Ukraine War: 306 Nigerians Arrive Abuja

BY AMEH GEORGE, ABUJA

Fourth batch of Nigerians fleeing the war in Ukraine have arrived the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja from Budapest, Hungary.

The 306 evacuees arrived via Air Peace Airline at 12:35am yesterday.

They were successfully evacuated following the intervention of the federal government with the cooperation of governments of Ukraine’s neighbours.

Welcoming the returnees on behalf of the federal government, the Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, Mr Mustapha Ahmed, said President Muhammadu Buhari had approved that $100 be given to each of them.

Ahmed, represented by the Director, Search and Rescue, NEMA, Air Commodore Edward Adedokun, added that the money was meant to assist them with transportation to their various locations.

He said that a one-night accommodation arrangement had been made for the returnees to rest before continuing their journey to their homes, while those whose relatives had come for them were free to go home.

NEMA staff along with representatives of other agencies involved in the reception at the airport, were on ground to receive the returnees.
Stakeholders Lament Effects Of Corruption, Others On National Assets

BY CALEB ISHAYA, ABUJA

Stakeholders have identified widespread corruption, perception that public assets are not anybody’s business and absence of a Nigerian crisis management doctrine among other challenges as factors affecting the country’s capacity to combat and overcome the emergent security threats to the country’s national critical infrastructure.

The stakeholders in a communiqué issued at the end of a two-day National Stakeholder Summit under the theme: “Protecting the Integrity of Nigeria’s Critical Infrastructures, Monuments and Business Assets, held recently in Abuja, also identified absence of a Nigerian crisis management doctrine, lack of perspective planning on the part of state institutions, knee-jerk approach to solving obvious national problems, non institutionalisation of protection of the country’s critical infrastructure, the absence of early warning system in the form of risk analysis, digital poverty and the crippling effects of inter-agency rivalry in the security complex”, as major threats to national infrastructure.

As a way out of the situation 422 participants from across various sectors in the oil gas, transportation, aviation, Maritime, Information Communication and Technology, ICT, the Telecommunication, Energy, Power, Security, and some other crosscutting sectors from various Government Ministries, Department and Agencies, MDAs, Military, Paramilitary bodies, members of the diplomatic communities, organized private sectors, civil society organizations, traditional rulers, the media, Individual professionals, and members of public resolved that, “The prioritisation of cyberspace in the hierarchy of critical infrastructure and the enactment of relevant legislations to support the protection of critical infrastructure, the adoption of traditional and modern approaches in dealing with security threats, socialisation of the population to the importance of security awareness to the extent of protecting the country’s critical infrastructure, harnessing expertise and operational knowledge of state and private institutions to support and enhance deterrence, threat mitigation and desired security outcomes and prioritisation of policing in ways that allows community indigenes/residents to take charge of their own security.

Besides, the communiqué which was signed by the Summit Convenor, Dr. Alfred Chiakor, also suggested, “The imperatives of engagement with host communities on the protection of critical infrastructure, creation of jobs for the population to deter anti-social and criminal behaviours, nation-wide advocacy to create awareness on threats to critical national infrastructure, emphasis on research and development in security matters as well as moral re-armament of the national population”. The Summit observed on a sad note that Nigeria’s infrastructure has been threatened and systematically undermined given the records of attacks on the country’s infrastructure. Oil and gas sector, which accounts for about 95% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings, has been hard hit by pipeline vandalism, flaring and oil theft. It noted for example that of the 85 million cyber-attacks in the continent in six months, Nigeria accounted for about 20% of them, thereby underlining the weight of threats to the country’s infrastructure, both hard and soft.
Lingering ASUU Strike Another Pain

Since February 14, the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, has been engaged in a long-drawn disagreement with the Federal Government, FG, over impending agreements that are yet to be consummated after several years. It would be underestimated to state that no known academic system has seen several incursions as in our country. There is research that has shown that in 20 years, an average of three strikes has taken place by the ASUU, following repeated disagreement with the FG.

While we concede that this figure is not salutary enough, it is disheartening that all parties to this embarrassing situation have not been brought to an end.

ASUU has on its own self-serving posture insisted that it has a subsisting agreement with the government which has been variously breached. It is not in the interest of our country which prides itself as the largest black nation in the world not being able to manage its affairs at the tertiary education level. With these incessant strikes, it puts to question the sincerity of our leaders to bequeath a legacy of an unbroken academic system where even the common folks can have their wards educated in public institutions.

There were times that the idea of private university education was alien to our country as it enjoyed great currency from various segments of the society for obvious reasons. Only disciplines that were not readily available was the allure for foreign students. However, the situation has changed given the fact that more Nigerians find the perennial break in the nation’s academic programme as not only inimical to national growth but a national disaster which has negatively impacted the quality of the output from the universities.

Many Nigerians have applauded the entry of private universities which are obviously a response to the concern over the large army of school leavers who are seeking entry into tertiary institutions. These large numbers have indeed been absorbed by these private institutions. Like we have in other climes, most universities are not state-owned but are managed in trust with the private sector; some of them already existed for centuries with some of them churning out the most brilliant folks who have made their marks in various callings.

Given our level of development, we would not entirely support the privatisation of the university system because not a many can manage the stunning funding required. Some of the private institutions charge exorbitantly so much that for them they would need to break the banks to meet up.

We recall that the FG-ASUU imbroglio has been a sad decimal in our education sector, requiring a swift attention by all stakeholders even as we call on all parties to be wary that many citizens whose fate hinged on these local institutions must be accommodated in the schemes of our national plan; ASUU’s concerns inclusive.

Indeed, there have been worries that our leaders are paying lip service to our local education system because they have the financial capacity to send their wards abroad for further studies. We would firm it up clearly that most Nigerians who now find solace in other countries where they have become their toast given their excellent performance were basically products of our local institutions.

AljazirahNigeria is though not privy to the recent position of both parties, urges the FG to meet the demands of the striking workers somewhere so that this long-suffering students can return to school.

We are in solidarity with parents and guardians whose financial plans for their wards have been distorted by this avoidable impasse.
Dear Editor,
May I use your esteemed medium to comment on a burning issue in our land today. It has become a national embarrassment the daily killings in major cities of our country even when governments at all levels will keep reeling out assurance that the situation would be brought under control. It the East, it is unknown gunmen, while in parts of the North they are terrorists, bandits or killer herdsmen etc. When would there be an end to these increasing plunge to the state of nature?

– Umar Bello

REPLY:
We share in your concern as a patriotic Nigerian. We agree that there is a need for better response from all stakeholders even as it appears the security agencies would also need citizens to give support in terms of sharing information and activities of these criminals causing pain and blood-letting across the country.

Kwara 2023: Northern Senatorial District And Question Of Equity, Fairness And Justice?

BY DAPO OLAOSEBIKAN

Recent events in the Nigerian socio-political space are all indicative of the ongoing calculations and permutations at federal and regional levels for pre-eminence and control of authoritative power at the centre and in the states in 2023.

Another unhidden truth about going-on, particularly in the political arena, and, among Nigerians politicians all over is that, though the period of round electronecering via-a-vis general election is still a few months away, alignments and realignments have begun in calculative gang-ups for which particular geopolitical zone will produce next president to lead Nigeria or the next governor for almost all the 36 states of the Federation.

Putting Kwara State in focus, it is an open secret that all the talks and moves about which senatorial zone should produce the next governor is still about Kwara South and Kwara Central, which have literally monopolised political leadership of Kwara State since the beginning of current democratic dispensation. Undoubtedly, this is where the whole affair of who leads the state at the expiration of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq’s term in 2023, becomes imperative and thought-provoking, especially for the North Senatorial Zone.

It is stating the obvious that the North Senatorial Zone has been playing the third fiddle in the political affairs and configuration of Kwara State in the current democratic dispensation in the country. This uncomplimentary historical development, which, of course, dates back to the First, Second Republics; save for the short tenure of Alhaji Mohammed Shaka LaFajri in the ill-fated Third Republic, is the encumbering group albatross which Kwara North may no longer accept according to Fillers from the state.

In a recent group discussion at a function in Ilorin, the state’s capital, which was amplified on some social media platforms, some top citizens of Kwara North expressed their belief that the political leadership of their state cannot continue to be exclusive preserve of the other two senatorial zones. The reasons for this position are compelling and deductively evident.

According to them, Kwara North cannot continue to be the slave-partner in the state because Nigerian Constitution, particularly the 1999 Constitution, is unambiguously and explicitly against inequality in running the affairs of our country. In effect, this Constitution stipulates as provider that there should be equality, social and political justice for all Nigerians. In particular, Sections 17, subsection 1 of Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria states: “The State social order is founded on ideals of Freedom, Equality and Justice”, and therefore, Kwara as a prime part of our great country, cannot and should not be an exception in this regard.

The implicit question in the quoted portion of our Constitution is apparent and the pose is: Where are the ‘ideals of Freedom, Equality and Justice’ in Kwara State? This question becomes quite pertinent in a situation whereby two out of the three micro geopolitical zones evidently created for socio-economic balance and political equity, seem to believe and scheme in perpetuity, to be the ‘men on the horseback’, while Kwara North remains on its knees as an onlooker in the political aggregation and power-sharing in the state.

Considering the foregoing scenario, which is akin to what obtains in Ekiti State for which political pundits have predicted possible PROTEST VOTE against the candidate of the ruling party later in the year, one may not be off the course of civility to admonish current political leadership and powers-that-be across the state to begin to eschew the injustice and gross inequality that monopoly of political power and leadership of the state constitutes. While one’s prayer and aspiration is that Kwara should continue to enjoy peace and massive socio-economic development, political fate-deciders of the state should be guided by history and principles of equity, justice and fairness which are bedrock of enduring democracies all over the world.

The counsel here is that all political leaders concerned with what the shape or shapes of things would be in Kwara in 2023, should make the recol, go back to their drawing-boards and patriotically consider and make sure that Kwara North, which is yet to produce the governor of the state since its creation in 1967, should take a shot at the governorship position and produce the governor in 2023. For indeed, as Aristotle immortally established, “The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.”

Dapo Olasehikan (dapolash@yahoo.com), veteran journalist, publisher & public commentator, writes from FCT Abuja.
Abuja Moms Foundation, AMF, an Abuja-based non-profitable organisation, has advised law enforcement agencies against secret settlement of child molestation cases, to deter perpetrators from such crime.

Founder of the organisation, Mrs Happiness Ani, gave the advice on Saturday in Abuja, during a road-walk to create awareness against child molestation.

Ani, who was once a victim of the incident, attributed increase in molestation cases in Nigeria to wrong handling of such crimes by the relevant authorities and stakeholders.

Dangote Group’s Executive Director and President of Manufacturing Association of Nigeria, MAN, Mansur Ahmed, has assured Nigerians that the upcoming Dangote Petroleum Refinery would help address the volatile fuel crisis in the country.

This is coming against the backdrop of torrents of commendations from President Muhammadu Buhari, Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai and Defence Minister Bashir Magashi.

Dangote Group is one of the winners at the Kaduna International Trade Fair that ended yesterday.

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, has intercepted no fewer than 294,440 tablets of Tramadol, Diazepam, Swinol, Rohypnol, and Exol-5, along with other illicit drugs in major operations.

This is contained in a statement by the Director, Media, and Advocacy, NDLEA, Mr Femi Babafemi yesterday, in Abuja.

Babafemi said that the operations were carried out in Delta, Bauchi, and the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, MMIA, Ikeja, Lagos.

Is a business outfit involved in designing and making unisex clothes for all ages, classes and calibre. We exist to offer beauty, elegance and style to our clients.

At Toya’s Signature Enterprise, we believe that people of all ages should dress with excellence and prestige. We also make room for training of other emerging fashion designers as well as engage in selling cosmetics and clothing accessories.

The company’s business name is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria and referenced with BN 2792857. Ms. Latoya Doom Gema has sole proprietorship in this business.

Toya’s Signature is also creating room for personnel to be trained and be productive in the fashion world.
Pupils Ready For In-Person Exams

After two years with no exams in person for primary school students, they began their exams yesterday for the second semester amid comprehensive measures to keep in check the spread of coronavirus.

Ministry of Education's spokesperson, Ibtisam Al-Shehri, told the media that education departments in all regions have finished their preparations for the exams, which started yesterday, for all educational levels in public, private, and foreign public schools.

The ministry has set up committees to supervise the exams, follow up the tests at the end of the second semester of this academic year, monitor and audit grades and give out results and grade sheets.

KSA Lifts Precautionary Covid-19 Measures

Saudi Arabia has lifted precautionary and preventive measures related to combating the coronavirus pandemic.

An official source in the Ministry of Interior said measures including social distancing and wearing masks outdoors are no longer mandatory in the Kingdom.

The ministry, quoted by the Saudi Press Agency, also said that social distancing in the Two Holy Mosques and all other mosques in the Kingdom would end, but worshipers still have to wear masks. Saudi Arabia will no longer require travelers to undergo mandatory COVID-19 quarantine upon arrival in the Kingdom.

Passengers will also no longer need to provide a PCR test upon their arrival.

All arrivals in the Kingdom on visit visas of any kind are required to get insurance that covers the costs of treatment from any coronavirus infection.

The ministry stressed the importance of continuing to stick to the guidelines of the national plan for immunization, which includes getting a booster dose and applying procedures to verify health status on the “Tawakkalna” app to enter facilities, activities, events, planes and public transportation.

Agency Educates Female Visitors In Makkah

Agency for Languages and Women’s Translation, led by the General Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques, is offering the translation of many educational courses and awareness programmes for female visitors of the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

It also provides religious education to women who have recently converted to Islam, along with the translation of administrative publications.

The agency is responsible for organising educational circles in multiple languages for female visitors and pilgrims at the Grand Mosque, along with providing them with religious and spatial guidance.

In 2021, the agency held more than 2,500 educational circles in many international languages, including Uzbek, Persian, English, French, Urdu and Turkish, and offered 3,597 religious and spatial guidance services for female visitors at the Grand Mosque.

It also provides translation of education materials and pamphlets, and distributes barcodes and supporting headphones for people to listen to the live broadcast of sermons on Fridays via radio frequencies within the Grand Mosque, with the assistance of a task force that explains how to use the service.

Over the course of the year, the agency launched several initiatives aimed at improving its output, including initiatives aimed at clarifying the concept of Hajj and Umrah, and some of the women’s provisions regarding Hajj and Umrah in different languages.

Stocks Rise Slightly As Oil Prices Soar

Saudi stocks were up slightly yesterday despite the Russia-Ukraine conflict dragging global stock markets down, as oil surged to multi-year highs.

At the closing bell, the main index, TASI, gained 0.38 percent to reach 12,804, while the parallel market Declined 0.06 percent to 24,752.

In the energy market, Brent crude oil spiked to $118.11 per barrel whereas US WTI crude climbed to $115.68 per barrel.

The Saudi industrial exporter, Al-Etihad Cooperative Insurance Co. ranked second on the gainers list, with a 9.94 percent rise, as its board approved a capital increase of 12.5 percent.

Further among the gainers, Methanol Chemicals Co. gained 8.67 percent, as it turned from losses into profit of SR244 million, $65 million, in 2021.

Leading the decliners, Gulf Union AlAhlia Cooperative Insurance Co., slipped 3.76 percent.

Shares in Aramco, the largest player on the Saudi oil market, rose 0.68 percent.

Riyad Bank fell 2.44 percent, despite reporting a 28 percent increase in profit in 2021.
**Saudi–Chinese Pact To Build Drone Factory**

Saudi Arabia and China have signed an agreement to build military drones locally in the Kingdom. This part of the Kingdom’s move to localise the field of military industries and make it an important source of the economy.

The Saudi Advanced Communications and Electronics Systems Company, ACES, signed a strategic agreement with a Chinese global knowledge transfer company to manufacture drone payload systems in the Kingdom. The pact was signed after ACES announced the establishment of a new company for unmanned aircraft in the Kingdom, namely Aerial Solutions. The new agreement was signed with China Electronics Technology Group Corporation, CETC, one of the world’s largest defense companies. The state-owned Chinese defense conglomerate is specialised in dual-use electronics.

The agreement will facilitate the Chinese company to set up a research and development center and manufacturing team for various types of unmanned aerial vehicles, UAV, payload systems, including communications units, flight control units, camera systems, radar systems and wireless detection systems.

The Kingdom will take advantage of the Chinese company’s vast experience spanning over 20 years in research and development, with its dozens of research institutes.

**‘Ministry Aims To Strengthen Relations With Investors’**

Ministry of Investment will participate in the World Defense Show 2022 in Riyadh, to be held on March 6-9, with the participation of major international and local companies.

They aim at reviewing qualitative investment opportunities for the defense sector, keeping pace with industrial developments, technical solutions, localising knowledge, and highlighting the Kingdom’s position as one of the world’s most influential countries in the defense sector.

Through its participation, the ministry aims to strengthen its relations with current and potential investors in the sector, and review facilities and incentives provided to investors, as it allows foreign companies to own 100 percent full ownership.

This reflects the ambitious trend towards economic openness to attract and develop investments and facilitate the access of seekers looking for quality investment opportunities.

During its participation through the ‘Invest in Saudi’ pavilion, the Ministry of Investment will review the services provided to investors and enhance the sustainability of investment in the sector, allowing investors to identify more partnership opportunities with local investors, and available investment opportunities.

The show will witness the Ministry’s signing of a number of memoranda of understanding with major international companies specialised in the field of defense aiming to discuss investment, technology transfer, localisation of companies’ capabilities, development of manufacturing systems and building local capabilities in the defense sector in the Kingdom.

**Preparations Complete For Riyadh Marathon**

Preparations for Riyadh Marathon 2022 have been completed as the city gets set to receive sports fans from all over Saudi Arabia and around the world with a chance to win prizes totalling more than SR2 million, $533,086.

The marathon is being organised by the Saudi Sports for All Federation with direct support from the Ministry of Sports and the Quality of Life Programme to achieve the goals of Vision 2030.

The 42-kilometer route starts from King Saud University at 06:15 a.m. and takes participants past a number of tourist attractions around the capital, including Diriyah, Digital City and the university.

The Riyadh Marathon 2022, which is open to anyone, is being accredited by the Asian and International Athletics Federations and has also partnered with the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee, the Saudi Athletics Federation, the National Center for Events and International Athletics and other sponsors. It includes a range of races to encourage people of all ages and athletic abilities to participate.

There is a 21.1-kilometer Half Marathon for the over-18s, a 10-kilometer race for ages 17 and above, and a 4-kilometer race for beginners and children.

There are also marathon village events on Friday and Saturday, where visitors can enjoy a range of sports and recreational activities, eat different types of food and take part in fitness classes.
About twenty women groups under the auspices of #womanifesto have vowed to mobilise the masses to occupy the National Assembly if the lawmakers fail to reconsider its stance on the failed gender equality and equal opportunity bills.

Speaking during a virtual press conference yesterday in Abuja, co-founder of the group and leader of the protest, Dr Abiola Akiyode Afolabi said they were determined to march to the gates of the National Assembly on March 8, 2022, to press home their demands. Afolabi said, "We are more than 20 different women groups that will occupy the premises of the National Assembly until they reverse their decision.

"This is the first step that we are taking to demand that the wrong that was done to Nigerian women should be redressed."

"What happened in the National Assembly was a manifestation of the historical injustices which have been affecting the voice of the Nigeria women. We realised that people who are representing us are not representing 50% of the population but they are actually just representing themselves compensation to do with their own resources and three issues that they prioritize when it comes to dealing with Nigeria people. Nigeria women, or young people were not prioritised by their own hand.

She noted that the bills, which had been pending before the National Assembly, sought affirmative actions for women in governance and political representation.

"These bills include the 35% appointed positions for women and 20% affirmative actions for women in appointments."

"Plan International, as a gender responsive to the needs of its vulnerable communities, has decided that until our demands are met, we will continue to protest until they meet their demands", she added.

AljazeeraNigeria recalls that the Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen had last week Wednesday, after the weekly Federal Executive Council, said the federal government had approved a revised National Gender Policy to promote gender equality, good governance and accountability across the three tiers of government in the country.

"We have decided that until our demands are met we will continue to protest till they meet our demands", she added.

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The minister noted that the policy represented a set of minimum standards expected of the Nigerian government to meet its mandate for gender equality, good governance, accountability, and being socially responsive to the needs of its vulnerable group.

"Today, the Ministry of Women Affairs, presented a memo on the national gender policy to the Federal Executive Council. This memo is a revised national gender policy 2021 – 2026.

It represents a set of minimum standards expected of the Nigerian government to meet its mandate for gender equality, good governance, accountability and being socially responsive to the needs of its vulnerable group.

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Lawma

Femi

Today, the Ministry of Women Affairs presented a memo on the national gender policy to the Federal Executive Council. This memo is a revised national gender policy 2021 – 2026.
Muslim Media Watch Group of Nigeria, MMWG, has commended the Inspector General of Police, IGP, for responding to the yearnings and aspirations of women officers, as well as the rank and file who clamoured for inclusiveness in dress code.

The group signed its National Coordinator, Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim, described the policy as its right step in the right direction.

Muslim Media Watch commended the statement credited to one Eben Adegokeh, who recently accused the inspector-general of police of imposing hijab on the women officers.

It described the statement as childish and mischievous. However, it was also commended for his religion on the system in modern day Nigeria.

The group backed politicking the new uniform policy which is aimed at carrying everybody along with international best practices, Adegokeh has carried his religious fanaticism too far.

According to the group, Adegokeh also attacked Governor Abdul-Razaq of Kwara State for approving the optional use of hijab in public schools.

Over 85 percent Muslim population in Nigeria state, MMWG wondered why Adegokeh turns everything happening in Nigeria into religious politics.

“Just like the US Army and British Army’s rights of women in those services are not violated and hijab is allowed, why any government of this newly improved police optional uniform by anybody no matter his status is ill-motivated, rebellious and highly condemnable”, the group stated.

It noted that the level of religious intolerance, bigotry and fanaticism of some elite and so-called religious leaders in Nigeria portray them as unpatriotic citizens ‘who usually do not see anything good in the country.

The group gave examples of the ‘Cross’ that has remained a symbol in hospitals, usually do not see anything good in the country since it has some meanings to our Christian brothers and sisters.

Sakaruyi of Karu in Abuja Municipal Area Council, AMAC, of the FCT, Emmanuel Yepwi, yesterday, disclosed the increasing rate of illegal structures in his domain.

Yepwi, stated this when the Senior Specialist Assistant on Monitoring, Inspection and Enforcement to the FCT Minister, Mr Ikharo Attah, paid him a courtesy call at his palace in Karu, Abuja.

He appealed to the Federal Capital Territory Ministerial Committee on city sanitation to urgently remove the illegal structures and shanties in his domain.

The monarch said it had been discovered that the illegalities was being perpetrated by some criminal elements, who lived in makeshift shanties and other illegal structures in the communities.

Responding, Attah said the FCT Minister, Malam Muhammad Bello had expressed similar worry over the illegalities in the Karu satellite town and was working in synergy with all stakeholders to address them.

He also disclosed that the visit to the Sakaruyi’s Palace was motivated by the myriad of complaints that had continued to trickle in from residents living in the Karu area.

The Buni administration has employed 196 medical personnel.

The approval covers 23 doctors, 62 dental surgery technicians and 60 medical laboratory technicians, 2 dental surgery technicians and 53 health information management professionals.

The governor urged the beneficiaries to be dedicated to their professional calling and to serve the people diligently and efficiently.

He assured that government will continue to employ the required personnel for effective and efficient service delivery.

“The administration is committed to providing accessible and affordable healthcare delivery to the doorstep of our people”, he assured.

The director-general said the administration has established at least one functional healthcare facility in each of the 178 political wards, general and specialist hospitals to boost healthcare delivery in the state.

Buni Apprives Employment Of 196 Medical Personnel

BY HASSAN BIRG DAMFURU

The State Governor, Mallam Fikpo, has approved the employment of 196 graduates of the College of Health Science and Technology Nguru, to boost manpower in the health sector.

A statement signed by his Director-General, Press and Media Affairs, Mamman Mohammed, which was made available to Aljazirah/Nigeria in Damaturu, said their employment would provide the professional skills needed in health facilities across the state.

The statement added that among those approved for employment are pharmacy technicians, medical laboratory technicians, 62 dental surgery technicians and dentists for effective and efficient service delivery.

The governor emphasized the importance of manpower in the healthcare sector.

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Nigerian Benefited Immensely From His Administration, Says Okowa

At 85, Ex-President Harps On Nation-building

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo said Nigeria needs to embrace and prioritize nation building to attain greater heights.

Obasanjo spoke on Saturday in Abeokuta at a symposium with the theme: “African narrative with the Nigerian Situation” organized to mark his 85th birthday.

Obasanjo listed the ideals of nation building to include equity, justice, common ideals, popular education, shared values, mutual respect and equality of opportunities.

He explained that the functions need to be anchored and propelled by leaders who are persons of integrity, honour, morality, conviction, great vision, and strength.

“Such leaders must be humble and be able to put a team together to work in selfless devotion and service with the fear of God. From personal experience and observation, the application of this formula is not a substitute for steady and uncompromised process of nation building as we have had in some notable examples in the past that have stood us in good stead,” he said.

Living Nigeria must begin on the principles of nation building. It is not necessarily on emotions, sentiments, euphoria, ignorance, incompetence, ethnicity, nepotism, bigotry, sectionalism, regionalism, relativity or class.

The issues of security, stability, development, economy and our relationship with the rest of the world can only be taken care of if we get the issue of nation building right,” he said.

Obasanjo advised that Nigeria must first seek to be a nation rather than a country, stressing that: “the cart should not be put before the horse, otherwise Nigeria, in no time will not be a country, but countries”.

For the statesman, such task was beyond one person, political parties, professionals and commercial politicians.

“It demands and requires all hands to be on deck. I mean Nigerians from all walk of life including, politicians, community leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, diplomatic leaders, leaders in the academia, leaders in all aspects of government and leaders in other aspects of the civil society,” he said.

Concerning the 2023 general elections, Obasanjo advised Nigerians to prioritize principles above personalities in their choice of leaders.

Obasanjo, A True Patriot – Lawan

Lawan, in a statement signed by his Special Adviser on Media, Mr. Dr Dapo Awoyin, in Abuja, yesterday, joined Obasanjo’s family members, friends and well wishers to rejoice with him on this auspicious occasion.

“I heartily congratulate former President Obasanjo as he continues his strong march in his remarkable journey of life.

He is a consistent protagonist of the Nigerian project, and now as an elder statesman, he has continued to push for Nigeria to realize its huge potentials as a great nation.

“This is to be expected, as his name is linked to some of the greatest events and developments in Nigerian history.

“I therefore heartily join Nigerians across the country in celebrating this unique and enduring provision of the milestone of 85 years.

“I also congratulate him on the diverse blessing of attaining the milestone in good health of body and mind.

“I wish him many more years of continued service to his beloved Nigeria and Africa, and to the cause of peace all over the world”, Lawan said.

Extradition: Us Offers Legal Representation To Kyari

Recall that Kyari was in trouble last year in Los Angeles for allegedly违violation in $1.1 million Internet scam.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI, had alleged that Hushpuppi paid $20,600 to two bank accounts allegedly provided by Kyari on January 20, 2020.

FBI Special Agent, Andrew Innocenti said he obtained voice calls and WhatsApp conversations between Kyari and Hushpuppi, adding that Hushpuppi also paid the police officer N8m or $20,600 for the arrest and detection of a ‘conspirator’, Chibuzo Vincent.

On the occasion of your 85th birthday anniversary, former president’s 85th birthday, the ÒròỌmọ Ọbaa Ọbaa’ felicitation to mark the ÒròỌmọ Ọbaa Ọbaa milestone of 85 years.

This is to be expected, as his name is linked to some of the greatest events and developments in Nigerian history.

“I therefore heartily join Nigerians across the country in celebrating this unique and enduring provision of the milestone of 85 years.

“I also congratulate him on the diverse blessing of attaining the milestone in good health of body and mind.

“I wish him many more years of continued service to his beloved Nigeria and Africa, and to the cause of peace all over the world”, Lawan said.

Obasanjo, Most Accomplished Leader Since Independence – Ortom

The governor of Benue State, Governor Samuel Ortom, has described former President Olusegun Obasanjo as the most accomplished leader that the country has so far produced since independence.

Ortom in a letter of felicitation to mark the former president’s 85th birthday anniversary, made available to newsmen at the weekend, in Makurdi, acknowledged his veritable track records of achievements both nationally and internationally.

The governor’s accolades was contained in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Nathaniel Ikyur.

It recalled that Chief Obasanjo’s presidency on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, had made the party proud by bringing stability into the polity, through interventions that not only championed professionalism in the armed forces but equally brought back the country’s global reputation.

He also acknowledged the reforms that the former president made in the telecommunication, privatization, banking and the fight against corruption.

The governor prayed God to bless Chief Obasanjo with good health and more years to enable him continue to contribute to the development of the Nigerian State and the welfare of humanity.
FG Tasks Youths On Agro-Allied Ventures

By Joel Amv, FCTA

Federal government has called on unemployed youths to take advantage of the various initiatives and programmes of the present administration to empower themselves with agro-allied skills, especially the provision of start-up packs and other agro-allied equipment given to them by government to become self-employed and job creators.

The Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare made the call at the weekend in Jos, Plateau State, during the closing ceremony of the National Youth in Agriculture Employment Training Programme.

Represented by the Director of Enterprise Development and Promotion Department, ETD, Prince Momoh Ohijie, the minister said the programme which was organized by his ministry was designed to cover unemployed youths both male and female, within the ages of 15-29 from the 36 states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory.

According to him, the training programme was not only aimed at fostering the creation of jobs through the acquisition of agro-allied skills but also to reduce youth unemployment and restiveness, as well as enhance their participation in sustainable and viable businesses with a view to boost economic growth and development in line with the policy thrust of President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration.

Dare said that agriculture and agro-allied businesses are one of the areas where jobs abound.

A general survey has confirmed that agriculture and agro-allied businesses are one of the areas where jobs and employment opportunities abound and will continue to be relevant, as well as play significant roles in the economy," he said.

To achieve the national goal of wealth creation and employment generation, he added that "there is the need to build the capacity of youths in areas where we have comparative advantage in both material and human resources.

He explained that tapping into their potentials could prove a crucial asset for the economic development of the country with the acquisition of relevant and marketable agro-allied skills that will meet the demands of the 21st century, it refused to fulfil the promise of protecting and guarantee their welfare.

According to NLC, government is expected to live up to expectations by addressing the lingering issues on insecurity, gratuity, teachers salary on percentage, implementation of promotion and payment of salary arrears.

"It is unfortunate that the government has continued to pay teachers salary on percentage for the past one year without remorse in spite of several appeals to stop the illegal payment," NLC lamented that the escalation of insecurity has led to the sprouting of IDP camps.

The union regretted that rampaging bandits go about freely on motorcycles despite the seven military formations in the state.

NLC queried why NLC was known as the most peaceful state has now become a home of bandits and kidnappers, who cause mayhem in communities at random without quick response from security outfits.

"As it is now, insecurity has taken a dangerous dimension, what is happening in the state demands some questions".

They lamented that handing over the terrorized and insecure areas to the security personnel is like handing a sword to the devil, and the devil has now returned to bite the manufacturer.

"This is also affecting productivity, because if you look at the faces of Nigerians at the various bus-stops, you will notice that everybody is angry.

This is also affecting our mental health, because the pressure is just so much." he added.

"So, it is up to the leaders to find a way around everything," he added.

While recent surveys of people to go out if extremely necessary and important, he said the government should do everything possible to make the people's lives better.

"Government should also ensure that the actual price at the depot is what is paid, because one of the major reasons for this scarcity is that most gas stations no longer sell fuel for N162.5 per litre.

"This is because the export price has increased. Now the question is who authorized the increment?" he asked.

"They are not supposed to sell at the current price because subsidy payment is still being made", the former PENGASSAN president said.

He noted that although there was no fuel in many stations, the black market is thriving due to availability of products.

"Fuel is also being racketeering as another major reason for product scarcity."

He said while some people are moving the product out of the country, others at the same time are selling at increased price.

Niger Workers To Embark On Indefinite Strike Today

By Samuel Adu, JIBAR

Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, in Niger State has directed workers to embark on indefinite strike action beginning from today.

A six-point demand signed by the State NLC Chairman, Comrade Yakubu Garba, said the union would not accept the deliberate foot dragging and refusal of the government to heed the demands of workers.

Yakubu pointed out that after several notices to government over the lingering demands of workers, the government has continued to pay teachers salary on percentage for the past one year without remorse in spite of several appeals to stop the illegal payment.

The union is also aggrieved that in spite of the military formations in the state, the security situation has continued unabated.

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Ogoja/Yala Bye-election: Group Wants INEC To Cancel Polls

By Calibe Iheanacho, ARH

Civil Society Organization, CSO, Right Watch Initiative, RWI, has written to the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, challenging the outcome of Ogoja/Yala Federal Constituency bye-election which gave victory to the candidate of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Jude Ngaij, due to alleged malpractices.

The Chief Executive Director of RWI, Alexander Edim, in an open letter to the Chairman of INEC, Mahmood Yakubu, claimed that the election was characterized by irregularities.

Edim called on the electoral body to nullify the disputed results in Ogojama, Okulu Echimofana and Yache Ward, and announces a run-off.

"As an organization whose core mandate is national development, social wellbeing of citizens, human rights, social justice, equity and good conscience, we were on ground and saw for ourselves the barbaric and uncivilized actions orchestrated by Governor Ben Ayade, through the instrumentality of his ADC, and chief security officer, in causing widespread violence, killing, humiliating and preventing eligible voters from exercising their franchise.

"Recall Sir, on February 26, INEC scheduled a bye-election into Ogoja/Yala Federal Constituency. Suffice to say, that while the commission under your able leadership did everything humanly possible to ensure a free, fair and credible election, Governor Ayade, in a show of blatant ego, decided to throw away caution by instructing his men to unleash violence on innocent voters, who were virtually prevented from exercising their franchise as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic Nigeria.

"The returning officers abrogated so much power to themselves, where they unilaterally cancelled results from several polling units without consulting the INEC headquarters for advice.

"Most regrettable is that if you sum up the number in the voters register in the polling units cancelled, you will realize that it exceeded the alleged winning margin, which under normal circumstances, in line with extant laws, a run-off should be held in these cancelled areas before a winner can be determined.

"The entire result in Echimofana ward, Imajie, Olgodoma and Okuku wards, were manipulated by heavily armed personnel, particularly in Okpoma, and in connivance with the head of IT in your office to manipulate the BVAS machine to conform with the manipulated system as if there was actual election.

"Sir, video footage of the alleged irregularities is everywhere on social media and we are ready to forward same when required by the commission.

"We expect that the commission will not allow the manipulation of the figures for its interest. We expect that the commission will be fair and just in this regard.

"The commission must see to it that no one takes advantage of the situation to manipulate the results for any candidate."

"This is also affecting our mental health, because the pressure is just so much." he added.

"So, it is up to the leaders to find a way around everything," he added.

While recent surveys of people to go out if extremely necessary and important, he said the government should do everything possible to make the people's lives better.

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"Fuel is also being racketeering as another major reason for product scarcity."

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Treat Fuel Scarcity As Pandemic -Esele

By Bendex BNP

Former President of Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff, APO Alliance Nigeria, PENGASSAN, Comrade Peter Esele has advocated that the lingering fuel scarcity should be treated as a pandemic.

The labour activist gave the advice while speaking with AljazirahNigeria in Benin City.

Esele said persons who work from home as was done during the early days of Coronavirus outbreak should be permitted to do so.

"By this, I mean that government and employers who know their workers can work from home, should allow them do so.

He also advised that as the scarcity persists, if possible the number of days that employees go to work should be reduced.

"These can serve as a temporary measure because, currently it is really tough and the fares have increased, some by 100 percent.

"This is also affecting productivity, because if you look at the faces of Nigerians at the various bus-stops, you will notice that everybody is angry.

This is also affecting our mental health, because the pressure is just so much." he added.

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Judgement Debt: NUP Wants Ogun Attorney General Jailed For Contempt

BY AGENCY REPORT

Nigeria Union of Pensioners, NUP, has commenced contempt proceedings before the National Industrial Court, Ibadan Division, against the Attorney General of Ogun State, Mr Olawunmi Ogunbawale, praying for him to be sent to prison for alleged breach of a court order.

In a Form 86 filed before the court through its lawyer, Mr A A Sparks, the union accused the Ogun AG of disobeying a May 7, 2021, judgment of Justice Opoloye Ogunbawale, which affirmed that retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries in Ogun State remain members of the NUP.

The judge had nullified a parallel union – Association of Retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries – formed by the Ogun retirees.

The judge further held that being members of the Ogun State Civil Service, one per cent of the monthly pensions of the retired Ogun civil servants should be paid to the NUP as check-off dues.

In consequence, the judge ordered the Bureau of State Pension, Ogun State, and the state’s attorney general to supply the NUP with the list of the Ogun retired Heads and P5s and to remit to the NUP all such check-off dues hitherto deducted from their monthly pensions.

The defendants, jointly and severally, should calculate and refund to the claimant, NUP, all the backlog of the check-off dues of all eligible members of the union, which were deducted and remitted to the first defendant, Registered Trustees of the Association of Retired Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries, Ogun State, from September 2015”, Justice Ogunbawale held.

However, the NUP, in its contempt application, alleged that nearly a year after Justice Ogunbawale’s judgment, the Ogun State Attorney General had refused to obey.

The union, in turn, filed a contempt application praying the court to send the AG to prison for alleged contempt of court.

On January 17, 2022, Justice J D Peters, before whom the contempt application was filed, ordered that the application be served on the AG through substituted means by publishing the same in a national newspaper.

Medical Check-up: Buhari Departs For London

BY OCHUBOKE VICKY AMIKE

President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday departed Abuja for routine medical check-up in London, the United Kingdom, after booking the same trip on his return to Abuja.

Recall that the president had initially planned to embark on the trip, after attending the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Environmental Programme, UNEP, from Nairobi, Kenya.

Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the President, Femi Adesina had in a statement on March 1 informed the nation that Buhari would proceed to London from Kenya for “routine medical checks that will last for a maximum of two weeks”.

However, the president returned to Abuja on Friday at about 1pm, thereby erecting suspense on why the U-turn by the president.

Meanwhile, President Buhari has said Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo is in charge whenever he is out of the country.

Speaking to State House correspondents before his departure at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, Buhari said he had capable hands to run the government in his absence.

Well, I cannot claim to be doing the work alone. The government is fully represented; the vice-president is there. Constitutionally, when I’m away, he’s in charge. And the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and then the Chief of Staff. So, I have no problem”, Buhari said.

However, the president did not disclose if he sent a letter to the National Assembly as required by the constitution.

Zamfara NSCDC Deploys 909 Operatives To Maulid Of Sheikh Inyass

BY AHMAD IBRAHIM GUSAU

The NSCDC, has deployed 909 personnel to the annual national Sheikh Ibrahim Inyass Maulid, to embark on internal security operations, Bodinga, the Acting Commandant Operations, Bodinga, reminded the personnel of the need to be firm and focused in the discharge of their constitutional duties.

The Maulid which is expected to last for 3 days is going to pull the crowd from different States in Nigeria to Gusau, the State capital.

Also, the intelligence unit of the corps has been deployed massively to various parks and bus stops to monitor the influx of the would-be participants to the annual event.

Also, the Quick Response Squads (QRS), to embark on routine patrol around the state to check criminal activities in the state during this period.

A four-year-old boy, Ibrahim Inyass Maulid, who equally resolved to also carry out a thorough appraisal of current political trends in APC and INEC timetable and engage more prominent Nigerians, the Academic, Civil Society groups and national delegates of the party, Professional bodies, Religious Leaders, Youths and Women Organisations on the need to elect this tested, loyal and true apostle of his and ensure that a man of conscience like him who truly abhors corruption succeeds him to continue where he stops”.

According to the communiqué, the Uyo declaration was sequel to the Kano declaration and the acceptance of the vision of the ‘New Tribe’ further resolved to ‘align with the Kano Declaration’ to mobilise funds to purchase the APC expression of interest and nomination forms for Prof Yemi Osinbajo in furtherance of our total commitment to the noble course of compelling the Vice-President of Nigeria Prof. Yemi Osinbajo to contest for the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria”.

The declaration expressed the readiness of the ‘New Tribe’ to help Osinbajo to win the presidency.

Chairman of the 27 Short Service Combatant Course of Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), retired Maj.-Gen. Okechukwu Ugo (M), with other guests and Course mate, cutting cake, during a dinner to celebrate the course grand reunion in Abuja on Saturday.

PHOTO: JOHNSON UDEANU/TANAN

2023: 180 Support Groups Pressure Osinbajo To Run For Presidency

BY INIOBONG SUNDAY, UYO

Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo is currently facing a stiff test of faith in taking decisions over the 2023 presidential election.

With several appeals from various quarters to run without green light yet from Pastor Osinbajo, a coalition of no fewer than 180 support groups converged in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, at the weekend, urging him to declare.

While we await his decision we shall intensify where he stops”, the groups, drawn from the academia, professional bodies, political stakeholders and youths, which met at the Emerald Event Centre in Uyo, appealed to Osinbajo to heed their calls as his acceptance cut across the aged, youths and the down-trodden, noting that the hope of rescuing Nigeria lies in him.

In a communiqué read by a chairmain of the All Progressives Congress, APC, in Akwa Ibom State, Chief Otu Ita Toyo, who chairs the Local Organizing Committee, LOC, said, “There are 180 support groups and all are calling on the Vice-President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo to come and contest”.

And the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and then the Chief of Staff. So, I have no problem”, Buhari said.

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and Civil Defence Corps, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, has deployed 909 personnel to the venue of the 2022 annual national Sheikh Ibrahim Inyass Maulid for internal security.

Briefing newsmen at the command’s headquarters shortly before the deployment, the state commandant, Mr A A Sparks entreated the personnel to be diligent, civil and courteous in the discharge of their duties.

The commandant reiterated that indolence and indiscipline of any sort will not be tolerated, saying that no corps member would be considered a sacred cow or untouchable.

He spoke through the Deputy Commandant Operations, Bodinga, reminded the personnel of the need to be firm and focused in the discharge of their constitutional duties.

The Maulid which is expected to last for 3 days is going to pull the crowd from different States in Nigeria to Gusau, the State capital.

Also, the intelligence unit of the corps has been deployed massively to various parks and bus stops to monitor the influx of the would-be participants to the annual event.

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Okowa Approves 50% Minimum Wage For Teachers

FROM CHIOMA ANYIJE, ASABA

Delta State Governor, Ifeanyi Okowa has given approval for the payment of the minimum wage to primary school teachers in the state.

The State Commissioner for Primary Education, Mr. Chika Ossai, who disclosed this in Asaba at a meeting between his ministry, the state wing of the Nigeria Union of Teachers, NUT, and other critical stakeholders, said the approval was with effect from February, 2022.

Ossai stated that the gesture was in fulfillment of the promise made by the Governor following a presentation on the excruciating plight of primary school teachers from the implementation of the new minimum wage by the State NUT.

The commissioner, however, explained that the Local Government Councils, under the auspices of the Association of Nigeria Local Governments of Nigeria, ALGON, Delta State chapter, were expected to make up for the balance of 50% of the minimum wage to teachers.

He told the stakeholders that government was looking into the shortage of teaching and non-teaching staff in primary schools across the state, pointing out that the State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB, had been directed to compile the staff needs of the primary schools for necessary action.

Ossai thanked primary school teachers in the state for their patience and understanding and assured them that their welfare would continue to receive the attention of government, while urging the teachers to rededicate themselves to their duties.

In his remarks, chairman of the state wing Executive of NUT, Comrade Titus Okorie thanked Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for the approval and appealed to ALGON, Delta State to fulfill its own side of the bargain to enable the teachers enjoy a full package of the minimum wage.

Fuel Scarcity: Osun Holds Stakeholders Meeting With Marketers

FROM ADEGBEI ROCHEVO, ILESHA

Osun state government has condemned the present hardship being experienced by motorists and non-motorists in the wake up of the petroleum scarcity in the state in recent times.

As part of efforts of his administration to cushion the effects of the scarcity thereby bringing a lasting solution to it, Governor Ademola Oyetola called for a stakeholders meeting with the Major and Independent Petroleum Marketers in the state aimed at fine tuning grey areas affecting the availability of the Premium Motor Spirits, PMS, popularly known as petrol.

Speaking with the stakeholders through the State Commissioner for Commerce, Industry, Cooperatives and Empowerment, Dr Bode Olanipokun, Governor Oyetola explained shock, disbelief and unhappiness with the emergence of long queues in virtually all filling stations throughout the state.

The governor, who assured that normalcy would soon be restored called for an end to the arbitrary hike in prices per litre of the product in many filling stations in the state.

Checks carried out by our Correspondent revealed that in Osogbo where the product per chance is readily available, it sells for as much as between N250 and N300 per litre, almost a double of the official N162/165 per litre.

This development as a matter of fact has made life more difficult for people as some of the motoring public who cannot afford to bear the price hike have had to abandon their vehicles at home or offices to trek long distances.

The effects of the unavailability of the product which a lot of people attributed to hoarding of the product deliberately by petroleum marketers has brought both social and economic activities to a near state of paralysis in Osogbo and other major towns and cities of the state.

Oyetola maintained the readiness of his administration to put all necessary machinery in place to make the product available very soon and to be sold at an official pump price of N162.

He stressed that for effective result in this regard, his ministry, the state wing of Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Cooperatives and Development, stressing that all that were officially required to put a stop to the scarcity would be done by the state parliament. He added that a special task force to that effect has been set up to address the issue of demand and supply of the PMS throughout Osun.

The lawmaker also called for restraint and understanding of the people pending when there would be the way out.

"Though not limited to Osun state alone, I assure you, however, that incumbent administration in the state will soon be on top of the situation."

"We cannot continue like this. We call for patient and understanding because very soon, both the motoring and non-motoring public would have a sigh of relief." commented Dr Olanipokun on behalf of governor Oyetola, he said.

In his remarks, chairman, House Committee on Commerce, Industry, Cooperatives and Empowerment, Hon. Lateef Adelabu Japaul condemned the development, stressing that all that were officially required to put a stop to the scarcity would be done by the state parliament. He added that a special task force to that effect has been set up to address the issue of demand and supply of the PMS throughout Osun.

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In his own remarks at the meeting held in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Cooperatives and Development, state secretariat, popularly known as petrol, Abere, chairman of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria, IPMAN, in Osun state, Alhaji Bukola Mutiu appreciated the various efforts of Governor Oyetola with a declaration that he would be the first Governor in the South-West to create a stakeholders forum for petroleum marketers to register their concerns on the current situation.

Alhaji Mutiu, however, said that the state government to ensure that the petroleum scarcity in recent times.

While appreciating the governor and his administration for the genuine concern to ameliorate the situation for the overall happiness of the citizenry, he also sought the support and intervention of the state government to ensure the availability of the Petroleum products in the state.

APC Convention: North West Youth Initiative Adopts Kalu For Presidency

BY ABDUL LATEEF BAMGBOSE, ABUJA

Concerned Nigerians under the auspices of North West Youth Initiative for Sen. Oritse Uzor Kalu, has called on the Leadership of the All Progressive Congress, APC, ahead of its planned National Convention to allow the wish of the generality of Nigerians to prevail by giving the lawmaker the party's presidential ticket.

Briefing journalists yesterday in Abuja, the group said that it has mobilized at least 2,000 youths across the North West to engage stakeholders in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara and Jigawa states for the convention with the ultimate objective of pushing for power shift to the South East.

Coordiorate of the group, Ahmed Bello Funstau told journalists that the only way to ensure peace and equity in Nigeria nascent democracy, is to allow the South East to seize the opportunity to fly the banner of the All Progressive Congress Presidential election in 2023.

"We are calling on the party leadership, that Senator Oritse Uzor Kalu, deserve a shot at the presidency, if Nigeria truly want to heal the wound of the Igbos under the unfortunate Civil war that ravaged the country."

"It is only fair that the South East should be allowed just like the aftermath of the June 12 debacle that produced former President Obasanjo.

"We cannot continue to pay lip service to unity of this country with the glaring inequality against the Igbos," the group said.

It described the campaign for a president from the South East as a popular demand and a desire for the ultimate objective of being at the top of the state to push for power shift to the South-East.

The group added that it has mobilized at least 2,000 youths across the North West to engage stakeholders in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara and Jigawa states for the convention with the ultimate objective of pushing for power shift to the South East.

"The South West have had their fair share, apart from been in power zone for eight democratic years, the zone has produced a military head of state and interim president," the group said.

It also announced its plans to embark on solidarity visit to the APC National Secretariat and the Senate Minority Leader, Oritse Uzor Kalu, before the convention to convince him to run for the presidency.

Funstau said the group has opened offices in Kaduna, Ijawa and Zamfara with the formal opening of the Kano office in March.

IBITOEY

I. formerly known and addressed as MRS OGUPOILA ADEWUNMI COMFORT, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS IBITOEY ADEWUNMI COMFORT. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please

CHANGE OF NAME

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Olu Of Warri Seeks Collaborations To Transform Niger Delta

The monarch said he would support any intentions directed at positively transforming the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

While welcoming the vice president, the Olu said the Itsekiri nation was committed to working with security agents and would support the federal government at all times.

The VP thanked the monarch for the warm reception, saying that traditional rulers should continue to maintain the peace in their domains, assuring that the Federal Government would continue to create the enabling peaceful environment for the overall development of the country.

Senate Passes Bills To Establish Universities In FCT, Rivers

Ahmad Babba Kaita, said the bill to establish the Federal Capital Territory University of Science and Technology, Abaji, would provide the legal framework needed by the institution to close the knowledge gap in science and technology.

According to the lawmaker, the bill to establish the Federal University of Environmental Technology, would allow for academic and professional programmes leading to the award of first degrees, post-graduate degrees and diplomas with special emphasis on environmental technology and research.

Both bills to establish the two federal universities were passed by the chamber after consideration by the Committee of the Whole.

Youths Urge To Explore Open Government Partnership

The annual event, which is slated for April 2 to 9, is expected to be hosted by the Federal Capital Territory. While performing the inauguration, the permanent secretary, FCTA, Ohakue Adesola expressed delight over the choice of Abuja as the host city for the film festival, noted that the annual event offered Abuja the platform to rank among elite film festivals hosts across the globe.

He highlighted the benefits of hosting the show among others, including job creation, revenue generation, boosting tourism, reduction of crime rate as well as the elevation of the status of Abuja as a leading entertainment capital city.

Adesola further assured the Nigerian Film Corporation of the administration’s support for the partnership to host a successful film festival come April while urging members of the committee to work vigorously towards the success of the event.

Speaking earlier, the managing director of the NFC, Dr. Chidie Maduekwe said the 2022 Zuma Film Festival in Abuja would attract Diaspora actors and filmmakers that will create opportunities for them to share ideas with local film makers towards repositioning the Nigerian movie industry.

He said with the inauguration of the 15 committees, preparations will be on top gear towards ensuring the success of the festival.

Maduekwe expressed hope that the committee would vigorously pursue the proposal for the inclusion of all activities that are associated with preparations as well as the success of the show.

Abuja To Host Film Festival, As FCTA, NFC Inaugurate Sub-committee

A joint sub-committee for the forthcoming Zuma Film Festival has been inaugurated by the Federal Capital Territory Administration, FCTA, and the Nigerian Film Corporation, NFC.

Sen. Ahmad Babba Kaita, lamented that despite the contributions of Nigerians both at home and abroad to the growth and development of the Nigerian movie industry, steps were not yet being taken to boost the industry.

He emphasized that the launch of the NFC in 2017 by President Muhammadu Buhari was timely and necessary to boost the film industry.

The festival, programmed to hold from April 2 to 9, is expected to attract film enthusiasts from around the world.

The Senate has passed two bills to establish a Federal University in the Federal Capital Territory and Rivers State. They are the FCT University of Science and Technology Abaji (Establishment) Bill, 2022. The bills were passed recently after the consideration of two separate reports presented by the Committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFUND.

Vice Chairman of the Committee, Senator Sandy Onuh, in a presentation on behalf of the Chairman, Koro Ma Saakperwa Tai Ogoni, Rivers State (Establishment) Bill, 2022. The bills were passed recently after the consideration of two separate reports presented by the Committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFUND.

Borno Govt To Resettle 500 Households Before Ramadan

Zulum directed that five blocks of classrooms at a central primary school be built by the state’s ministry of reconstruction, rehabilitation and resettlement within the next 90 days.

He also ordered the rehabilitation of a healthcare centre and a Friday mosque around the old cattle market in the town. He added that each returnee would be supported with N10,000 as part of a participatory rebuilding approach.

Malam-Fatori, a town on the fringes of Lake Chad, had been abandoned by most of its residents since the early stages of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2014.
Police Arrest Man For Defiling Wife's Cousin In Ogun

OGUN
BY AGENCY REPORT

Ogun State Police Command yesterday said it had arrested 35-year-old Ifonbo Edoma for allegedly defiling his wife's cousin at the Hallelujah area in Ifo.

The state’s police spokesman, DSP Abimbola Oyeyemi, who disclosed this in a statement in Ota, explained that the suspect was arrested following a report lodged by his wife at Ifo Divisional Headquarters, that her husband had been forcefully having sex with her 11-year-old cousin (name withhold), who lives with them for the past three years.

She added that her cousin decided to report her husband to her when she could no longer bear it.

The wife said that the little girl, who lost her mother since she was a toddler, has been enduring it because she has no other place to live if her aunt’s husband sends her away.

The little girl said that her aunt’s husband usually threatens her whenever he wants to have his way with her.

“Upon the report, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Ifo Division, CSP Kehinde Kurangba, quickly detailed his detectives to the scene where the suspect was arrested.

“On interrogation, the suspect confessed to the crime but pleaded for forgiveness from the little girl,” he said.

The Commissioner of Police, Lanre Bankole, has directed that the victim be taken to hospital for medical attention.

Bankole also ordered the immediate transfer of the suspect to the anti-human trafficking and child labour unit of the state criminal investigation and intelligence department for further investigation and diligent prosecution.

Obaseki To Detractors: I’m Not Leaving PDP For Anyone, Accept My Leadership Or Leave

EDO

PHOTO TYOZENDA TYOAKAA

Edo State governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki at the weekend said he had no plans of defecting from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), urging anyone who is uncomfortable with his leadership of the party to leave.

The governor, who stated that the party was now fully harmonized, stressed that the constitution of the party bequeaths him with the leadership of the party in the state.

He said: “There is no division in Edo PDP. Let the party be open to accommodate others. PDP is democratic. The hallmark of democracy is ensuring that the majority has their way, as the minority can’t dictate to the people.

“I heard that Chief Dan Orithe was around, saying there is no harmonisation in Edo PDP. This is really irresponsible to say and an insult to members of the party, as the party has truly harmonised in the state.”

“PDP in Edo State is harmonised because before we made any appointments in any ward, we made sure the party at that level was harmonised. We are gathered here now as the election timetable is out; harmonisation has been done, appointments made and we are ready to win any election before us”.

Obaseki disclosed that the PDP national chairman, Dr. Iyonchua Ayo, would visit the state on March 10, 2022, urging party leaders to bring along five percent of newly registered members to welcome the party chair.

"Politics is not about fighting but dialogue and discussion. I urge us to collaborate and unite to move the party and state forward,” he charged.

"I didn’t give leaders any resources to mobilize but rather they challenged themselves and achieved the goal to register more members in the state.

"Some people went around saying people should not join our party. No true party man will do that. Those that engaged in that are not true members of the party and don’t belong to Edo PDP. If not, they will not push people away from the party.

"Our focus now is on how to engage our members, making them participate in the political making process of the party.”

Obaseki said, “These numbers are not fabricated as we have the data, pictures, emails and phone numbers of members of the party we have registered so far. You have broken records as this is the baptism of the PDP in Nigeria. We have changed the face of politics in Nigeria.

"I didn’t give leaders any resources to mobilize but rather they challenged themselves and achieved the goal to register more members in the state.”

Why I Dumped APC – Utomi

By Ben Ochum

Former stalwart of the All Progressive Congress, APC, and ex-presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress, ADC, Prof Pat Utomi has given an insight why he left the ruling All Progressive Congress, APC, alleging that the ideals of the founding fathers of the party had been jettisoned.

Speaking to newsmen in Abuja, Prof Utomi, a renowned economist, described the APC as a dying party that had lost focus, adding that there was need for Nigerians to rise and chart a direction for the country ahead of the 2023 election.

He noted that the party had drifted from its original ideology and had disconnected from the suffering masses that voted it into power.

Utomi, who said he was denied his constitutional right of contesting for the presidential ticket of the All Progress Congress in 2019 accused the party of not refunding the nomination and expression of interest form fee of N22.3, even after he was forced to withdraw litigation against the party.

He said, “We were deceived by the party that all people having one litigation or the other against the party should withdraw their suit and the governors would meet to refund the nomination fees , and I withdrew my suit against the party , no body refunded anything to me, it was a 419 that they did”.

Okowa, Monarch Advocate Constitutional Role For Traditional Rulers

BY OJOMO AKINBOLA, ASABA

Governor of Delta State, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa and the Ovie of Uvwie Kingdom, Dr Emmanuel Ekede have advocated for a constitutional role for traditional rulers.

They made the call in their separate addresses during the courtesy visit of the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo to the Uvwie monarch.

Governor Okowa, who was represented by his deputy, Deacon Kingsley Burutu Otuaro, noted that the peace in Delta State could be traced to the partnership and collaboration between the state government and the traditional institution.

The governor remarked that traditional rulers had contributed immensely to the development of their various communities.

He, therefore, opined that traditional rulers should be given a special role in the Nigerian Constitution.

The Uvwie monarch, in his own address said that traditional rulers were disappointed when their request for enforcement of constitutional role was not mentioned by the Senate in the constitutional amendment and that traditional rulers were not happy about it.

He, therefore, appealed to Vice-President Osinbajo to see to it that the role of traditional rulers was attended to by the National Assembly owing to the important role of peace making by traditional rulers at the grassroots.

In his response, Osinbajo acknowledged the role of traditional rulers in making it in the society as he referred to the role of Abe 1 in the establishment of the Ovie of Uvo to a peaceful kingdom.

He assured that he would reintroduce the issue before the National Assembly for consideration.
Oyo Wins South-West U-19 Cricket Championship

BY JOEL AJAYI

South-West U-19 Cricket Tournament’s host, Oyo State, emerged the winner of the third edition of the tournament tagged “Jide Bademasi Cup” at the Obafemi Awolowo Stadium.

With the victory, Oyo successfully defended its title after winning by 125 runs for six wickets in 20 overs, while Lagos had 107 runs for seven wickets in 20 overs.

In third place was Ogun who had defeated Osun. Ogun scored 56 runs in 19.3 overs. Ogun won by seven wickets.

It was gathered that both teams met in the finals of the 2nd edition in 2020 while COVID-19 scuttled the 2021 edition.

While speaking, the captain of the Oyo State team, Kayode Komolafe, said it wasn’t an easy win as both teams competed keenly.

Komolafe said that teamwork and dedication made them win. According to him, Lagos is a strong contender, it wasn’t an easy one. We both fought hard but in it I’m happy we won it. We always meet them at the finals.

However, the batminton of the series was awarded to Abdulraheem Ridwan of Lagos, bowler of the series was Olomoyo Orisota while the wicket-keeper of the series was Lakan Kofoworola of Oyo State.

World Cup Play-off: We Are Working Hard To Beat Ghana Home And Away – Eguavoen

BY JOEL AJAYI

With less than 20 days to make or mar games between two West African giants Nigeria and Ghana, the technical director of the Nigerian Football Federation and the interim manager of the Super Eagles, Augustine Eguavoen, has revealed that the technical crew is working very hard to ensure victory in both ties of their upcomingCAF-FIFA 2022 World Cup qualifier games

The first leg will take place at Accra on March 25 and the next leg will take place in Abuja on March 29.

The aggregate winner of both ties will secure one of Africa’s five spots for the upcoming global showpiece.

Speaking to journalists, the interim boss of the Super Eagles noted, “There is no doubt in my mind, I am a Nigerian, a full-blooded Nigerian, and if you asked me such a question, I think, without missing words, we deserve a place at the World Cup.

“That is why we working hard to ensure victory in both ties. We will just go and fight and try to win the game”.

Eguavoen noted that it will not be easy against the new-look Black Stars who will be playing under a new system which they are yet to witness.

“It’s going to be a very tough game and a tight one as well”. Eguavoen said of the upcoming fixture under Ghana’s new coach Otto Addo.

“We have a lot of mutual respect for one another, and when Ghana plays Nigeria and Nigeria plays Ghana, it’s always tough, it’s always tight”, he added.

However, the last competitive match between Ghana and Nigeria was in January 2010 and the Black Stars emerged victorious, beating the Super Eagles 1-0 in the 2010 African Cup of Nations semi-final in Angola.

Unending NBBF’s Crisis: Morocco Replaces Nigeria As BAL Tourney Kicks-off

BY JOEL AJAYI

Nigeria as a nation has started reaping seeds of discord planted and unending crisis in Nigeria basketball federation as the FIBA replace a club from Morocco to replace Nigeria slot in the Basketball African League BAL, second season began over the weekend.

FIBA picked AS Sale, Moroccan champions in 2020-21 Division Excellence to replace the Nigeria 2021 champion Rivers Hoopers.

On January 14, 2022, FIBA decided to exclude Nigeria champions Rivers Hoopers stating that the Nigeria Basketball Federation NBBF, failed to organize a national championship.

The world basketball ruling body in a letter dated January 14, 2022, signed by the Secretary-General, Alphonse Bile, and addressed to the President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation, Engr. Ahmadu Musa Kida stated that Nigeria’s Rivers Hoopers cannot participate in this year’s Final Round.

The reason for FIBA Africa’s sanction according to a document available to AljazirahNigeria Sports is that Nigeria did not conclude its League.

The Super 8 basketball league held in Abuja in November 2021 that produced Rivers Hoopers as champions were organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development following leadership tussle in the Federation.

However, the 2022 edition includes 12 club basketball teams from 12 African countries that will be played in Dakar Senegal, and Cairo, Egypt. The BAL season will also expand to a total of 38 games with 15 games in Dakar from March 5-15 and another 15 games in Cairo from April 9-19 and an eight-game playoff and BAL Finals in Kigali from May 21-28.

The twelve teams include; Petrol de la Beira, Mozambique, FAP Yaoundé, Cameroon, and Cape Town Tigers.

Roger Federer

The 20-time grand slam winner, Roger Federer said he is hoping to return to action by the end of the summer, with his recovery from knee surgery likely to rule him out of Wimbledon.

The 40-year-old underwent surgery on his right knee for the third time last August and has missed five of the last seven grand slams.

Federer made the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in 2017 before having to pull out of the final with a virus that affected his legs.

He said: ‘It’s a hard one, that he will suffer more injuries than others. It’s going to be a very tough game and a tight one as well’.

Eguavoen said of the upcoming fixture under Ghana’s new coach Otto Addo.

The 20-time grand slam winner is hoping to return to action by the end of the summer, with his recovery from knee surgery likely to rule him out of Wimbledon.

However, he feels “positive” about his return, which could mean he is back to being an aces player.

Federer’s tally of 20 career Grand Slams is the most for a man, with Rafael Nadal having 19 and Novak Djokovic 18.

However, it has never been out of the question to see him as the highest again. That is why we working hard to ensure victory in both ties. We will just go and fight and try to win the game”.

Eguavoen noted that it will not be easy against the new-look Black Stars who will be playing under a new system which they are yet to witness.

“He’s going to be a very tough game and a tight one as well”, Eguavoen said of the upcoming fixture under Ghana’s new coach Otto Addo.

“‘It’s going to be a very tough game and a tight one as well’.

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Eguavoen noted that it will not be easy against the new-look Black Stars who will be playing under a new system which they are yet to witness.
Man City Showed Class, Embarrasses Red Devils To Restore 6 Points EPL Lead

Manchester City embarrassed their brother Manchester United 4-1 to maintain control of the Premier League title race with an outstanding display at Etihad Stadium. City remained six points clear of Liverpool having played one game more after a victory that was arguably even more convincing than the score line suggests.

De Bruyne got City off to the perfect start five minutes into the 187th Manchester derby, slotting home his 50th Premier League goal. Jadon Sancho, on his first Etihad Stadium appearance, provided temporary respite for United with a well-taken equalizer midway through the first half, but De Bruyne’s second ensured City led - deservedly - at the break.

Mahrez brilliantly volleyed in City’s third from a corner to wrap up the statement victory 22 minutes from time, and amid the fever-pitch celebrations among the home faithful, the Algerian underscored the champions’ dominance with a late, VAR-awarded fourth. City’s victory sees them respond to Liverpool’s title challenge and reinstate their six-point lead at the top of the Premier League, while a first defeat since January 3 sees United in fifth, a point behind fourth-placed Arsenal, who have three games in hand.

Ralf Rangnick’s side were without injured Cristiano Ronaldo and Edinson Cavani, as well as Raphael Varane and Luke Shaw, who have COVID-19, and found themselves overwhelmed by the quality and intensity of the reigning champions.

Arsenal Beats Watford Climbs To Fourth In EPL Table

Arsenal football club of England on Sunday climbed into the Champions League places with an entertaining victory over lowly Watford in a game with five quality goals.

The Hornets, who remain in the relegation zone, thought they had taken the lead within the first 20 seconds as Emmanual Dennis slotted home but he was offside. Martin Odegaard put Arsenal ahead not long afterwards after flicking the ball into the path of Bukayo Saka and then running into the centre to slot in Saka’s cross.

Watford levelled with the best individual goal of the game, Cucho Hernandez’s acrobatic flying volley from Kiko Femenia’s cross. The visitors restored their lead when Saka won the ball off Tom Cleverley and found Alexandre Lacazette, who rolled the ball back into Saka’s path to fire into the top corner.

England star Saka was involved again in the third goal as his quick throw-in set up a move with Lacazette laying the ball off to Gabriel Martinelli to finish. They looked as if they were cruising, and Eddie Nketiah hit the post, before Moussa Sissoko controlled the ball on his chest and beat Ben White before slotting in.

That set up tense finale but Watford did not manage a clear-cut chance to equalise. Arsenal moved above Manchester United into fourth spot for a couple of hours at least, with United facing Manchester City in the derby.

Targets Summer Return

Wimbledon last year, but coach Severin thi recently said that he “can’t ignore” the eight-time Wimbledon former featuring in London this year. The 20-time grand slam winner now provided an update on his recovery. He said the end of summer or the start of autumn is a realistic target for his return, which could mean he is back for the US Open that starts on Aug. 29. However, he feels “positive” about his return to the court whenever that comes.

“It will certainly be a while”, Federer said. “The end of the summer, early autumn, that’s where I’m aiming for a comeback.”

“It’s, the knee, fine. Better. Obviously, I was on crutches for two months, so you have to start from the bottom”.

Federer’s tally of 20 career Grand Slam titles was surpassed by Rafael Nadal in January’s Australian Open. However, the timeline for Federer’s recovery also means that he will miss the second slam of 2022, May’s French Open at Roland Garros.

Obindo ya jadadda cewa kusan kashi 60 cikin 100 na ‘yan Nijeriya an tabbatar da cewa suna da tafin hankali. A cewarwa, cikiyaya ya gabar da kwata, domin akwai karancin ya maa’akatan lafiyar kwakwalawa irin su liktokin ta’addanci mai lamba CAP 237, domin da kuma duba lafiyar masu tavin hankali. Abin da ya kamata a yi shi ne ake fama da shi a ke yana da yawa.


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Magatakardar Hukumar Shirya Jarabawar Shiga Makarantar Gaisha Da Sakantirin Tarihi Farisa Is-haq Oloyede ya yi kira ga matsata da su yi hakuri da ta’ayar hawainiyar da ake fana da su a yanzu. Oloyede ya yi
Hukumar NDLEA Ta Kama Mutum 41 Da Ake Zargi A Kaduna Da Abuja – Jami’i


Shugaban kungiyar wasan mota jiki ta Majalisar Dinkin Duniya (UNSRC), Ms Tolulope Lewis-Tamoka (M); Shugaban kungiyar wasan mota jiki ta Majalisar Dinkin Duniya (UNSRC), Ms Tolulope Lewis-Tamoka (M); Shugaban kungiyar wasan mota jiki ta Majalisar Dinkin Duniya (UNSRC), Ms Tolulope Lewis-Tamoka (M); Shugaban kungiyar wasan mota jiki ta Majalisar Dinkin Duniya (UNSRC), Ms Tolulope Lewis-Tamoka (M); Shugaban kungiyar wasan mota jiki ta Majalisar Dinkin Duniya (UNSRC), Ms Tolulope Lewis-Tamoka (M).
النيجيريون عرضة لمرض العقلية بسبب المشقة

ما يجعل لائملاً هو أن يعيش أشخاص الأردن في نطاق zdjia@aljazirahnews.com، الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة صحية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية.

وقال macOS Mountains: "إذا تنطلق، فإن أشعر بالتحسن، لأنه يتعذر على الأشخاص الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية.

وقد أشار macOS Mountains إلى أن هذا التشخيص يمكن أن يكون في نطاق zdjia@aljazirahnews.com، الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية، أو الذين يعانون من مشكلة جسدية أو نفسية.
تحلت نيجيريا المرتبة السادسة في مؤشر القوة الإدارية لعام 2022

احترام قواعد اللغة العربية في النص:
- استخدمت اللغة العربية بشكل صحيح.
- نصيحتي: لا يوجد أي ميزات التشبيك أو مذكرات في النص.

نوفمبر، 2022امتدت عائلة طارق في معركة النهاية، وتمكنوا من السيطرة على المواقع المتبقية في تدمر، وتمكن نحو 400 من المسلحين من التراجع بعد لقائها مع قوات النظام في التقدم الميداني.

الجشير، 2022

الجدير بالذكر أن نيجيريا، واحدة من الأكبر في العالم، تتمتع بمساحة تبلغ حوالي 9.2 مليون كيلومتر مربع، ويعيش فيها حوالي 200 مليون نسمة. إن هذه الارتفاعات مصدر إلهام للعديد من الدول الأخرى في الإيزابيل.

رويترز، 2022

أصبحت نيجيريا واحدة من أكثر الدول إزدهارًا في العالم، وتعتبر من الدول الرائدة في تنفيذ السياسات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية.

نتمنى أن يكون النص مفيدًا.

نير برونسور
A Chieftain of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, Chief Sam Nsietan, has expressed confidence that the National Assembly would soon reconsider the passage of the bill seeking the creation of special seats for women in the national and state assembles.

Reacting to the rejection of the bill at the recent constitutional amendment meeting at the National Assembly, Nsietan said Nigeria was too prominent on the global stage to play second fiddle in gender rights and parity issues.

The APC stalwart assured Nigerian women that his party, being a progressive one, was sensitive and supportive to development issues affecting women, youth, girl-child, and the vulnerable in the society.

Nsietan in a statement in Abuja yesterday said that his party’s manifesto and ideology favoured the International Affirmative Action as was enunciated in Beijing, China in 1995.

“Passing of the bill is just a matter of when and not if,” the statement said.

He advocated champions of the bill, who included Abia State-born Hon. Nkiri Iwuji, not to be discouraged by the setback but to reintroduce the bill without delay.

He also appealed to members of the national assembly to put into consideration the overwhelming support the bill has among the Nigerian populace when next it comes to the legislature.

He commended the support of the Nigerian women in particular, who were led by the wife of the president, Aisha Buhari, and also recalled the courageous role played by the former First Lady Mariam Abacha, inputting Nigeria at its rightful place during the landmark Beijing conference of 1995.

Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Lucky Irabor (R), flagging off the 2022 International Military Sports Council (CISM) Day Run for the Armed Forces and Security Agencies in commemoration of the 2022 Anniversary of CISM globally aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the Armed Forces and security agencies, in Abuja, recently.

Photo: Johnson Udeani/OTU/NAN

**Robbers Kill Gang Member, Businessman In Benue**

BY HEINRICH ASABA MAKURDI

Two suspected armed robbers early yesterday morning reportedly killed a businessman identified as Jonah Onchwe at Naka, headquarters of Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue State.

Sources said the robbers, who stormed the residence of the businessman early hours of Sunday, killed one of their own in the process of robbing their victim.

“It was around 2:00 am this morning (Sunday) that some grooms suspected to be armed robbers entered the businessman’s house after scaling the fence. “It was the sporadic gunshots at the businessman’s house that woke up the neighbor and nobody could come out,” a source said.

Confirming the robbery incident, chairman of Gwer West Local Government, Mrs Grace Igbofan said one of the robbers was the son of a pastor. She said the robbers who were known cultists had been terrorizing the Musikur/Naka/Adoka road for some time.

“The report I heard is that two robbers went to the businessman’s house and scaled through the fence. “When they entered they (robbers) asked the businessman to bring the money in his house, he brought the money and pleaded with them not to kill him. “But one of the robbers collected the money and shot the man in the chest, the other robber who saw what happened shot his colleague and made away with the money.

“The robber that was killed is a pastor’s son, they were actually four armed grooms but only two went for that operation on Sunday,” the LG boss said.

Mrs Igbofan, who said police operatives had launched a manhunt for the arrest of the suspected robbers, added that the trio started off as cultists and graduated to robbers.

“Twice they had been arrested and taken to court but unfortunately, we still see them around terrorising the people of Naka as well as Naka/Makurdi/Adoka highway,” she concluded.

“When contacted, spokesperson of the state police command, SP Catherine Anene said she was yet to receive information about the incident. “Am yet to receive the information,” Anene said.

**Okowa Emerges Special Guest Of Honour At Maris Lecture**

BY OMOWO EZERE ASABA

For three consecutive times, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State has emerged the special guest of honour at this year’s annual Maris Public Service Lecture.

Dropping the hint yesterday in Asaba, the secretary, Maris Trust Council, Comrade Felix Egbugo said the achievements of Governor Okowa in private and public service had qualified him as the special guest of honour at the lecture titled ’Selfless Service: A Phenomenal Virtue’. He said “every Nigerian can testify that Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State is a man with a heart of gold.

“As a son of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in 2014, he revolutionised the country’s health sector when the National Health Bill 2014 was passed to effectively address the health needs of Nigerians. “Senator Okowa as the chairman, Senate Committee on Health said, ‘Primary healthcare is what we need in this country and we are poised to have at least one primary health care centre in every ward, but we do not have well trained personnel. “We need to train them and we need to have adequate drugs and facilities.’ “We are aware of his antecedents as a medical doctor, secretary to local government, local government council chairman, commissioner of different ministries, secretary to Delta State government, another and of course, as a governor, he has done as well as Delta is the first state in the country to have compulsory Health Insurance scheme.

“Governor Okowa has done a lot for humanity that he is most suitable to be the special guest of honour for this year’s lecture as the topic of discussion, ’Selfless Service: A Phenomenal Virtue’ is a life that he is living.

“Again, the Maris Trust Council led by Dr Kenneth Olise, FCA, is very happy that the governor through selfless service in the act of governance, has made Delta, more progressive and safe for the annual public service lecture to take place. This year’s edition will hold on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at Asaba.

“Already, the Chief of Staff, Government House, Asaba, Rt. Hon. Festus Ovie Aga, a renowned politician, former Deputy Speaker of the Delta State House of Assembly, former Chairman of the Delta State Executive Labour Agent, former Chief Strategist to Delta State Government, former Secretary to Delta State Government, among other positions that required rendering of services to humanity has agreed to deliver the lecture.”

“It is worthy to state that former Nigerian Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Godson Egbeche, OFR will Chairman the occasion which will have a philanthropist, successful private sector operator, Hon. Eta Enahoro as discussant, and a University Don, Dr Kemi Ehinmi will be the Moderator.”

Typical of Maris Annual Public Service Lecture, the Maris Trust Council, has resolved to stick to having four discussants, and other players.

“We thank the public for accepting the lecture series as contributing to the growth of the society,” Egbugo said.

**Kwara Lists Conditions For Fish Farmers At Asa Dam Waterworks**

BY ADEO SALAUDEEN BORIN

Kwara State government has listed some conditions for farmers operating in Asa Dam to continue their business.

The state Ministry of Water Resources has lamented the negative effects of their activities on public facilities and water supply to the people of Ilorin metropolis.

In a communication issued on Thursday at the weekend following a stakeholders’ meeting with fish farmers, Consultation Officer, Ministry of Water Resources, Wahab Femi Agbaye directed all the fish farmers to stop the discharge of their effluent into the dam.

He also ordered that the 250 meters minimum setback stated in the law should be maintained by all the fish farmers operating by the dam side.

It has also been agreed that the state government must now have the data of and certify all the fish farmers operating in Asa Dam area, while a seminar will be organised for all of them on safety measures by the Kwara State Environmental Protection Agency, KEWEPA.

Effluent treatment machines of affordable cost, to be provided for use by the farmers while KEWEPA will carry out routine inspections of their activities and others.

It is also recommended that the fish farmers operating around the Dam area should be registered with the Ministry of Agriculture,” the communiqué said.

It observed that the effect of fish farmers’ activities, especially activities along Alara, Egbejila, Panpo and other areas of the dam and the discharge of waste into the dam has now reached an alarming stage, adding, “The effect of effluent being discharged into Asa Dam lake has great impacts on the water supply facilities in Asa Dam watersheds, such as GRI I beam that supports the lamina tube sand filtration media equipment, resulting into high wastage.”

“The discharge of effluent into the dam, increased the cost of treatment of water and reduces the quantity of treated water supply to the citizen. This has to be addressed now,” the communiqué added.
Russian Assault Halted Civilian Evacuations, Says Official

Ukrainian officials said a second attempt to evacuate civilians from a southern city under siege for a week has failed due to continued Russian shelling.

Ukrainian military authorities said yesterday that evacuations from the port city of Mariupol were scheduled to begin at noon local time, 10am GMT, during a 10am to 9pm local ceasefire. A similar ceasefire planned there and in the nearby city of Volnovakha collapsed Saturday, trapping women, children and older under more shelling and aerial bombardment by Russian forces.

Interior Ministry's advisor, Anton Gerashchenko said the planned evacuations along designated humanitarian corridors were halted because of an ongoing assault.

"There can be no 'green corridors' because only the sick brain of the Russians decides when to start shooting and at whom," he said on Telegram.

A similar cease-fire planned for Mariupol and the nearby city of Volnovakha collapsed Saturday, trapping residents under more shelling and aerial bombardment by Russian forces.

Separately, Ukraine's national security service said Russian forces are firing rockets at a physics institute in the city of Kharkiv that contains nuclear material and a reactor. The security service said a strike on the nuclear facility "will lead to a large-scale ecological disaster."

The service said on Facebook yesterday that the Russians were firing from Grad launchers. Those missiles do not have precise firing from Grad launchers. Those missiles do not have precise

In television comments, Putin made a series of allegations against future agreements with Russia and Ukraine reaching a compromise.

Trump Renews 2020 Election, NATO Criticism

Former United States President, Donald Trump, in remarks to top Republican National Committee donors, renewed his criticism of NATO.

He hinted at another run for the White House and suggested that those who are there and who are in disarray, “somebody called me a Putin apologist the other day,” but didn’t bring up Pence, according to a source.

Trump’s remarks came about 24 hours after former Vice President, Mike Pence took several shots at the candidate in elections.

According to a source, Trump’s remarks came about 24 hours after former Vice President Mike Pence was brought down by the White House and a source.

Trump told them that; “there is no room in this party for the candidate” in elections. Trump’s remarks came about 24 hours after former Vice President Mike Pence was brought down by the White House and a source.

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New Lafia Substation To Become Nigeria’s Transmission Hub – NDPHC

BY CYRIL OGAR
Managing Director of the Niger Delta Power Holding Company Limited, NDPHC, Mr Chiedu Ugbo, says the new Lafia Transmission Substation will become Nigeria’s transmission hub with back feed to Abuja.

The NDPHC’s Head, Communication and Public Relations, Mr Emmanuel Ojor, who said this in a statement on Saturday in Abuja explained that Ugbo said this at the substation in Lafia.

He explained that before the substation was built, Lafia was served by a single 70 Km distribution line from Akwanga.

Ugbo maintained that NDPHC decided to build the substation essentially to step down electricity from the high voltage transmission line to a lower voltage level.

"Where the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company, AEDC, can now draw electricity and serve close to one million households and businesses in the state.

"It will thus help boost economic activities in the state, with positive knock-on effects on employment and socio-economic uplift of the residents of the state”, he said.

On his part, the Executive Director, Networks, NDPHC, Mr Ifeoluwa Oyedele, said that though the company was primarily a power generation, it constructs transmission substations and injection substations and so on.

"This is because no organisation can do what we do with the speed that we do it, with the quality that we do it and at the cost that we do it. We are arguably the largest power company in Africa", he said.

Meanwhile, the Transmission Company of Nigeria, TCN, says it has upgraded its Egbin 330/132/33 Kilo Volt, kV, Transmission Substation within its network that have a history of minimal power supply to Nigerians.

In the last 15 years, NDPHC has built 10 power stations and that is our main focus, however, we do realise that when you generate power it has to get to the consumers.

"That is why we have been intervening in constructing transmission substations, injection substations and so on.

"This is because no organisation can do what we do with the speed that we do it, with the quality that we do it and at the cost that we do it. We are arguably the largest power company in Africa", he said.

With the new 60MVA power transformer, the substation capacity to supply bulk electricity to the major distribution utilities in Lagos State, with installation of a 60 Mega Volt Ampere, MVA, 132/33kV power transformer.

TCN’s General Manager, Public Affairs, Mrs Ndidi Mba, said in a statement in Abuja on Sunday that the transformer which was installed by TCN in-house engineers was energised at 13.05pm on March 2.

"With the new 60MVA power transformer, the substation capacity to supply bulk electricity to the major distribution utilities in Lagos State, with installation of a 60 Mega Volt Ampere, MVA, 132/33kV power transformer."

Four African Countries Eye Kano Dry Inland Port – Ganduje

BY IBRAHIM ISMAIL
Four countries – Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon and Central African Republic – say they will patronise the Dala Inland Dry Port in Kano State, Gov. Abdullahi Ganduje said in Kano at the weekend.

This is contained in a statement issued by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr Abba Anwar.

Anwar stated that Ganduje made the disclosure when he visited the facility.

"Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon and Central African Republic have indicated their interests and readiness to use the Kano Dry Port for their imports and exports.

"They all agreed to get across to Kano State and send their officials to come and discuss with the state over the modus operandi of the new dry port before it takes off”, he quoted Ganduje as saying.

"They all agreed to get across to Kano State and send their officials to come and discuss with the state over the modus operandi of the new dry port before it takes off”, he quoted Ganduje as saying.

According to Anwar, Ganduje expressed his gratitude to President Muhammadu Buhari for his commitment at creating the enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the state and in the country in general.

"His commitment and seriousness signify his love for the state to bounce back economically as a commercial hub for the northern part of Nigeria”, Anwar also quoted Ganduje as saying.

Ganduje also called on the would-be managers of the port to make sure that they run everything digitally.

"We are in a digital world. You should therefore make sure that you comply with digital demands and operate within the realm of global best practice”, the governor said.

Ganduje expressed satisfaction at the level of progress and commitment of contractors and consultants on the project.
Nigeria Needs Trade Negotiation Skills To Boost Economy – Expert

Lagos Free Zone To Decongest Apapa, Tincan Ports – Emefiele

Illicit Financial Flows Threaten Attainment Of SDGs In Africa – Owasanoye

Slump In Share Price Trails MTN Amid Fraud Allegations

BY LADY PATRICK

Slump during trading hours on Friday amid sexual harassment allegations against the firm's MD, has put some pressure on the MTN Group share price. Some female workers of MTN Nigeria, under the umbrella name, 'The Anonymous Whistle Blowers', had written to the Group to report several misconduct against the subsidiary's head of Sales and Distribution Office, Adekunle Adebiyi.

The female employees alleged that Adebiyi had been a sexual predator for security in MTNNigeria, while his atrocities were said to have been allegedly covered by the Chief Executive Officer, Karl Toriola.

Fraud and misuse of power

Aside from the sex for job, Adebiyi was also linked to fraudulent activities, allegedly using his position to inflate contracts, while creating false sales and revenue reports.

He was said not to be alone in these illegal transactions, as other officials in the same group were also involved.

Anonymous Concerned Staff of Sales and Distribution Division alleged that the General Manager, Northern Regional Operations, Amina Dambatta, was also involved.

Some senior officers in MTN Nigeria are also said to have colluded in different corrupt strategies, while also violating the rights of workers that complained of the anomalies, as reported.

Another allegation made against Adebiyi includes favoritism and friends for selected positions in MTN Nigeria despite lacking requirements for the post.

While MTN is yet to publicly react to the allegations made against its senior officials, the telecommunications company seems to be taking action quickly, in response to the allegations.

On Friday, several media reports stated that Adebiyi had been fired by his parent company to the following the sexual and corruption scandal which came to light through the emails.

BY LADY PATRICK – DWOLFI

Former Head, Course on Intensive Trade Negotiations Skills, World Trade Organization, WTO, Prof. Dickson Yebah said Nigeria needs trade negotiation skills to tackle poverty, recession and boost the economy.

Yebah, started this at the weekend in Abuja, noted that training more trade negotiators would boost the strength of Nigeria's negotiating to lift the country out of poverty.

According to him, "Nigeria is a big country, we need to train 1,000 people who are skillful in negotiations and can negotiate better investment deals for the country. Trade negotiation skills are a way out of poverty, recession or economic slowdowns," Yebah said.

He said that a country could not attract better deals if it lacks skilled negotiators.

"So, negotiation skills are keys because if a country doesn't have good negotiators they cannot negotiate better deals for the country.

"They cannot attract anything to the country because they liaise with the outside world and we need to have effective negotiators who will liaise with the outside world and get investments into the country. This is the key.

"And it is not just to go to talk, it needs preparations, it needs information, research and this is why we are here training Nigerians to be able to negotiate better deals for Nigeria," Yebah said.

He urged Nigeria to emulate some countries in Asia that have used the course to their advantage.

"Because they know it is a way out of recession, it is a way to advance the economy of a country.

"So, I have strong hopes that if gradually we are able to train more Nigerians in the act of negotiations we attract more investments to Nigeria, this will lead to further creation of jobs and reduction of poverty.

"We need to train more Nigerians in this act of negotiation.

"But this time negotiation is not only about goods, we have intellectual property, we have trade in services, investments, we have agriculture and a whole array of areas which are of interest to Nigeria.

"These days, we are in the 21st Century, we are no longer in the 80s so certain areas of interest to our partners have shifted.

"For example in 1986, the WTO negotiating the services trade protocol negotiated what was called the positive list approach where a country only liberalises and opens up the sector it feels comfortable with.

"So, if Nigeria was comfortable with tourism, Nigeria would open up only that sector and close other sectors but now in the 21st Century, our partners are more interested in using the negative list approach.

The CBN governor further said that the bank would ensure it did everything possible to make the environment friendly for companies and businesses to thrive.

"So, we’re looking into how to make sure that the policy regulations are reviewed, we have our concerns about how free trade zones operate either tax exemptions or duty free exemptions and the rest of them.

"We would like to work with you to see how we would create a clear demarcation that separates companies that operate in free trade zones of those that will not operate as free trade zones.

The CBN governor further said that the bank would ensure it did everything possible to make the environment friendly for companies and businesses to thrive.

The UNODC had in October 2020, established the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030, developed in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030 on Friday by the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN.

"The illicit and sometimes criminal use of financial resources to fund international and local criminal activities is a threat to the safety and security of individuals and communities alike. We have been committed to working with the United Nations to ensure that the Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030 is implemented effectively.

"We would like to work with you to see how we would create a clear demarcation that separates companies that operate in free trade zones of those that will not operate as free trade zones.

Illicit Financial Flows Threaten Attainment Of SDGs In Africa – Owasanoye

BY LADY PATRICK

Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, ICPC, Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN, has warned that corruption and illicit financial flows may threaten Nigeria’s and Africa’s ability to realize the SDGs.

The ICPC Chairman gave this warning during the launch of the UNODC’s United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030 on Friday by the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN.

"The illicit and sometimes criminal use of financial resources to fund international and local criminal activities is a threat to the safety and security of individuals and communities alike. We have been committed to working with the United Nations to ensure that the Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030 is implemented effectively.

"A vision and plan of action underwriting the resilience of vital institutions, including anti-corruption agencies and the justice system are critical to the achievement of the core functions of leaving no one behind," the ICPC Chairman said.

He expressed the anti-corruption agency’s support for the United Nations’ Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030.

The UNODC had in 2020, worked with other development partners, in the global anti-corruption agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, as well as combat corruption, terrorism, economic slowdowns, and drugs.

Prof. Owasanoye, who commended the UNODC for the Strategic Vision in his goodwill message, noted that it would strengthen crime prevention, enhance justice, address organised crime, ensure a balanced response to drugs, terrorism, transnational crimes, and drugs.

The UNODC thematic areas are the global drug problem, organized crime, corruption and economic crime, terrorism, and counter prevention and criminal justice. A strategic vision that addresses these thematic areas in the context of Nigeria is directly relevant to the mandate of the ICPC, the UNODC and the ICPC Act.

"I therefore commend the UNODC for the Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030. The ICPC will continue to work with the UNODC and other stakeholders in the justice sector to realise the strategic vision in the interest of the same free society," the ICPC Boss was quoted in a statement by Commission’s spokesperson, Azuka C. Osuga.
Foreign Direct Investments Dwindle Further In January

January edition of the Nigerian Exchange NGX, report on domestic and foreign investor participation in equities trading showed that total equities market transactions increased Year-to-Date by 104% to N723.38 billion in January 2022. This was in line with out outlook for the first quarter of 2022 in which we anticipated increased bullwhip activity amid expectations of 2021 full year financial results of companies.

Transactions also gushed by 39%/when compared to January 2021, partly due to a low base occasioned by the global pandemic. Both local investors and foreign portfolio investors registered increased transaction sizes.

The report showed that transactions by local investors surpassed those by foreign investors by an even wider margin at 87.13% in January 2022 compared to 78.2% in January 2021, and 80:20 in January 2021, as the latter category remained on the side lines despite increased foreign exchange performance of quoted corporate.

Further breakdown showed that domestic individual investors generated the highest transaction value, followed by domestic retail investors, while foreign portfolio investors’ contribution remained the least.

We note the gradual decline in equities participation by foreign portfolio investors from 2018 to date which is due to several reasons, the least not being foreign exchange rate risk.

There is the additional challenge/threat of local investors actively seeking to build foreign portfolios for fear that in the event of a currency crisis, they would be unable to hedge against the devaluation of the naira. We are however, on the basis of reports received from local brokers, yet to see any significant downward pressure on foreign investment flows.

We nevertheless note that local bureau would still provide significant opportunities for the sophisticated investor.

Oil May Hit $150 Per Barrel if West Sanctions Russia’s Energy Exports

BY CHARLES OBI

Since Russia began its special military operation in Ukraine, the United States and other European nations have been reluctant to sanction Russia’s oil and gas exports. This is because the Western allies are concerned about the repercussions on Europe’s energy supply and skyrocketing oil and gasoline prices.

Although this concerns European nations and the US, there is no dearth of sanctions on Russian energy exports is still not off the table as the war wages on. According to many analysts, if the West bans Russia’s energy, international crude prices could skyrocket to as high as $150 per barrel.

Even without sanctions on Russian energy exports, there is already disruption in Russian oil exports as Moscow meets mounting challenges in selling its seaborne crude oil products, and oil products, with traders, refiners, banks, insurers, and tanker owners unwilling to touch anything coming out of Russia.

Russia exported around 11 million bpd of crude oil in 2021. As the country learned to live with sanctions, it has used its substantial cash reserves and cut back on imports, essentially making the country more resilient.

Russia is the third-largest producer of oil in the world and the largest exporter. The country had been a major supplier to Europe, which is now looking to diversify its energy supplies as it seeks to reduce its dependence on Russian gas and oil.

Russia’s oil exports have been hit by the sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies. The country’s oil production has been reduced by half since the start of the war, and the country’s oil exports have fallen by 30%.

The United States has said it is considering imposing new sanctions on Russia, which could further disrupt the market. The country is also considering imposing sanctions on the country’s oil sector.

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Despite Injection Of 381m Litres, Petrol Sells For N330

- Subsidy payment gulsps N10bn daily
- SERAP wants investigation of refiners' budgets, as fuel scarcity rages
- OPS seeks audit of oil importation

BY CYRI QASIM AND UMORU

Hope of the disappearance of fuel queues across the country has been rekindled as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) on Saturday released details of the distribution of additional 381.88 million litres of Premium Motor Spirit to Nigerians. The figure was released by the NNPC through its verified twitter account.

The release of the 381.88 million litres of petrol to Nigerians by the NNPC represents an average daily distribution of 13.1 million litres.

This is in addition to the 387.5 million litres of petrol which was released to Nigerians during the week covering February 14 to February 20. A breakdown of the NNPC weekly national evacuation report showed that 80 per cent of all the distribution took place at the top 20 high loading depots.

It stated that the remaining 20% of the evacuation took place at the other loading depots.

The top 20 high loading depots that sold the 387.5 million litres evacuating the PMS are: NNPC (19.78 million litres), AY Shafa (19.78 million litres), 11 PLC (17.78 million litres), Rainoil (15.93 million litres), and Avgov (15.63 million litres).

The NNPC is also sending 12.29 million litres, Bull Strategic (12.2 million litres), Matrix (11.99 million litres), Korian (11.7 million litres), and Pinnacle (11.7 million litres).

The rest are: NIPCO (10.78 million litres), Swift (10.01 million litres), Total Apapa (9.5 million litres), Palm (9.19 million litres), Sohar NG Ltd (8.84 million litres), Mainland (8.88 million litres) and Ardova (8.1 million litres).

Similarly, Nigeria’s subsidy payment has now risen to N10 billion daily, as international oil price continues to surge.

On Friday, Brent, the oil benchmark, closed the week at $118.1, this is the highest level in the last nine years and should have been a piece of good news. But, this development means Nigeria’s landing cost of petrol is now above N333 at an official rate of N141.66 and 1,341 litres per metric tonne.

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), claims Nigeria’s daily petrol consumption is at 60 million litres meaning to keep the price at N165 per litre, NNPC will be covering a cost of more than N168.

The injection of 381.88 million litres means to keep the price of petrol at N4.81, admin charge (N1.23), jetty throughput and Safety Agency charge, N2.49. The figure was released by the NNPC through its verified twitter account.

According to a document seen by AljazirahNigeria, shows that the cost of petrol quoted on Platts stood at N98.75 per metric tonne (N283.38 per litre, using the IRE rate of N141.66/35) as at February 25, 2022 from $754.75 per MT on December 31, 2021.

Other costs include freight at $26.77 per MT (N8.31 per litre), lighting expenses (N4.81), Nigerian Ports Authority charge, N2.49.

Others are Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency charge (N0.23), jetty throughput charge (N1.62), storage charge (N2.58), and financing costs (N2.17).

In the current market, a retailer margin is at (N4.03), admin charge (N1.23), transporters allowance (N3.89), bridging fund (N7.51), marine transport average (N1.15), and retailers margin (N6.19).

However, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has criticized the horrendous state of the nation’s refineries despite millions earmarked for rehabilitation.

In a letter dated March 5, 2022 and signed by SERAP deputy director Kolelake Olowu, the organisation urged President Muhammadu Buhari to, “Direct the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Mr. Abubakar Malami, SAN, and appropriate anti-corruption agencies to probe the spending on the country’s four refineries, alleged corruption and mismanagement of public money budgeted for the rehabilitation, operation, and maintenance of the refineries since 1999. “According to reports, the government spends over N926.4 billion annually to operate and maintain the country’s refineries. Successive governments have reportedly spent trillions of Naira to rehabilitate, operate and maintain the refineries that have produced little or no fuel.

“Your government reportedly spent N396 million for maintenance of the country’s refineries between 2015 and 2020 alone. Despite this huge spending, millions of Nigerians continue to lack access to a full and unhindered supply of fuel. Furthermore, the SERAP tasked the Federal Government to unravel the theft of events which led to the importing of adulterated fuel into the country and “to urgently identify and ensure access to justice and effective remedies to affected victims. “Anyone suspected to be responsible should face prosecution as appropriate, if there is sufficient admissible evidence, and any mismanaged public funds should be fully recovered.

There is a legitimate public interest in ensuring justice and accountability for alleged corruption and mismanagement in the oil sector and the resulting importation and distribution of dirty fuel and precluded petrol scarcity in the country.

“The importation and distribution of dirty fuel, and the current fuel scarcity across the country demonstrate the need for effective accountability measures to weed out, expose, and punish allegations of corruption in the sector, and to ensure justice and effective remedies for victims.

“We would be grateful if your government responds to our request in the public interest. “You are hereby instructed to cooperate with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), to jointly track and monitor the spending of public funds to rehabilitate, operate, and maintain the country’s refineries.

“Ending impunity and ensuring access of victims to justice and effective remedies would contribute to preventing and combating corruption and mismanagement in the oil sector. It would also help to address the precluded problem of dirty fuel and petrol scarcity, as well as improve availability and access to fuel in the country.”

In a related development, the Organised Private Sector (OPS), has reviewed the hike in the current petroleum product importation process so as to have a standard regime that meets international best practices.

They equally asked the federal government to make the nation’s refineries functional to prevent the current situation by which toxic fuel that causes problems for many are imported into the country.

We urge the government to conduct an audit of the current processes towards having a standardized system that meets international best practices. These are necessary to forestall future occurrences and boost the integrity of our importation processes, stated Michael Olawale-Cole, President, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industries (LCCI).

Also, Ide John Udachala, the National President, Nigerian Association of Commerce Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), is worried about the current petrol scarcity that has caused price hike, and hurting the economy.

Olawale-Cole told InsideBusiness that the current situation is disquieting and risky, and calls for an immediate overhaul of our import processes and systems to forestall any chance of future occurrences.

The news about the importation of contaminated fuel and subsequent recall of the same that caused the hike in PMS pump price came to us in LCCI and Nigerians as a rude shock. Nigerians had trusted that there was a fuel importation system that could not be compromised in the manner it happened two weeks ago now.

He expressed concerns about the reported cases of damages to vessels across the country before the adulterated fuel was withdrawn and imagined the dangers that would have happened with aviation fuels for our airlines.

Beyond the rhetoric of accusations and denials by the parties involved, the LCCI President sought an investigative and conclusive investigation to unravel the circumstances that led to the compromised importation.

The results of the investigations should point to actionable penalties for all parties involved to serve as a deterrent against future occurrences.

Udachala stressed the need for a definitive resolution of the oil and gas sector, and end petrol queues, to avert the obvious implications on life and the economy.

The National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), has four refineries, two in Port Harcourt and one each in Kaduna and Warri with a combined capacity to produce 445,000 barrels per day.

Sadly, all the four refineries in Nigeria, Africa’s top oil exporter, are currently not functional according to the Group Managing Director, Sheik Kachalla, who in September 2020 on Nigeria’s Channels TV stated that down because pipelines feeding crude oil into them were badly damaged.

Olawale-Cole said the most sustainable solution to curtail these hazards and eventually remove the burden of fuel subsidy is to have our domestic refineries come online, to refine our crude oil for local consumption and for export to boost our foreign exchange earnings.
PDP, Jonathan, Tinubu Salute Obasanjo At 85

BY MUYIWA OYINLOLA

Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, has congratulated former President Olusegun Obasanjo on the occasion of his 85th birthday anniversary.

The party congratulated him in a statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Mr Debo Ologunagba, in Abuja on Saturday.

Ologunagba described Obasanjo as an exceptionally patriotic leader, courageous statesman, insightful administrator and global personality.

He said that, “Obasanjo had continued to play pivotal roles towards the security, unity, stability and development of our dear nation, Nigeria, Africa and indeed the world at large.

As a military leader, democratically elected President and now an elder statesman, Obasanjo remains a detribalised leader and firm believer in one and indivisible Nigeria established on the firm foundation of democracy, justice, equity, transparency and the Rule of Law.

The PDP recalls Obasanjo’s leading role as Military Head of State to effectively steer the ship of state and return our nation to democratic rule in 1979.

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Ebele Jonathan or a northerner in the presidency.

The purpose of begging Emefiele to run the ruling party's ticket in 2023.

Godwin Emefiele intensified last week as his campaign posters surfaced in major cities including Lagos and Abuja.

One of the posters reads: "We the people work to manifest... not as career politicians... Godwin Emefiele... Would you lead THE CHARGE 2023?"

Emefiele is an Igbo man from Delta State, and in the calculation of some northern power brokers, his presidency will meet those agitating for a Nigerian president of South East extraction half way.

Emefiele may be the latest presidential aspirant on the bloc if he yields to the call of his supporters.

There have been buzz talks that Aso Rock grandees, including President Muhammadu Buhari's nephew, Mamman Daura, Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, may be considering Emefiele among several others for the top job.

Other nominees of the cabal include Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo, Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, and Fezimin of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP.

Emefiele is not a known politician but there are indications he may pitch his tent with the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, to enable him realise this clarion call.

According to reports, an Emefiele candidacy may douse the tension of the CBN governor to run as president of Nigeria in 2023.

"He has come up with new strategies to navigate the Nigerian economy through hurdles such as the challenge of foreign exchange inflow, the exchange rate, the economic recession, stagflation, financial inclusion and the rise in the value chain of the majority of crops in Nigeria," he added.

Other supporters have already coined 'Mefiy 2023' as the campaign slogan for the treasury chief, and adorned T-shirts and fez caps bearing his picture.

Recall that, last month, a coalition of civil and pressure groups in Lagos, The Green Alliance, TGA, also urged Mr. Godwin Emefiele to run for President in 2023.

The group said there was a need for Nigeria to change the norm from core politicians to technocrats, hence the call for the CBN governor to join the presidential race.

Addressing newsmen at their inaugural meeting, Convener of TGA, Mr Wale Fapohunda said the coalition was formed as a movement to persuade the CBN governor to run for President in 2023.

"His achievements in CBN are numerous and are not quantifiable. We, therefore, urge Emefiele to come forth and declare. We are sure that well-meaning Nigerians are with him owing to his numerous feats in the CBN saddle and the farmers, artisans, and smallholder businesses he helped to livelihood are waiting for him to declare..."
Sokoto APC Crisis: Association Of LG Chairmen Affirms Election Of Sadiq-Achida

Association of Local Government Chairmen of the All Progressive Congress, APC, Sokoto State Chapter, has affirmed Isa Sadiq-Achida as the authentic APC Chairman elect in the State.

The association's chairman, Alhaji Muhammad Isa, APC Chairman Illela local government area of the State, made this known in Sokoto on Saturday, citing a resolution by the 23 Local Government Area, LGA, Chairmen.

Isa said the 23 local government chapters of the APC, in its meeting, duly acclaimed and declared the party’s state leadership election on Nov. 8, 2021, at which Sadiq-Achida emerged, as very successful and authentic.

"Consequently, we believe we are the true representatives of the APC in the 23 LGAs of Sokoto, after our inauguration following a written directive by the National Caretaker and Extra Ordinary Convention Planning Committee of our party."

However, we took part in the Sokoto State APC Congress held on Nov. 8, 2021, at the state secretariat, which elected Sadiq-Achida as the Chairman.

"We, therefore, affirm that Sadiq-Achida is the authentic, elected Sokoto State APC Chairman and presently recognised Sen. Al'yu Warrako as the leader of our great party in the State", he said.

He further appealed to the National Caretaker and Extra Ordinary Convention Planning Committee of the Party to recognise Sadiq-Achida as duly elected Sokoto APC Chairman and put necessary machinery in motion for his inauguration.

We’ve Not Zoned Any Seat In PRP, Says National Chairman

National Chairman, Peoples Redemption Party, PRP, Malami Falalu Bello, says the party has not zoned any of its political seats ahead of 2023 general elections.

He made this known in Abuja on Saturday during a meeting of the party’s National Working Committee, NWC, with the Board of Trustees, BOT, and other party stakeholders.

Bello said: “We have not zoned the presidency to any part of Nigeria. Anybody from anywhere in Nigeria is free to contest for the presidential seat in PRP.

“We are not considering zoning. Nobody can come from any part of the country to contest. What is important to us is someone who has integrity.

“We will develop a template for selection of leadership in Nigeria and that template will come before the presidency, the governors and members of the national assembly.”

Lawmaker Urges Tinubu, Sanwo-Olu, Others To Intervene In Ndigbo APC Crisis

Lagos State lawmaker, Hon. Jude Idimogu, has called on Sen. Bola Tinubu, Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu and other leaders of the All Progressives Congress, APC, in the state to wade into the leadership crisis rocking Ndigbo in the state APC.

Idimogu, a two-term member of the Lagos State House of Assembly representing Oshodi-Isolo Constituency II, made the appeal on Saturday in Lagos, following the clash between his loyalists and loyalists of Mr Joe Igbokwe, the Special Adviser to Gov. Sanwo-Olu on Drainage Services.

The clash occurred at the official inauguration of Executive Members of Ndigbo in the APC, Lagos State, Ejigbo Local Council Development Area, LCDA, Chapter, at the party secretariat.

Both Igbokwe, the apex leader of Ndigbo in Lagos APC, and Idimogu, his deputy, on Saturday disagreed over the list of executive members of Ndigbo in Lagos APC, Ejigbo LCDA Chapter.

The inauguration was conducted by Igbokwe amid protest from the group loyal to Idimogu, who vowed that the event will not be recognised because they were not carried along.

Speaking with newsmen after the rancorous inauguration, Igbokwe said that the inauguration was not supposed to hold until all interest groups were harmonised so as not to deepen trouble among Ndigbo in Lagos APC.

Describing the event as inconclusive, Igbokwe added: “Lagos APC has no chair. Igbokwe has no chair. Joe Igbokwe’s inauguration is nothing.”

Igbokwe further said that the PRP was considering alliances with other political parties to form mega parties to challenge the ruling APC and the PDP.

“We are in discussion with some groups; the NC Front, and Rescue Nigeria Mission.”

Recall that the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, had on Feb. 27, endorsed the factional Chairman of the APC in Sokoto, Alhaji Mainasara Sani.

Malami gave the endorsement in Sokoto during his address at the distribution of empowerment tools to constitutencies by Rep. Balarabe Salame APC-Gwadabawa/Illela.

The Minister’s recognition of Sani as the APC true chairman triggered widespread reactions and criticisms among the APC loyalists and residents.

There are ongoing legal disputes on the legality of the last APC state congress and who to be recognised as the correct chairman in Sokoto State between Sani and Sirajo Abubakar.

Abubakar had instituted a suit challenging the congress that produced Sani as chairman while another group, led by Sadiq-Achida, filed a rejoinder case and a separate suit.

Sadiq-Achida had asked the court to restrain the APC from recognising Sani as chairman of the party in Sokoto State.
**Electoral Act Ushers New Beginning For Nigeria’s Electoral System – Olawepo-Hashim**

A political group, The Osinbajo Think Tank, TOTT, and 100 others have endorsed Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo as possible replacement for President Muhammadu Buhari come 2023. Mr Olugbenga Olajaye, the TOTT Co-Convener, made the disclosure on Saturday in Ibadan.

Other groups have been drumming support for their preferred aspirants whom they feel could succeed Buhari when he bows out of office on May 29, 2023.

NAN reports that TOTT comprises various interests in the corporate space who felt Osinbajo’s candidacy should be promoted.

Olawepo-Hashim

Chief of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim has said that President Muhammadu Buhari’s asent into law of the Electoral Act would now make elections more transparent while the people votes will count.

In a statement issued by his media office in Abuja, Hashim who was a Presidential candidate in 2019 and a global energy executive, said history was made on Friday, February 25, when President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, assented to the 2022 Electoral Act and Nigerians would now exercise their franchise through a transparent electoral system that reflects their will.

He explained that, “The Act contains provisions aimed at making elections more transparent and making the votes of the people count. According to him, “Having credible elections that reflect the will of the people has been an important challenge of Nigeria since the return to Democracy in 1999.”

“Electoral systems were massively rigged in 2003 and 2007. Tott 2011 a slow process of electoral reform started that saw some significant improvement in 2015 which sadly relapsed in 2019.”

“The effect of public perception that the electoral system is not clean has long been increasing voter apathy in our country.”

2023 Presidency: Group, 100 Others Drum Support For Osinbajo

At TOTT, we came together to promote the candidacy of Prof. Yemi Osinbajo. I will refer to him as Mr. Capable. He is the only one that can turn around the fortune of this Nation. Every citizen that is playing and those who are qualified to vote and have not registered, no longer have any excuse not to do so because now, every vote counts. It is a New Day for Nigeria.”

“Credible periodic election is a hallmark of democracy and it is the vehicle of expression of sovereignty of the people’s will.”

He explained that, “Democracy is not simply about building roads, providing electricity, water and police service. Efficient and benevolent authoritarian regimes sometimes perform those services better.”

Essentially, Democracy is about the right of the people to choose who governs them through a transparent electoral system that reflects their will.”

“Credit for the signed law must be given to the relentless pursuit of Nigerian people of higher ideals of democracy expressed through the work of various civil society organisations and the media who worked hard for the ACT, the National Assembly that conveyed the wishes of the people and President Buhari who has written his name in Gold by giving his assent to the bill.”

“Democracy is a system as well as a process. This huge step is just the beginning; there is a lot of work to be done to make our democracy stronger and our Union more improved.”

Every citizen has a role to play and those who are qualified to vote and have not registered, no longer have any excuse to do so because now, every vote counts. It is a New Day for Nigeria.”
Guest Columnist

Owei Lakemfa

War Is Hell, Not A Blockbuster (I)

The domineering media is presenting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as a war hero who has confidently stood up to Russian forces and is recording stunning victories. Yes, Russian troops are dying, but so are Ukrainian troops. Worst still, Ukrainian civilians are dying not necessarily because they are targeted or bombed, but that is the logic of war as there would be shortages of basic needs from food to medicines and some too weak to flee.

The most tragic thing is that the war is being fought on Ukrainian soil, in their towns and cities, alleys and highways with infrastructure being destroyed and economic activities and education grounded. The motivational speakers giving Zelensky the impression that he is a super hero who can, in fact, win the war would not themselves agree to be used as cannon fodder like the Ukrainians.

They concentrate their efforts and energy on debates and propaganda and how to supply more weapons when what the Ukrainians need is a ceasefire, a negotiated settlement, food and medicines, drink and safe shelter. Already, as at yesterday, the United Nations reports that 870,000 Ukrainians have fled the borders towards the Polish border as if they are enemy Russian troops? Would Middle Easterners have imagined that they would be discriminated against in evacuations when no life is more precious than the other?

I think countries which prefer a negotiated resolution of the crises rather than be part of the Western chorus against the ‘Devil Putin’ do humanity more good. That is the common sense exhibited by other trusted allies of the United States like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

European countries like other peoples in history have been involved in various wars like the English-French One Hundred Years War, 1337-1453. When they seized colonies and exploited the colonised, there were near-war situations which they handled with their American allies by holding a conference in Berlin in 1884/85 at which they agreed on peaceful means of chopping up Africa and dividing it like spoils of war.

However, Europeans have a tendency of making their differences the problem of the entire humanity. For instance, with their different alliances, imperialist goals and self-interests a single spark; the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on June 28, 1914 by a Serb led to the 1914-18 All-European War christened the First World War. That war claimed 9.7 million soldiers, 10 million civilians, while 21 million were wounded.

When as a result of the mishandling of the post-war victory, especially with punitive sanctions against Germany and the theft of its colonies, the Europeans resumed their war, it claimed 70-85 million lives or about three per-cent of the 1940 world population. That European War was called the Second World War.

Apart from the Europeans pillaging our resources in Africa, turning schools like the Kings College into war camps, many youths in the continent were seized and conscripted into the colonial armies. Many of these our fathers and grandfathers never returned home. They were killed in faraway lands they had never been to, and buried in unmarked graves.

So many Nigerian youths were thrown into the battle fields of Burma that some Nigerians called it the Burma War. Would Middle Easterners have imagined that they would be discriminated against in evacuations when no life is more precious than the other? So many Nigerian youths were thrown into the battle fields of Burma that some Nigerians called it the Burma War. Those who returned were called Burma Boys, a name subsequently adopted by street toughies.