of the budget amounts to N240,972,204,025.09, which is 64.01% of the

entire budget, while recurrent expenditure is N135,484,430,899.57, that is 35.99% of the budget.

According to Hajiya Umma, "the 2023 budget which is referred to as the "Budget of Continuous Growth and Development", epitomizes continuity of development, while strategizing on minimizing economic shocks occasioned by the unintended effects of policy reforms."

The commissioner further said that the "budget is focused on cushioning the

negative effects by prioritizing human capital and social development and the completion of ongoing projects with a view to consolidating the achievements of the past seven years that will enable the smooth transition of government."

Giving a further breakdown, she disclosed that the state expects N89,277,209,534.01 as

Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and N59,922,244,646.12 as statutory allocation, including exchange gains, excess, & ecological funds amounting to N3,442,854,825.50.

The commissioner also said that the state government is expecting N30,756,738,525.96 from Value Added Tax (VAT); N62,769,276,112.95, N61,662,182,999.07, N20,999,967,529.00 as internal grants, external loans and external grants respectively.

Ibadan Tanker Fire Victims Protest, Demand Gov Makinde's Probe Of N10m Relief Fund

**Allege they were shortchanged by impostors*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

It was protest galore on Thursday, as victims of last week's tanker fire incident in Apata area of Ibadan asked Governor Seyi Makinde to probe the disbursement of the N10 million relief fund he gave them.

The victims stormed the Oyo State Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Press Centre at Iyaganku in Ibadan in large numbers, to protest what they called shortchanging in the disbursement of the N10 million fund.

Speaking during the protest, the victims emphasized the need for Governor Makinde to investigate the disbursement of the money and retrieve victims' money from those

they referred to as impostors.

According to the protesters carrying placards with various inscriptions, they were criminally sidelined or given insignificant share of the N10 million fund meant to cushion their loss, saying 45 beneficiaries were listed as beneficiaries after the money was given in cash but the list increased to more than 70 later and that four persons, Ashifat Abdullahi, Aminat Bamidele, Abiodun Tejuoso and Olayiwola were chosen to represent the victims.

The protesters alleged that the beneficiaries' list was later doctored to accommodate those that were not affected and that while the four

representatives apportioned to themselves huge sums.

One of the protesters, Olasunkanmi Adunni, a bread and essential goods seller affected by the fire, said "there were 45 names in the list but unfortunately, that list increased with those who were not affected included. In fact, we don't know the new beneficiaries".

"The house I lived in and the store my goods was burnt and I was only lucky to escape with my four children. Initially, the sum of N500,000 was penciled as the amount I was to collect but I was only given N100,000. Aminat Bamidele, who did not lose anything to the fire because she was not among the traders affected got N300,000. Someone who claimed to be a shoemaker got

N200,000", she said Adunni added, "I lost over N12m worth of property to the fire. Bamidele was said to have claimed that there is nothing we can do as she has several influential people as in the list of her boyfriends."

Another protester Temilade Makinde stressed that she was promised N500,000 but got N60,000, adding, "a day before the fire incident, I stocked the store with N1.3million worth of food stuffs but everything is gone including the building housing the store".

"In the list, N500,000 was estimated as compensation for me but after the list was doctored, I was given N60,000. We appeal to the governor to investigate the disbursement of the money and retrieve victims' money from impostors."

Medical Researcher Bemoans Neglect Of H. Pylori, Its Threats As Nigeria Ranks 89.7% Of Infection

By; MATTHEW UKACHUNWA, Lagos

Director of Research at Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), Professor Stella Smith, has raised alarm over the prevalence and neglect of Helicobacter Pylori (H. Pylori) in Africa, as Nigeria ranked 87.7 - 89.7 per cent of infection.

"In Nigeria", the Professor of Medical Microbiology declared, "the prevalence of H. Pylori infection varies with Northern Nigeria having more cases than other parts of the country."

The medical researcher defined H. Pylori as "a Gram-negative bacterium that infects and colonizes the human gut."

Signs and symptoms of the infection include an ache or burning pain in the stomach (abdomen), stomach pain that may be worse when an infected person's stomach is empty, nausea, loss of appetite, frequent burping (belching), bloating and unintentional weight loss, Professor Smith enumerated.

"The pathogen has been implicated in different gastric disorders including gastritis, peptic ulcer disease, gastric mucosa associated lymphoid tissue (MALT)

lymphoma and gastric adenocarcinoma," Smith explained.

She said that challenges facing H. Pylori research, diagnosis and treatment in Africa include neglect, lack of accurate prevalence data, absence of consensus on diagnosis and treatment.

Other challenges faced in tackling the disease are inadequate healthcare infrastructure, lack of funding as well as straggling number of professionals.

"Helicobacter Pylori infection (HPI) is obviously a neglected disease in Africa. Most other infectious diseases like HIV, malaria, tuberculosis, and more recently COVID-19 have more attention in terms of funding and grants," Smith said.

She showed concern that the burden of the infection in Africa is high with reported prevalence of 70 per cent as at year 2019, adding: "Although this could be higher due to lack of data in some regions of the continent."

According to her, it has been reported that 50 per cent of the world's population are infected with H. Pylori with people of different races and regions around the world having varied levels of severity and pathological outcomes.

Jos North Council Boss Bags Chieftaincy Title

By; BUHARI B. BELLO, Jos

The Executive Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council, Shehu Bala Usman has been conferred with a chieftaincy title of Dan Masani of Nigeria by the Youth Chiefs of Nigeria.

While confirming the Chieftaincy title to the council chairman alongside 13 other awardees at the Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi amidst cheers from thousands of well-wishers, the Leader of the youth ruling class of Nigeria, Sani Uba Daura said the conferment of the chieftaincy title to the council Chairman is due to his efforts in promoting good governance and

youth development.

Sani Uba Daura while congratulating the awardees, said the confinement of the title is a deliberate step towards encouraging them in developing the nation, youth as well as promotion of traditional institutions in the country.

He expressed gratitude to the youth chieftaincy grand patron and the Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar, the Emir of Bauchi, Sulaiman Adamu, Emir of Kano and Oba's and Obi's for their approval to ensure the success of the occasion.

The Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council, Shehu Bala Usman who was flanked at the occasion by top

officials of the council, family, friends and political associates, expressed delight with the ruling Council Youth Chiefs of Nigeria for finding him worthy of the enormous title of that magnitude.

He said his administration since he was appointed as management committee chairman and currently the Executive Chairman of Jos North Local Government Council, has accorded respect for the Traditional Institutions in the area as well as that of the state Council of Chiefs and Emirs.

He pledged his continuous determination to collaborate with the Traditional Council of Jos to promote good

governance as well as economic prosperity of the locality.

Deputy Leader Jos North Local Government Council, Auwalu Baban Ladan noted that the council chairman has done well in improving economic growth and the substance of the peaceful coexistence among the inhabitants of the area thereby, restoring trust and confidence among the citizenry.

The representative of the Bauchi State Government, Bauchi and Kano State Traditional Councils also graced the occasion.

Various tradition dance groups spiced up the event.



Don Decries Politicisation In Varsities Administration, Management

By; OLADELE ADEDAYO, Ado-Ekiti

university lecturer, Professor Azeez Olaniyan has decried alleged politicisation of administration and management of universities in Nigeria, saying such has further retrogressed their growth and made them subservient to politicians.

Prof. Olaniyan also identified poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, corruption, brain drain, industrial action amongst others as some of the factors working against seamless university administration in the country.

Prof. Olaniyan, who is a Professor of Political Science at the Ekiti State University (EKSU),

The varsity don however, called on the president and state governors to turn

down unnecessary interference of politicians in the affairs of university administration in the country to ensure effective service delivery.

Prof. Olaniyan made this known in Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital while delivering the 3rd Annual Lecture and Award Ceremony of the Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti (EKSU) Alumni Association, Ekiti State chapter titled, "University Governance In 21st Century: EKSU And Expectations Under a New Visitor".

The don expressed worries over the attitude of some influential personalities who always put undue pressure on university management to influence decisions which are detrimental to the growth of the institutions.

The National President of the Alumni Association, Engr. Dipo Bamisaye and National Secretary, Dr Jide Akinleye acknowledged efforts being made to uplift the university.

Speaking with newsmen, the Chairman, EKSU Alumni Ekiti State chapter, Mr Ayodeji Oso and the Coordinator, Ido-Osi Local Government Area, Mr Ayodeji Ogunbusuyi stressed the need for entrenchment of good governance in the university administration.

According to him, "Democratic governance is necessary in the system. University administration should be democratised properly and there should be more autonomy to the universities, with this, I believe the system will be more effective".

Ogunbusuyi was awarded, "the association's most dedicated male members" for good governance in the administration of universities.

He said "For instance education sector supposed to getting about 26 percent of the total budget of a state or country but what they getting is between four and six per cent, which is not sufficient, but with good people who know the importance of education in position, they will do better".

Ogunbusuyi advised, the governor of the state, Mr Biodun Oyeibanji, who is the visitor to EKSU as well as an alumnus of the institution, to increase the subvention to the educational institution to be self sustaining and develop the university's infrastructure.

2023: We Are Only Showcasing Candidates With Integrity, Who Can Rescue Nigeria –Stella Omu

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

A former Chief Whip of the Nigerian Senate, Chief Mrs. Stella Omu, had said that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is not campaigning but showcasing the quality of the party's candidates, while emphasising their capacity to win the 2023 General election and rescue the country from bad Government of the All Progressives Congress, APC with the quality of the candidates the party is presenting for the election.

The former Senator made this known when the Delta State Chapter of the PDP Campaign Council, visited Isoko South and Ughelli North local government areas, in continuation of its local government campaigns on Wednesday, December 28, 2022.

She stated that the PDP is very prepared to rescue Nigeria from the difficult condition that the APC had plunged the country into. According to her, the PDP is not only ready to rescue the country, but they had searched, and elected capable candidates for the

party, which they are presenting to Nigerians in 2023.

"We are prepared to rescue Nigeria from the hardship the APC had caused us. And that is why we are here showcasing our quality candidates, and not campaigning.

"We are not campaigning here, but we have come to showcase our candidates, with integrity, and capacity to work for a better Nigeria."

Speaking on the choice of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the Presidential candidate, and Senator Ifeanyi Okowa as the Vice-Presidential candidate, she said the choice is a mixture of the old and young, with experiences in Government affairs.

"Some people are out there talking of the old, but I can tell you, the PDP had made a very good choice in choosing Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, this is the combination of both old and young with experiences in government. The choice is a perfect one."

She further reminded the party members and supporters that the evidences are there for

Nigerians to verify par the contribution of the PDP to the development of the country since 1999, while pointing to the abysmal performance of the APC Government.

"You can verify the contributions of the PDP in the development of Nigeria. The evidences are there for you."

Senator Omu, however,

emphasised the need for the electorates to collect their Permanent Voter Cards, PVCs, keep it safe for the election, as it's the instrument to vote out bad governance of the APC, and rescue and reset Nigeria.

"For you to be part of the rescue mission, you must collect your PVC, and keep it safe. Do not allow anybody to keep it for you. On election

day, go and cast your vote for the PDP, and stay to protect your vote."

Also, speaking the wife of the PDP Governorship candidate, Mrs. Tobore Oborewori speaking in the Isoko language appealed to the people of Isoko South to vote for the PDP candidates in 2023, as it will be suicidal to vote for any other party who will plunge the country into more hunger.

The campaign rally which witnessed a high turnout from party members and

supporters in both Local Government Areas, had the Delta State Governor and Vice-Presidential Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, the Deputy Governor of Delta State, Barr. Kingsley Otuaro, the Deputy Governorship Candidate, Sir Monday Onyeme, the Deputy Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Ochor Ochor, the Chairman of the Party, Barr. Kingsley Esiso, and many other party chieftains.

2023: Gov Mal Mala Buni Deserves Second Term In Yobe - Mato

By; Sani Gazas Chinade, Damaturu

The Yobe State Governor, Mai Mala Buni deserves and is qualified for a second term as the governor of the state, following numerous achievements in developing the state within his first tenure in office.

The Executive Chairman, United Marketers Association of Potiskum (UMAPO), Alhaji Nasiru Mato expressed this while interacting with newsmen at his office in Potiskum.

According to him, the first tenure of Governor Mai Mala Buni is very impressive, adding that they are very happy with the way he is handling things in Potiskum and Yobe State at large.

He said, "there is some physical work Mai Mala Buni did, we have about 178 political wards in the state and in each ward, he has done something physically and if you go there, you will see it with your naked eyes accordingly," he said.

According to him, Yobe



State is a place where majority of the people are farmers and marketers, especially Potiskum, which is largest commercial town in the state, hence there is no local government in the country that has trailers like Potiskum obviously.

Alhaji Nasiru Mato who is also the Chairman Yobe State United Marketers Association, said that Governor Mai Mala Buni has fulfilled all his campaign promises to the

electorate in the state, adding that on assumption of office on May 29, 2019, he declared a state of emergency on education, which is yielding positive results. L

According to him, the Buni-led administration rehabilitated existing schools and established six modern and seven mega schools to decongest existing ones and also procured books and laboratory equipment, employed more teachers,

trained and re-trained more teachers to enhance quality of education in the state in general.

"Obviously, the Buni administration initiated and constructed four modern markets, Damaturu, Gashua, Potiskum and Nguru as well as a trailer park in Potiskum, all these with a view to creating a conducive environment for trade and commerce for economic development.

"Surely, If the trailer park is completed, it will employ about 5,000 people and also he resuscitated three dormant industries, Yobe Flour and Feeds Mills Potiskum, Woven Sack Company Damaturu and Sahel Aluminum Company Potiskum, all in Yobe State," he pointed out.

Therefore, he used the forum to call on all the electorate in the state to come out in mass to vote for Governor Mai Mala Buni and all APC candidates, including their presidential candidate, during the coming general elections 2023.

400m US Dollars Spent On Ajaokuta Steel Not A Waste - Buhari

By; ADAMA JOHN, Lokoja

President Muhammadu Buhari has said that the 400m US dollars spent to rescue the moribund Ajaokuta Steel Company that he inherited from the past administration was not a waste.

He said that his administration inherited a company enmeshed in dispute, he has been able to rescue the company by paying the staggering amount, saying that the company is now ready for concession to competent investors that will operate it for the good of Nigerians.

"We are in talk with a reputable company in United States" he said, adding that in no distant time, the company would be back to serve the people of Nigeria.

This is as concerted efforts are being made to complete the on going AKK Gas Plant embarked upon by his administration.

Speaking in Lokoja on Thursday on the occasion of commissioning of key projects in the state, President Buhari stressed

that the importance of the steel company coming back on stream cannot be overstressed, as it is expected to generate 1.6bn US dollars as revenue annually and creation of 500,000 jobs for Nigerians.

"Nigerians should be reassured that my administration will pursue the issue of Ajaokuta to logical conclusion before I leave office as president of Nigeria," he stressed.

He expressed delight with the administration of Governor Yahaya Bello in projects execution, as well as the security architecture of the state, saying, "I am appealing to the people of Kogi State to support him so that he can achieve and deliver more dividends of democracy".

Earlier, the state governor, Yahaya Bello expressed profound gratitude to the president for the official visit to the state, occasioned by the commissioning spree of projects.

Projects inaugurated include the Ganaja Flyover, the Reference Hospital in Okene, Muhammadu Buhari Civic Centre and others.

Traditional Title Holder In Police Net Over Raping 14-yr Old Boy In Zaria

By; SANIALIYU, Zaria

Kaduna State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of one Shehu Umar, a traditional title holder of Ciroman Barayan Zazzau for alleged raping a 14 years old boy.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the command, DSP Muhammad Jalige who confirmed the arrest and detention of the suspect in an interview with

newsmen in Zaria, said the suspect is in their custody. Jalige said investigations are going on, when concluded, the suspect would be charged to court for prosecution.

A family member of the victim, Hamza Zubairu told newsmen that incident happened on the December 9, 2022 when the suspect being a neighbour, summoned the boy to enter his room at Unguwar Kwarbai, Zaria

City to pick money for him on top of a table, which the boy obeyed and he followed him and closed the door and threatened him with knife if he refused his demand.

Zubairu further explained that, after he had done the ugly act, the boy went to his mother's sister and informed her what happened to and she immediately alerted family members, who

took the matter to Zaria City Divisional Police Headquarters in Pada, which led to the arrest of the suspect.

New Nigerian visited the Salama Sexual Assault Referral Center, Gambo Sawaba General Hospital, Koran Gayan Zaria and the Coordinator, Hajiya A'ishatu Ahmed confirmed that both the suspect and victim have been examined.

Masari Signs 2023 Katsina N289.6bn Budget Into Law

**Assembly reviews draft upwards*

By; SULAIMAN AHMED MISAU, Katsina

Governor Aminu Masari of Katsina State has signed into law, the 2023 appropriation bill of about N289,633,257,693, which was tagged 'Budget of Transition'.

In November 2022, the governor presented before the State House of Assembly, a proposed budget of N288,633,257,963 for the 2023 fiscal year.

Governor Masari while signing the budget, said his government performed well despite challenges of fall in crude oil price, dwindling revenue from the Federation Accounts, insecurity and COVID-19.

He prayed that the incoming government would build on his achievements and perform better for a greater Katsina State.

He however, thanked the Almighty Allah that in spite of the challenges encountered, their regime has recorded meaningful progress.

Masari said, "We have gone through thick and thin. Our projections for revenue were affected by fall in crude oil prices, banditry, COVID-19 among others.

"But we are here not to

grandstand, we are here not for applause, but we are here for service," the governor said.

He further thanked the Almighty Allah for giving President Muhammadu Buhari the foresight and vision for his policy that Nigerians should produce what to eat and eat what they produce.

According to him, this helped a lot during the COVID-19 as the country was not importing food.

"As 2023 is approaching, we hope and pray that the next generation of leaders will build on our modest achievements," he said.

According to him, "To my colleagues at the Executive Council, some might have come with high expectations, but in life, some expectations are met while some are not. Whatever happens, life goes on.

"Being in or out of the executive council or at the house of assembly is not the end of life. But it depends on how we take life as individuals. But for me, I am hopeful about life and I take life as it comes," he said.

Speaker of Katsina State House of Assembly, Alhaji Tasiu Maigari said the House had reviewed upward the budget from the earlier proposal, noting that it was in line with the vision of Masari's led government.

25km Sokoto Road Project: Senator Wamako Hails Buhari

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The Chairman Senate Committee on Defense, Senator Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko has commended President Muhammadu Buhari for "graciously awarding the construction projects of Dange-Danchadi-Bodinga 25k Road linking Trunk Sokoto -Gusau and Sokoto -Yauri Road."

The lawmaker, while expressing appreciation, described the projects as timely as it would impact positively on the lives of the people of the state "especially considering its economic benefits".

Wamakko, who is also the APC leader in the state, expressed gratitude to the Federal Government for approving the dualization of Sokoto -Gusau road project.

The Senator urged benefiting communities to cooperate with the construction company for the success of the project.

He disclosed that, "already, Director of the Highways construction and Rehabilitation Department of the Ministry of Works and Housing, Engr. F. N Esan, ordered the Engineers concerned to commence the works projects with effect a "Wednesday the 28th of December 2022 and to ensure its completion on or before December 27, 2023".

Kaduna PDP Gubernatorial Candidate, Ashiru Promises To End Insecurity If Elected

**Hundreds of APC politicians join PDP*

**Says like Makarfi, he would reinstate sacked workers*

By Amos Tauna, Kaduna

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

governorship candidate in Kaduna State in next year's elections, Honourable Isa Mohammed Ashiru Kudan has assured that if elected, in the first one year of his government, he will, by the grace of God, bring insecurity to its barest minimum in the state.

He said it would enable the farmers to return to their farms, secure their communities for the benefit of everyone, adding that the interest of women, youths and look into the issue of sacked workers in the state.

Ashiru made the assertion when he visited the District Head of Kajuru, Alhaji Alhassan Adamu, Esu Chikun, Ishaku Yari and other stakeholders of Kajuru and Chikun local government areas.

He extended sympathy to the two traditional institutions on the terrible situations that have been bedeviling their people, following the incessant attacks by bandits and kidnappers, assuring them that he would do everything possible to fight the menace to enable people leave the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps and return to their homes.

The gubernatorial candidate stated, "I'm quite aware of the

insecurity challenges facing the people of Kajuru and Chikun. It is very unfortunate and unacceptable. I really sympathise with all the victims families and communities that are being affected by this dastardly acts."

He expressed his willingness to carry both women and youth along in his government if elected, saying that the women, the PDP presidential candidate, Atiku

Abubakar has made it clear that if he becomes the president of Nigeria, he would invest up to \$10bn on women development and at the state level, he would do his best to alleviate the plight of women.

"We, the older politicians are aware of the logjam and we need to shift grounds for the youth to come in. I will surely work with the productive younger generation so that it will be easier for them to take over from where we stopped," he assured.

He observed the plight of sacked workers by Gov. Nasir el-Rufai-led government and assured



Isa Mohammed Ashiru Kudan

them that those who have genuine cases will be reinstated, drawing inspiration from Gov. Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi's legacy. He added, "When the military administration of Hameed Ali sacked workers in the 1990s, Gov. Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi elected government, through its magnanimity, set-up a committee and looked into the issue and afterwards,

those who had genuine cases were reabsorbed while those who exceeded their years of service, were paid their entitlements and by the grace of God, we will replicate the same thing if elected," he assured.

PDP State Chairman, Dr. Felix Hassan Hyat during the visit, received hundreds of politicians who decamped from APC to PDP, led by Samuel A. Dangiwa.

2023: 4,005 Offenders Apprehended, 630 Vehicles Impounded In Oyo State - FRSC Sector Commander

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Oyo State Command has apprehended 4,005 offenders in the state between January and November this year.

Disclosing this in Ibadan on Wednesday during a chat with journalists, the

state FRSC Sector Commander, Mr Joshua Adekanke said the command also impounded 630 vehicles during same period.

Mr Adekanke stressed that the 630 vehicles were impounded by the FRSC over traffic rules as most of them and their drivers were either not having

driver's licences as well as other valid vehicle papers. Concerning the offenders, the FRSC sector Commander said they were apprehended for various road traffic offences in and across major roads in the state.

The Oyo State FRSC Commander stressed that the command is determined to ensure free

flow of traffic in and across the state.

While urging motorists in the state to abide by the traffic rules, Mr Adekanke warned commercial vehicle drivers against excessive speeding and dangerous overtaking before, during and after the festive period.

US Church Confers Episcopacy On Ebonyi Philanthropic Pastor



By; M K P U M A
ENYINNA, Abakaliki

A United States based Christian organization, World Kingdom Fresh Fire Ministries International, has ordained an Ebonyi Pastor, Reverend Joseph Nwanchonu as Bishop. Nwanchonu is a renowned philanthropist and General Overseer of the Total Freedom in Christ Church. The consecration and robing ceremony took place on Tuesday, at the national headquarters of the Church, Ndufu Amegui in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The conferment was validated under the approval of the United Apostolic Churches in Nigeria.

Performing the rites, the presiding Archbishop and General Overseer of Abundant Harvest World Outreach, Ikom, Cross River State, Noah Effiong, explained that ecclesiastical consecration brings about a change in

one's spiritual level.

Effiong, also the guest preacher at the event, noted that the primary goal of the Organization, United Apostolic Churches, is to win souls, and charged the newly consecrated bishop to redouble his efforts in winning souls for Christ, especially in the hinterlands.

Effiong said, "Consecration brings increase in the ministry. That will give you authority to go deeper into the villages to win more souls for the Lord. "The emphasis is not for money, but for souls and I believe as we have finished here, the land of Ikwo will never be the same."

The new bishop and his wife, Ndidiamaka Nwanchonu, who was also ordained a pastor at the event attributed the ecclesiastical elevation to the grace of God.

They said the mantle will spur them to commit their lives deeper into the service of God and care for

humanity. They appreciated members of the Church for their support and encouragement.

Nwanchonu said, "What my people expect from me is more dedication and hard work, and by the grace of God, I will not disappoint them.

"I will continue to care for not only the widows, but everyone the Lord brings on my way, men and women.

"You can see our yearly Christmas relief: wrappers, food items behind me, everyone here will benefit.

"But most importantly, I will redouble my preaching of the gospel; the message of salvation for genuine repentance in the land of Ikwo and beyond."

Some of the congregants and beneficiaries of Nwanchonu's philanthropy who spoke to newsmen, including Chinweike Nwoba, Jeremiah Nwalo and Mrs Bridget Obasi, prayed for God's continued anointing

and blessings upon him.

They observed that the office of a Bishop is quite demanding and admonished the newly consecrated to uphold the virtues of honesty, dedication and a good family record as prescribed in the scriptures.

They praised Nwanchonu's philanthropy and care for the downtrodden, which they described as enviable. Mrs Obasi summed, "In fact, I envy this man of God positively, and I wish to be like him because he is a great man.

"It is not easy to feed and clothe a multitude.

"The man of God and his wife have made so many impacts in the land of Ikwo and beyond.

"I have witnessed them buy a car for somebody this year, and they take care of the poor."

The event featured distribution of Christmas packages to the widows, orphans, as well as all deserving guests and congregants.

25,000 PDP Members Dump Party For APC In Katsina

By; SULAIMAN
AHMED MISAU,
Katsina

No fewer than twenty five (25,000) thousand members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have decamped to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kaita Local Government Area of Katsina state.

The PDP decampers were received by the gubernatorial candidate of the APC, Dr Dikko Umar Radda who was in the area as part of his campaign tour to all Wards in the 34 local government areas in the state.

Dr. Umar Radda said so far, he has visited 140 wards and the journey has been very fruitful, describing his visit to Kaita Local Government Area as a "home coming."

Dr. Radda commended the 25,000 PDP decampers under the leadership of the secretary of "Lado Alherine" Alhaji Ado Mani, for their focus to join the "winning party APC, assuring that, they would not regret joining APC."

Speaking at the Palace of the District Head of Kaita, Sarkin Sullubawan Katsina, Alhaji Yazid Abdulkarim Kabir Usman, Dr Dikko Umar Radda appreciated the massive turnout of people in the local government area to welcome him.

He said going by history, the mutual respect and understanding between his father and Sarkin Sullubawa is still on his mind, that would never be forgotten forever, "hence my father named me Dikko."

He assured that, if elected Governor of Katsina State, he would improve the living standard of people through several interventions in addition of addressing insecurity in the state.

Dr. Dikko Umar Radda solicited prayers from traditional rulers, Imams, Ulama and the general public for peace and economic development of the state and the country in general.

Chairman of Kaita Local Government Council, Engineer Bello Lawal Yandaki described the APC gubernatorial candidate, Dr. Dikko Umar Radda as the best and honest candidate, therefore, he charged people in the area to vote wisely for Dr. Dikko Umar Radda.

Responding, District Head of Kaita and Sullubawa Katsina, Alhaji Yazid Abdulkarim Kabir Usman, commended Dr. Dikko Umar Radda for his track records in service while as Chairman of Charanchi Local Government Area and Director General SMEDAN in Abuja.

He described him as a good candidate to be voted for as Governor of Katsina State.

Sarkin Sullubawa, Alhaji Yazid Abdulkarim Kabir Usman assured that, they would continue to offer prayers for peace and unity of the country.

Earlier, leader of the 25,000 PDP decampers, Alhaji Ado Mani said academic and leadership background and qualities of Dr. Dikko Umar Radda as well as the performance of the APC government in the state and federal levels, made them to change from PDP to APC.

The ten wards in Kaita Local Government Area toured by the APC Katsina State gubernatorial candidate, Dr. Dikko Umar Radda include, Yandaki, Yanhoho, Gafiya, Girka, Abdallawa, Ba'awa, Dankama, Dankaba, Matsai and Kaita.

Dr. Dikko Umar Radda was accompanied amongst others, by his running mate, Honourable Farouk Lawal Jobe, the younger brother of the late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, Katsina State Central Senatorial Candidate, Lieutenant Colonel AbdulAzeez Musa Yar'adua, House of Representatives Candidate, Honourable Sada Soli Jibia and Katsina State House of Assembly hopeful, Malam Korkoro Na Buhari.



Kaduna CP Vows To Eliminate Criminal Elements, Says 780 Suspects Nabbed In 2022

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

While assuring of the Kaduna State Police Command's resolve to serving with everything within their capacity to totally extricate the state from the grip of criminal elements, the Commissioner of Police, CP Yekini Ayoku has revealed that 780 suspects were arrested in 2022 for various crimes.

CP Ayoku disclosed this at the end of year briefing of the command, held on Wednesday December 28, 2022 at the commands headquarters.

According to him, the combined effects of the measures taken, led the Command to record remarkable achievements in its fight against crimes such as armed robbery/banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling among others.

"A summary of arrest, recoveries and other achievements between January - December, 2022 is given hereunder as follows:-

(i). Seven Hundred and Eighty (780) suspects were arrested in connection with various forms of crimes.

(ii). A total number of One Hundred and Sixteen (116) suspects were convicted.

(iii). Two Hundred and Six (206) Kidnapped Victims were rescued.

(iv). Forty-nine (49) Rifles/Guns were recovered.

(v). One Thousand, Three Hundred and Fifty-nine (1,359) rounds of live ammunition were recovered.

(vi). Seventeen (17) Bandits' Operational Motor Cycles were recovered.

(vii). Twenty-One (21) Armed Bandits were neutralized.

(viii). One Thousand, Four Hundred and Forty-six (1,446) rustled livestock were recovered at different parts of the State.

(ix). Fifteen (15) bags of dry leaves suspected to be Indian Hemp" he said.

According to CP Ayoku, the outgoing year 2022 witnessed the commencement of political activities as the nation prepares for the 2023 general elections.

"The different political parties had their party primaries to elect candidates for the various elective offices. Campaigns, you will recall, officially kicked off on 28th September, 2022 in line with INEC guidelines and Kaduna has had its own fair share of rallies, processions and campaigns by the various political parties seeking the votes of the electorates which have been peaceful. Being the lead agency in election security



management, the Police Command has been keeping tabs and closely monitoring activities in the political arena.

"I have had two (2) engagement meetings with stakeholders in the political process towards ensuring seamless, peaceful and hitch-free electioneering activities in the State. In the course of these engagements, it was re-iterated to political actors in clear unmistakable terms that the political game has to be played strictly by the rules," he said.

According to him, the need for political parties, office seekers and their supporters to conform with the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 and INEC guidelines was re-emphasised.

"Let me exploit this opportunity to reecho my warnings to our politicians to avoid actions and conducts that are contrary to extant laws guiding the electoral

process as nobody will be spared in our determination to enforce the laws.

"The Police, leading other security agencies under the auspices of ICCES of which I am the co-chair, will police and secure the electoral process in a very professional, unbiased and impartial manner and will give robust support to INEC to deliver free, fair and credible elections come 2023.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I acknowledge specially the robust support that the Command has enjoyed from the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Airforce, the DSS, NSCDC and other security and safety agencies in the state.

"I want to assure that we shall work to enhance the existing strong interagency synergy and collaboration towards maximizing our strength and capacities for effective

onslaught against criminal elements in the State.

"I equally applaud the loyalty and support for my leadership by my Deputy Commissioners, members of the Command Management Team, Officers and other ranks of the Command and urge all to remain steadfast, committed and dedicated to our statutory mandate of securing the public space and exhibit professionalism in service delivery.

"Our friends in the media, we appreciate your strategic partnership as you made our job a lot easier by your balanced reportage and wide coverage given to our activities.

"The feedbacks we get from your reports have helped in no small measure in identifying our area of weaknesses while building on our strengths as we continually strive to improve on our performances.



"I am confident that as patriots, you will always take the overriding state security interest into consideration in the manner incidents are reported and headlined.

"I thank our revered Royal Fathers ably led by the Emir of Zazzau HRH. Amb. Ahmad Nuhu Bamalli cfr, every citizen and resident of this State for the cooperation and invaluable support the Police and other agencies have continued to receive. I ask for more of this public support as everyone has a stake in the security of our communities.

"The Command under my watch is ever determined to serve with everything within our capacity to totally extricate the state from the grip of criminal elements and all hands must continually be on deck to achieve this," he said.

He explained that the briefing for the end of year 2022 is aimed at sharing with the media and by extension the general public, the Command's activities in executing its mandate of law and order maintenance and safeguarding lives and property in the State under my stewardship.

"Let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude and appreciation to the Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, NEAPS, fdc, cfr, for finding me worthy to command this Command as the 40th Commissioner of Police in the state and importantly for his continued strong and pivotal support and operational guidance to the Command at every juncture in addressing the security challenges that confront the state.

"My equal profuse appreciation goes to the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, His Excellency Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai, con, for his strong leadership as a Security Passionate Governor and his constant logistical support and interventions in aid of the Command's operational activities in fighting crimes and criminality in the State.

"Upon assumption of duty as the Commissioner of Police, Kaduna State on 8th April, 2022, which was on the heels of the incident of train attack of 28th March, 2022 between Dutse Village - Rijana along Abuja - Kaduna rail track and the earlier security breach within the Kaduna International Airport general area, the need for urgent safeguard of commuters/road users especially along Kaduna - Abuja expressway in the absence of a functional rail and commercial air operation was

2023 Presidential Race: We Have Valuable Products To Market To Nigerians - APC PCC Director

**Inaugurates Oyo State PCC*

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan
The All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council Media and Publicity Committee (APC PCC) on Tuesday, said the party has valuable products in their hands to market to Nigerians.

This was made known in Ibadan by the Director APC PCC, Mr Bayo Onanuga at the inauguration of the Oyo State APC Presidential Campaign Council Media and Publicity Committee (APC PCC).

Represented by the Oyo State APC PCC, Chairman, Alhaji Kehinde Olaosebikan, Mr Onanuga disclosed that the party's Presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu is a marketable project and that the task before the committee is to go all out to market the presidential candidate of the party, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to all the 33 local

government areas and 351 wards in the state.

"We have valuable products in our hands to market to our people. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Senator Kashim Shettima are men of character, competence, capacity, vast experience with profound antecedents. With the best presidential candidate to market, our job has been made easy, as all that is left for us is to come up with robust plans and strategies for effectuating the campaign," he said.

Mr Onanuga added, "with the mission at hand, we are expected to go beyond the units and penetrate all the villages, hamlets, cells and homes to convince the electorate why Bola Ahmed Tinubu is the best candidate and the preeminent person that would make life more meaningful, enjoyable and better for all".

"Ultimately, our responsibility

is to ensure that the overwhelming majority of voters in Oyo State cast their votes for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the presidential election of February 25, 2023. Our target is at least 95 per cent of the total votes in the state."

The Director APC PCC stressed that members of the committee were appointed based on their professional competence after being duly screened by the Media Directorate headquarters in Abuja, and that the committee was set up as the state branch of the directorate for efficient and effective dissemination of information and programmes of the directorate to the nooks and crannies of Oyo state.

"Your choice as members of this all-important committee was



done purely based on your professional competence, loyalty and commitment to the party and sincere interest in the Presidential Candidate of our great party, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. You were individually screened, both here in Oyo State and at the directorate headquarters in Abuja, for suitability and competence before your

appointment.

"With our appointment, we are expected to bring our professional expertise and experience to bear and engender great communications ideas and activities that would explicitly spread the good tidings that the presidency of Bola Ahmed Tinubu would bring to Nigerians, particularly to the people of Oyo State.

Kaduna CP Vows To Eliminate Criminal Elements, Says 780 Suspects Nabbed In 2022

considered paramount and imperative.

"With these challenges met on ground, there was thus no time to spare and I had to immediately and swiftly review and rejig existing architecture, crime map the state, re-strategize and mobilise all operational, tactical and intelligence resources and deploy same massively cognisant of the crimes prevalent in the different areas of the state.

"For obvious reasons as stated earlier, Abuja - Kaduna highway was prioritised with heavy motorised and static patrols complemented by military backup and aerial patrol and surveillance from the Force Headquarters.

"The objective was to keep the road open and safe for travellers being, as at that time, the only major means of accessing Kaduna and other North-Western states from Abuja and the southern part of the country.

"This objective was

achieved as throughout the period under review, the command was able to minimize any form of security breach/threat on the highway through the stated upgrade in visibility policing and prompt response to distress calls.

"While checkmating attacks and ensuring safety on all major connecting highways, the command's inner city patrols and crime prevention and control operations aimed at combating criminal activities within our various cities and communities were equally intensified.

"The seven (7) Area Commands and sixty-one (61) Divisions were specifically tasked to leverage Community Policing Strategy by strengthening Police-Community Partnership in discharging their constitutional mandate of ensuring public safety and security in their respective areas of responsibility," he said.



Plateau Journalists Boycott Jos Polo Tournament

**Low turn out of spectators observed*

By: BUHARI B. BELLO, Jos

Journalists in Plateau State have boycotted this year's edition of Jos Polo Tournament over the payment of 1,000 Naira access fees required of them to enter and cover the event.

The Vice President of Jos Polo Tournament who doubles as the media and publicity contact committee chairman, Mr Edward Fom gave the directive while speaking with some newsmen, insisted that they must pay the sum of 1,000 Naira to enable them cover the event

Some journalists earlier were told

to collect their tags following the promise made by Mr. Fom to come by 2:00pm for the collection of the tags, but were later reminded over the payment of the sum of N1,000 before they would be allowed in.

Journalists left the venue of the tournament in annoyance, insisting that they don't have to pay to cover events for whatsoever reason.

Earlier some journalist were denied entry into the field of the tournament allegedly on the orders of the polo management that a payment of 1,000 Naira must be made.

It took the efforts of some of the officials of the polo tournament, who identified the journalists,

before they were ushered in where they met Mr From, who bluntly told them that they just must pay if they want to cover the event.

On hearing such, some journalists who had earlier gone to cover this year's edition of the tournament, left, saying that they were poorly treated by security operatives at the gate.

However, this year's edition of Jos Polo Tournament was greeted by low turnout and cold weather being experienced in Jos metropolis

It was observed that people who usually turn out in large numbers for the event, could not come, probably due to the weather condition in the city.

Southern Kaduna Group Condemns Renewed Attacks In Kaura Council Area

**Tasks security to immediately investigate, apprehend culprits, sponsors to face law*

**Slams SOKAPU over 'unfounded' allegation against military*

**Commends OPSH for prompt intervention which immediately halted ugly act*

**Passes vote of confidence on OPSH*

By; VICTOR DAZANG,
Kaduna

A Southern Kaduna-based peace building organisation has condemned the renewed attacks, killings and destruction of property in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State by those it described as "some unknown criminal elements."

Reacting to the dastardly act, the group which described the action of the perpetrators as not only barbaric and inhuman, but also senseless, tasked security agencies to swing into action with a view to apprehending the culprits and their sponsors to face the full wrath of the law.

It thanked the internal military outfit in the area, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) for its role in ending the mindless attacks, which it noted, would have wiped out the entire communities, "if not for their timely and professional intervention."

The peace advocacy group operating as Conference of Southern Kaduna Professionals for Peace and Development (CSKPPD), in a statement on Tuesday by its national coordinator, Rev. Bitrus Elisha, insisted that the latest ugly development is coming at a time peace had returned to the once-troubled area, was callous, insensitive and reprehensible.

While commiserating with the families of the victims, the Government of Kaduna State and the people of Southern Kaduna over the despicable act, the group called on the people of the area to remain calm, saying security agencies are capable of unraveling the culprits.

On the other hand, it tasked its kinsmen to assist security outfits in the area, especially the internal military outfit, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), with useful information to succeed in its mission.

The group which hailed Operation Safe Haven, for living up to expectations of the natives, however, took a swipe at the statement by the Southern Kaduna Peoples Assembly (SOKAPU), for faulting the military over their roles in the attack.

SOKAPU had in a statement following the development,

claimed that the "killings which lasted for long, started around 11pm Sunday night simultaneously. "Not only were these, poor innocent citizens killed, not less than 100 houses were razed with some victims burnt alive.

"At the time of releasing this statement, volunteers are still combing surrounding bushes in search of missing persons and more corpses.

"The villagers had noticed the gathering of strange herdsmen coming from different directions on motor bikes to set camp in nearby bush some days back. Apparently, the security forces deployed there did nothing under this glaring potential threat to security," SOKAPU had alleged.

But reacting, the Conference of Southern Kaduna Professionals for Peace and Development, insisted that the statement by their umbrella organisation was not only unpatriotic to the country, but also unfair to the military operations OPSH, which it noted, has been relentless in its efforts at ending the crisis in particular and stop recurrence of the ugly development in general.

The statement reads in part, "We condemn in the strongest terms the barbaric, inhuman and senseless killings of many of our people in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State, our heart goes to immediate families of the deceased and injured persons.

"We hereby call for the immediate arrest and prosecution of these killers and their sponsors. Security agencies must do their best to quickly arrest all those involved and bring them to book immediately."

The Southern Kaduna group which said its reaction was predicated on its on-the-spot assessment of the affected areas and interaction with the people,



chided the statement by SOKAPU against the military outfit, noting that the action was in bad faith.

"Our attention has been drawn to some malicious, spurious, calculated, and biased allegations and unwarranted attacks against the military, particularly Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), over the series of attacks by suspected herdsmen in Kaura Local Government Area in the Southern part of Kaduna State.

"We ordinary would not have bothered to respond to this well-thought-out lies and allegations against the military operation in the area as we are not their mouthpiece, but we are obligated to do this just so that posterity will not judge us for sitting on the fence as critical stakeholders.

"Without mincing words, we hereby pass a vote of confidence on Operation Safe Haven for its patriotic roles in the Southern Kaduna crisis and prompt intervention in this latest mindless attacks which would have wiped out the entire communities in the affected area, if not for the timely and professional intervention of the OPSH.

"The response of the Sector

Commander and his men was swift and done in minutes.

"But for the timely intervention of the officers, only God knows how many casualties that would have been recorded," it added.

While tackling SOKAPU, the Conference of Southern Kaduna Professionals for Peace and Development, said, "It is however wicked for some sponsored and wicked enemies of peace and the military outfits to be working so hard to discredit the efforts of these gentlemen and women who are doing everything possible to keep us safe."

"As enlightened people, upon hearing this allegation against the military, we quickly swung into action by visiting the affected communities to get firsthand information, where the testimonies of some direct victims proved that it's indeed the efforts of men of Operation Safe Haven that saved their lives.

"They went further to prove that the military did not kill any villager with the sophisticated bullets contrary to the allegations that some high caliber ammunition being paraded on social and other media outfits were used by the

military to kill our people. Having visited all the affected places and received firsthand information, we wish to state categorically here that the allegation is not only false, but also a figment of imagination of those peddling it.

"Our finding from the places visited showed that men of OPSH actually shot those high caliber ammunition against the bandits who were killing and maiming innocent civilians.

"As a matter of fact, it was the high ammunition that scared the bandits to retreat. No single civilian was killed or injured by men of OPSH. The soldiers and other sisters security personnel attached to OPSH were rather protecting the villagers and facing the attackers.

"We are calling on our people in Southern Kaduna to face the real issue causing this crisis which is criminality and address it quickly rather than allowing themselves to be used against the military operations in the area.

"We should caution our young people from taking laws into their hands no matter the provocation instead of blaming people who are sacrificing their lives for us.

"We therefore, call on the general public to ignore the statements from some of our misguided brothers, whose aim is to tarnish and discredit the leadership of the military operation for reasons only best known to them. We shouldn't allow this stand," it said.

The group which insisted that it was speaking based on facts gathered, added, "We challenge those blackmailing military/OPSH that it was military bullets that killed the villagers to bring all the affected corpses to any hospital of their choice for autopsy", pledging that, "we shall pay the entire medical cost."

It would be recalled that the attack carried out in Malagum 1 and Sokwong communities of Kagoro Chiefdom in Kaura Council Area of the state, reportedly claimed more than 30 lives, besides the destruction of several buildings in the communities.

2023: We'll Ensure Effective Implementation Of Kolmani Integrated Development Project - Gov Inuwa Assures

**Leads campaign rally to Pindiga, Gona Emirates; canvasses votes for APC Candidates at all levels*

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has said that the All Progressives Congress (APC)-led government will ensure effective oil exploitation and full actualization of the Kolmani Integrated Development Project flagged off by President Muhammadu Buhari.

According to a statement signed by the Director-General (Press Affairs) Government House Gombe, Ismaila Uba Misilli, dated Wednesday December 28, the governor gave the assurance at the palace of Emir of Pindiga, Muhammad Seyoji Ahmad during a visit of his campaign team to the area.

Governor Inuwa said his administration pursues with all vigour and seriousness any project capable of improving the standard of living of the common man, recounting how his administration boldly worked with relevant stakeholders and pushed for the actualization of the Kolmani Integrated Project for the benefit of people of Gombe state.

He said, "just two months after assuming power, we started moving around, from the NNPC to the Villa to push for oil exploitation in Kolmani and to God be the glory we have succeeded in securing the project. Thanks to His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari for making it a reality.

"On our part, we did everything we could to make sure that this development has come to stay in Gombe and you are all witnesses that the project has been flagged off and hopefully soon, our people will begin to reap its benefits".

He assured the people that APC government, with Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the helm will continue with oil exploitation in the North as started by President Muhammadu Buhari.

"At the formal Flag off of Kolmani Project by President Buhari, our presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu attended the ceremony and made a commitment to continue with the project when elected".

Governor Inuwa assured to continue repositioning Gombe State on the path of progress and sustainable development. "We will continue to provide quality leadership that will take the state to the promised land. We will never be reckless nor rest on our oars in discharging our duties",



he affirmed.

Inuwa lamented on the increasing security threat in the area, calling on traditional rulers and community leaders to intensify efforts towards tackling the problems, maintaining that security is the catalyst for any meaningful development.

In his response, the Emir of Pindiga, Muhammad Seyoji Ahmad applauded Governor Inuwa's uncommon zeal and steadfastness towards fighting for the course of his people, the trait he described as praiseworthy, citing actualisation of Kolmani Integrated Development Project as one good example.

The Royal father thanked the governor specifically for numerous developmental projects within his domain, especially the ongoing construction of 24km road from Nasarawo to Kolmani which will link up several communities and connect the emirate's

headquarters with the Kolmani oil field for economic prosperity of the people.

In his welcome address at the Palace, the Commissioner for Energy and Mineral Resources, Hon. Sunusi Ahmad (Mai Dalan Pindiga) extolled Governor Inuwa for not forsaking the area. He the Governor had executed numerous developmental projects in the area, reassuring that "Pindiga people are solidly behind Inuwa and will ensure the success of his reelection bid.

Hon. Sanusi specifically mentioned some of the projects executed by the Inuwa-led administration in the region to include: 15km road Mararraban Jabba - Jabba-Sambo Daji - Pandi Kola - Gwaram-Garin Wada, connecting several communities, 15km Tashan Magarya Kumo-Luggerawo-Bappa Ibrahima-Papa Road, renovation of Pindiga and Tumu cottage hospitals, building of schools, water supply among

others.

The Campaign team had earlier berthed at the Palace of Lamido Gona, Alh. Umar Abdulkadir Abdussalam in Akko Town to seek for his fatherly blessings and prayers.

Governor Inuwa who holds the title of Madawakin Gona in the Emirate said there is a longstanding relationship built on trust and understanding between him and the good people of Akko Ward and Gona Emirate as a whole.

He said, "we came here in 2019, sought for your mandate and you entrusted us with leadership; thankfully we delivered to the best of our ability.

"We provided responsible leadership which is a requisite for the development of any community. It is as a result of this strong zeal for development that our administration pushed for oil exploitation in Kolmani for the benefit of our people", he remarked.

The Governor reiterated his

government's determination to bring more development to the emirate and Gombe State in General.

"We worked together with Gona emirate in securing land for the establishment of an Air force base, which will strengthen security in the entire Northeast, including the Kolmani oil field which is not far from here.

"We also sunk more than 18 billion Naira in establishing the Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park to engage our teeming youths and create wealth for our people".

He restated his government's determination to expand the Gombe Regional Water Supply Scheme to many areas in Akko LGA especially Tumfure, Akko, Lawanti among others.

In his remarks, the Lamido Gona thanked Governor Inuwa for the development projects he brought to the emirate comprising of roads, healthcare facilities, schools among others.

"We are grateful for the roads in Kundulum, Arawa, Alkahira, Cairo, Wuro Shie'e, Gona-Garko-Gujuba-Kalshingi Road, several hospitals, schools, especially School of Nursing and Midwifery and among others".

Earlier in his welcome address at the Lamido's Palace, the Commissioner for Rural Community Development and Cooperative, Hon. Danladi Adamu commended the efforts of Governor Inuwa in bringing development to the district and promoting peace in the region.

He assured of the support of the local community for Governor Inuwa Yahaya's return for the second term.

In their addresses at the respective venues of the campaign rallies, Director-General of the campaign, Barrister Zubair Muhammad Umar and the State Coordinator, Tinubu/ Shettima Campaign Council, Dr Jamilu Isiyaka Gwamna attested to the integrity and excellence of the APC candidates, urging the people to collect their PVC's and vote for APC candidates at all levels.

APC candidates from Akk, including Member of the House of Representatives, Hon. Usman Bello Kumo and his State House of Assembly counterpart, Hon. Abdullahi Abubakar as well as Musa Wuro Biriji had also spoken at various campaign grounds.

The campaign team visited, Akko, Garko, Tukulma, Pindiga, Kashere, Tumu and Kalshingi wards of Akko LGA amidst rousing crowd of supporters.



HEKAN President Bags Another Award Of Excellence

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

The President of the United Church of Christ in Nigeria (HEKAN), Reverend Amos Kiri has received an Award of Excellence in recognition of his selfless service to humanity

The honour was done by Kiri District Development Association, Adamawa State.

The HEKAN President was among five awardees from different fields ranging from Academia, Religious and other fields

The award ceremony was the second of its kind in recent times.

The award of excellence to Dr. Kiri, is on the heels of his contributions and dedication to the development of his

community and the association among others.

Kiri was elated by the recognition and honour done on him.

He thanked his people for finding him worthy and assures to continue to give his best at all times.

Reverend Amos Kiri also commended the organisers for a job well done, noting that the award is not for him alone, but for his family and the entire HEKAN Church, where he is currently serving as the president.

Dr. Kiri appealed to all to see each other as brothers and also embrace peace at all times.

On the forthcoming general elections, the clergyman tasked all to get their permanent voters card and vote wisely.



KACRAN Appreciates Agric Minister For Organizing Regional Herders-Farmers Conference

By; SANI GAZAS CHINADE, Damaturu

The Kulan Allah Cattle Rearers Association of Nigeria (KACRAN) has commended the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Muhammad Mahmud Abubakar, the ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr. Ernest A Umakhihe and the Director Animal Husbandry Services, Dr Winnie Lai-Solarin and staff of the ministry for successfully organizing and hosting the Regional Summit on Human and Climate Security challenges and Farmer-Herder conflict resolution in Abuja, the Federal Capital in December this year.

In a statement signed by the President of KACRAN Khalid Muhammad Bello available to our correspondence in Damaturu the Yobe State capital, said that, the summit was well attended by pastoralists and farmers associations in Nigeria and other neighboring countries such as Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroun and Benin.

"Truly the initiation, organization and successful hosting of the afore mentioned summit by the Hon minister is a clear testimony of his result oriented vision, determination and purposeful leadership, which he has brought to bear on the ministry, since he assumed leadership of this all important ministry. "The Hon minister and all his well experienced and committed staff, have shown capacity and determination to immediately end all the challenges facing our agricultural sector," it said.

The group said that in addition, the most striking thing about the historic summit being the first of its kind in over fifty years of the history of the ministry, is that the honourable minister in his wisdom and foresight agreed, that the livestock and fisheries sectors, which have been totally marginalized and

neglected over the years will receive due attention henceforth.

"In view of this, KACRAN feels that making that well thought and highly articulated statement by somebody of high repute like the Hon Minister of Agriculture in the presence of esteemed Nigerians and invited delegates from the neighbouring countries is worth mentioning and deserves sincere commendation not only by KACRAN but by all Nigerians who sincerely want justice and equity for the development of our fatherland.

"In this regard, we of KACRAN deem it necessary to once more, thank the minister for the new stand of the ministry, and state that, we the members of KACRAN are happy that we are now on the same righteous page with members of the Senate, judging from the recent statement of the Senate President, Dr Ahmed Lawan, when the Hon minister led a delegation of Veterinary Doctors to him on a courtesy call in his office."

The Senate President was said to have said that the livestock sector has been totally neglected in the past, and that though he does not have any Fulani blood in his vein, he would ensure that justice and fairness is equitably gotten by all in the country and that he is ready to lead the fight on behalf of the nation's pastoralists' rights and liberty.

"At this juncture let us once again say, capital kudos to our Senate President, Dr Ahmed Lawan, Hon Minister and the entire staff of the ministry under reference who put head together to make sure that justice and fairness is fully exercise in the allocation and implementation of the ministry's policies and programs.

"And here we abundantly wish to state it in unmistakable terms that the entire members of KACRAN are so much happy and excited with the above anticipated positive developments in the livestock sector.

IsDB/LLF Project In Kano Budgets N23.07bn For 2023

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Kano State Agro-Pastoral Development Project (KSADP), funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Lives and Livelihood Fund (LLF) and the government of Kano State, has unfolded a financial plan, in the sum of N23, 076, 030, 000, 34 for infrastructure and other interventions in 2023.

A statement signed by the Project Communication Specialist, Ameen K. Yassar, dated December 27, 2022, said the State Project Coordinator, KSADP, Malam Ibrahim Garba Muhammad, made this known during a presentation before the

Steering Committee of the project, chaired by the Kano State Deputy Governor, Dr. Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna, highlighting that the budget involves expenditure on several projects including Dansoshiya Grazing Reserve development, expansion of Watari irrigation scheme by 1,000 hectares, and upgrade of 20 Slaughter houses.

Others are commercial large scale fodder production, second batch of livestock fattening and reproduction schemes, implementation of straw utilization empowerment for youth, construction of grains storage facilities, Dawanau Market Infrastructure

development, construction of 70km feeder roads as well as Stock Routes development.

"Crops Value Chain Intervention (Cereals) by Sasakawa Africa Association, Crops Value Chain Intervention (Legumes) by KNARDA as well Project coordination and management activities were also captured in the budget", the Project Coordinator added.

Ibrahim Garba, however, mentioned that "non-payment of State government counterpart funds and encroachment of Dansoshiya Grazing Reserve, thus, impeding development sites, as major challenges militating against smooth

execution of the project". The State Deputy Governor, Dr. Nasiru Yusuf Gawuna said: "In the first two years since the formal take-off of this project, attention has been focused on putting things on paper – planning, projecting and designing etc. It is only in this year, 2022, that the results started to manifest more clearly, in terms of capital projects and activities, which have impacted positively on our people". Praising KSADP's implementation strategy, the Deputy Governor thanked the Project Management Unit for its strict budget implementation in the past year, hoping that the trend will be maintained.

Dangote Refinery Awards Scholarship To 460 Students In Host Communities

By: JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Dangote Fertiliser Limited have awarded scholarships to 460 students of secondary schools and tertiary institutions from its host communities in Ibeju Lekki, Lagos State.

The company said the scholarship had become an annual event meant to contribute to the educational development of the people and position them rightly in the scheme of things in Lagos State and Nigeria in general.

The scholarships were presented to 443 secondary school students and 17 tertiary institution students from its host communities around Ibeju-Lekki.

Group Executive Director, Strategy, Capital Projects and Portfolio Development, Dangote Group, Mr. Devakumar Edwin, presented the scholarships to beneficiaries yesterday at an event attended by traditional rulers and government officials in Lagos State.

Edwin said the Dangote Group believes that education is the passport to the future and that an investment in knowledge yields the greatest dividends for mankind.

He said the company had over the years supported the Nigerian educational sector by instituting scholarship award programmes.

According to him, this is part of the company's education intervention initiative for indigenous students of host communities impacted by its businesses.

He stated: "In 2019, we executed a pilot of the scholarship programme where 51 secondary school students from our 15 host communities here in Ibeju Lekki were awarded. However, we

could not hold the second edition in the year 2020 due to the incidence of COVID-19 and its associated effects not only on businesses but on every household.

"In 2021, 118 secondary school students and 19 tertiary institution students from our host communities were awarded the scholarship award and after a rigorous screening process this year, 443 secondary school students and 17 tertiary institution students have qualified for the scholarship award."

While congratulating the beneficiaries, he enjoined them to continue to work hard at their studies, strive to achieve excellence in all that they do, and never stop giving their best. "Your achievements are a testament to your determination, perseverance, and commitment to excellence, and we are honoured to celebrate your success with you today", he added.

Edwin encouraged the awardees to make the most of the opportunities and to always strive for excellence. "Remember that your education is a gift, and it is up to you to make the most of it. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn and grow, and do not be afraid to take risks. We are proud to support your education and future endeavors, and we look forward to seeing all that you will accomplish in the years ahead. Congratulations again to all our scholars."

"With the continuous support of the people and the Lagos State Government, we shall not relent in our efforts to be socially accountable while we positively impact our host communities. We look forward to a continuous peaceful and rewarding relationship with our host communities in Ibeju Lekki," Edwin said.

On his part, the traditional ruler



L-R, Chief Mufutau Dauda, Baale of Magbon Segun / Chairman of Baale in Ibeju-Lekki, Bello Shakirat, One of the Beneficiaries from Community High school Lekki, Dangote Industries Limited, Group Executive Director, Strategy, Capital Projects & Portfolio Development, Devakumar Edwin, Ajangboju Moruff, Beneficiary From Community Senior High school Magon Segun, Hon. Tosin Osunnuga, Secretary Lekki LCDA, who represented the Chairman of LCDA, at the 2022 scholarship award to qualified secondary and tertiary students of the host communities youths of the Dangote Refinery and Fertiliser Projects Lekki Lagos, on 28th DECEMBER 2022

of Lekki, Onilekiki of Lekki Land, Oba (King) Liasim Ogunbekun said that the programme was a blessing to the community and gave kudos to the Dangote Group.

"We appreciate Dangote Group because this is not their first time but their third scholarship edition to the host communities in Ibeju Lekki.

"I urge the beneficiaries to put in more effort in their academic pursuit and justify the amount being paid for the scholarship.

"We thank the Dangote Group because a lot of improvement have been recorded in the lives of the participants," Ogunbekun said.

One of the beneficiaries of the

City & Guilds Engineering training programme, Raheem Olukayode thanked Dangote Group for the opportunity to study, become an engineer and impact positively to the society.

"The training has been beneficiary because it supports the less privilege who are interested in furthering their education achieve their dreams in spite of financial challenges.

"The programme is simply going to positively affect the development of Ibeju-Lekki in future because we are going to have more engineers emerging from this area.

"We were told that after level three training, the best of us will be given job opportunity to work

with Dangote Group so we are encouraged to give our best to win the slot," Olukayode said.

Also, the Head Girl of Community Senior High School, Magbon Segun, Ibeju Lekki, Sano Omolere said that the scholarship had assisted their parents in supporting their education.

"For instance, some students have relented in their effort to further in their education because of lack of money.

"However, this scholarship has supported our parents provide us with school fees and books that have encouraged a lot of us to do better in class," the head girl said.

Don't Play Politics With Future Of Nigeria, CJN, Chief Imam Of Iseyin Warns

By: BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

The Chief Imam of Iseyin, Alhaji Akeem Babatunde Olajori has cautioned against playing politics with the future of Nigeria by attacking the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kayode Ariwoola.

Speaking at a special Muslim prayer organized by the former Chairman Of Iseyin Local Government Area, Alhaji Saheed Alaran for the Chief Justice of Nigeria, the Chief Imam asked those engaged in such attacks on the CJN to desist from doing so, otherwise, they would attract the wrath of Allah.

The Chief Imam declared that the news of some people sponsoring opposition against the CJN came to him as a shock in a nation that proclaims unity as the bedrock of its existence.

According to Alhaji Olajori, "God is not a

God of tribe, he created all equal and assigned everyone with his or her own time, why would they raise eyebrow when it is legitimately the turn of our own son".

The Chief Imam of Iseyin noted, "although we appreciate the President of Nigeria for not allowing tribal sentiment get in his way and pray that the time of Justice Ariwoola will be favorable to our nation at large."

The organizer of the prayer, Alhaji Alaran while speaking, disclosed that the prayer was important as the CJN has a national calling to rebuild the judicial system in Nigeria, so as to make justice available to all without segregation.

He maintained that the distraction that followed elevation of Justice Ariwoola as the CJN was from elements that forgot that Nigeria remained a country that could only survive its current challenges by working on the unity of its tribal sections.

"The prayer is important because our brother who has assumed a national position upon which our country's judicial system is anchored for survival and rebirth, he has gotten all that is needed to achieve the height and he has gotten there, what remains is for God Almighty to guide, protect and support him in all his doings", he said.

Alhaji Alaran added, "also, we are here to pray for our brother who is the face of Oke-Ogun and Iseyin, a respected legal practitioner and philanthropist per excellence, Alhaji Ahmed Raji SAN, Oke-Ogun and Iseyin need him more now that development has started coming our way, may he never misstep, may all God continue to replenish him with wisdom and capabilities to do more for the people.

"So did we pray for others like Ambassador Shina Alege, Barrister Jelili Owonikoko and other sons and daughters of this community at

home and abroad that are making us proud in their different endeavors."

Ikolaba of Iseyinland, High Chief Ismahil Odubiyi Tikalosoro in his remarks, said the focus of the prayer was not only on the CJN, Barrister Ahmed Raji and other sons and daughters of Iseyin that have made national marks, but also for a prosperous Iseyin going forward.

The Ikolaba of Iseyinland then prayed that God Almighty will take control of the selection process of the new Aseyin of Iseyin, which he said has gotten to a considerable level.

The prayer was attended by other traditional Chiefs and community leaders, including Colonel John Ayegbonyin Fagbire (rtd) and Alhaji Olanrewaju Azeez of the Iseyin Elders' Council, among many others.

2023: Arewa Youth Forum Raises Alarm, Says Millions Of Northerners Risk Disenfranchisement

made available to newsmen in Kaduna on Thursday December 29, 2022.

According to the statement, INEC's lack of adequate sensitization could lead to disenfranchisement of millions of Nigerians, especially Northerners. "The introduction of BVAS and other amendments to the electoral act, will affect millions of voters in Nigeria, if INEC does not go to the grassroots to educate and sensitize the electorate.

"Our little findings

revealed that a lot of our people here in the North don't know there will be BVAS accreditation before voting. Those that have heard of it scantily, are afraid of being embarrassed during voting, hence the need for INEC to do the needful," Zagi said.

He suggested that traditional, community and religious leaders should be approached by INEC and used as opinion leaders to reach all communities with the sensitization.

The group however, said that it is optimistic that the electoral body is committed to delivering a free, fair and credible polls in 2023.

A'Ibom Restates Commitment To Fixing Agric Feeder Roads

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

Akwa Ibom State Government has said that it is committed to the provision of rural-urban access roads in a renewed move to ease the movement of agricultural produce from rural to urban centres.

State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Offiong Offor made this known at Ikot Ndua Iman, Onna Local Council on Thursday, during the commencement of rural road grading and maintenance by the state government.

Offiong who applauded Governor Udom Emmanuel for his strides in the agric sector also commended other partners in the AK-CARES project for collaborating to empower farmers who were affected by COVID-19.

"Today we are gathered here to flag-off this road grading project cutting across Ikot Ndua Iman and Ikot Annang communities. We know the essence of good roads, as bad roads will hinder free flow of agricultural produce from the rural to urban areas; thus increasing prices of goods. For this reason, Governor Emmanuel thought it wise to open up the roads".

"AK-CARES by my understanding means that, Akwa Ibom State government cares for the entire populace. Governor Emmanuel says that food should be available in the State, in sufficient quantities and for this reason, he has put the machinery in place by providing inputs to farmers, maintaining roads, providing access to finance and capacity development workshops." She said.

Flagging-off the 2.9kms road project, Commissioner for Economic Development & Chairman State Steering Committee, AK-Cares, Mr. Emem Bob explained that the first phase of the feeder roads project which is under Disbursement Linked Indicator 2.2 would take care of roads in ONNA, Itu, Ikot Ekpene, Ibesikpo Asutan, Essien Udim. Okobo and Ini Local Councils.

The second phase Bob stated would cover other local government areas not captured in the previous phase and assured that the first phase would be rounded off by the end of January next year.

State Project Coordinator, FADAMMA, Mr. Richard Sam had earlier said the event was in agreement with the vision of Governor Emmanuel in developing the rural communities.

Sam disclosed that AK-CARES result area 3 comprised of Four Disbursement Linked Indicators including DLI 2.1 made up of Inputs to farmer, DLI 2.2- Feeder Roads, DLI 2.3 – Assets and DLI 2.4- Wet markets while current emphasis has been on DLI 2.2.

el-Rufai Appoints New Chief Of Staff, Others

By ; FUNMI ADERINTO, Kaduna

Governor Nasir el-Rufai has approved the following political appointments of Muhammad Bashir Sa'idu as Chief of Staff. Dr. Shehu Usman Muhammad as Counsellor (Political) and Jamila Haruna as Special

Assistant - Intergovernmental Relations.

According to a statement signed by the Special Adviser to the Governor (Media & Commission) Muiywa Adekeye, December 29, 2022, said Muhammad Bashir Saidu returns as Chief of Staff after serving as Commissioner of Finance

since April 2019.

He joined the government in 2015 as Commissioner of Local Government and was first appointed as Chief of Staff in December 2016.

Dr. Shehu Usman Muhammad has previously served as a permanent secretary and as commissioner in the ministries of Education

and Local Government.

Jamila Haruna graduated with a degree in Economics in 2009 and earned an MBA in Human Resources Management in 2016. She has worked in logistics and as a staff of the Presidential Committee on North East Initiative.

The appointments are with effect from December 28, 2022.

2023: Governor Inuwa Upbeat Of Resounding Victory As Mammoth Crowd Receives APC Campaign Train In Akko **Emir of Akko describes projects executed by Gombe Governor in domain as critical, transformative*

By; JACOB ONJEWU DICKSON

Gombe State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya says the political philosophy of the All Progressives Congress, APC hinges on revamping the economy, provision of critical infrastructure, human capital development, social cohesion and the strengthening of security to deal with emerging threats.

In a statement signed by the Director-General (Press Affairs) Government House Gombe, Ismaila Uba Misilli, he said it is against this backdrop that his administration remains resolute towards the provision of opportunities and incentives for individuals and groups to grow in their chosen endeavours, and maintains its resolve of exploring meaningful avenues that will lead to the social, economic and infrastructural development of the state. The governor stated this in Kumo when his campaign train visited the Palace of the Emir of Akko in 'Day Two' of the APC rally to the local government area to solicit for the support of the royal father ahead of the 2023 general elections.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya told the monarch that the reconstruction of the Kumo General Hospital and the provision of road networks across Akko Local government area was done in accordance with his campaign promises aimed at giving the people a new lease of



life.

He said his administration was able to make its presence felt in all the 114 the wards of the State especially as it affects the provision of quality health care, schools among others.

The Governor explained that his administration has equally constructed a sizeable kilometers of roads to ease social linkages and boost economic activities in the area and the state at large.

Responding, the Emir of Akko, His Royal Highness, Mohammed Umar Atiku thanked Governor Inuwa Yahaya for his people-oriented projects which made it easier for the citizens to engage in economic activities that have advanced the living condition of the people.

The royal father described the projects executed by the administration of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya in Akko Local Government Area

as critical and life-changing and therefore assured the Governor of his Emirate's support and solidarity.

The Commissioner of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Hon. Muhammad Magaji Gettado, while speaking, reeled out some of the projects executed by Inuwa-led administration in Akko Local Government, especially the construction of a brand new General Hospital in Kumo, numerous roads network, modern classroom blocks among others. He therefore assured that with his superlative performance, the Governor needs not campaign in Akko, as the LGA, is a 'no go' area for any opposition.

Shortly after the traditional homage, the campaign train, clad with thousands of APC supporters, traversed the shores of Kumo Central, East, West and North.

In all the political wards

visited, Governor Inuwa Yahaya maintained his upbeat disposition, maintaining that the APC will record a landslide victory in the 2023 general elections from top to bottom.

The Governor enjoined the people of Akko East to channel their electoral energies towards delivering the Candidates of the All Progressive Congress at all levels so that the good policies and programmes of the ruling party which have social and economic dimensions on Nigerians will not be truncated.

Also speaking, the Gombe State Coordinator of Tinubu/Shettima campaign organisation, Dr. Jamilu Ishiyaku Gwamna said the victory of the APC candidates will mean the consolidation of the party's laudable programmes and projects, especially the Kolmani Integrated Development Project.

Ekiti Tribunal Dismisses Oni's Petition, Declares Oyebanji Winner

By: **OLADELE ADEDAYO, Ado-Ekiti**

The Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital on Thursday, upheld the election of Governor Biodun Oyebanji and his Deputy, Mrs. Monisade Afuye.

The Ekiti State Governorship Election, it would be recalled, was held on June 18, 2022.

The Tribunal in a judgment, however, dismissed the petition filed by former governor and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) governorship candidate, Chief Segun Oni, resolving all issues in favour of the defendants.

Oni, who was dissatisfied with the declaration of Oyebanji, who contested on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), filed a petition against the result declared by the electoral umpire in the early hours of June 19.

In the unanimous judgment read by the Chairman of the Tribunal, Justice Wilfred Kpochi with the concurrence of the two other members of the panel, Justice Sa'ad Zadawa and Justice J.A. Atsen, the panel held that "head or tail, the petitioners (Oni and SDP) have failed woefully" to convince the jury to nullify the election that brought Oyebanji to power.

The Tribunal ruled that Oni himself, in his evidence, admitted and agreed that Oyebanji and Afuye were validly nominated and sponsored by their party, hence it cannot set aside their nomination and candidacy as confirmed by his testimony and evidence before it.

The panel had earlier ruled on some motions upon which verdict was pending, before determining the merit of the petition holding that the Petitioners have failed to prove the allegations that Oyebanji and Afuye were not qualified to run for the offices of the Governor and the Deputy Governor respectively.

Respondents in the petition are Oyebanji (1st), APC (2nd), Yobe State Governor, Alhaji Mai Mala Buni in his capacity as the National Chairman of the APC Caretaker/Extraordinary Convention Planning Committee (3rd), INEC (4th) and Afuye (5th).

Oni's petition was based on whether Oyebanji and Afuye were qualified to have contested at the polls; whether they were validly nominated by their party, the APC; whether Mala Buni had the authority to sign their nomination papers and forward same to INEC; whether Afuye possessed the right academic certificates to run for Deputy Governor alleging that they were forged and whether the election was not vitiated by corrupt practices.

The panel ruled against the challenge of the Petitioners (Oni and the SDP) against the January 27 APC primary that produced Oyebanji holding the the Governor and his Deputy were duly and validly nominated by their party (APC) to contest in the June 18 main governorship election.

According to the Tribunal, Oni's averment that the Ekiti APC governorship primary election which produced Oyebanji as the flag bearer was superintended over by the National Caretaker Executive Committee under the leadership of Buni does not hold water as the votes which gave him the mandate were cast by party members and not Mala Buni.

Ruling on Oni's position that Mala Buni and the then Secretary of APC CECPC, Dr. John Akpanudoedehe signing the nomination papers of Oyebanji and Afuye, invalidated their nomination as governorship and deputy governorship candidates respectively, the Tribunal described the petitioner's objection as "lame."

The Tribunal held that the issue of Buni's signing of letter of the party's sponsorship of Oyebanji to INEC in his capacity as the National Chairman of APC CECPC while holding office as Yobe State Governor had been decided by the nation's highest court, the Supreme Court.

The Panel ruled that Supreme Court had held in the case of Eytayo Jegede v INEC describing such an issue as an internal affairs of the party and further held that it is not within the jurisdiction of the Election Petition Tribunal.

The Tribunal held that in deference to the earlier judgment of the Supreme Court, Mala Buni in his capacity as Yobe State Governor cannot be sued as he enjoys constitutional immunity in line with Section 308 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999

The Tribunal said it lacks the propriety to inquire into the role played by Mala Buni in the internal affairs of his party moreso when the case had been settled by both the Supreme Court in the Eytayo Jegede case and the Court of Appeal in the Gboyega Oyetola case which was decided recently.

The Tribunal ruled: "It was the party members who voted at the primary and not the person that signed the nomination papers. The 3rd Respondent (Mala Buni) merely co-signed the letter and formally informed the 4th Respondent (INEC).

"The decision is that of the 2nd Respondent (APC) and not that of the 3rd Respondent (Mala Buni) and the matter has been decided by the Supreme Court. The decision to nominate candidates is jointly carried out by the congress of the party, voting is done by

members.

"The decision is not taken by the National Executive Committee of the political party. The National Executive of the party submitted the names (of the candidates) to the 4th Respondent (INEC), it was a notice to the 4th Respondent, an official communication to the 4th Respondent.

"That issue has been settled by the Supreme Court and we shall be swimming against the tide of the decision of the superior court if we resolve the issue in favour of the Petitioners."

Ruling on Oni's allegation of certificate forgery levelled against Afuye which the Petitioners claimed had disqualified her from running, the Tribunal held that "the Petitioners have a duty to prove that the 5th Respondent (Afuye) does not have valid certificates to stand as deputy governorship candidate.

The Tribunal held that the Petitioners attempted to invoke the issue of forgery as an afterthought and the prayer is invalid by the fact that it was introduced against the 5th Respondent in the Petitioners' additional statement on oath and not contained in the main petition filed.

The Panel noted that the allegation of forgery was raised against Afuye state by Mr Dada Moses Bamidele Petitioners Witness 2 (PW2) and the 1st Petitioner, Oni, who was PW3 after the window for filing of the petition had closed and it cannot be smuggled in with the filing of the additional witness on oath in reply to the Respondents witness on oath.

The Tribunal ruled that by doing so, the Petitioners had acted in breach of Paragraph 11A of their Petition that forbade them from introducing a new matter after the window to do so had lapsed when their petition was filed adding that such an allegation must be proved beyond the reasonable doubt.

The Tribunal ruled that the Petitioners did an incalculable damage to their case by failing to call the examination body, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to give evidence and prove that school certificate of the Deputy Governor was forged adding that evidence given by Bamidele and Oni were hearsay.

"The allegation (against the Deputy Governor) must be proved beyond the reasonable doubt. The next issue for the Petitioners was to have called WAEC to

give evidence hence the evidence of PW2 and PW3 (Bamidele and Oni) will be hearsay even if not swept away by our ruling in an earlier motion. They testified that they had never worked with WAEC," the Tribunal held.

The Tribunal further ruled that the 1st and the 5th Respondents were qualified to run for the offices of the Governor and the Deputy Governor respectively and the testimony of Oni that they were not qualified holds no water as the SDP candidate had admitted while being cross-examined by counsel to the Respondents that the duo (Oyebanji and Afuye) were validly nominated by their political party (the APC).

The Tribunal held that having admitted while giving evidence that Oyebanji and Afuye were validly nominated, Oni's testimony was "inconsistent and self-defeating" with his prayer in his additional statement on oath before the Tribunal that they were not qualified to run.

"The evidence of PW3 (Oni) that he was sponsored by the SDP and that the 1st and the 5th Respondents were sponsored by the APC has sounded a death knell on the petition of the 1st Petitioner (Oni)," the Tribunal held in part.

The Tribunal also dismissed the allegation of corrupt practices across the places where election was held in the election levelled by Oni holding that "it is incumbent on him (Oni) to prove same beyond the reasonable doubt as the allegation was criminal in nature."

Besides, the Panel held that Oni and the SDP failed to call witnesses from the units, wards and local government areas where such alleged corrupt practices to give evidence to prove the alleged corrupt practices maintaining that "such must be proved unit-by-unit, ward-by-ward."

The Tribunal held that since the Petitioners have failed to provide any evidence to disqualify the 1st and the 5th Respondents, they were qualified to contest in the June 18 governorship election and the votes recorded for them and the results declared by the 4th Respondent (INEC) are valid.

The Tribunal further ruled that INEC conducted a free and fair election which was in compliance with the Election Act (as amended) and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 hence it has resolved all issues in favour of the Respondents.

"Head or tail, the Petitioners have woefully failed to convince us to resolve all issues in their favour. We confirmed that the election that returned the 1st and 5th Respondents as Governor and Deputy Governor was conducted in substantial compliance with the Electoral Act and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"The Petition is hereby dismissed," said Justice Zadawa who read the latter part of the judgment.

In the result declared by INEC, Oyebanji of the APC polled 187,057 votes to defeat Oni of the SDP who scored 82,211 while the candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Bisi Kolawole came third with 57,457 votes in an election that was contested by 16

"The Tribunal said it lacks the propriety to inquire into the role played by Mala Buni in the internal affairs of his party moreso when the case had been settled by both the Supreme Court in the Eytayo Jegede case and the Court of Appeal in the Gboyega Oyetola case which was decided recently."

Police Cybercrime Centre Busts Syndicate Of Cryptocurrency Fraud, OBT, Apprehends 2 Suspects

By; RAYMOND TEDUNJAYE, Lagos.

Operatives of the Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre (NPF-NCCC) has successfully busted two suspects responsible for computer-related fraud, identity theft, cryptocurrency fraud, and obtaining money by false pretence. The duo run a syndicate specializing in defrauding unsuspecting victims from foreign countries by assuming appealing identities of other persons and promising them romantic relationships, under the pretext of which they defraud their victims. In the extant case, a report on their activities was received from Incheon Metropolitan Police Agency in Korea through the Interpol National Central Bureau that in May, 2021, the suspects approached the victim, one Baek Seong-hee, a Korean national, via Kakaotalk, a mobile messaging application used majorly in South Korea, in the guise of being a member of the US Armed Forces stationed in Yemen.

The Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi who made the disclosure in a release on Tuesday, stated that the suspect used the pretext of a romantic

relationship and defrauded the victim of 259,637,941 Korean Won (KRW) worth of cryptocurrency equivalent to about 91 million Nigerian Naira.

Subsequent investigations led the NPF-NCCC to the arrest of the duo of Odia Theophilus aged 24 and Ebo Junior Success aged 25 at their hideout in Benin City, Edo State. The suspects confessed to being part of a syndicate responsible for these crimes and stated their roles as accomplices who provide bank accounts for fraudsters in furtherance of their nefarious activities.

The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, NEAPS, fdc, CFR, has lauded the efforts of the Head, NPF-NCCC, DCP Uche Ifeanyi Henry, in ensuring a clampdown on cybercrime related offences.

"The IGP similarly extolled the collaboration being enjoyed with other police agencies worldwide via the Interpol NCB platform stressing its importance in tackling transnational crimes.

"Suspects will be charged to court upon conclusion of investigations", the Force spokesperson added.



One of the suspects

Akeredolu's Commissioner, Ologbese, Honoured By Command School

**Dedicates award to Gov*

By; BAYO AKAMO, Ibadan

Ondo State Commissioner for Regional Integration and Diaspora Relations, Prince Boye Ologbese, has been honoured with the Impact Maker Award of Ex Commando 1994 set Alumni of Command Day School, Ojo, Lagos. Receiving the award at the 2022 End of Year event of the alumni of Command Day Secondary School (CDSS), Prince Ologbese said he dedicates the

honour to the Executive Governor of Ondo State, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu, SAN.

The decision to honour the commissioner was communicated to Governor Akeredolu through a letter signed by the president of CDSS '94 Set Alumni, Dr. Kunle Megbuwawon; and Secretary, Funmi Ogundare, dated December 22, 2022.

Titled, "Award To Honourable Commissioner For

Regional Integration And Diaspora Relations," the letter stated that Ologbese had distinguished himself as an alumnus of the institution.

"The Alumni Association of Command Day Secondary School (CDSS) 94 set, a body saddled with the objectives of promoting unity and fostering relationship amongst its members, will be holding its 2022 End of Year party on Monday 26th.

"The body will be giving awards to members who

have distinguished themselves in ensuring the development of their Alma Mata and members. To this end, it will be honoring one of its own, Prince Boye Ologbese, with the Outstanding Award of Excellence," the letter read in part.

Ologbese, thus, promised to be more committed to the alumni and ensure he gives back to the school.

"I dedicate the award to the Executive Governor of Ondo State, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu, SAN, CON.



Ondo State Commissioner for Regional Integration and Diaspora Relations, Prince Boye Ologbese (left), and Vice Principal, Academics of Command Day Secondary School (CDSS), Mrs. Olagunju Alero Felicia, when the commissioner was being presented with the award in Ojo, Lagos

How Explosions At Ohinoy's Okene Palace In Kogi Almost Marred Buhari's Visit

By; ADAMA JOHN, Lokoja

There was pandemonium in Okene in the early hours of Thursday as the palace of the paramount traditional ruler of Kogi central was rocked by explosions. This came at the time

when President Muhammadu Buhari was on official visit to the state to inaugurate some key projects executed by the government of Yahaya Adoza Bello.

Our correspondent gathered that the explosions occurred around 9am on

Thursday, leaving four dead and structures destroyed.

The cause of the explosion was not immediately ascertained but unconfirmed sources said that it could be a bomb or the transformer within the vicinity of the

magnificent Azad Palace in Okene.

The Police Command Public Relations Officer, William Ayah when called to confirm the story, neither picked his call for confirmation nor text message to acknowledge the missed call.

Tatari Ali Polytechnic Presents Certificates To 20 Private Security Agents

By; SADIQ ABUBAKAR, Maiduguri

Abubakar Tatari Ali State Polytechnic Bauchi has presented certificates to all the 20 selected and accredited participants as members of the Agents Association of Nigeria (PSAAN) that participated at a 3-day training on the role of private security agents and other volunteer security groups fighting insecurity in the north east of the country.

Presenting the certificates to the private security personnel/participants on Wednesday, the Crime Prevention and Control Training Coordinator of Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Bauchi, Dr. Mohammed Suleiman Awwal expressed appreciation of the polytechnic for getting the opportunity when it requested for the training programme two years ago from the North East Development Commission (NEDC).

He also said that immediately the approval was given, the institution commenced the training programme for the private security outfits in all the six states of the North East zone, carrying out and coordinating the

training programme successfully. The training coordinator added that the prevailing security challenges in the North East, coupled with the devastating effects on lives and property, informed the three days training which was funded by the NEDC, while thanking the management and coordinating staff of the commission for the training programme which he described as the first of its kind in the zone.

He noted that one of the purposes of the training workshop is to assemble the private security agents together to rub minds on the security situation in the North East and for them to discuss with experts and other security professionals, brainstorm on the issues and challenges of insecurity generally in the zone.

Dr. Awwal however, pledged to produce a white paper on the training programme, being the first school; to introduce or offer crime prevention and control as well as criminology in any institution in the North East from the Department of Crime Prevention and Control, while

calling on individuals and organizations to patronize the institution. Describing the training programme as an acclaimed one trending in the world, Dr. Mohammed Musa further thanked the sponsors of the security training programme, NEDC management and coordinating staff of the training programme, adding that the training is also targeted at trainers in order to train the trainees in their communities. A resource person, Malam Musa Yakubu from Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Bauchi, explained further that the training was conducted peacefully and smoothly without much hitches, despite the fact that the programme was aimed at synergizing, strengthening and consolidating on the security issues and problems in the North East to the training programme, share ideas and experiences between the formal and informal security agencies in the zone and country at large.

He also explained that the training included conduct of intelligence gathering and

elaborate really exposed them and created important awareness and knowledge on insecurity, terrorism, insurgency, who is a terrorist, justice, crime, litigation and many others. The participants utilize what they learn during the period, relating same to others whenever they are back home in the society in order to enhance peace, unity, progress and development of the society among the people and communities of the North East.

Speaking to journalists during the training, the Private Security Agents Group Head, Ali Yakubu expressed delight and appreciation to the organizers for training them and giving them opportunity to build themselves and grow as well as others.

He said the training

really exposed them and created important awareness and knowledge on insecurity, terrorism, insurgency, who is a terrorist, justice, crime, litigation and many others. The participants utilize what they learn during the period, relating same to others whenever they are back home in the society in order to enhance peace, unity, progress and development of the society among the people and communities of the North East.



Our Money and the Big Story that is Never Told

By Jibrin Ibrahim

I wish I knew the real story of the naira redesign narrative. Recall that the CBN had on December 6 announced a new policy limiting over-the-counter cash withdrawals by individuals and corporate entities and asking Nigerians to accept a new reality – that future life would be spent in a cashless society. Then on Wednesday, the amounts were raised following concerns that Nigeria is a cash society and tens of millions of Nigerians are without bank accounts and have no alternative mode of payment for personal needs and petty businesses. The Central Bank has one of the best research departments in the country and certainly know the low level of banking outreach in the country. Why then did it insist on immediate implementation within weeks, over Christmas holidays and an impending election? What is the story?

The upward review comes after the National Assembly asked the bank to considerably adjust the withdrawal limits in response to public outcry on the policy. The new directive now allows individuals to withdraw up to N500,000 weekly and organisations, N5 million weekly. The initial limit was N100,000 for individuals. The Central Bank suddenly: “Recognizes the vital role that cash plays in supporting underserved and rural communities and will ensure an inclusive approach as it implements the transition to a more cashless society.” They knew this all along so what is the story?

“Maybe the real story is the one being shouted from the roof tops by Honourable Gudaji Kazaure, a member of the House of Representatives, who has raised the alarm about the theft of stamp duty proceeds of N89 trillion. He says that the same Governor Emeziele is essentially the beneficiary of the biggest fraud in Nigeria's history as the CBN only sends 60% of the stamp duty revenue to the government, with the remaining 40% going to individual wallets, and claimed that the apex bank has not remitted that money as tax.”

We know there is a story that is not being told because since the matter came up, President Buhari has been openly very

supportive of this cashless society policy and defended Governor Emeziele openly. At the same time, the secret police that works for the President, the DSS, has been making desperate attempts to arrest the CBN Governor for terrorism financing and he barely escaped their fangs as a judge refused to issue an arrest warrant to lock him up. He now appears to be in hiding.

Meanwhile, numerous sponsored “civil society” organisations that had not been known to exist previously have emerged holding mega press conferences stating politicians are behind the arrest attempt because the real goal of the policy is to deny politicians the cash to bribe voters, and for this sin, Emeziele must go to jail. The government has neither confirmed nor denied why Emeziele must go to jail. Someone should tell us the real story.

Maybe the real story is the one being shouted from the roof tops by Honourable Gudaji Kazaure, a member of the House of Representatives, who has raised the alarm about the theft of stamp duty proceeds of N89 trillion. He says that the same Governor Emeziele is essentially the beneficiary of the biggest fraud in Nigeria's history as the CBN only sends 60% of the stamp duty revenue to the government, with the remaining 40% going to individual wallets, and claimed that the apex bank has not remitted that money as tax.

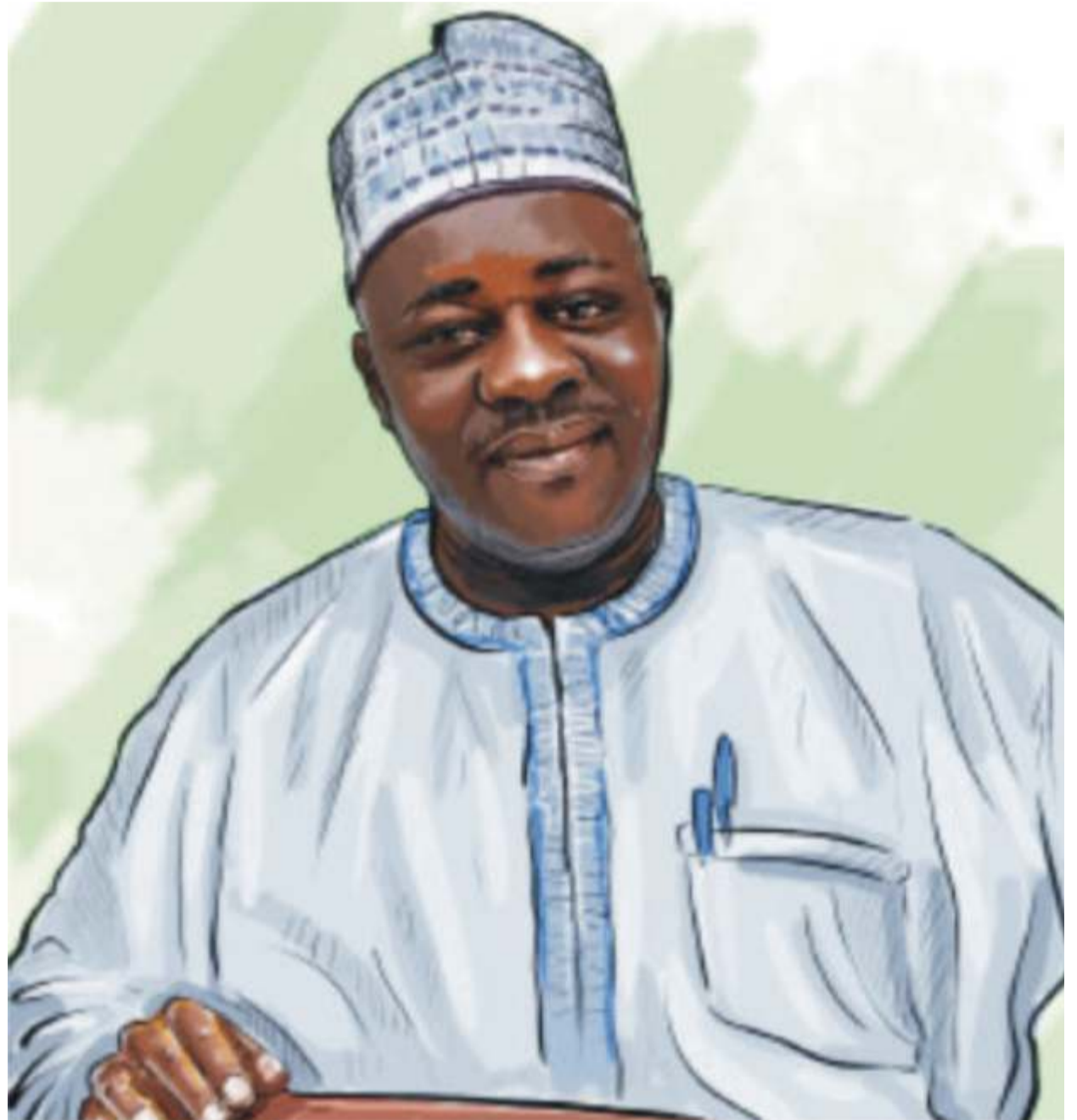
He told us that President Muhammadu Buhari had established a presidential committee in June of this year to collect stamp duty from 2015 to the present, with him serving as secretary because of concerns about the enormous sums that have not been submitted. The President, he says, wants to pay off the country's obligations before leaving office and that the money in question would have gone a great way toward doing so. He then expressed his sadness that he has been prevented from seeing the President to make his report so we Nigerians should tell the President to see him.

I confess I don't understand. Even his boss, Femi Gbajabiamila, Speaker of the House of Representatives, spoke with State House correspondents after a private

meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari at the presidential villa in Abuja on Tuesday saying they know nothing about this story.

Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), Mele Kyari corroborated the Tony Elumelu claim that Nigeria is losing 95 per cent of

his oil was being stolen and he could not even service the debt he had incurred from banks to buy the well so he had to spill the beans. That was when the



Nonetheless, believe me, there must be a big story here too that someone should tell us.

The big story of the year was told by businessman and Chairman Heirs Holdings, Mr Tony Elumelu, way back in March when he bemoaned the fact that Nigeria was losing over 95 per cent of its oil production to thieves. “How can we be losing over 95 per cent of oil production to thieves? Look at the Bonny Terminal that should be receiving over 200,000bpd barrels of crude oil daily, instead it receives less than 3,000 barrels, leading the operator, Shell to declare force majeure.”

The percentage loss is so large that it should have been the big story long before Elumelu tweeted it out so I thought it was a farce. Then, the Group Managing Director of the

oil production to thieves at Bonny Terminal in Rivers State. How could Nigeria's biggest story emerge from an Elumelu Twitter thread on March? Mr Kyari then further disclosed that the country lost \$4 billion to theft at the rate of 200,000 barrels per day in 2021. He added that the country already lost \$1.5 billion so far in 2022 because the vandalism has escalated.

I was in shock, in every other country in the world where the main revenue source is compromised to this level, it would be the only item in the news, in the agenda of the President, National Assembly and security services.

Then the side story that emerged was that Mr Elumelu push out the story because he himself had bought a small oil well only to realise almost all

Nigerian Government realised they too had to confess the country had become bankrupt due to the unbelievably high magnitude of oil theft. We may have had to wait for the next government to come in next year before hearing the story. If Nigeria had become bankrupt and those in charge of Nigeria would not tell the story, it must have been because of the real story – there is a long list of people in government benefitting from the theft.

Ibrahim is a professor of Political Science and development consultant/expert, and Senior Fellow of the Centre for Democracy and Development. He is also the Chair of the Editorial Board of Abuja-based online newspaper, PREMIUM TIMES.

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ADVERT RATES FROM JANUARY 1, 2022

SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	395,176.32	29,638.22	424,814.54	323,433.00	24,257.48	347,690.48
HALF PAGE	248,970.00	18,672.75	267,642.75	203,175.00	15,238.13	218,413.13
QUARTER PAGE	164,670.00	12,350.25	177,020.25	94,724.44	7,104.33	101,828.77
10" x 6 Col	364,320.00	27,324.00	391,644.00	245,005.20	18,375.39	263,380.59
10" x 5 Col	333,960.00	25,047.00	359,007.00	224,588.11	16,844.11	241,432.22
10" x 4 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
10" x 3 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
9" x 6 Col	327,888.00	24,591.60	352,479.60	220,504.68	16,537.85	237,042.53
9" x 5 Col	273,240.00	20,493.00	293,733.00	183,753.90	13,781.54	197,535.44
9" x 4 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
9" x 3 Col	163,944.00	12,295.80	176,239.80	110,252.34	8,268.93	118,521.27
8" x 6 Col	291,456.00	21,859.20	313,315.20	196,004.16	14,700.31	210,704.47
8" x 5 Col	242,880.00	18,216.00	261,096.00	163,336.80	12,250.26	175,587.06
8" x 4 Col	194,304.00	14,572.80	208,876.80	130,669.44	9,800.21	140,469.65
8" x 3 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
7" x 6 Col	255,024.00	19,126.80	274,150.80	171,503.64	12,862.77	184,366.41
7" x 5 Col	212,520.00	15,939.00	228,459.00	142,919.70	10,718.98	153,638.68
7" x 4 Col	170,016.00	12,751.20	182,767.20	114,335.76	8,575.18	122,910.94
6" x 6 Col	218,592.00	16,394.40	234,986.40	147,003.12	11,025.23	158,028.35
6" x 5 Col	182,160.00	13,662.00	195,822.00	122,502.60	9,187.70	131,690.30
6" x 4 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
6" x 3 Col	109,296.00	8,197.20	117,493.20	73,501.56	5,512.62	79,014.18
6" x 2 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
5" x 5 Col	151,800.00	11,385.00	163,185.00	102,085.50	7,656.41	109,741.91
5" x 4 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
5" x 3 Col	91,080.00	6,831.00	97,911.00	61,251.30	4,593.85	65,845.15
5" x 2 Col	60,720.00	4,554.00	65,274.00	40,834.20	3,062.57	43,896.77
4" x 6 Col	145,728.00	10,929.60	156,657.60	98,002.08	7,350.16	105,352.24
4" x 5 Col	121,440.00	9,108.00	130,548.00	81,668.40	6,125.13	87,793.53
4" x 4 Col	97,152.00	7,286.40	104,438.40	65,334.72	4,900.10	70,234.82
4" x 3 Col	72,864.00	5,464.80	78,328.80	49,001.04	3,675.08	52,676.12
4" x 2 Col	48,576.00	3,643.20	52,219.20	32,667.36	2,450.05	35,117.41
3" x 3 Col	54,648.00	4,098.60	58,746.60	36,750.78	2,756.31	39,507.09
3" x 2 Col	36,432.00	2,732.40	39,164.40	24,500.52	1,837.54	26,338.06
2" x 2 Col	24,288.00	1,821.60	26,109.60	16,333.68	1,225.03	17,558.71
1" x 1 Col	6,072.00	455.40	6,527.40	4,083.42	306.26	4,389.68

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- Advertisers will be surcharged 20% of the applicable rate where artworks are not provided.
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TECHNICAL DATA

6 COLUMNS

Depth	38.1 (CM)	Depth	-	15 (Inches)
Width	25.4 (CM)	Width	-	10 (Inches)

POLITICAL RATE

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	461,622.86	34,621.71	496,244.57
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
FRONT PAGE STRIP	787,474.29	59,060.57	846,534.86
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	420,889.54	31,566.72	452,456.26
FULL PAGE (COLOUR)	465,967.54	34,947.57	500,915.11
FULL PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	364,037.14	27,302.79	391,339.93
HALF PAGE (COLOUR)	303,285.71	22,746.43	326,032.14
HALF PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	247,500.00	18,562.50	266,062.50
QUARTER PAGE (COLOUR)	203,877.14	15,290.79	219,167.93
QUARTER PAGE (BLACK AND WHITE)	111,692.74	8,376.96	120,069.70

LOOSE INSERTS

S/NO	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Handling for the first 40 copies	120,000.00	9,000.00	129,000.00
2	Per 1000 Copies (1 Page)	28,000.00	2,100.00	30,100.00
3	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine 2-8 Pages)	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
4	Per 1000 Copies (Magazine above 8 pages)	80,000.00	6,000.00	86,000.00

CLASSIFIEDS

S/NO	POSITION	SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
1	Registration of Trustees	3" x 2 Coils	6,857.14	514.29	7,371.43
2	Loss of Documents	2" x 2 Coils	4,400.00	330.00	4,730.00
3	Change of Name	Per Box	2,000.00	-	2,000.00

SPECIAL POSITION

SPACE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL WRAP AROUND	6,750,000.00	506,250.00	7,256,250.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	4,500,000.00	337,500.00	4,837,500.00
PAGE 2 OR 3	400,000.00	30,000.00	430,000.00
PAGE 4 OR 5	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
PAGE 6 OR 7	325,000.00	24,375.00	349,375.00
FRONT PAGE MAST HEAD EAR PIECE	225,000.00	16,875.00	241,875.00
FRONT PAGE SOLUS	312,500.00	23,437.50	335,937.50
FRONT PAGE STRIP	375,000.00	28,125.00	403,125.00
BACK PAGE EAR PIECE	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00
BACK PAGE STRIP	250,000.00	18,750.00	268,750.00
CENTRE SPREAD (COLOUR)	837,500.00	62,812.50	900,312.50
DOUBLE SPREAD (COLOUR)	700,000.00	52,500.00	752,500.00
CENTRE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	575,000.00	43,125.00	618,125.00
DOUBLE SPREAD (BLACK & WHITE)	550,000.00	41,250.00	591,250.00
FRONT PAGE (10" X 6)	3,250,000.00	243,750.00	3,493,750.00
ROP STRIP (COLOUR)	125,000.00	9,375.00	134,375.00
ROP STRIP (BLACK & WHITE)	85,000.00	6,375.00	91,375.00

PROPERTY AND IT, VACANCY, AGRIC, AND EVENTS/EDUCATION RATE

SPACE	COLOUR			BLACK AND WHITE		
	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
7 X 3	108,571.43	8,142.86	116,714.29	62,857.14	4,714.29	67,571.43
6 X 3	102,857.14	7,714.29	110,571.43	57,142.86	4,285.71	61,428.57
6 X 2	45,428.57	3,407.14	48,835.71	32,285.71	2,421.43	34,707.14
5 X 3	53,428.57	4,007.14	57,435.71	37,428.57	2,807.14	40,235.71
5 X 2	42,571.43	3,192.86	45,764.29	24,857.14	1,864.29	26,721.43
4 X 3	47,714.29	3,578.57	51,292.86	30,571.43	2,292.86	32,864.29
4 X 2	33,142.86	2,485.71	35,628.57	21,714.29	1,628.57	23,342.86
3 X 3	34,571.43	2,592.86	37,164.29	23,142.86	1,735.71	24,878.57
3 X 2	22,857.14	1,714.29	24,571.43	14,285.71	1,071.43	15,357.14
2 X 2	16,000.00	1,200.00	17,200.00	9,142.86	685.71	9,828.57
2 X 1	7,714.28	578.57	8,292.85	4,975.71	373.18	5,348.89

Apes Obey, But No Free Lunch in Washington

By Owei Lakemfa

THE United States invited or summoned 49 African presidents to Washington, DC, for a summit from December 13-15, 2022. There was 100 per cent attendance. However, it unilaterally excluded six African countries, and none of the invited countries protested this exclusion.

The body language from the African presidents was that everybody was on their own, therefore, there could be no talk about the African Brotherhood. The US tried to rationalise its decision. For instance, it claimed that Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Sudan were not invited because their leaders did not emerge through elections.

“The US was not interested in the priorities of Africa, such as building basic infrastructure like railways, roads, seaports, or human capital development. Rather, they were mainly the same priorities the colonialists had when they came to Africa; exploitation of African minerals, preferably in their raw form with no value-addition, and markets for their goods and services. The only difference is that in this case, no human cargo is involved.”

If this were true, why was Chad's leader, General Mahamat Deby who overthrew the government on April 20, 2021, and dissolved the elected parliament, invited? In which general election was factional Libyan President Mohammed al-Menfi elected?

The simple reason is that these four countries have spiralled out of the control of the West. Guinea's leader, Mamady Doumbouya, overthrew President Alpha Conde on September 5, 2021, and has refused to conform even after sanctions were imposed. After Malian leader, Colonel Assimi Goita, overthrew President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, he accused the West of looting the resources of the country and prolonging the war against terrorists.

He then took the unprecedented step of bringing in Russian-led mercenaries. He had crossed the red line. It is that same line that Burkinabe leader, Captain Ibrahim Traore, is accused of

crossing. As for Sudan, it is not so much how the government emerged, as that it has so far refused to hand over former President Omar Hassan al-Bashir to the West for persecution.

This was what Cote d'Ivoire did with former President Laurent Gbagbo and, Nigeria with former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who was on an African Union-guaranteed exile. Since Eritrea has normal constitutional elections, the US concocted a different reason for barring that country; that their diplomatic relations are not fully consummated.

This is laughable as the US has its embassy at 179, Alaa Street, Asmara. The Americans did not even bother to give an excuse for barring the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara), which has been a full member of the African Union since 1982. For the arrogant American establishment, that country simply does not exist!

As is often the case with such summits, the African countries, which outnumbered the US 49-1, had no agenda of their own. The US was at liberty to set one. What it did was set aside the first day for papers, NGOs, gist, banter, and photo opportunities. On the second day, which was the primary reason for the summit, the Americans divided the African countries into basic units and set up teams of officials and businessmen and women in each country.

This was called the US-Africa Business Forum, or USABF. As the Africans signed billion-dollar contracts within minutes, I wondered whether these contracts had been previously studied by both sides. If it had, why empty the African continent of all its leaders at once, just to come and sign agreements that had been reached previously?

I do not know how many African presidents at the summit truly believed that it was a meeting of “partners” or that the Americans were being truthful when they claimed it was all about increased cooperation with Africa on shared global priorities. Almost all the agreements were signed, but the summit outcome put a lie to this. The US was not interested in the

priorities of Africa, such as building basic infrastructure like railways, roads, seaports, or human capital development. Rather, they were mainly the same priorities the colonialists had when they came to Africa; exploitation of African minerals, preferably in their raw form with no value-addition, and markets for their goods and services. The only difference is that in this case, no human cargo is involved.

“In playing the role of the House Negro, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo came to the summit to snitch on its neighbour, Burkina Faso. He reported to the Americans: “Burkina Faso has now made an arrangement to, like Mali, use Wagner (Russian) forces. I believe a mine in southern Burkina has been allocated to them as a form of payment for their services... Russian mercenaries are at the northern border” of Ghana. Let's assume, without conceding, that Akufo-Addo's claims are true; how is that the business of the US? Is it to get America to invade Burkina Faso for ditching the double-dealing French forces for Russian forces?”

The detailed agreements reveal that America will acquire cobalt, copper, and nickel mines in Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania; Angola will award contracts to Americans for bridge construction; South Africa will assemble more Ford cars; Nigeria will purchase American energy storage systems; and, overall, America will fund the export of goods and services to Africa. President Joe Biden was not joking when, in his remarks at the Summit, he told the African presidents: “Look, this forum is about building connections. It's about closing deals.” And the deals that were closed were 95 per cent in favour of the US.

The summit reminds me of the 19th Century American salons where, with the purchase of



drinks, customers were given free lunches. But unknown to the latter, the cost of the 'free' lunch had been factored into the drinks. So, there was an implicit cost in the 'free lunch'. This gave rise to the American saying: 'There ain't no such thing as a free lunch.'

The summit was not without its theatrics. Ghana, an official satellite of the US which also hosts the American military base in West Africa, sees itself as the supervisor of its American masters in Africa. It is what, during slavery in America, was called 'The House Negro'. These were slaves who lived in the slave master's house eating crumbs from the table and who loved the master than the master loved himself. They were also the eyes of the master watching over those slaving in the fields, who were called the 'Field Negro'.

In playing the role of the House Negro, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo came to the summit to snitch on its neighbour, Burkina Faso. He reported to the Americans: “Burkina Faso has now made an arrangement to, like Mali, use Wagner (Russian) forces. I believe a mine in southern

Burkina has been allocated to them as a form of payment for their services... Russian mercenaries are at the northern border” of Ghana. Let's assume, without conceding, that Akufo-Addo's claims are true; how is that the business of the US? Is it to get America to invade Burkina Faso for ditching the double-dealing French forces for Russian forces?

What was most astonishing to me is that Akufo-Addo did not raise this issue with his neighbour and did not, even as a lawyer, confirm the veracity of his claims before rushing to Washington. In the Lagos of my youth, whenever labourers were gathered, or people had to lift heavy objects, the cry “Oshebe!” would ring out and the others would answer “Eh!” Then the work began in earnest. I learnt that this was how the colonial supervisors ordered the colonised to work, especially when the work is forced or cheap labour. I also later realised that the word “Oshebe!” was the corruption of the words “Apes obey”. In a partnership, our duty as Africans cannot just be to obey task masters.

Gridlock In Ikot Ekpene, Uyo As OBA Returns Home From Correctional Centre

By; PATRICK TITUS, Uyo

Activities from the Raffia City of Ikot Ekpene to Uyo, the state capital, came to a halt for hours on Thursday December 29, 2022, as thousands of supporters of Senator Bassey Albert Akpan aka OBA, lined both sides of the road in ecstatic reception as the Senator returned home on bail from the Correctional Centre. Recall OBA, who is the 2023 governorship candidate of Young Progressives Party (YPP) in the state, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment at the Correctional Centre in Ikot Ekpene on December 1, 2022 by Justice Agatha Okeke of Federal High Court, Uyo on a six Count Charge including money laundering levelled against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). He was granted bail by an Appeal Court sitting in Port Harcourt, but a normal journey of about 45 minutes turned to over five hours from Ikot Ekpene to Uyo, because of the unprecedented length of the convoy.

The event witnessed a gridlock and near stampede from even the Correctional facility as men of the Federal Road Safety Corps, the Police and Crowd Control Personnel, had a tough time directing the unprecedented crowd.

At the Ikot Ekpene Plaza, the heart of Ikot Ekpene, it became a

total lockdown for about 20 minutes, as leaves-wielding admirers besieged there to greet him.

Another crowd of excited leaves-wielding crowd formed a major gridlock at the popular Itak Junction, saluting OBA with shouts of "Daddy oyoyo". They followed the YPP gubernatorial candidate straight to the city of Uyo.

At Ibom Plaza, the heart of Uyo township, it was another total lockdown when all commercial transporters and myriads of admirers besieged the popular spot,

joining the convoy of the lawmaker to OBA's multipurpose recreational facility, Ifa, Oron road.

At Ifa, OBA and his team went into a moment of supplication and appreciation to God for his mercies, protection and safe return of the Senator, who is a



member representing Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District at the Senate.

Addressing the crowd, Mrs Imaobong Albert, thanked the people for their love and encouraged them to be steadfast, stating that even God has given man the freedom to exercise his

will.

She told them that Akwa Ibom belongs to them all and that they have a right to choose who they want to govern them; assuring that her husband will ensure the welfare and well-being of all Akwa Ibomites.

Equally, the chairman of

campaign council, Sir Emem Akpabio, and the Director General, Pastor Sunny Ibuot, expressed the appreciation of the council to the teeming crowd.

They also told the people to ensure the manifestation of God's will by voting for OBA on the Election Day.

Ignore Few Inconsistent, Selfish Igbo Elites Fueling Anti-Obi Campaign, SERG Tells Nigerians

Contd from Page 24

administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, stressing that it is only through President Buhari that the quest for Igbo presidency can be actualized.

"Arthur Eze, who is the founder and chairman of oil exploration company, Atlas Oranto Petroleum, made the call in Abakaliki during Buhari's visit to the state in 2017.

"At the end of the day, the Governor David Umahi he was positioning for President got disappointed when he didn't get support from Mr. President to emerge the presidential candidate of APC, despite dumping his party, the Peoples Democratic Party to join APC in anticipation that President Buhari will endorse him.

"The same game is on ahead of the 2023 presidential election, and this time, Anambra State

Governor, Prof. Charles Chukwuma Soludo is the bait they are using to deceive a few Igbo elites that a support for APC or PDP in the presidential election will ensure that a President of Nigeria of Igbo extraction will be made possible whenever the PDP or APC candidate may have finished his tenure.

"If the support of the likes of Arthur Eze and David Umahi for APC did not translate into a support for an Igbo to emerge Presidential candidate of the APC in 2023, which is what is fair and just, it will be unthinkable to believe that the emergence of an Igbo as president will be possible as being promised over the years.

"Nigerians are fully aware that it is unjust, unfair and devoid of equity for another Northerner to succeed President Muhammadu

Buhari in 2023. How can a Muslim northerner replace a Muslim northerner in 2023? Is it just? Is it fair? Is equity not lacking in that?

"Nigerians of good conscience know that PDP unjustly denied the Igbos the presidential ticket contrary to its zoning arrangement as enshrined in the party's constitution.

"In the same vein, it is unfair and unjust to the South East for a Yoruba southerner to succeed President Buhari after Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba, completed an eight-year tenure as President and the Yoruba has a sitting Vice-President who would have completed his eight years in 2023.

"As for Senator Adolphus Wabara who claimed that Alhaji Atiku Abubakar will hand over to an Igbo, how can that be when no South East man or woman

was good enough for the position of a Vice-President in Atiku's planned government in 2023?

"Is Senator Wabara telling us that an Atiku who desperately and deliberately usurped the turn of South East in his party and ensured the total desecration of the provision of the PDP constitution on zoning will now hand over to a South East person after his tenure?

"In 2019, Atiku Abubakar enjoyed a total support of the Igbos but he paid the Igbos back by blocking every possibility of a South Easterner emerging presidential candidate or even a vice presidential candidate of the PDP. So, where is his professed love for Igbos?

"Therefore, we are happy that the 2023 presidential election has become a clear tool in the hand of God and some individuals who hate Nigeria and love only themselves are being exposed on daily basis.

"We're equally happy that people of good conscience across the country, who are obviously in the majority, are rooting for justice and equity, which is what the presidential bid of Peter Obi represents.

"It is a quest for true unity, peace and prosperity of Nigeria as a country.

"Nigerians have seen that Peter Obi is competent, prepared and divinely favoured to win the 2023 presidential election and they are set to actualise it.

"Peter Obi himself has on several occasions, urged Nigerians to vote for him, as a Nigerian, not because he is an Igbo man.

"That is a man who has a heart of a true leader and ready to bring about a new Nigeria where peace and justice shall truly reign for the benefit of Nigerians from all works of life, irrespective of political party affiliation or religious beliefs.

"Peter Obi represents the true Nigerian spirit, not the selfishness of the leaders who have kept the country in captivity over the years for personal benefits", the SERG stated.

Nigeria Without Teachers

By; PRINCE CHARLES DICKSON
Ph.D

I know the biggest crime is just to throw up your hands and say "This has nothing to do with me, I just want to live as comfortably as I can." ~ Ani DiFranco.

Dog wey wan lost no dey hear owner whistle.

I want to end the year 2022 in this manner. A #BIGTHANKYOU to Lawrence Njoku (Enugu), Gordi Udeajah (Abia), Charles Ogugbuaja, (Owerri), Uzoma Nzeagwu (Awka), Obinna Nwaoku (Port Harcourt), Monday Osayande (Asaba), Ayodele Afolabi (Ado Ekiti), Rotimi Agboluaje (Ibadan) and Adewale Momoh (Akure) all of Guardian and all media practitioners that put in the shift to tell stories that we don't want to hear and yet we know. Writing under the caption As the year ends... Sad tales from states over unpaid salaries, arrears.

The highlight was—

Imo teachers yet to be paid two and half years

Delta teachers receive old salary

In Rivers, teachers not promoted in seven years

Ondo teachers drive Bolt, Uber to survive

Ekiti owes four months

Rufus Giwa Poly lecturers owed 11 months

I will pick the "koko" of the matter because as usual we will go ahead like nothing has been said or written.

In Abia State, hundreds of public school teachers have not received their salaries since October 2018. The Guardian gathered that teachers are now living in abject poverty, which, invariably, has affected their performances in class. Already, public secondary and primary schools have been closed down for months over the state government's inability to pay teachers' salaries.

According to sources, secondary school teachers are owed 14 months; state college of education (technical) 27 months and Abia State Polytechnic 30 months.

Others include, Abia State University seven months, primary school teachers seven months, state college of health sciences and management four months, pensions between 14 and 24 months, gratuities not paid for over 15 years and unpaid leave allowances from 2018 to 2020.

In Imo State, the same fate has befallen teachers. Since February 2020, they have not received their salaries. The governor, Hope Uzodimma, on assumption of office in January 2020, ordered suspension of teachers' salaries.

In Enugu state, they declared an indefinite strike on July 27, this year, over inability of the state government to pay the N30, 000 minimum wage, primary school teachers in Enugu had always received their full salary.

Ekiti state teachers have expressed mixed reactions over backlogs of unpaid salaries and other allowances. The state university teachers described the situation as near hopeless, wondering when their nine months' salary arrears



would be paid, while accusing the government of paying lip service to education funding. Ondo can brag that they are owing 'only' two months.

Rivers, Anambra, Delta, Oyo were not owing, but had issues, from non-promotion of the teachers, to refusal to employ new teachers or over non-implementation of N30, 000 minimum wage to primary school teachers. In this list is Kogi state that pays a percentage salary, rather than full.

Now before we start blaming the government and all the hullabaloo, a cursory look into the International Labour Organisation's Global Wage Report 2022–23 tracks the horrendous collapse of real wages for billions of people around the planet. The gaping distance between the incomes and wealth of 99% of the world's population from the incomes and wealth of the billionaires and near-trillionaires who make up the richest 1% is appalling. In Nigeria, it is a case of priority and a deliberate act and art now mastered by politicians to leave the populace uneducated.

If you take a walk in any city on the planet, not just in the poorer nations, you will find larger and larger clusters of housing that are congested with destitution. They go by many names: angwa, tudun wada, ajegunle, nyayan, bastis, bidonville, daldongneh, favelas, gecekundu, kampung kumuh, slums, and Sodom and Gomorrah. Here, billions of people struggle to survive in conditions that are unnecessary in our age of massive social wealth and innovative technology. But the near-trillionaires seize this social wealth and prolong their half-century tax strike against governments, which paralyzes public finances and enforces permanent austerity on the working class. In Nigeria, teachers bear the brunt, they suffer it like there is no tomorrow.

The constricting squeeze of austerity defines the world of the bastis and the favelas as people constantly struggle to overcome the obstinate realities of hunger and poverty, a near absence of drinking water and sewage systems, and a shameful lack of education and medical care. In these bidonvilles and slums, people are forced to create new forms of everyday survival and new forms of belief in a future for themselves on this planet. In Nigeria, the dog has simply refused to adhere to the call of her master. In this context of immense poverty and social fragmentation, people turn to different kinds of popular religions for relief. There are practical reasons for this turn of events, of course, since churches, mosques, and temples provide food and education as well as places for community gatherings and activities for children. Where the state mostly appears in the form of the police, the urban poor prefer to take refuge in charity organisations that are often connected in some way or another to religious orders. But these institutions do not draw people in only with hot meals or evening songs; there is a spiritual allure that should not be minimised.

We are playing with fire and ask me where are we, as a nation educationally? I would tell you; we are at the point where kids write exams after staying at home after eight months watching premier league, Mexican soaps, and going to several MTN/GLO music gigs and making TikTok skits.

I weep for this nation because we cannot have a nation with a generation of young persons who lack qualitative education baptized in the waters of the 4E's Enlightenment, Exposure, Experience and Emotional Intelligence. Beyond those well-prepared speeches at convocation grounds and occasions, the

Nigerian School system is dead and most of us cannot see any reason this should be the portion of a nation that has and continues to produce a lot of first-class brains nationally and internationally.

Despite all the propaganda of free education by some states, the UBE thing has been all propaganda with most States Primary Education Board serving as a conduit pipe for educational donor agencies' money to State CEOs.

Really where are the teachers that taught us schools in Nigeria, in the same Baptist Secondary School, Ansaru Deen, St. Gregory, Sardauna Memorial, Barewa College, the Unity schools and many such in which discipline, and morals. Today, teaching is part of a journey to something better (sic).

Now young graduates do all sorts of things to make a living when their paper qualification cannot fetch them the big break or the executive seat and all the years at the University or Polytechnic did not prepare them for the task ahead and the society itself is not ready for them.

In 2023, pupils will still receive classes under the trees, after Grammar school our young ones may only have the likes of Obasanjo to thank for how to write an open letter skill.

One morning it is six years mandatory primary education by noon it is nine years by night who knows. One state is returning schools, another is taking it back, the policy makers do not even have faith in the system they claim to be reforming.

I have said as a nation, we have the wherewithal to make education from primary to tertiary free, let ability be the determinant. The way we are treating our educational system, I dare say that when the consequences spill, may it not be like the gun, it does not know who carries it, the dog is running, to where and who it will bite, only time will tell.

Church, State And 2023 General Elections

By: ABIODUN KOMOLAFE

Originally, in the secular world, the State comes before the church, because, by its institutional characteristics, it is the custodian of all other institutions. In other words, the state is the behemoth institution; co-existing, but superior to other social institutions. And that has been established since 1648! Thence forward, the marriage between the church and the state has been at the mercy of the state. The only exception is Rome, where a state exists within a state because the papacy is a state on its own.

In the United Kingdom, the church legitimizes the state. Succinctly put, the church is the legitimacy booster for the state. That is why, while the powers of the state protect the king or the queen, the church legitimizes the state. The more reason the king or the queen can do no wrong! Again, that's why, immediately a Prime Minister is elected, he or she goes to Buckingham Palace for the blessing of the king or the queen. And the king or the queen will normally approve the appointment of the Prime Minister, because it is both symbolic and a symbiotic thing!

Basically, though the state is always there to protect the interests of the church, the unfortunate thing is that, in the Nigerian circumstance, the church is now representing a sectorial capacity of the religious sector. For instance, the Islamic faith is as formidable as the church. As it is, the Bola Tinubu/Kashim Shettima same faith joint presidential ticket of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has so made the powers of the two main religions in Nigeria become so antagonistic to each other, that it is now the test of religious influence!

It is also interesting to note that former Governor Rauf Aregbesola of Osun State did add the reality of Isese (traditional worship) to the mix, which, of course, is still within the purview of religion. Gboyega Oyetola, the immediate past governor of the state, did not betray the trust! In Osun, for instance, Isese now has a recognized annual holiday attached to it. Impliedly, the indigenous religion is also qualified to be a contender to the throne. While the Christians may put forward an advice, the Islamic world will be willing to add its voice. Ultimately, the 'Isese adherents, who also have the recognition of the state, will also want to be heard! So, its no longer the church, solely.

Where also lies the place of the atheists and others whose interests are not captured in the present picture? After all, Nigeria belongs to all Nigerians, irrespective of creed or race. Whats more? Elective offices in Nigeria are supposed to be secular. That's what Article 10 of the Constitution says! Yes, the atheists may not have the population with which to push through their wishes, but, within the context of liberality, even the Boko Haram insurgents have a reason to make a demand in a democracy!

With a specific reference to the 2023 elections, there's a lot of confusion in the definition of Christianity in Nigeria. And it is deliberate! Take, for instance, the case of Peter Obi. As governor of Anambra State, it's being alleged that he never gave



non-Catholics free access, or Certificates of Occupancy to build their churches in the state. Added to Obi's purported sins, was that he almost chased everybody, who wanted to build a mosque in the state, away.

As a matter of fact, these allegations have been appropriately documented and any Nigerian with disagreeing opinions has been asked to come forward and open up. Now, Obi as the presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) is a regular face at Pentecostal churches and congregations. As Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, doesn't being a Christian go beyond being a churchgoer?

Those who still doubt the relevance of, or the influence of religion in Nigeria's democratic journey had better ask Atiku Abubakar why he hurriedly deleted his tweets, condemning the gruesome murder of Deborah Samuel by religious extremists in Sokoto, on his Twitter handle. Obviously, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate did it to appease the hoodlums. Otherwise, he would lose the entire North, come February 25, 2023!

It has also been argued that Nigeria is currently not a state. Well, those who hold this notion may not be wrong after all! For example, had dear fatherland truly been a state, the Ademola Adeleke-led

government in Osun would not have deliberately refused to pay the salaries of certain public workers. That's not possible in a true democracy! No! In a thriving democracy, public administration cannot come down to the handlers personal feelings or idiosyncrasies.

All said, the immediate major interest of the Nigerian State, so to speak, is to have successful elections in 2023. Without doubt, the point opined about the question of religion and its influence on; or, relevance to, governance is so critical to social cohesion. The state will want the cooperation of the church, while the church, though will want to appear neutral, will be very sensitive to its interests. So, the state must be extremely careful not to be seen as being religiously biased or partial. If it does, it could lose its legitimacy; and it will have legitimacy crises.

Take for instance the Nigerian situation: the current president is a Muslim; so also are most of the key position holders in its bureaucracy and public service. Coincidentally too, the ruling party has also presented a Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket for the election. Under this condition, should the handlers of the state spew words that are perceived as being against the Christian world, it can

bring the country to its knees.

If I may ask, how coterminous is the interest of the church with that of the Nigerian state? Whereas the interest of the state is as constant as the Northern star, the church cannot but negotiate its interests and preferences with the state within the context of the demands of other similar social institutions.

The interest of the state is to have a legitimized government in place; and the interest of the church is to have its interests protected from hindrances from the state or opposing faiths. That the church is presumably drawing global attention to the fielding of Tinubu and Shettima as the APC joint presidential flag-bearers as a result of these fears cannot be far from the truth.

The argument is that, as Muslims, a Tinubu/Shettima presidency may not be sympathetic to the core interests of the church, more so as they don't even understand the components of those core interests.

Lastly, its a statement of fact that the burden of the success of the forthcoming elections lies squarely on the state. However, since it is a societal issue, it therefore behooves the church and other societal groups to cooperate with the state to ensure that a peaceful atmosphere prevails before, during and after the exercise for, it is only in a peaceful atmosphere that both the interests of the state and the religious community (the church inclusive) can be realized. How to get societal peace engineered in an environment of insecurity, poverty, hunger and other kinds of social malady places an enormous burden on the state. its after these negative social indices are sorted that both the church and the State can have peace and, effectively, a government that is legitimate.

May the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us peace in Nigeria!

Komolafe wrote in from Ijebu-Jesa, Osun State (ijebujesa@yahoo.co.uk)

“Those who still doubt the relevance of, or the influence of religion in Nigeria's democratic journey had better ask Atiku Abubakar why he hurriedly deleted his tweets, condemning the gruesome murder of Deborah Samuel by religious extremists in Sokoto, on his Twitter handle. Obviously, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate did it to appease the hoodlums. Otherwise, he would lose the entire North, come February 25, 2023!”

SWANECO Releases Timetable For 2023 Election Into SWAN NEC

**Election slated for February*

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

Following the inaugural meeting of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria National Electoral Committee (SWANECO) on December 17, 2022 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, the timetable for election into the National Executive Committee (NEC) of Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has been made public.

After exhaustive deliberation by the 5-member SWANECO presided over by the Chairman, Mr. Sunny Ogele it was proposed that the election holds in

February, 2023.

Furthermore, Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State has been slated as the tentative venue for the election subject to approval and ratification by the outgoing NEC.

"Consequently, an ELECTION TIMETABLE was agreed upon as follows:

SWAN ELECTIONS 2022/2023 TIME TABLE.

Wed. Dec.28, 2022 to Fri. Jan.26, 2023:

Sale/Return of Nomination Forms.

Tues. Jan.30, 2023 to Mon. Feb.13, 2023:

Screening of Candidates/Publication of Results.

Tues. Feb 14, 2023 to

Thurs. Feb 16, 2023 : Claims/Objections/Appeal.

Fri. Feb 17, 2023 : (i) Publication of Final Results.

(ii) Manifesto Presentation.

Sat. Feb 18, 2023: A Election/Swearing In

N/B- Nomination forms could be purchased from any of the five members of SWANECO

C O S T O F NOMINATION FORMS:

N90,000.00 Vice President N70,000.00

Deputy Secretary General N60,000.00

* National Treasurer N60,000.00

National Welfare Officer N60,000.00

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE.

SWANECO hereby request all candidates who wish to contest the SWAN National Elections to:

(1) Pay the cost for Nomination Forms to the relevant position of choice to the underlisted account details;

Name : Ogele, Sunday Anyim

Acct.No : 3202331010

Bank : F.C.M.B

(2) Then, with your teller receipt (whose photocopy would be deposited), procure your form through any member of the Committee.

(3) Also note that the original copy of the teller receipt would be presented at the screening exercise.

Basketball: 2022 To End With Generation Next Elite 8

By ; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

The Warriors Academy Basketball Court, Ilupeju will come alive from Wednesday by 10:00am for the Generation Next Final 8.

The four day event powered by Olumide Oyediji Youth Foundation will draw the curtain on the basketball competition featuring eight best teams out of over 20 academies across Lagos State that featured in the competition.

The teams comprising of White Lion basketball academy, Heatkings Basketball Academy, Ohklahoma Newsong Basketball Academy, Rising Star Basketball Academy, Rookies Basketball Academy, Raptors Basketball Academy and Ravean Basketball Academy will be divided into two groups. A total of six games will



be played daily as the top two teams will qualify for the semi-finals of the competition.

The All Star Game which will feature some of the rising talents within the Nigerian

basketball sphere will take centre stage on Friday alongside skills challenge and slam dunk contest with some amazing cash prizes up for grab.

According to the

chairman of the organising committee, the final will hold on Saturday after the celebrity games which will commence by 2pm.

Gusau Hails IMC After Colourful NPFL Draw In Abuja

By; AYO OJEDOKUN, Lagos

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau has applauded the Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) for its efforts to reposition the Nigeria League, following the conduct of the draw for the new season in Abuja on Wednesday.

At the colourful ceremony held inside the press conference hall of the Sandralia Hotel, the 20 NPFL teams were calibrated into two different groups for the purpose of the abridged League season, already approved by the NFF.

"Let me state clearly that the NFF is satisfied with the efforts the IMC headed by Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye has been making to rebrand and reposition the NPFL since its inauguration. The NFF commends the IMC Chairman and all his members for the highly successful pre-season tournament held earlier in the month, and also for the actualisation of this Draw Ceremony.

"The commitment to engineer changes that will deliver a vibrant Nigeria League and a viable football economy in the country remains as firm as ever. The NFF will continue to provide the necessary support to the IMC to fulfill its terms of reference in flying colours," Gusau said. He was represented at the event by the NFF's Director of Communications, Mr. Ademola Olajire.

The Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Chief Sunday Dare was represented by his Chief of Staff, Alhaji Abba Abdullahi Yola.

Chairman of the IMC, Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye revealed that the

organizers have secured a sponsor to foot the indemnities of match officials for the next three years, with the payments to be done directly from the company to the appointed match officials. "We are committed to eradicating the malaise of indebtedness to match officials, which compromises them and lowers their morale to do the right thing.

"The IMC has also increased the winner's prize for the season to the sum of N 100 Million, which is a hundred percent increase on what was in place previously."

The Draw Ceremony grouped the 20 teams into two pools of A and B, with Matchday 1 set for 8th January 2023.

GROUP A
Kwara United
Nasarawa United
Plateau United
Gombe United
El-Kanemi Warriors
Enyimba FC
Akwa United
Bendel Insurance
Shooting Stars
Remo Stars
GROUP B
Niger Tornadoes
Doma United
Wikki Tourists
Lobi Stars
Rivers United
Abia Warriors
Dakkada FC
Rangers Int'l
Sunshine Stars
Bayelsa United
MATCHDAY 1 (A)
Nasarawa United Vs Enyimba FC
Akwa United Vs Bendel Insurance
Plateau United Vs Shooting Stars
Kwara United Vs Gombe United
Remo Stars Vs El-Kanemi Warriors
MATCHDAY 1 (B)
Bayelsa United Vs Dakkada FC
Wikki Tourists Vs Niger Tornadoes
Doma United Vs Sunshine Stars
Rivers United Vs Lobi Stars
Rangers Int'l Vs Abia Warriors

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University Of Ilorin Teaching Hospital Seizes Corpse, Arrests One Over Alleged Assault On Personnel **Relatives blame death of deceased on negligence*

By **ONAOLAPO BILIQIS
OLAJUMOKE, Ilorin**

Management of the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UITH), Ilorin, Kwara State on Wednesday, seized a corpse of a deceased patient and arrested one of its sons for beating a medical doctor.

It was gathered that three family members of the deceased, one Alhaji Saliu, on Tuesday, reportedly beat up a medical doctor in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Wing of the UITH following what they described as nonchalant attitude of medical staff, leading to the death of their relative.

It was gathered that trouble started shortly after the news of the death of their relative, a butcher, said to be suffering from blood cancer, was announced at the hospital.

The butcher was said to have been rushed to the facility on Tuesday after he suffered complications when he reportedly returned from a business trip.

Narrating the incident, a relative of the deceased, Mr. Abdul, said the hospital had held on to the corpse because of the incident.

"We rushed Alhaji Saliu to the emergency ward of UITH around some minutes after 5:00am on Tuesday and despite all our pleading for a doctor to attend to him, nobody obliged us.

"We were surprised to see doctors coming to attend to us several hours later after a



medical personnel who saw our plight confirmed he was dead. That infuriated the relatives and they reacted by descending on one of the doctors that came. Since then, they have vowed not to release the corpse unless we produce some other people that beat the doctor", he said.

When contacted, the Head, Corporate Affairs Unit (CAU) of the UITH, Mrs. Elizabeth Ajiboye, on behalf of the hospital management, confirmed the development, saying that, doctors under the aegis of Association of Resident Doctors of Nigeria (ARD) in the hospital are protesting the assault, "urging the Management of the hospital against the release of the corpse without arresting and

prosecuting the culprits".

Mrs. Ajiboye, who urged members of the public to stop attacks on health workers, said that the patient case was presented late with severe complications.

"The patient in question was one of such cases presented to the hospital late and with severe complications. Nevertheless, the health workers on duty, especially doctors swung into action but while battling with his life, he convulsed. He was stabilized from that stage, prompting the doctors to take over another case requiring an emergency attention.

"Three of the patient's relations pounced on one of the doctors on duty, pinned him to the wall, and punched him severally but he

managed to escape from them.

"This led to the arrest of one of patient's relatives by the security operatives attached to the hospital. As at the time of this report, this person is still under the watch of the security personnel while the other two are being searched for.

"Meanwhile, the doctors under the aegis of Association of Resident Doctors of Nigeria (ARD) are protesting the assault, urging the Management of the hospital against the release of the corpse without arresting and prosecuting the culprits.

"It has now become imperative for the hospital to caution patients and their relations against any form of attack on its health care providers.

"We wish to remind members of the public on the roles of health workers in health Management system and the limitations of these health care providers in saving lives especially when the cases before them are presented late.

"Just as these workers had sworn to protect the lives of their patients, their own lives should not be endangered.

"Therefore, the Management through the law enforcement agents, has resolved to henceforth commence the arrest and prosecution of anyone irrespective of their status, threatening the lives of any of the workers of UITH in the course of their duties. Legal action will also henceforth be taken against such unruly relatives of our patients.

Ignore Few Inconsistent, Selfish Igbo Elites Fueling Anti-Obi Campaign, SERG Tells Nigerians

By; **JACOB ONJEWU
DICKSON**

Prominent pan-Igbo sociopolitical pressure organisation, the South East Revival Group (SERG) has called on Nigerians to ignore those it described as a "few inconsistent and selfish" Igbos fueling anti-Peter Obi campaign ahead of the 2023 presidential

election, saying that "they are on a wild goose chase if they believe that any of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidates is interested in uniting the country through fairness and equity as they have equally exhibited selfishness in their quest to emerge as

flagbearers."

The SERG was reacting to the reports credited to some elites of South East extraction who have been making anti-Peter Obi comments in a statement signed by its President and National Coordinator, Chief Willy Ezugwu.

"Some PDP and APC chieftains have been urging the South East

to support their presidential candidates in exchange for their support for the emergence of a South Easterner as President after their tenure," SERG said.

But insisting that there is no going back in the "total support for the Labour Party presidential candidate, Mr. Peter Obi across the country", the SERG said that "the fact that individuals who are

part of the country's failed leadership are exposing themselves is a good development in the build up to an emerging new Nigeria."

The SERG said, "We recall that in 2017, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Chief Arthur Eze, had called for support from the people of the South East for the

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