



News as it breaks

# Daybreak

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## PDP Convention

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# PDP Convention: Jonathan's absence unsettles leadership

- ★ Party hierarchy worries that former President is dodgy and may have joined the APC
- ★ Says Jonathan's trip to Kenya a convenient excuse to stay away from convention
- ★ Plans to send delegation to Jonathan as soon as he returns

By our correspondents

The conspicuous absence of former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan at the just concluded People's Democratic Party National convention has increased speculation that he wants to dump the PDP and then vie for the presidential ticket of the ruling APC.

According to observers this may be the reason why he deliberately avoided the just-concluded PDP National Convention in Abuja.

Mr Jonathan said on Friday he was leaving Abuja on Saturday for Nairobi, Kenya, to attend the African Union retreat on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

According to report some PDP leaders believe the former president only used the trip as a "convenient excuse" to stay away from the party convention. "If indeed he was interested in the convention and the affairs of the party, he would have attended briefly and perhaps give a short speech before travelling on Saturday," one party chieftain advised that. "He could also have sent his former deputy, former Vice President Namadi Sambo or anyone else to deliver a goodwill message on his behalf." Party insiders said Governor Douye Diri of Mr Jonathan's own Bayelsa State, and his Oyo State counterpart, Oluseyi Makinde, met with the former president on Friday to persuade him to attend the convention. Our sources said when Mr Jonathan said he had a scheduled flight to Nairobi, the governors urged him to at least make a brief visit to the convention ground. They also offered to arrange a flight for his trip after the event if necessary. Mr Jonathan declined. When this newspaper contacted Mr Jonathan's media

aide, Ikechukwu Eze, Sunday morning, he requested that the paper send a message to him via WhatsApp. He was yet to respond to the question about Messrs. Diri and Makinde's meeting with the former president as of the time of filing this report. Mr Eze is currently with Mr Jonathan in Nairobi. Prior to the convention, even before the list of Bayelsa delegates was compiled, Governor Diri reportedly met Mr Jonathan to request him to lead delegates from the state to the event. Our sources said Mr Jonathan agreed. Some party chieftains said they suspect Mr Jonathan's heart was no longer with the party. Aside from his absence at Saturday's convention, the former president has not been attending the PDP National Executive Committee meetings, nor involved in the effort to resolve the party's intractable internal crises. There have been speculations that the All Progressives Congress would want to put forward Mr Jonathan as its candidate in the 2023 presidential election.

... As Atiku, Saraki, Tambuwal, Bala, Kwankwaso Square up for PDP Presidential ticket

The race for the 2023 presidential ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has intensified as top northern aspirants turned the national convention to a campaign ground to test their popularity.

While no candidate has expressed interest for the position from the south, top contenders are lining up from the north as a result of the party's position on zoning.

Top contenders for the PDP ticket who didn't hide their intentions to contest for the party's presidential tickets are: former vice president Atiku



Abubakar, Sokoto State Governor Aminu Tambuwal, his Bauchi counterpart, Bala Mohammed, former Senate President Abubakar Bukola Saraki and former Kano State governor, Senator Musa Kwankwaso. Posters, banners and branded vehicles of the presidential hopefuls were visible within and outside the Eagle Square venue of the PDP 2021 National Convention. Despite promises of a level playing field for all contestants into elective Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) national offices, two unity lists emerged at the venue of the national convention. Unity list, in the party's parlance, is a list of consensus candidates as agreed by power brokers to occupy various party offices through affirmative election. Although both lists indicated that 21 persons have been endorsed by

the party power brokers, the major difference was the position of deputy national champion, which has remain contentious between Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola and Taofeek Arapaja. While of the lists has Oyinlola and deputy national chairman the other list had Ambassador Taofeek Arapaja for same position. However, according to the lists, Senator Iyorchia Ayu and Amb. Umar Iliya Damagum (North) were cleared as the National Chairman. Others are Senator Samuel Anyanwu (National Secretary), Hon. Ahmed Yayari Mohammed (National Treasurer), Hon. Umar Bature (National Organizing Secretary), Daniel Woyegikuro (National Financial Secretary), Prof. Stella Effah-Attoe (National Women Leader) and Mohammed Kadade Suleiman (National Youth Leader). The

list also include Kamaldeen Adeyemi Ajibade (National Legal Leader), Hon. Debo Ologunagba (National Publicity Secretary), Okechukwu Daniel (National Auditor), Arch. Seteonji Koshode (Deputy National Secretary), Ndubuisi David (Deputy National Treasurer) and the Deputy National Publicity Secretary (Ibrahim Abdullahi). According to the document, Chief Ighoyota Amori and Hon. Adamu Kamale got cleared as Deputy National Organizing Secretary and Deputy National Financial Secretary; while Hajaja Wanka, Timothy Osadolor, Barr. Okechukwu Osuohaand Hon. Abdulrahman Mohammed we're given a clean bill of health as the Deputy National Women Leader, Deputy National Youth Leader, Deputy National Legal Adviser and Deputy National Auditor respectively. Before the election some of the aspirants announced that they have stepped down for the sake of and interest of the party. While the party has yet to take an official position on where its 2023 presidential ticket will be zoned to, it was learnt that the party is set to throw it open for all aspirants. Although none of the northern presidential hopefuls have openly declared their intention to contest the 2023 election, their supporters besieged the venue of the national convention yesterday to project the popularity of their benefactors. Dressed in colorful attire, they hailed their preferred candidates as they danced and moved round the venue of the PDP 2021 National Convention, tagged "Nigeria Rescue Mission", yesterday at the Eagle Square, Abuja. Supporters engaged in a subtle contest to out-cheer opposing camps. Supporters of the former vice president, the 2019 Presidential candidate of the PDP, Atiku Abubakar were seen with his posters with inscriptions like "2023, Atiku is the answer", "I stand with Atiku" and "2023: Support Atiku" and dancing from one end of the convention



# EDITORIAL

## The unending violence and killings in South-East

The worsening insecurity in the South-East, demonstrated in the orgy of killings, is a cause for concern and signposts of an unfortunate collapse of governance, and failure of leadership at all levels in the region.

Worryingly, life has become unacceptably short, brutish, cruel, and nasty in many parts of the South-East. In response, the military has launched an operation in the region. Movements for national self-determination should not depend on violence for their success.

Things came to a head following the brutal killing of Chike Akunyili, the widower of the late Minister of Information and Director-General of the National Food and Drug Administration and Control, Dora Akunyili. In broad daylight, he was assassinated by gunmen.

Akunyili, a medical doctor, was killed alongside his driver and orderly, at Afor Nkpor in the Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Sadly, the trio was not the only casualty.

Media reports said several people were killed in different parts of the state as a result of the tension created by the political climate and the Anambra Guber elections.

The proscribed self-determination agitators, Indigenous People of Biafra, however, dissociated themselves from “the senseless killing of innocent citizens in Anambra State.” IPOB claimed it had “raised the alarm that some cruel politicians were hiding under the cloak of the situation in Biafra land to eliminate their political enemies and blame it on IPOB.” The security and intelligence agencies, therefore, have their job cut out: Unravel the brains behind the dastardly killings and bring them to justice.

In Akunyili’s case eyewitness claimed that the surgeon was murdered when his vehicle ran into a traffic jam on his way back from Onitsha, where he went to receive an award on behalf of his late wife. The eyewitness said, “The killers attacked

him (Akunyili) when they spotted a policeman in his car. Maybe, they felt threatened when they sighted his police orderly. So, they killed him, the orderly and his driver. They took him to be a politician.” This is bestiality at its peak. The security agencies should unravel the mystery behind the breakdown of law and order in the region in recent times.

This spectre of insecurity will devastate the region, known for commerce and industry, and it should be arrested immediately. The solution lies in the hands of the people of the region, both the leaders and the led. The lethargic state governors should rise to the occasion and fashion out well-defined strategies to restore peace and order in the South-East and end the rampant killings.

What is required now, more than ever before, is a united front by the political leaders in collaboration with religious, traditional leaders, opinion moulders and groups like Ohanaeze Ndigbo to confront the menacing insecurity in the region. This is not the time to stand aloof or point fingers if the South-East is to be saved from itself. It is unacceptable that from Abia to Ebonyi, Anambra to Enugu and Imo, the state governors appear helpless in the face of monumental security breaches in their jurisdictions. This is a violation of Section 14(1) of the 1999 Constitution: “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of Government.”

It is reflective of the leadership quality in the region that an attempt by the five state governors to form a regional security network codenamed Ebubeagu has since been mired in unhelpful politics. It is not salutary that nothing has been heard again of the group since its official formation in May while the region reels in insecurity. Whatever hope raised by the formation of Ebubeagu has since evaporated. The result is that the South-East has no answer to the raging violent occurrences in the region.



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### Mission Statement

To tell the truth at all times and hold government accountable to the governed and to give the citizens the information they need to be active participants in the democratic process. In this light Daybreak newspaper refuses to be an ally of any special interest but to maintain objectivity, fairness and balance as its core principle especially in an age of misinformation and fake news.



## Cover

## Jonathan's absence...

ground to another. Also, supporters of Senator Kwankwaso had placards and banners which read: "The People's Choice," which were sponsored by PDP Kwankwasiyya Patriotic Movement. For Tambuwal, his supporters had placards which read: "The Bridge Builder-North East Vision For Tambuwal." The Saraki Support Group had a poster with the inscription, "Saraki Hope For Nigeria". His branded vehicles were also seen around the premises. Kwankwaso and his Kwankwasiyya followers, however, stole the show. Garbed in their white attire and red caps, they marched, in their large numbers, around the venue chanting "Kwankwaso! Kwankwaso!" Kwankwaso himself joined in the march, cheered his followers along. Supporters of former minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and governor of Bauchi State, Senator Bala Mohammed, also moved around with posters and flyers of the Kauran Bauchi for 2023. Meanwhile, PDP leaders at the convention took turns to lambast the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) for misruling Nigeria just as they vowed to salvage the country from the precipice. They accused the party of failing to make an impact since it assumed office because it was built around an individual who is bereft of ideas on what to do with victory. They added that the APC administration had undone all the gains made by Nigeria since it took over power in 2015. While delivering an address at the convention, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar called on the PDP to ensure that it rescues the country from "mismanagement, bad governance, insecurity and disunity," saying Nigeria has been put in bad shape by the ruling APC since it came to power in 2015. The former Vice President who said that the "mission to rescue Nigeria is a collective thing," added that the PDP must position itself to "rescue and restore the dignity, security and economic growth of Nigeria." This is as he asserted that the decision taken at the party's national elective convention would determine the country's future. Speaking also, Senate minority leader, Sen. Enyinnaya Abaribe lampooned the APC for not having any clear ideas on how to manage Nigeria, lamenting that under its watch Nigeria has become the world poverty capital. On his part, chairman of the PDP governor's forum and Sokoto State governor, Tambuwal, said the country is going through trying times. He said, "Our people are in need of policy intervention and leaders that can provide solutions to the challenges of security, unemployment, rising cost of energy, food and other essential items for living a decent life. "We need a strong and smart Nigeria that can provide the leadership that will help sustain institutions capable of promoting collaboration in the areas of security, innovation, trade, investment and defence of our democracy. "Our young

people need a secured, safe and enabling country that will allow them to realise their desires to be educated, employ and deploy their entrepreneurship skills. They need to take advantage of their potential to fulfill their ambitions," he said. While he welcomed new members who joined the party, he noted that more will join. In his welcome address, chairman of the national convention committee and governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Fintiri, said: "We have demonstrated our commitment to these time-tested ideals that Nigerians have every reason to trust us enough more than a contraption that was formed solely for the purpose of winning election and around the personal ambitions of certain individuals bereft of the knowledge of what to do with the victory. "The PDP has traversed multiple stages of institutional consolidation that places it far ahead of any other political party in Nigeria. In spite of any setback, the party has remained afloat and waxing stronger with all its statutory organs functioning, from the BoT, the NWC and the NEC. The other contraption cannot boast of the same credentials. "For Nigeria, the present APC-led government is hell-bent on rail-roading the country into multifaceted recession on all fronts. Indeed, the country has never had it this bad. "That Nigeria is better by far with PDP in power is not in doubt: that the people relish those golden moments when the PDP held sway at the centre is not in doubt; that citizens are yearning for the return of PDP at the centre as the 2023 elections draw nearer is equally not in doubt. "We therefore have a duty not to disappoint our teeming supporters. We have to take back our country as we have always done. We have to save Nigeria. If we could force the country out of the clutches of the military, we can do this one huge task: push the people who don't know the true definition of good governance and national coexistence out of power. This is a Nigeria rescue mission. This is the role PDP was invented to play." He said the 2021 national convention presents a starting point for the Nigeria rescue mission. He disclosed that 34 candidates indicated interest to vie for various national positions in the party, out of which 28 were cleared, two withdrew voluntarily and four were disqualified, adding that the Screening Appeal Committee under the leadership of Senator Ike Ekweremadu had submitted its report. "I am glad to tell you that this is the least acrimonious convention ever in the history of the party," he said. Speaking on the mode of election and why the winners have to tarry a while before swearing-in, Fintiri said, "While we hope to conduct and declare election results on this convention ground, the winners of today's election must wait till December 9 to be sworn into office. This is to enable the subsisting NWC



Atiku



Tambuwal



Saraki



Kwankwaso



Bala

members to exhaust their statutory tenure of office and ensure a smooth transition in the party." He also explained why the party is deferring vote on its constitutional amendment, saying, "This convention will also not give us the opportunity to make and adopt amendments to our constitution. This is because we are foreseeing a need for more amendments after the new Electoral Act passed by the National Assembly is signed into law. "We are therefore deferring the votes on constitutional amendments to a special convention to be held on any convenient date to be decided by the NEC," he said. Senate Minority Leader Enyinnaya Abaribe, however, moved the motion for the election to choose a new National Working Committee (NWC) to begin.

In his remarks, the acting national chairman of the party, Elder Yemi Akinwomi, appealed to all party members to come together, bury their personal, individual and collective differences and put PDP and the interest of Nigeria above any other considerations. "We all know the disturbing and uncomfortable condition and situation Nigerians are in today due to our loss of power. The APC led-government is so clueless that Nigerians need a better hand to get them out of this mess. I believe we can do it as we did before," he said. Meanwhile, the party has introduced reforms to improve the process and the integrity of its congresses to reduce incidents of complaints that usually plague the exercise. The PDP equally disclosed the introduction of "pictured ballot papers" containing the photographs of party aspirants at the gubernatorial and presidential primaries to ensure free, fair and transparent primaries. The PDP national secretary, Senator Umaru Tsauri, stated this in a report at the convention yesterday in Abuja. Listing other steps taken, the party said that it had created a computerised party register to ensure control and to avoid fraud. It said that the computerised party register was piloted by a committee headed by the Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki. According to it, the e-Registration "would be done across the 8,809 wards in the country with Edo, Anambra, Ekiti and Osun states as pilot states."



## Major Stakeholders Call for Suspension of APC Congress in Oyo State

Major stakeholders of the All Progressive Congress, APC, in Oyo State have called for the suspension of its State congress.

This was announced in Ibadan by a former Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chieftain of the party, Senator Ayo Adeseun, during a press conference in Ibadan, Oyo State capital.

The conference which had in attendance, former guber-candidate of the party, Bayo Adelabu; House of Rep member, Tolu Akande-Sadipe; Minister for Sports, Sunday Dare; guber-aspirant, Mogaji Tegbe; Cardiovascular surgeon, Dr. Adeduntan; NCC Chair, Prof. Adeolu Akande; former ALGON Chair, Abass Aleshinloye among other party chieftains condemned the high-handedness of a serving Senator and former Governor of Oyo State, Adebayo Alao-Akala who surreptitiously cornered the party and pocketed its ward and local government delegates lists.

The chieftains called for a suspension of the congress following an alleged forgery of wards and delegates lists by the serving senator and a former governor of the State for their selfish reasons.

Calling for the suspension, Senator Adeseun decried the insensitive manner at which the culprits manipulated the delegates' lists, despite what was sent to Abuja by the State Executives after the legitimate ward and local government

congresses held in Oyo State.

He noted that top-ranking party officials said the call for suspension was in order, adding that the culprits behind the shenanigans do not have the true interest of the party at heart.

Senator Adeseun said the list sent from Abuja for the State congress was in complete variance from what was sent from the State, noting that there is a limit to what the party membership could condone.

He therefore appealed to the National leadership of the party to take up the matter seriously and if need be, limit the list of delegates from Oyo State to the statutory number, according to the party's constitution.

He said, "We received information that the list sent in from Abuja had been tampered with by a serving senator and a former Governor of the State. In order to safeguard the integrity of the process, we appeal to our National Chairman to suspend the State congress until all of this is sorted out".

"We appeal to our National Excros to suspend this process. Oyo is a sensitive state. The National congress could be attended by the statutory list of delegates from the State", he said.

Senator Adeseun added that, "Oyo APC is ready to take over only if we are sincere with our hard earned democracy".

"The so-called State congress has been postponed. We have committed too much to the party, than for anyone to make a fool of us"



Secondus

## PDP convention: Secondus rejects Appeal Court Ruling, heads for Supreme

The embattled National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Prince Uche Secondus, says he will appeal the judgement rejecting his request to stop the party's national convention.

Secondus had approached an appeal court in Rivers seeking an order of injunction to restrain the opposition party from holding its national convention scheduled for October 30th and 31st.

This was after multiple court orders were issued against Secondus resulting in his removal from office, and Yemi Akinwonmi, deputy national chairman (south), was appointed in his stead.

Delivering judgement on the matter on Friday, a three-member panel unanimously dismissed the application for lacking in merit.

But reacting to the ruling in a statement issued by Ike Abonyi, his spokesman, Secondus said he will appeal the judgement "immediately" to avoid abuse of the party's constitution.

"I have just been briefed of the ruling of the Court of Appeal, Port Harcourt dismissing my motion to halt the National Convention of the party. I respect the position of the

court even though I disagree totally with it," the statement reads.

"Even as the substantive case is still pending at the Court of Appeal, I have instructed my lawyers to study the ruling with a view to appealing it immediately as no abuse of the constitution of our dear party should be allowed to stand.

"The issue is not about Prince Uche Secondus but the sanctity of our party constitution and core democratic principles of justice and rule of law, not only in PDP but in our democracy. No impunity must be condoned.

"I will therefore wish to emphasise the fact that I did not take the party to court and would not have done that. As a foundation member of this party who has served at various levels, State Chairman, Chairman of state Chairmen, National Organising Secretary, Deputy National Chairman, Acting National Chairman and now National Chairman, I am very much abreast with the workings of the party. I have been a witness to how much harm litigations have done to our party in the past and as a result I have been a strong advocate against settling issues in

courts.

"This was why I resisted and rejected entreaties of those who wanted me to go to court to halt these forces when it was obvious that they were determined to disrupt my leadership and truncate my tenure in office with the sole objective of hijacking the party for their selfish ulterior motives.

"To allow this travesty to stand is to reduce our beloved party to a level where anybody can wake up overnight and remove officers against the proscribed constitutional process and the National Chairman for that matter. And purporting to use the judiciary through an ex parte order to legitimise same.

"As a major practitioner in our democracy, I am duty bound to protect and defend the sanctity of the provisions of our constitution of which I am the custodian.

"If those who orchestrated and fostered this avoidable crisis had listened to wise counsel of party leaders and elders who advised the withdrawal of cases, this situation would have been avoidable. I wish the party well as always."

## Anambra Guber: 86 Polling Units Don't Have Voters — INEC Reveals

With one week to the November 6 governorship election in Anambra State, the Independent National Electoral Commission on Friday said 86 out of the 5,720 Polling Units in the state have no voters.

The commission, however, said it would not deploy personnel and materials to the polling units without voters. The chairman of INEC, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, said this at a special consultative meeting with political parties in Abuja.

According to him, 894 representing 15.6 per cent of the polling units have between 1 and 49 voters.

Yakubu said, "Understandably, the voters have also been more circumspect in asking for a transfer to polling units. At the same time, the commission did not use its powers under Section 42 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) to allot voters to the new polling units to minimise the disruptions that may occur from such a decision given the forthcoming governorship election.

"Consequently, out of the 5,720 polling units in Anambra State, 86; 1.5 per cent have no voters. For that reason, the commission will not be deploying personnel and materials to these polling units. Furthermore,

894 representing 15.6 per cent of the polling units have between 1 and 49 voters. The election will hold in these polling units."

The INEC boss expressed the commission's commitment to work with stakeholders to ensure that all polling units have voters allotted to them ahead of the 2023 general election.

Speaking on the commission's preparation for the election, Yakubu said that all non-sensitive materials had been moved to the 21 Local Government Areas of the State.

He said the Central Bank of Nigeria is handling the delivery of sensitive materials to the State on schedule.

"Our State office in Awka is arranging for stakeholders to inspect the materials at the premises of the CBN in Awka. As is the case in all elections, the sensitive materials are moved under security escort to each Local Government Area from where they are distributed to the Registration Areas or Wards and finally to Polling Units on Election Day", he added.

The INEC chairman urged political parties to present their agents to be on the ground for the inspection of the materials at the CBN.

## PDP crisis being propelled by APC – Dino Melaye

A member of the Peoples Democratic Party, Senator Dino Melaye, on Thursday said the All Progressives Congress was behind his party's recent travails.

Senator Melaye made the remark during his appearance on Channels Television's Politics Today.

"PDP is not in a dilemma. My party is solid. There is no fear, no agitation. The agitation is rather from the APC, who are part of those orchestrating what we are saying," he said.

The PDP's convention, scheduled to hold this weekend, is hanging in the balance due to court battles between erstwhile PDP Chairman, Uche Secondus and the party

framework.

The Court of Appeal is set to give a verdict on whether the Convention will hold on Friday.

But Senator Melaye insisted that the verdict will go the way of the PDP and the Convention will hold as scheduled.

"I want to tell you that we are not perturbed," he said. "There is calmness in the PDP, all our programs and preparation towards the convention is ongoing."

Senator Melaye, who is a former member of the APC, said he has no plans of returning to the ruling party. "No reasonable human being will go back to his vomit," he said. "The APC is a disaster. For every

human being, there is a journey of life. You will definitely pass through your Egypt to the land of Canaan. So I pass through Egypt, and that is APC; but I am in Canaan and I am comfortable and enjoying my stay."





# News



## I am not responsible for the impeachment of former Speaker - Governor Lalong replies Cleric.

Plateau State Governor Simon Bako Lalong on Saturday cleared the air on the insinuation making rounds in the social media and elsewhere alleging that he has a hand in the impeachment of former Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Nuhu Abok Ayuba.

Governor Lalong while responding to a submission by a Jos-based Christian cleric Prophet Isa El-Buba at the Annual Thanksgiving Service of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) held at the Jesus Power Crusaders International Assembly Jos where the cleric asked the Governor to restore stability in the House after the recent impeachment of the former Speaker and the election of Rt. Hon. Yakubu Sanda.

Lalong said "the House of Assembly is an autonomous body

that runs its affairs independently. You will recall that I was the first Governor in Nigeria to sign into law the Autonomy Bill when it was passed. I did that because of my passion for democratic growth and the strengthening of the Institution. Having served as a Speaker who was also impeached, I have no hand in the running of the House, not to talk of the change of its leadership. They run their affairs and do as they wish based on their rules and the law".

The Governor also advised the citizens particularly the leaders of thought to always verify information and also engage before taking a position on any matter such as the impeachment story that has been widely misrepresented.

He advised those who have concerns to reach out to the members and get the complete picture before reaching conclusions. He called for prayers

and support for those in authority.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo in his message said Nigeria is a great country with huge potentials which needs to be nurtured and built by its citizens. He said though the current challenges are huge, there is biblical support to the fact that things will change for the better in no distant time. He urged Nigerians to speak well of their country and not use confess negatively.

He commended PFN for organising the Thanksgiving Service which is an opportunity to recognise and appreciate God's goodness for the nation in times of difficulty, saying this makes God to do more.

PFN President Bishop Wale Oke in his sermon said the challenges Nigeria is facing are prevalent and appear daunting, but will surely be overcome according to God's promises.

## PDP Governors working on achieving consensus candidate – Tambuwal

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum has said it is working on achieving consensus candidate in all elective positions at the party's national convention scheduled for Saturday.

The Forum Chairman, Gov. Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State disclosed this while briefing newsmen at the end of the main opposition's governors on Thursday night in Abuja.

Tambuwal said that not less than 80 per cent had been achieved in producing

consensus candidates for the elective positions.

"We held the meeting of the PDP governors forum and as you can see, all of us attended.

"Chairman of the convention committee brought us up to the speed on how prepared they are for us to hold our convention starting from Friday, Oct. 29 through to Saturday.

"We are also happy to say that part of what we discussed was the process of arriving at consensus during the convention.

"So far, we can say that with

certainty that we have achieved not less than 80% of that process and it is still ongoing.

"We are hoping that at the end of the day, we are going to have a hitch free convention and possibly have all the candidates emerge via consensus.

"Consensus is part of democratic process and we are imbibing that in the interest of our party so that we can continue to have stability that will reposition the party as we have always said for the future," NAN quoted him as saying.

## COVID-19: Gov Sanwo-Olu Launches Mass Vaccination Programme Campaign

The Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu has launched a mass vaccination campaign against COVID-19, as part of strategies to stave off re-emergence of the viral infection.

The objective was aimed at vaccinating four million residents in Lagos before the end of the year.

The immunisation programme was flagged off at an event held in Lagos.

The governor warned of the possibility of the fourth wave of COVID-19 as the yuletide approaches, saying residents of Lagos, who are 18 years and above were eligible to be fully immunised with the COVID-19 vaccine.

The accelerated vaccine rollout is tagged: "Operation Count Me in 4 Million Lagosians Vaccinated Against COVID-19" and is being undertaken by Lagos State government in collaboration with National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA).

The governor believed the mass vaccination campaign would help bolster the State's response to the emerging threat posed by the pandemic.

Sanwo-Olu said the joint committee set up by the Lagos State Government and the NPHCDA to oversee the implementation of the campaign would be opening vaccination sites in high traffic locations as part of the strategies to expand vaccine access in underserved communities.

Mobile vans, the Governor added, would be deployed to move round boundary settlements in order to reach individuals in areas with limited access to health facilities.

He said: "There is potential for the fourth wave of COVID-19, as our borders would be opened to all people coming into Lagos in December. To prevent the catastrophic events we witnessed in the previous waves, the state has developed a robust vaccination drive, leveraging on both the strengths we have in the public and private sectors of our healthcare system. "In development of our strategy and counter-measures, we prioritise the protection of human lives and keeping our economy open for business.

"To mitigate against this potential damage that will further spread existing variants of COVID-19 in the State, and accelerate efforts towards herd immunity, the need for a different strategy became a front burner issue. "This is what has culminated in the campaign, tagged 'Count Me In! 4 million Lagosians Vaccinated Against COVID-19' to target the full vaccination of 4 million Lagos residents before the end of

December 2021. Once achieved, this will bring the State closer to reaching our promise to vaccinate 30 percent of our population within one year."

Since March when Lagos started its vaccination programme, Sanwo-Olu said the state had successfully vaccinated 800,000 residents with the first dose of Moderna vaccine and 310,000 persons fully vaccinated with the AstraZeneca vaccine. This, he said, made the total number of residents vaccinated with the first dose of either AstraZeneca or Moderna 1.2 million, while raising the number of fully vaccinated individuals to 550,000, which accounts for about four per cent of the State's population.

Sanwo-Olu re-emphasised that the vaccines being administered are safe and remain free of charge in public health facilities. The governor, however, said an administrative charge of N6,000 would be paid by individuals who wish to get the vaccines at approved private facilities.

The governor charged all stakeholders, including the local council chairmen, to mobilise for participation in the programme and ensure the success of the campaign.

He said: "We have set up COVID-19 vaccination in all our 205 public primary health centres, 14 of the State's second and tertiary hospitals, and we are hoping that this partnership can be implemented in over 400 private health centres across seven underserved Local Government Areas in the State.

"Let me re-emphasise that we are not compelling anyone to get vaccinated. But, we want everyone to take it as personal responsibility, which is highly important. What we seek to achieve by this campaign is to ensure there is access to the vaccines and availability. Then, give people an opportunity to get vaccinated at centres close to them. This will give nobody a reason not to get the vaccines."

Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, described the vaccination campaign as "ambitious", saying the State Government had put in place two-pronged approach to prevent the fourth wave of the pandemic.

"The first step is to control the in-bound flight passengers and maintain adherence to all preventive measures that have been put in place, while the second step is to closely monitor the isolation of those coming from the red zone area," Abayomi said. On his part, the NPHCDA Executive Director, Dr. Shuaib Faisal, disclosed that only 2,950,232 Nigerians had been fully vaccinated. This, he said was a far cry from reaching the target number for herd immunity.



## Our party's successful convention, quit notice to APC says Ayu

National Chairman-Elect of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Dr. Iyorchia Ayu has thrown a challenge to the All Progressives Congress (APC). Specifically, the former President of the Senate said the successes recorded in the major opposition's just-concluded National Convention tagged "Nigeria Rescue Mission" is a challenge to the ruling party to prepare and quit Aso Rock come 2023.

Ayu stated this in the early hours of Sunday after he was declared winner at the party's Special National Convention held at the Eagle Square, Abuja.

Going down memory lane, the former minister said: "When we started this party 23 years ago, we never in any way imagine that the journey will get us to this stage. A stage where we ruled for 16 years, we went into rough times, but for anybody who bothers to see,

PDP is back. PDP is back to rescue Nigeria from the terrible mess we have been in, in the last six years."

"Many people imagined that this convention will lead to the breakup for the PDP. Those people who are dreaming like that were dreaming in a wonderland. Their dream was misplaced. Those who have lost hope should know that Nigeria



Tambuwal and Ayu

is not a divided country. A small group of people decided to divide Nigeria. PDP will come back to unite our people; put them together, north and south, east and west.

"We will move ahead to develop this country. We did it before. We are going to do it again. I want to thank the governors. I want to thank the delegates. I want to thank our supporters and every single person who has made this event such a huge success.

"I believe the other party can never hold a convention because even state congresses, they cannot hold. They have produced 92 state chairmen for 36 states, how can they hold a successful convention which the PDP has done? We are waiting for them. This is a challenge to them. Let them come and hold a successful convention. This is a quit notice, PDP is back and is taking back the country to develop it."

## Court freezes Benue State Govt. bank accounts over N333m loan

A federal high court in Abuja has made an interim order freezing bank accounts of the Benue state government over its involvement in securing a "N333 million loan" in 2008.

Inyang Ekwo, the presiding judge, gave the order on Wednesday following an ex-parte motion brought by the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON).

He also directed that the bank accounts of HPPS Multilink Services Ltd, a firm, be frozen pending the hearing and the determination of the substantive suit.

While AMCON is the claimant, the company and the state government are first and second respondents, respectively.

According to the order, the affected bank accounts of both respondents are domiciled in Access Bank Plc, Citibank Nigeria Limited, Eco Bank Nigeria Plc, Fidelity Bank Plc, First Bank Nigeria Plc, First City Monument Bank Plc, and Guaranty Trust Bank Plc.

Others include those in Heritage Bank Plc, Keystone Bank Limited, Polaris Bank Limited, Stanbic IBTC Plc, Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria Limited, Sterling Bank Plc, Suntrust Bank Nigeria Limited, Union Bank of Nigeria Plc, United Bank for Africa Plc, Unity Bank Nigeria Plc, Wema Bank Plc and Zenith Bank Plc.

The ex-parte motion, in suit number: FHC/ABJ/

AMC/74/2021 dated and filed on September 30, was moved by Darlington Ozurumba, counsel to AMCON.

In the affidavits in support of the suit, AMCON described the loan as a toxic loan of eligible bank assets transferred to it by law to recover.

AMCON told the court that the first respondent (the firm), which has its office in Kaduna state, had collected a N333 million loan facility from Bank PHB Plc (now Keystone Bank Ltd) on January 31, 2008 "for the purpose of purchasing 5,000 pieces of motorcycles to the 2nd defendant and its workers through the Nigeria Labour Congress of its state vide an irrevocable standing payment order (ISPO)".

"That the 2nd respondent is the state government of the beneficiaries who equally gave ISPO guarantee for the repayment of the loan through deduction from the salaries of its workers and make payment to the bank but failed to do so," the affidavit reads.

"That the loan was for the agreed period of 24 months at the interest of 19 percent per annum.

"That the loan granted to the respondents has crystallised to the sum of seven hundred and eighty-four million, three hundred and forty thousand, five hundred and twenty-eight naira, three kobo (N784,340,428.03) as at 2014 from the sum of N333,000,000 (three hundred and thirty-three million naira) granted to the 1st defendant in 2008 and guaranteed by the 2nd defendant as contained

in the letter of Aug. 15, 2014, which represents the interest and the principal sum as at August 15, 2014, and same has remained unpaid till date."

Ruling on the application, the court also made an interim order "freezing and attaching the JAAC Bank Accounts (Joint Accounts Allocation committee), Internal Generated Revenue Accounts, all bank accounts both current, savings, fixed deposits and/or investments accounts of the 2nd respondent (Benue Government) maintained with all the banks mentioned above pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit".

"An interim order is hereby made restraining all banks and/or other financial institutions above mentioned in Nigeria forthwith from releasing or dealing in any manner howsoever with monies held in any account to which the respondents are signatories pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit," the judge said.

"An order is hereby made directing all banks and/or other financial institutions in Nigeria to, within seven (7) days of the date of service of this order, file and serve an affidavit of compliance disclosing with statement on each account howsoever designated, held and/or maintained by the respondents and all accounts to which the respondents are signatories for a period of six months prior to the date of service of this order till date."

The matter has been adjourned till November 2 for mention.

## CAN laments over 120 days captivity of 4 Bethel students

..Say's more people being kidnapped in Kaduna

By Gabriel Udeh, Kaduna

Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has lamented that four of the innocent children of Bethel baptist High School, kidnapped in Kaduna are still in captivity with bandits despite different security measures put in place by the state government.

Kaduna CAN Chairman Rev. Joseph Hayab who made the assertion in a statement weekend also expressed surprised that more and more people are being kidnapped in the State inspite the security measures.

According to him four of the students are over 120 days in captivity with bandits, given the parents, school management and church leaders sleepless night and trauma.

The statement read in parts: "4 Baptist High School kaduna students still with Bandits over 120 days today. It is sad to again remind us that despite different security measures put forward by Government in kaduna State our children of Bethel Baptist High School who were kidnapped since July 5th 2021 at the school premises in Damishi kaduna

have not all yet been released. Parents, School management, Church leaders and relations are worried.

"We have prayed andu we are still praying,we have appeal and cry out to Government and those who we think are responsible for the security of our nation but the journey to freedom for these children has been with a speed of a snail.

"CAN kaduna State therefore wish to let Nigerians know that we still have 4 of our school children in captivity. The pains and trauma their parents are going through can not be discribed.

"We must not forget these children and we are pleading with all spirited Nigerians to join us to appeal to those concern or do anything they can to help bring the four remaining children back home.

"CAN desire to see banditry and kidnapping in our dear state and in other part of Nigeria come to an end but sadly more people are still been kidnapped despite the measures that Government is saying she has put in place .

Government should therefore double her efforts to stop the evil these criminals are causing fellow citizens", he stated.

## Anambra Guber: We have recovered from attacks, ready for polls – INEC

The Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof, Mahmoud Yakubu on Wednesday, confirmed to the Senate, the body's readiness to conduct governorship polls in Anambra.

His invitation to appear before the Senate Committee on Wednesday, confirmed to the Senate, the body's readiness to conduct governorship polls in Anambra State.

Yakubu revealed that INEC required 14 activities preparatory to the election, out of which 12 have been concluded.

He said INEC had recovered from attacks on its facility in the zone, adding that ad-hoc staff have been adequately trained with sensitive materials already deployed.

He said: "We required 14 activities to conduct Anambra Governorship Election successfully and we have accomplished 12 out 14 as well as we have recovered from attacks on our facility in the South East and we are good to

go." The disclosure was in response to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on INEC, Senator Kabir Gaya, who expressed concern over the security challenges in Anambra State ahead of the November 6 governorship election.

Gaya bemoaned attacks in Anambra at a sensitive time when the State would be going to the poll to elect a governor.

He said: "The situation in Anambra is quite unfortunate especially at a time when we are approaching the gubernatorial elections in the State, election as you are aware, is a recruitment process of the leadership as well as the foundation that carries the builders of change and development.

"Recently, INEC increased the polling units in Anambra State from 4,608 to 5, 720, this effort is to allow a situation where polling units will be accessible to the electorates, this can only be achieved when and where the safety of people is assured", Gaya maintained.



# News



## Buhari to attend Climate Change Summit in Scotland

President Muhammadu Buhari has left Abuja for Glasgow, Scotland, where he will attend the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the President, Garba Shehu, who disclosed this in a statement, said the President would deliver his national statement at the High-Level segment for Heads of State and Government at the conference on Tuesday.

Buhari will later leave Scotland for France to attend the Paris Peace Forum to be hosted by the French President, Emmanuel Macron.

He will be accompanied on the trips to the European nations by

the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, Minister of State for Environment, Sharon Ikeazor, National Security Adviser, Maj.-Gen. Babagana Monguno (ret'd) and Director-General of National Intelligence Agency, Amb. Ahmed Rufai Abubakar.

The statement read: "President Buhari's address is expected to highlight Nigeria's key priorities and action to tackle climate change as well as progress on the country's transition to low carbon economy, consistent with achieving the Paris Climate Agreement.

"The conference, hosted by the United Kingdom in partnership with Italy, will bring parties together to help accelerate action towards the Paris Agreement as well as the UN

Framework Convention on Climate Change.

"Given Nigeria's leading role in taking climate action and as a signatory to the Paris Agreement, COP 26 will afford a unique opportunity for the Nigerian delegation to work with other parties to make progress on the main goals of the conference including securing global net zero by mid-century and keeping 1.5C within reach; adapting to protect communities and natural habitats as well as mobilising the much-needed finances to meet the set targets.

"In Glasgow, President Buhari will participate in some side-line events hosted by the United States President, Joe Biden and French President, Emmanuel Macron.

## Gov Ortom presents N155.6 billion 2022 budget estimates to Benue State Assembly

By Isaac kertyo, Makurdi

Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State has presented to the State House of Assembly the 2022 budget proposal of over N155.6 billion.

Performing the ceremony at the Assembly's Chambers, the Governor noted that the proposal was based on the exchange rate of N410 per Dollar and the rate of inflation at 13 percent with the benchmark of 57 dollar per barrel and oil production of 1.88 million barrel of crude oil per

day as proposed by the Federal Government.

Ortom explained that the recurrent expenditure was projected at N98.7 billion, while capital expenditure stood at N56.8 billion.

The Governor pointed out that the total expenditure for the fiscal year was allocated to the major sectors of the state economy, namely; Economic sector N56.7 billion, Social Sector to engulf N46.9 billion, Administrative Sector N43.8 billion while Law and Justice Sector got N8.1 billion respectively.

It was learned that the 2022

budget is higher than the 2021 budget by over twenty one billion naira.

Speaker of the Benue State House of Assembly, Mr Titus Uba assured that members would pass the 2022 budget proposal on time, adding that members would suspend other legislative matters to concentrate on the said budget to ensure quick passage.

He noted that next year's budget would address Covid-19 Pandemic as well as economic and social challenges to pave the way for employment, poverty reduction among others.

## Oyo Govt. Issues Quit Notice to Illegal Occupants of Properties

The Oyo State Government has frowned at illegal occupants of government properties, adding that those in such acts should desist forthwith or face the wrath of the law.

The Honourable Commissioner for Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Tpl Olusegun Emmanuel Olayiwola, who made this disclosure during his visit to some of the GRAs in the week warned that the state government will deal decisively with anyone found or caught illegally occupying any of the state government properties.

Speaking at the Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja GRA along Lagos-Ibadan Expressway which according to the Commissioner covers about 100 hectares of land not far from the Lagos-Ibadan Toll Gate, Tpl Olayiwola said the facility provider at the GRA will move to site any moment from now.

He said the state government was already making holistic assessments of state government's GRAs in Ibadan with a view to commence proper planning and development.

Olayiwola added that the Oyo State Government is already putting measures in place to commence the development of undeveloped Government Residential Areas (GRAs) in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

He said this is part of efforts of the Governor Seyi Makinde-led administration to provide affordable housing for the increasing population in the State.

"By December anyone that comes around here in this GRA will know that Governor Seyi Makinde is working hard to urbanize Ibadan. From what you

saw on the signpost, you could see that something entirely different is already happening here and by the grace of God by December you will be impressed with what would have been done."

"You know a GRA is a quiet, serene, and secluded environment. This GRA is such a beautiful place that mobility is very convenient for residents of this place either going to Lagos or going to the city from here. And I can assure you facilities such as the road, drainages, electricity, etc. for the GRA will be provided even before construction starts, that's why we are first and foremost, engaging facility providers before we start building." Tpl Olayiwola said.

While addressing residents of Ajia community in Ona-Ara, the Commissioner stated that the state government has put in place measures proper relocation of the market in the area to enable the government develop the site to a modern residential area.

The Commissioner maintained that the commitment of Governor Seyi Makinde-led Government towards urbanizing Ibadan to a 21st century standard remains unwavering noting that critical infrastructures of a modern society being put in place by the present administration was strategic and deliberate.

The Commissioner who was in company of the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry, Tpl Ademola Ajibola, Oyo State Surveyor-General, and other top government officials in the ministry during a visit to Lere Adigun GRA behind the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) in Bashorun had a brief stop at Oyo Free Trade Zones and Omololu Olunloyo GRA, Ibadan.

## Illegitimate funds frustrating Nigeria's economy – Bawa

The Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Mr Abdulrasheed Bawa, has said that illegitimate funds finding their way into the nation's economy are frustrating economic competitions and planning towards achieving economic growth.

Bawa said this while featuring on Channels Television, on Friday.

He noted that the commission is working assiduously to curtail the problem.

Speaking on the dangers of illicit financial flows into the Nigerian economy, the EFCC boss said: "it is a huge problem when you have illegitimate funds finding their way into our economy.

"It stops all economic

competitions and planning towards achieving economic growth of the nation. It is really alarming, that's why we are worried about it.

"We are working with other stakeholders to ensure that what needs to be done, is done to curtail the problem," he said.





# Justice Odili: Buhari's agents intimidating South-South – PANDEF

**P**an Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) has asked the Federal Government to apologise for the raid on the Abuja residence of Justice Mary Odili of the Supreme Court and wife of a former governor of Rivers State, Sir Peter Odili.

Recall that security operatives had invaded Justice Odili's home on Friday.

The search warrant showed that the panel comprises the EFCC, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), and the Ministry of Justice.

But, the EFCC has since denied reports that its operatives were behind the raid.

PANDEF in a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Ken Robinson, condemned the raid, describing it as barbaric and dictatorial.

The forum noted that the raid was one of the too many of actions by agents of Buhari's government against persons from the South-South region.

Part of the statement read: "The raid at Justice Odili's residence is another attempt by agents of the Buhari administration to further intimidate and humiliate the nation's judiciary.

"And this is one of such actions too many against persons of southern extraction, particularly, persons from the South-South geopolitical zone.

"PANDEF recalls that it was in the same nefarious manner was the Abuja residence of the former chief justice of Nigeria, Walter Onnoghen invaded in January 2019, which was considered by many as part of political machinations, leading to

the 2019 general election."

PANDEF asked that President Muhammadu Buhari stopped these actions that were capable of thwarting the Nation's democracy, for prosaic and political intentions.

"Those who ordered and carried out the scatological invasion of the home of Justice Mary Odili must be identified and punished appropriately. Enough of this nonsense!

"Nigeria is not an 'Animal Kingdom' and we can't afford to let it plummet to that state; the ramifications would be catastrophic for the entire world," the statement added.

PANDEF called on the International Community not to remain indifferent to the oppressive actions of the Nigerian Government against its citizens.



## Kogi Assembly approves N30bn supplementary budget for Yahaya Bello

**T**he Kogi State House of Assembly has approved a supplementary budget of over N30 billion for the 2021 appropriation bill.

The supplementary bill was approved following the clause-by-clause consideration by the committee of supply during the plenary on Thursday.

The approval, which brings the 2021 appropriation bill to over N160 billion, was done under the request of Governor Yahaya Bello to meet the developmental needs of the state.

Gov. Bello had in August 2021 sent a letter requesting the assembly to approve the supplementary budget.

## Odumakin's widow gives birth to twins

**D**r. Joe Okei-Odumakin, widow of the late spokesperson of Afenifere, Yinka Odumakin, has been delivered of a set of twins – a boy and a girl – at a United States of America (USA) hospital.

Dr. Oke-Odumakin, an activist and President of Women Arise, gave birth on Wednesday, October 27, 2021, according to a statement she signed and issued on Sunday.

The mother and the babies are said to be in excellent health condition.

In the statement, Mrs. Joe-Odumakin said the "miracle" birth fulfilled the wishes of the late Odumakin towards the end of his sojourn on earth to have another baby to be named after him.

The late Afenifere spokesman and activist died from COVID-19 complications, on April 3, 2021.

It was learnt that Mrs. Odumakin took in about the time her husband was hospitalised and never recovered until his death.

The couple got married in 1997, had their first baby girl in 2000 and the second, a boy, in 2003. While the girl was named after Joe, the boy was named Abraham after the late Afenifere leader, Pa Abraham Adesanya.

But the twins are coming 18 years after the last childbirth.

## IYC fault FG over N621bn approved for NNPC to construct 21 Federal Roads

**T**he Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) stalwart, Chief Sunny Onuesoke, have faulted the Federal Government over the approval of N621bn for the reconstruction/rehabilitation of 21 Federal Roads across the country by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

The IYC and Onuesoke also condemned the lopsided sharing pattern of the roads to be constructed between Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria and the exclusion of other vital Federal road particularly in Bayelsa State.

Recall that the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo at the Presidential Villa, last Wednesday gave the approval.

At the end of the council meeting, the Minister of Works

and Housing, Babatunde Fashola who said the move was a strategic intervention under the Federal Government Road Infrastructure and Refreshment Tax Credit Scheme disclosed that the selected 21 roads covered 1804.6km.

Reacting to the development Onuesoke said it did not make sense for NNPC to spend N621.2bn tax liabilities on road projects, wondering where the money would come from and how they would account for it.

He queried how the NNPC would dip hands into the nation's oil revenue and use funds generated for the nation to build roads rather than paying it into the nation's account and allowing the Federal Ministry of Works to perform its constitutional role.

"It will appear smartly in their books again as a cost in year of expenditure. What is going on here?"

"Road construction or reconstruction is for the Ministry of Works and Housing. Let's borrow ourselves some sense. This is subject to plenty of fraud.

"If the Ministry of Works and Housing needs money, they should collect from the treasury through budgeting not from NNPC.

"If NNPC wants to contribute to national development, let them pay tax and do CSR with transparency. Has the NNPC taken over the functions of the Federal Ministry of Work? he queried.

He described as amazing how, out of the 1804.6 kilometers of road to be constructed by NNPC, only 288.22 kilometers were allocated to the the South while 1,516.38 kilometers of roads went be built in the North, saying it was equivalent to robbing Peter to pay Paul.

## Oyo Charges Principals on Improving Education Standards

**P**rincipals of public Secondary schools in Oyo State have been charged to be alive to their responsibilities of moulding Nigeria's future by building improved educational standards in the State.

The Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Barr. Rahman Abiodun Abdu-Raheem made this call, while hosting the Executive Council of the

All Nigeria Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools, ANCOSS, on Thursday, in Ibadan. Abdu-Rahman, who advised teachers to place a premium on holistic education to build academic and moral standards, also urged the principals to ensure proper training of every child that passes through them.

While he charged the Principals to ensure that syllabuses are covered within the stipulated terms, as this will aid performance of students in internal and external examinations, the Commissioner reiterated that ANCOSS has great roles to play at achieving quality education in the state.

According to him, "principals of schools need to showcase good leadership examples, because it means a lot. Do not to arrogate your responsibilities to others, in order not to compromise standards in schools". "I also want to encourage you to always look inwards,

despite varying challenges, and make positive contributions at improving the Oyo state educational systems".

On Schools' Governing Board, the Commissioner ascertained that SGB is no longer formed based on political patronage as before, but on responsibilities, honesty and commitment, describing old students' associations as responsible, vibrant partners in progress.

Barr. Abdu-Raheem, however, cautioned members of the body on the need to exhibit transparency and shun acts that could tarnish their good names such as collecting illegal fees, doctoring documents and registration of external candidates.

The Commissioner lauded the sterling efforts of Governor Seyi Makinde in restoring the omoluabi ethos in schools, which were on the verge of being eroded or completely lost a few years ago.

Also speaking the National Secretary General of ANCOSS, Mr Akin Akinade, commended Governor Makinde on the giant strides taken to move education forward in Oyo State.

He also commended the present administration on recent recruitment exercise in the State, prompt payment of salaries, backlogs of promotions and benefits, reiterating the support of the body to the administration.



# News

## We Rejected RUGA to Secure Benue People's Lives – *Ortom*

The Benue State Government, Thursday, said it rejected the establishment of Cattle Colonies, Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlements and Grazing Reserves or any other plans by the federal government in order to secure the lives of the people of the state.

Governor Samuel Ortom, in a press statement, by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Nath Ikyur, however, reiterated that Benue's position has not changed on the matter.

He noted that the state government only acceded to the National Livestock Transformation Programme (NLTP), because the National Economic Council (NEC),

which has the 36 state governors as members, approved it after a series of engagements and incorporated suggestions by stakeholders from the state.

The governor said with the NLTP, states were at liberty to adopt and implement aspects of the plan that suited their peculiarities, adding that "unfortunately, the Presidency rejected this but would rather continue to dribble Nigerians.

"For us, in Benue State, our peculiarities are that we have a ranching law and in the area of livestock farming, our competitive advantages include indigenous cattle, piggery, goats and fisheries, etc. All these have been captured in the plan and Benue State has accepted the



implementation of the Plan based on these conditions."

Ortom also described as spurious, a statement credited to a former presidential aide, Laureta Onochie, that he was

in support of the RUGA plan, saying the state government was listed as one of the states that applied for funds from the federal government for the purposes of establishing ranches.

"We read insinuations in the media, where former presidential aide, Laureta Onochie, tried to give a false narrative about the stand of Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State on the implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP).

"Onochie made spurious allegations, painting the picture that Governor Ortom supports RUGA, because the state government was listed as one of the states that applied for funds from the federal government

for the purposes of establishing ranches.

"However, it is clear to us that Onochie is not ready to amend her ways, which is why the Senate roundly rejected her nomination as a Federal INEC Commissioner."

Ortom said it was mischievous for Onochie to drag him into an argument she lacked knowledge about, and advised that if the ex-presidential aide "has any modicum of decency remaining in her tainted pedigree, she should rather commend Governor Ortom for insisting on ranching as the win-win solution to herdsmen attacks on farming communities, which has now been embraced by others states and the federal government."

## DSS denied British envoy, Ezeife access to Kanu in custody, says lawyer

Ifeanyi Ejiofor, counsel to Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), has criticised the Department of State Services (DSS) for denying Chukwuemeka Ezeife and a British envoy access to his client.

Kanu, who is facing charges of treason, is currently being held by the DSS after he was brought back to Nigeria to face trial.

In July, Binta Nyako, a judge, had ruled that access to Kanu at the DSS should be "regimented".

"But it is not going to be all comers' affair; it will be regimented. You can't get up at night and say you want to visit your client," the judge had said.

But Ejiofor, in a statement issued on Thursday, said the DSS denied access to Ezeife, a former governor of Anambra, and "the British consul". Kanu's lawyer however failed to mention the name of the consul.

He described the action as "clear violation of the subsisting order of court," adding that he will initiate legal action against the leadership of the DSS.

The lawyer said the DSS had earlier denied Bruce Fein, IPOB's lawyer in the US, access to Kanu when he visited on Monday.

"Today was the turn of the British consul to experience

what the civilized society may refer to as the height of abnormality in the system," the statement reads.

"The innocent woman who flew all the way from Lagos on this special diplomatic engagement, was denied access to our client and told her that she is not welcome for the visit because she's a foreigner.

"His Excellency, Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife who was denied access to the courtroom at the last court sitting was also denied access to our client today without offering any reason(s). Height of impunity indeed!

"It is important to point out here that the order of court with regard to the number of persons and class of persons allowed to visit our client, never restricted them to Nigerians only

"It is more so that this clarification was made by His Lordship, following our specific complaint to the court that Attorney Bruce Fein was not only denied access to our client on two occasions at the DSS Headquarters, but was not allowed inside the courtroom on 21st October, 2021.

"If His Lordship's intention was to restrict foreigners from visiting our Client, the Court would have simply made it clear while responding to our application for clarification.

"Though we have promptly filed another application for

the transfer of our client to the correctional center predicated on an entirely new set of facts.

"It is now crystal clear to the world that if the DSS is allowed to remain the custodian of our client, there shall certainly be gross denial of fair hearing and

fair trial in these proceedings.

"We will equally be initiating contempt proceedings against the Head of the DSS for this gross violation of court order.

"Order of the court must be obeyed regardless of the status of the person(s) involved or the

agency affected by the order.

"Even though the DSS has a history of flouting court orders with impunity, we will pursue for the Court to step in, in this case and protect the sanctity of its Order(s). Enough is enough!"

## COVID-19: Okonjo-Iweala Harps on Investments in Local Vaccines Production

The Director General, World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has said Africa could no longer rely completely on importation of vaccines and pharmaceuticals given the lessons drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic. She expressed concern that most of the continent's population remained unvaccinated, with only less than five per cent of Africans fully vaccinated compared to over 60 per cent in developed countries.

The WTO DG, who had predicated the economic recovery in developing countries on the availability and access to COVID-19 vaccines, pointed out that the organisation had spent a great deal of time working with manufacturers to invest in emerging and developing countries including Africa.

Okonjo-Iweala spoke virtually at the 49th Annual General Meeting and 50th anniversary of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) in Abuja. She said death dynamics on the continent were worsening with death ratios climbing from an

average of 33.4 per cent in 2015 to over 50 per cent in 2021.

Okonjo-Iweala who spoke on the "Role of Trade in the Post-Pandemic Recovery in Africa," stressed that unequal vaccine access had limited economic recovery especially in developing countries.

She added: "But those at the downward end of the k-shape which include Latin America, Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa lag behind because they don't have as much access to vaccines and the physical stimulus especially in Sub-Saharan Africa." She said intra-regional trade as a percentage of total trade was only 15 per cent in Africa compared to 60 per cent in Asia and 67 per cent in Europe -implying that Africans trade much less with themselves unlike other regions.

She said the pandemic had exposed how dependent Africa is, reiterating the need for the continent to make use of the The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to build pharmaceutical industries and also produce vaccines.

The WTO DG said the prospects

of a unified market of 1.3 billion people offered enormous opportunities for Nigerian businesses that service a whole market of 211 million people.

According to her, "The large continental market which makes investments more attractive in Nigeria can create more wealth and more jobs. "We need to trade more with each other because we can trade more with each other and increase that percentage, we can create more wealth and create more jobs".

She said increased trade remained critical in the recovery of the Nigerian and African economy onto a sustainable upward path. Okonjo-Iweala noted: "We need to reverse our presence on the downward part of this k-shaped recovery and use the recovery from the crisis to increase Africa's share of global trade.

Earlier, President, MAN, Mansur Ahmed said industrialisation and trade were key to economic recovery and sustainability adding that this enable Nigeria compete across various frontiers.



By Dr. AUSTIN MAHO



# Perspective

## Justifying Youths Trust Fund

At a recent star-studded symposium in Abuja in which there was an array of about six professors who delivered well researched and empirically verifiable lectures on the desirability and functional necessity of what is called NYSC Youth Trust Fund, I was ever the more convinced that the idea if it materializes will provide succor to hundreds of thousands of unemployed youths.

Some of these University teachers who spoke on different but interconnected topic of the fundamental objectives for Nigeria putting up a sustainable platform from which creative minded and entrepreneurial youngsters that have had their one year compulsory National Service (NYSC) include Professors Ukerto Gabriel Moti, C.B.N Ogbogbo, Mutiu Matiu Adejo, Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh and Godwin Abu.

As a philosopher, the specific lecture that tickled my fancy was the one delivered by Professor Okpeh in which he summed up the overview of the imperatives of an NYSC Trust Fund.

Professor Okpeh itemized eight solid and rational reasons why President Muhammadu Buhari and the National Assembly should bring to life a legal framework for the establishment of the NYSC Youth Trust Fund.

Professor Okpeh's eight Professorial and empirical reasons backing the establishment of the Trust Fund for Youth doing the NYSC are as follows: Rapid increase in the population of the country since the decades of the decades after the Nigerian Civil War. From about 60 million in the early 1970s, the nation's population is today above 200million; There has been a steady rise in the demand for formal education across all zones of the country.

He argued that as at September 2021, the country have 170 universities (43 Federal Universities, 48 State Universities, 79 private universities); In addition, the country has 43 polytechnics (17 Federal and 26 state owned). Of course these figures exclude those illegally operating across the country.

In consequence, there has been a steady rise in the population of the youths, considered to be the future of the country, he submitted.

This, he said, has remained a constant factor in the proliferation of institutions of higher learning in the country in the last three to four decades.

Besides, the learned mind affirmed that the number of corps members have also tremendously increased over the decades; From a mere 2,364 at inception, the scheme now mobilizes 350, 000 qualified Nigerian graduates, making it the largest youth social institution in Africa".

Professor Armstrong Mattie particularly thrilled the audience with his presentation which spoke to the issue of necessity to recalibrate the NYSC for the 21st Century nation building challenges just as he justified the call for the establishment of an NYSC's Youth Trust Fund by President Buhari.

Hear him: The idea of a national service has global roots but every nation creates its own national values and institutions in which its core national interests are reflected and to which its citizens are committed. The idea of national service is (thus) a critical component of citizens' expressive solidarity with national goals. It has been largely associated with the military service in its primary purpose of defending the nation.

Okpeh Okpeh identifies three main typologies of national services globally and these include: compulsory military service/conscription, mandatory national service scheme and voluntary national service.

The mandatory national service is the type in which youths are required to serve the nation for a definite period of time and

they are trained to acquire requisite skills for future challenges. This is the typology in which the Nigeria scheme falls.

The NYSC scheme, he asserted is also an instrument of credible motivation of the nation's youth to patriotic duties, as well as encouraging the movement of labour.

Consequently, the Corps members have had the opportunity of living and interacting with fellow Nigerians of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, at least for a period of one year.

A second major contribution of the Scheme is in the area of labour mobility just as he noted that through its development policy, the Scheme has been able to reasonably reverse the trend of uneven distribution of high-level quality manpower in Nigeria as the members served in various sectors, especially in the rural areas. Thirdly, by implication and arising from the training programmes, the Scheme has done reasonable well in instilling discipline, focus and high sense of purpose use in the nation's youth, he affirmed.

The Professor then states that ordinarily, a Trust Fund is a legal entity that holds property or assets on behalf of another person, group or organization. It can hold a variety of assets such as money, real property, stocks and bonds, a business or a combination of many different types of properties or assets. The primary motivation for establishing a Trust Fund is for an individual or entity to create a vehicle that sets terms for the way assets are to be held, gathered or distributed in the future.

He said given the need to recalibrate the NYSC scheme within the intention of keeping to the dictates of the 21st century, and to assuage some the problems challenging the Scheme's vision and mandate, especially to re-activate the NYSC investment platform and uphold and modernize the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) Programme, the idea of a Trust Fund is a necessity.

It will create partial or full financial autonomy for the scheme in funding its operations and providing window for drawing capital for the entrepreneurial exploits after the service year.

Also, he stated that the benefits of the fund will include unburdening the government of being the sole financier as presently obtained; reduce the menace of unemployment; curb the increasing rate of crime by meaningfully engaging youths after the service.

The good news is that there appears to be a favourable disposition of the federal government to this proposal, especially the President who is passionate about youth engagement and empowerment, he emphasized.

For him, the objectives of a Proposed Bill

for an Act to establish the NYSC Trust Fund (NYSCTF) among other things, provides insight into what is expected as it harps on sustainable source of funds for the NYSC for some of the following: Skill acquisition training and provision of startup capital for corps members; Train and retrain the personnel of the NYSC; Develop camps and NYSC formations and provide facilities; Improve the general welfare of corps members and personnel of the scheme. On the mandate of NYSC when viewed side by side with the proposal for a youth trust fund, the professor said: A core mandate of the National Youth Service Corp scheme as enshrined in the NYSC Act is to:

S. 1(2)(c)The development of the Nigerian Youth and Nigeria into a great and dynamic economy; S.1(3)(d) to enable Nigerian youths to acquire the spirit of self-reliance by encouraging them to develop skills for self employment; S.1(3) (e) contribute to the accelerated growth of the national economy; S1(4)(f) to induce employers, partly through their experience with members of the service corps, to employ more readily qualified Nigerians irrespective of their states of origin. He then stressed that a reading of these sub-sections indicate that they are most germane to the theme of this symposium which seeks to "consolidate the gains of youth empowerment for national development. It is against this background of her mandate that we seek to locate the need for a Trust and then proceed to interrogate the legal framework for setting up a Trust Fund.

Professor Godwin Abu listed the gains to be derived from the NYSC Youth Trust Fund as follows: • Aside the positive, transformational and constructive social impacts the youth trust fund would bring, the initiative is about the surest panacea to youths involvement in social crimes because "the IDLE MIND IS THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP".

The Federal government needed to declare and implement a Marshall Plan For Economic Empowerment Of Youths. One of such should be the establishment of the NYSC TRUST FUND;

The National Population Commission (NPC, 2013) states about half of the population is made of youth, defined as individuals between 18 and 35 years of age;

Any funding/investment in the youth translate automatically into national development; and lastly.

The fund, when established, will help actualize President vision of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of unemployment before the next decade. Reading through a recent research work on youths unemployment in Nigeria conducted by the USA based BROOKING INSTITUTE published in Brookings.

Edu, it is no longer a child's play to restate that the NYSC Youths Trust Fund would tackle this grave developmental challenges associated with massive youths unemployment. On the State of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria, Brookings submits that Nigeria's population is said to have reached about 167 million people in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics). The National Population Commission (NPoC, 2013) states about half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age.

Unfortunately, as the youth population grows, so does the unemployment rate. In fact, unemployed youth numbered about 11.1 million in 2012. Here we explore a number of trends in youth unemployment in Nigeria and discuss various government programs attempting to address the problem. First, in terms of age, younger youth struggle even more to find jobs: At least two-thirds of unemployed youth are between 15 and 24 years of age. And, in terms of gender, available statistics show that a majority of unemployed youth are female. As shown in Table 1, women accounted for more than 50 percent of unemployed youth between 2008 and 2012.

Brookings presented an analysis of youth unemployment by geographical/settlement location (rural and urban areas) indicates that youth unemployment is mostly in rural areas and rapidly growing: From 2010 to 2011, the share of unemployed youth in rural areas increased from 47.59 percent to 59.95 percent.

The population of unemployed youth in rural areas rose from 2.9 million in 2008 to about 5.9 million in 2012.

Brooking.Edu also undertook a study of economic programmes and policies adopted in Nigeria to tackle youth unemployment and then says: "Ascertaining policies that have worked in addressing unemployment in Nigeria is rather difficult in light of the incredibly high and rising unemployment rate—and at least around 1.8 million youth are entering the labor market every year (Falusi, 2014). Since it is unclear to what extent any given intervention may have reduced the youth unemployment rate in aggregate, it may be more helpful to think of effective policies as those which have delivered on their stated objectives.

The sustainability of a program could also be considered an indicator of success." "Different programs have been introduced by various administrations over time to address youth unemployment, which has been an issue of significant public concern since the days of SAP.

In fact, youth unemployment became the focus of the social policy of the military government that ruled Nigeria for much of its years as an independent nation. The initial reaction of the government was to draft unemployed youth to public programs such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI), which provided immediate and direct jobs to participants interested in agriculture."

However, we now stand at a threshold of history that would see millions of youths getting involved in wealth creation if the NYSC'S YOUTHS TRUST FUND is established and transparently administered.

The audience at that academic summit acknowledge the fact that the Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim led management of NYSC has performed creditably and could therefore be entrusted with the administration of the much sought after NYSC'S YOUTHS TRUST FUND.

*\*EMMANUEL ONWUBIKO is head of the HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA) and blogs@www.theingerianinsidernews.com, www.huriwanigeria.com.*



# News



Gov. Inuwa Yahaya

## Gombe government commends EEC for timely completion of road project

The Gombe state government has commended the management of Eighteen Engineering Company International Limited (EEC) for the timely completion of the Degri - Bembelem - Reme - Dong - Talasse road in the state.

The commendation is contained in a statement made available to journalists in Abuja and signed by the director of highway, in Gombe state, Engr. Aliyu Isa Shinga

According to him the road project with contract no: FGPC/GME/2019/185 was awarded by the Gombe state government to the EEC in October, 2019 with a completion period of 24 months

The road which links several communities in the local government area has a total length of 21km length and 10.3 width made up of several concrete drainage.

Shinga commended the company for the timely completion of the project nothing that the road meets all

safety and quality standards.

“Following our joint inspection of the site and in accordance with the clause 48 of the General Condition of Contract, it is hereby certified that the construction of Degri-Bembelem-Reme-Talasse Road Project has been Finally completed” he noted.

He said that the company has also been awarded a maintenance contract that would last for 12 months which commenced on June, 2021.

The N3.7b, 21 km road in Balanga local government area of the state was flagged off by the Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya in December 2019 in order to open up the area and boost economic growth.

The Governor who underscored the importance of the road had said when completed, it would connect the Southern and Northern parts of Balanga Local Government as well as open up many communities around the hilly terrain and boost agriculture.

## SERAP Sues Buhari over Alleged Missing N881bn in 367 MDAs

By Nasir Ahmed

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against President Muhammadu Buhari over his failure to probe allegations that over N880 billion of public funds are missing from 367 ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to ensure the prosecution of those suspected to be responsible, and the recovery of any missing or diverted public funds.

Joined in the suit as respondents are the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN), and the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed.

The suit followed the grim allegations contained in part 2 of the 2018 annual audited report by the Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation that N880,894,733,084.811 was

spent by 367 MDAs without any appropriation.

In the suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/1281/2021 filed last week at the Federal High Court in Abuja, SERAP is seeking an order of mandamus to direct and compel President Buhari to promptly investigate the alleged missing funds and to ensure the prosecution of those suspected to be responsible, and the full recovery of any missing, mismanaged or diverted public funds.

The suit filed on behalf of SERAP by its lawyer, Kolawole Oluwadare, read in part: “The failure to investigate the allegations of grand corruption contained in part 2 of the 2018 annual audited report constitutes a grave violation of the duty placed on the Nigerian government to take appropriate measures to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public finances.

“Recovering the alleged missing

public funds would reduce the pressure on the federal government to borrow more money to fund the budget, enable the authorities to meet the country’s constitutional and international obligations and reduce the growing level of public debts.

“These damning revelations suggest a grave violation of the public trust, the Nigerian Constitution of 1999, and international human rights and anti-corruption standards. Spending of public funds without appropriation will create opportunities for corruption. Transparent and accountable public financial management is a key pillar of good governance, and of vital importance to provide public goods and services to citizens, as well as to create and maintain fair and sustainable economic and social conditions in the country. No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit.”

## Why We Impeached Plateau Speaker – Majority Leader

By Mike Oboh

Hon. Naalong Gapyil, the Majority Leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly has explained why the State Assembly impeached Hon. Nuhu Ayuba Abok last Thursday in the state.

Speaking with airport correspondents on Sunday at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos, Gapyil said that the former Speaker was impeached for financial misappropriation, dictatorial tendencies and gross incompetence.

According to him, the former Speaker allegedly used his position as to corruptly enrich himself and develop his personal political empire, thereby frustrating policies that could have engendered development to the state.

He also accused the former speaker of shutting down the House for three months and finding a home in the major opposition party, noting that these acts culminated in what led to his ouster last week by the House members.

He debunked the allegation that only eight out of the 24 members in the House carried out the impeachment and went ahead to showed

the reporters videos of the impeachment proceedings.

According to him, 16 members of the House of Assembly signed the impeachment notice, adding that the impeachment followed the due process and was in line with the House rules.

The member Representing Mikang District at Plateau State House of Assembly, further noted with regrets that the House tolerated the impeached speaker for a long time, purporting that he was at the lowest ebb on intellectual matters, especially in areas relating to legislative businesses.

“Abok is also said to have made concerted efforts to thwart all the efforts put in place by the current administration of Governor Lalong and the goodwill earned by it simply because he felt he has found a new home other than the All Progressives Party,” the majority leader alleged.

He said Abok is a product of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), stressing that all he ought to have done was to have worked in line with the policies and programmes of the current government to ensure delivery of dividends of democracy to the people of

Plateau State.

He added: “But, I want to tell you that what the House under the former Speaker Nuhu Abok was doing was totally in the negation of what is expected of a leader who is supposed to put into account his primary responsibility first in all his undertakings. This is because we have the mandate of the people of Plateau State to represent them well.

“Being a speaker is a privilege and I must tell you that the way and manner Abok has managed this House as its speaker can be summarised as embarrassing. Firstly, since autonomy was granted to the State House under Abok, there was never a time that the Principal Officers ever met, discussed, and took any decision on any issue.

“Abok was only taking decisions solely without recourse to Principal Officers of the House. And I would be bold to state that his dictatorial tendencies are one of the reasons that cost him the speakership.”

The House Leader added that apart from financial recklessness, the former Speaker’s attempt to undermine policies of the current government embedded in Executive Bills was also his albatross.



By Olalekan A. Babatunde

Last Friday 5th March 2021, nearly 3,000 of Chinese lawmakers met at the National Peoples Congress (NPC-China's top legislature) to deliberate over a draft decision on improving the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The proposed changes include adjusting the size, composition and formation of Hong Kong's election committee, which selects the city's leader or chief executive, and expansion of the committee's function to include electing a "relatively large share" of Hong Kong's legislative body, and nominating candidates for the body. According to Wang Chen, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, while stressing the need to systematically implement the principle of 'patriots governing Hong Kong' said that the reformed electoral system would adjust and improve the size, composition and formation of the Election Committee in Hong Kong. It is the Election Committee that will elect the chief executive of the province, and will be entrusted with the new function of electing a relatively large share of Legislative Council (LegCo) members and directly participating in the nomination of all candidates for the LegCo.

This initiative promises a fresh and improved approach that will unleash Hong Kong democratic values, contrary to what the some media and critics will make the world to believe. They claimed it would erode Hong Kong's democracy and violate Beijing's commitment made to the international community regarding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy since its return in 1997. But this will not be so based on the experience on China's structure, system and values. Hong Kong, which is a special administrative region (SAR) of China under the 'one country, two systems' principle, has now become an object of politicization and confrontation with China by external forces. The proposed electoral reform will deter the meddlesomeness of the system; and also will strengthen fundamental freedoms, political pluralism and democratic principles.

Essentially, the crux of the revised electoral system is patriotism, one of the key attributes of the Chinese culture. Which country does not demand patriotism from its citizens or institutions? When asked about why China is so ahead on the race to 5G on GPS' Fareed Zakaria on CNN on 7th March 2021, Eric Schmidt, former Google chief, said China was ten times ahead of the United States. A country that has four times more population might eclipse the US.

According Schmidt, the Chinese "...are a significant global competitor

to the west and to America; they are organized in central planning way...very smart people with global ambition.

I'm worried because of the structure of China], they're gonna move quicker than we are, even as a democracy." He was apparently referring to the structure that delivers world-class and reference-point development to China in the way the US is not.

Such structure is propelled by patriotism or national pride. Hong Kong Secretary for Mainland and Constitutional Affairs Erick Tsang has defined patriotism as "holistic love" for China, including the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

China demands devotion and vigorous support from its citizens. Without this, China would not have been the economic, industrial and technological powerhouse of the world.

Just this 2021, it has eradicated poverty by bringing the remaining 93 million people out of poverty and coupled with its success in keeping covid-19 under control. This is the quality borne out of age-long efficiency and effectiveness the NPC, that represents the voice of the people, is bringing to bear in Hong Kong.

Though, as a nation that is represented by distinctive traditions, cultures and languages, China still remains a cohesive whole like most nations of the world. Regardless of the 'one country, two systems' model bequeathed to it by the British, China is simply promoting civic patriotism that takes the existing imbrication of politics and cultures of both the mainland and Hong Kong seriously. According to Cecile Laborde (2002), "civil patriotism, ... emphasizes the motivational prerequisites of democratic governance, stresses the need to preserve existing co-operative ventures such as nation-states, and demands that existing political cultures be democratically scrutinized and re-shaped in an inclusive direction."

It is that inclusiveness that will

promote a political identity that will be compatible with Chinese characteristics that is being planned with the electoral reform. Therefore, one is confident that Hong Kong will be better for it in the long term.

The NPC's effort to rejig the electoral system could be described as a major improvement for Hong Kong as it will serve as a constitutional assurance for implementing the principle of 'patriots governing Hong Kong, and therefore brings it in tandem with the Chinese mainland. Definitely, the political life of Hong Kong that had been challenged by crises in recent years would return back to normal. In other words, the revised electoral system will remove chaos in Hong Kong. More robust and meaningful political roles have now been created for the city's Chief Executive. As proposed, the Chief Executive will now be elected by the Election Committee and entrusted with the new function of electing a relatively large share of Legco members and directly participating in the nomination of all candidates for the LegCo, contrary to what had existed.

Again, once the electoral system is reformed, the divisive political issues and processes that entangled the city in recent history will be a thing of the past. Political encumbrances that could regress the economic and financial successes of the region through political shenanigans and protest will be blocked by the new system. The political process will be able to elect competent hands that serve Hong Kong's development. Also, Hong Kong stands to gain tremendously if the electoral system is connected with governance process.

Over the last three years or so, there have been some misunderstandings and deep-seated problems about elections and democracy in Hong Kong. With the coming electoral regime, these misinterpretations or confusions will be explicitly explained and straightened-out. The intrusion

of foreign influences into the Chinese politics and internal affairs that are stoking unrest will be a thing of the past when this revised electoral system takes off. Li Keqiang, the country's premier buttressed it, saying 'we will resolutely guard against and deter external forces' interferences in the affairs of Hong Kong.' What is more important is the protection and vibrancy of democracy in which people who truly love the country's ideals and willing to sacrifice for its survival are involved in its democratic processes, participation and decision. It is when this is fixed that people around the world will envy the Chinese system yet again. Hong Kong is a democratic region.

Whatever that needs to be done for its improvement is both in the interest of the Hong Kongers and the rest of the Chinese people, inasmuch as those who are patriotic to the region's cause and Chinese characteristics are in positions of authority.

Election is the hallmark of participatory democracy. Thus, the central government is on the right path to help improve the electoral process of Hong Kong. The desire to return to the political stability and prosperity that Hong Kong was known for is more imperative particularly in the covid-19 pandemic era where nations are devising pragmatic means to overcome the attendant socio-economic and development challenges.

To this end, China's central government and other stakeholders particularly the people of the city must ensure to further develop Hong Kong as an international and technology hub as well as support its development as a China-foreign cultural and artistic exchange centre. Hong Kong must be better than when it was returned by the British. Fortunately, the 14 Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) is loaded with opportunities that will transform the social and economic development of the special region to keep up with what it is used to be, 'the Pearl of the Orient'. The new national security law and the revised electoral system are veritable mechanisms to achieve such feat for the region.

Carrie Lam, the Hong Kong's chief executive, instils confidence that the revised electoral system is 'timely, necessary, lawful and constitutional'. It is time for Hong Kong to wake up and put the interest of the region on the up and up. There is great optimism that the region is poised for an unprecedented development journey. Hong Kong will be for the Hong Kong people.

*Babatunde, PhD, is a fellow, peacebuilding and evidence practitioner at the Nigeria's Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Abuja. austinebabatunde@yahoo.com.*



# Opinion

## Revised Electoral System Will Benefit Hong Kong



# Photo Gallery

## Welcome Speech by H. E. Mr. Cui Jianchun, Ambassador of China to Nigeria at “The Oct. 1st Award of China-Nigeria Friendship” Awarding Ceremony On Oct 22nd , 2021

*The Honourable Dr. Adaora Ifeoma Anyanwutaku, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Information And Culture*

*Mr. Sulaiman, President of Society of Nigerian Artists and China Alumni Association in Nigeria*

*Award Winners, Friends from media, Distinguished guests,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Good afternoon!*

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to attend “The Oct. 1st Award of China-Nigeria Friendship” Awarding Ceremony and share this exciting moments with us! Let me take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to everyone here!

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations between China and Nigeria. Over the past 50 years, political mutual trust between China and Nigeria has been greatly enhanced, traditional friendship between China and Nigeria has been significantly improved, substantial progress in our win-win cooperation has been made, commercial, cultural and educational exchanges have been further promoted, we are very delighted to see that we have made tremendous achievements in all fields which have greatly benefited our two peoples.

There is a saying in English: No Pain, No Gain. Success comes from hard work, commitment turns good wishes into reality. While tasting the sweet fruits of our mutually beneficial cooperation, we should never forget those who worked tirelessly and made valuable contribution to our brotherly relationship. For this reason, the Chinese Embassy specially set up “The Oct. 1st Award of China-Nigeria Friendship” to recognize those outstanding Nigerians for their excellent performance and contributions to strengthening diplomatic ties between both countries.

Since 2021 witnesses the 50th Anniversary of bilateral ties, the Chinese Embassy

will honour 50 “Oct 1st ” Award winners. After reading the list of 50 winners, I’m so happy to see that some are senior Nigerian officials who have been playing very important roles and guaranteeing the China-Nigeria cooperative ship to sail safely and smoothly; some are ordinary teachers who have been working in “China Corners” for many years and Spending their precious time on cultivating talented students; some are journalists known as the uncrowned kings who have reported the amazing fruits of the exchanges and cooperation between our two countries; some are policemen who have been trying their best to bravely guard the safety of Nigerian and

Chinese people; some are local celebrities who use their social influence and tireless efforts to enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples, etc... Here I can’t mention them all, I just want to say “Thank you! Congratulations!”

We always say that a good start is half success. Encouraged by the great success we have made in the past 50 years, we have full confidence that China and Nigeria will definitely work together and unite as one to draw a more beautiful blueprint for the next 50 years!

*Thank you!*







**Countries should respect the United Nations, take good care of the UN family, refrain from exploiting the Organization, still less abandoning it at one's will, and make sure that the United Nations plays an even more positive role in advancing humanity's noble cause of peace and development.**

**—Chinese President Xi Jinping**  
Speech at conference marking 50th anniversary of restoration of People's Republic of China's lawful seat in UN, October 25, 2021



**Peace and development are our common cause, equity and justice our common aspiration, and democracy and freedom our common pursuit.**

**—Chinese President Xi Jinping**  
Speech at conference marking 50th anniversary of restoration of People's Republic of China's lawful seat in UN, October 25, 2021



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**Humanity should overcome difficulties in solidarity and pursue common development in harmony. We should keep moving toward a community with a shared future for mankind, and jointly create a better future.**

**—Chinese President Xi Jinping**  
Speech at conference marking 50th anniversary of restoration of People's Republic of China's lawful seat in UN, October 25, 2021



**China will be happy to work with all countries under the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits to explore new ideas and new models of cooperation and keep enriching the practice of multilateralism under new circumstances.**

**—Chinese President Xi Jinping**  
Speech at conference marking 50th anniversary of restoration of People's Republic of China's lawful seat in UN, October 25, 2021



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# Business & Economy

## BudgIT Foundation Tasks CSOs On Proper Budget Tracking, Constituency Projects” Monitoring

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been charged to strengthen their capacity in the area of monitoring and tracking of budgets at the various levels of government in order to save the people from being Shortchanged.

This was the thrust of a two-day capacity-building workshop on Budget Analysis, Visualisation and Monitoring for Open Alliance Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Ekiti State.

The programme which was organised by BudgIT Foundation was geared towards promoting transparency and accountability in governance as the participants were equipped with relevant knowledge on how to access credible official information.

The CSOs were enjoined to use the instrumentality of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law to obtain credible documents that would fast-track monitoring.

The BudgIT program officer, Henry Omokhaye explained that the workshop with support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was

put together to enhance the state derived maximum benefits from openness and transparency needed for inclusive development and efficient service delivery.

Omokhaye, noted that the workshop with support from National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was put together to enhance the state derived maximum benefits from openness and transparency needed for inclusive development and efficient service delivery.

According to him, ” The overall goal of this workshop is to improve the capacity of open alliance civil society organizations in analysis, visualisation and interrogating fiscal documents especially the budget document for effective engagement in open government partnership to promote transparency and accountability in Ekiti state.

”More than ever citizens are very much interested in being part of the decision on how public wealth is being expended, citizens are seeking more roles in the planning, formulation, implementation and monitoring of the budget

to ensure transparency and accountability for improved service delivery.”

He noted that the foundation acknowledged the efforts of the administration of Dr Kayode Fayemi in the last three years in promoting transparency and accountability in its budgeting process which centres around the people.

”Ekiti was the first sub-national government in Nigeria to pass her Freedom Of Information (FOI). We might not be where we wish to be as a state in terms of transparency and accountability, we are not where we used to be as a state,” Omokhaye said.

The Head Tracker, BudgIT Foundation, Mr. Uadamen Ilevbaoje urged CSOs to lead advocacy towards redirecting citizens’ interest in the budget preparation, implementation and monitoring at federal, state and Local Government levels.

He lamented that poor public knowledge about budgeting and budget implementation had deprived the people the deserved dividends of democracy.

## First Bank investors lose N53.84bn to Otedola, Hassan-Odukale leadership tussle

By Dino Amadi

It seems First Bank’s attempt to douse the chaos around the lender in the capital market failed to sway investors confidence following the leadership tussle between Femi Otedola and Tunde Hassan-Odukale.

The company, in a swift fashion, released a statement ranking Hassan-Odukale as its majority stakeholder, shortly after announcing Otedola as its major shareholder – handing the control of First Bank to the Leadway Assurance boss.

The clarification didn’t stop investors’ total investment in First Bank from crashing by 11.95 percent in a space of five days, as prospectives priced the lender’s stock low, following minority shareholders sell off amid uncertainty surrounding ownership structure.

Otedola’s short-lived position as the majority

shareholder had swung investors confidence in favour of the lender, resulting to over 50 percent increase in investment value in the first two weeks of October.

But this gain was almost erased by the misinformation emitting from First Bank’s management in the last two weeks of same months – a case of First Bank shooting itself in the foot.

The 11.95 percent decline

in market value resulted from depreciation of stock value which dropped to N11.05 per share on Friday, from Monday’s N12.55kobo, as some shareholders took out their investment in First Bank.

The sell off caused investors to lose N53.84 billion in five days, after the exit forced First Bank’s market cap to dwindle to N396.64 billion at the end of trading on Friday, against Monday’s N450.48 billion.



Otedola



Hassan-Odukale



## Huawei Empowers Youths Though Global ICT Competition, Certification

Three Nigerian students are set to win the sums of N1 million, N700,000 and N500,000 respectively in the ongoing 2021 Huawei global ICT competition ending on November 7.

The winners will also get a chance to be awarded internship opportunities, get free Huawei devices including laptops and smart devices as well as Huawei Certification vouchers.

One of the vital part of the competition is a roadshow – an avenue to intimate the students about the ICT Competition as well as the ICT Academy program.

”The Huawei ICT Competition is a competitive ICT talent exchange event developed by Huawei for University and College students globally to promote the healthy development of the ICT talent ecosystem and support the integration of industry and education.

”Nigerian students have participated in this competition since 2018, with over 40,000 Nigerian students registering for the competition cumulatively since 2018. Nigerian students reached the 3rd position in the Global final in 2018-2019. ”In the 2019-2020 competition, students from Ahmadu Bello University, University of Port Harcourt and University of Ibadan clinched 2 of the grand prizes in the Cloud and Network Track,” Mr Kenneth Ogwe, the ICT Talent Ecosystem manager said in a statement issued at the end of the awareness road show.”

”This is part of Huawei’s CSR programs under which the company is unrelenting in investing heavily in nurturing local ICT talent to compete equally with counterparts from across the globe.”

”This is in addition to growing the local ICT talent ecosystem, strengthening capacity building and increasing people’s digital competence,” he added.

”Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Huawei Nigeria did not relent in its efforts in ensuring Nigerian students register under its Authorized Information and Network Academy and get thoroughly trained in core ICT skills. Trainings and classes are

online based, engaging hundreds of students across the country on their computer screens from the comfort of their homes. Over 15,000 Nigerian students have been trained for free under the Huawei ICT Academy program on subjects such as Networks, Cloud Computing and Big Data.”

”This program also provides Nigerian students with access to globally recognized career certificates at three levels; Huawei Certified ICT Associate, Professional and Expert (HCIA, HCIP and HCIE),” Ogwe said.

The competition affords students the opportunity for talent building in the ICT Talent Ecosystem. Students are given the platform to enhance their ICT knowledge, practical and application skills, stimulate their innovation skills and creativity and acquire a globally acceptable certification.

During the competition, students choose between the Network and the Cloud track. Under the Network track students compete in networking technologies including Routing and Switching, Security and WLAN while the Cloud Track features newer technologies such as Big Data, Cloud Computing, Cloud Service, Storage and Artificial Intelligence. Huawei has so far partnered with over 110 institutions across the country, providing training to more than 5,000 students annually. In 2021, Huawei extended its partnership to over 20 universities across the country to provide training on emerging technologies.

The Huawei ICT Competition has become an opportunity for students in related fields to connect and compete with fellow students in the country and globally, learn the latest technologies and also get an opportunity to win prizes. Most especially, it allows them to bridge the gap between theoretical study and practical industry experience,” he added.

The registration for the ICT Competition commenced in July and ends on the 7th of November. The students will sit for the Preliminary Exam slated for the November 8th, 2021 thereafter followed by the National Final by the end of November 2021





# NEWS AS IT BREAKS

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# Politics

## APC most corrupt, divisive party - Atiku

Former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar said the ruling All Progressives Congress have proven themselves to be the most corrupt party and was never prepared to lead Nigeria.

Atiku stated this on Saturday during the national convention of the PDP in Abuja.

He said the responsibility of restoring the glory of Nigeria is now bestowed on the PDP.

The former vice-president added that the victory of the party is the victory of Nigerians.

He said, "The APC has proven itself to be unequipped to lead the nation.

They have shown themselves to be corrupt, in fact, the most corrupt, sectional and divisive party that was never prepared to lead this country. If we had the idea of what it took to lead a diverse, multiethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria.

"The responsibility, therefore, is for us to arrest the downward spiral of the Nigerian nation and save the country from even greater calamities. This is our collective responsibility."

"We must set aside our differences. We must bring forth our brightest lights and position ourselves to rescue, restore and rebuild the foundation."



Atiku

## 2023: Kano Speaker declares for Tinubu

Speaker of Kano State House of Assembly, Hamisu Chidari, has declared support for the Tinubu Support Organisation (TSO).

The director-general of Tinubu Support Organisation (TSO), Aminu Suleiman, stated on Sunday.

The TSO said Mr Chidari reiterated his unflinching support to the course of Bola Tinubu presidency project, when he expressed gratitude for the support offered him by the former Lagos governor during his mother's funeral.

He promised to continue to put in his best for organisation aimed at realising the project 2023.

Mr Suleiman reaffirmed the commitment of the organisation to the vision of Bola Tinubu.

"The Speaker is appointed the North-West coordinator in recognition of his dedication," Mr Suleiman announced.

The TSO is one of the support groups pushing for the realisation of Mr Tinubu's presidency in 2023.



## FCT Minister receives 4,000 decampees From PDP, APGA

About 4,000 party faithful have dumped opposition parties to join the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kwali Area Council of the territory, ahead of the Federal Capital Territory Area Councils election, slated for February 2022.

The FCT Minister of State, Dr Ramatu Aliyu, made the disclosure in a statement by her Special Assistant on Media, Mr Austine Elemue, on Sunday in Abuja.

Receiving the decampees, Aliyu assured them of justice and fairness amongst members of the ruling party and called on others who are yet to join to do so.

The minister, who described the event as a 'harvest' of over 4,000 members, expressed delight that most of the returnees are former leaders of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) in the FCT.

Aliyu, therefore, charged them to use their political weight to ensure victory for the party come 2022 and beyond.

She, however, appealed to both old and new members of the ruling party to work together in peace and be law abiding and emphasised on the supremacy of party decisions.

"We are here today to receive over 4,000 of our brothers and sisters who have decided on their own to join the ruling APC.

"They came from various political parties especially the major opposition parties, the PDP and APGA. We appreciate them.

"They have keyed into the agenda of the second term of the incumbent chairman, the second term of credible governance, the second term of competent leadership, the second term of solid management of our common patrimony in Kwali area council".

Aliyu, who explained that the occasion was not to kick off campaign for the council elections, however,

tasked party members to support continuity in governance.

Earlier, the APC Chairman in FCT, Alhaji Abdulmalik Usman, revealed that some of the decampees are founding members of the All Progressives Congress before they jumped ship.

"Today, we are here to make another history, the history of receiving our brothers, some of whom we started this party together.

"Our brothers and sisters whom we struggled hard to form this party at that time. So it is welcome back home for these members sitting here today.

"We are here to receive these people back home. They travelled somewhere and they said the atmosphere there is not conducive for them.

"Coming back home, they are back to meet their brothers and sisters in good health and we have nothing against them than to receive them back to their house.

"We are not here to campaign because we don't want anybody to indict our party," he said.

Usman expressed the confidence that come February 12, 2022, the APC would win the entire six area councils and the 62 wards in the nation's capital.

Responding on behalf of the decampees, Mr Usman Jiya, former APGA aspirant, assured party faithful that their return to APC was to consolidate on the achievements recorded by the incumbent chairman of Kwali area council.

Jiya assured all members of their dedication and team spirit in the forthcoming area councils poll.

The highpoint of the event was the presentation of symbolic broom to the leaders of the decampees by the FCT Minister of State and the party chairman.

Other decampees include Salihu Kolo, former State PDP Deputy Chairman, Mr Habila Bwaba, former PDP State Vice Chairman, Maimunat Adamu, amongst others.



# Politics

By Iyke Durumba

As political activities in Nigeria gravitate towards the 2023 General election, a Pro-Tinubu support group, 'Patriots of Bola Ahmed Tinubu' has been inaugurated in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The inauguration held Saturday, 30th October, 2021 at the Graceland Gardens and Park event hall, Wuse II, along Sanni Abacha Express Way.

The launch of Patriots of Bola Ahmed Tinubu had in attendance members of the Patriots league from the 36 states of the federation and FCT, as the event center was filled to capacity with loyalists of POBAT, APC members and well-wishers of Dr. Abiola Oshodi, National Leader of POBAT.

While delivering the welcome address, National President of Patriots of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (POBAT), Dr. Babatunde Bello said Nigeria deserves a dynamic and compassionate leader in the mould of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, stressing that POBAT is for Asiwaju because he is the leader who will unite and not divide the nation. "Today is a very important day in the life of this movement for so many reasons: we are launching our movement and inaugurating Exco members across the states of the federation.

"I have no doubt in my mind that POBAT is one of many groups rooting for the Tinubu Presidency, but after this inauguration today, we shall be the group leading the charge for the Tinubu Presidency with an unwavering zeal as we shall move from one state to another round the country to canvass for the Tinubu Presidency," Dr. Bello said.

The National President appreciated all the "Patriots" that came to Abuja for the inauguration, adding that for those doubting, the success of the inauguration has confirmed that POBAT is serious and committed to seeing Asiwaju emerge as Nigerian President in 2023.

One of the significant highlight of POBAT launching was the unveiling of the POBAT logo which was done by the POBAT stakeholders in company with Dr. Bishop Emeka Okonkwo of Chapel of Faith Assembly, Onitcha. Bishop Okonkwo was one of the awardees of The POBAT Award of Excellence. The Cleric in his remark saluted the organizers, particularly Dr. Abiola Oshodi, whom he described as a personality he has much respect for. He said Nigeria needs more people of



## Patriots of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (POBAT) inaugurated in Abuja

strong character like Dr. Oshodi to canvass for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who is a pan Nigerian Presidential candidate come 2023. Bishop Okonkwo supported POBAT with a million Naira donation.

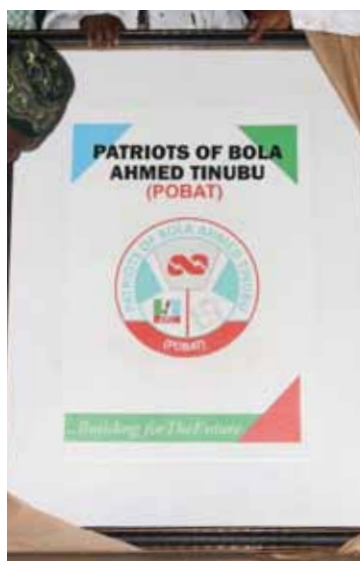
Earlier in his keynote address, the National Leader of POBAT, Owo born, Canada based Medical Doctor, Abiola Oshodi noted that persons push ideas and people of like minds join such lofty ideas, indicating that Bola Ahmed Tinubu Presidency is an idea which time has come.

Oshodi said, "POBAT is not about castigating outgoing Administration but to build on it and through that build a strong and unshakable support base for Asiwaju Tinubu ahead of the next Presidential election come 2023.

"The need for the rescue of the nation is much more important than any other consideration now and we at POBAT are now convinced more than ever before that while it is the turn of The South, it is also our collective effort to push for the candidacy of Tinubu who possesses all the qualities of the Nigerian President with the dynamism that this time requires.

"Our movement, POBAT is opened to all Nigerians across tribe, race, religion, profession and gender as well as Nigerians in The Diaspora," Dr. Abiola Oshodi enthused.

The National Vice President of POBAT, Prince Umar Yahya while welcoming the dignitaries at the event saluted the resolve of all members for



supporting the ambition of Asiwaju Tinubu, noting that across Nigeria, the popular sentiments is that the Tinubu who sustained Democracy after the June 12 crisis through his doggedness is deserving of leading Nigeria as President after President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure.

Over 750 State Executive members across the 36 states of the federation including the FCT were inaugurated while floor members of POBAT were also inaugurated at the event.

In the course of the inauguration, National Chairman, South West Agenda for Asiwaju (SWAGA), Senator Adedayo Adeyeye walked in to keep the date with the POBAT stakeholders.

Senator Adeyeye who thanked Dr. Abiola Oshodi for being forthright and living his dream of leading the park of Nigerians

in The Diaspora to activate his Pro-Tinubu movement, POBAT, assured him of reporting the success of the inauguration to Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. "We were together this morning at a wedding function and he is still in Abuja. Rest assured that he will be duly informed of your stride in POBAT," the Ekiti born Politician stated.

Another major highlight of POBAT inauguration was the presentation of recognition awards to POBAT Ambassadors and Nigerians across different ethnic groups.

The awardees were: Senator Adedayo Adeyeye, Dr. Bishop Emeka Okonkwo, Senator Aliru Matori (Bauchi), and Hon. Alhasan Ado Doguwa, (Member House of Rep).

The rest POBAT awardees included Dr. Yussuf Nazir Garwuna, Deputy Governor Kano State, Hon. Farouk Moustapha and others.

Dr. Okonwo who spoke with newsmen on the sidelines of the inauguration said he, like other Nigerians, are Tinubu men and what this shows is that in the West, East and the entire North, there are so many Tinubu men who are solidly behind his Presidential bid.

While speaking with Pressmen, Dr. Abiola Oshodi thanked God for the success of the inauguration, describing it as a huge positive stride and a step in the right direction. He said POBAT has hit the ground running and will take the good tidings of the Tinubu Presidency in 2023 to every part of Nigeria.

### How Arapaja floored Oyinlola to emerge Deputy National Chairman South

The Peoples Democratic Party weekend elected Professor Iyorchia Ayu as its new national chairman alongside 20 other members of the new National Working Committee (NWC) that will take office December 9.

The election came amid failed last-ditch attempts by governors elected under the party to get former governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola to step down for Ambassador Taofeek Arapaja as the anointed candidate for the office of the national deputy chairman (south) of the party.

Following a decision to back Arapaja for the post, the governors had invited Olagunsoye to a meeting where they appealed to him to step aside in the interest of the party.

But an adamant former Osun State governor expressed bitterness over the poor treatment he said he was getting from the state chief executives.

He was said to have told the governors that he would not be humiliated as he was on his own when he has approached to contest for National Working Committee (NWC) post.

But worried by the negative message a lack of consensus going into the national convention may cause, the governors resolved to send emissaries to his house to continue their pressure on him.

Five of the governors were said to have stormed Oyinlola's house in Abuja on Thursday night with "a package," which sources said did not appeal to him.

When the governors realized that they were not making any headway, they decided to allow Oyinlola and Arapaja to contest but ensure that state delegates were mobilized for the former Oyo state deputy governor.

At the poll, Arapaja garnered 2,004 votes to defeat Oyinlola who polled 705 votes while a total of 165 votes were declared invalid.

Hajia Inna Ciroma, who is the wife of the late former Minister of Finance and PDP chieftain, Malam Adamu Ciroma, also vowed not to withdraw from the race for the national deputy chairman (north) in favour of Umar Ilya Damagum despite the pressure from the state governors.

She had insisted that she had paid her dues in the party where she was a minister and woman leader.

Mrs. Ciroma also frowned at the lack of inclusion of women in the PDP leadership and pointed out that her emergence as the national deputy chairman could assuage the womenfolk.

Her insistence caused the National Convention Organizing Committee (NCOC) led by Governor Ahmadu Fintiri to promise constitutional review that will ingrain affirmative action in the party constitution.

Damagum polled 2,222 votes to beat Ciroma who garnered a paltry 365 votes.



# NewsXtra

## EFCC moves to end menace of fake Visa

Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdulrasheed Bawa, yesterday, assured Nigerians of the commission's effort towards tackling the menace of fake visas, by working with embassies with a view to sanitising the process, which has led to increase in the demand for foreign exchange.

This is as the Central Bank of Nigeria has said its ban on sales of forex had begun to yield results.

Bawa gave the assurance in Abuja, at the Roundtable conference on: 'Depreciating value of naira and the Nigerian economy', organised by the National Institute of Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), during which various stakeholders drawn from the academia and Association of Licensed Bureau-de-Change operators frowned at the impacts of the recent policy statement issued by the CBN on

over N300 billion investment of the BDCs operators.

The EFCC boss, who was represented by the Director of Operations, Mr. Abdulkareem Chiko, observed that the prevailing economic situation has constrained government's ability and capacity to generate the required revenue and provide the needed infrastructure.

He reiterated the commission's resolve towards the enactment of legislative framework that would help in coordinating and ensuring the return of the looted funds back into the country with a view to addressing the revenue gaps.

"But from all these angle of the commission, there can be a very good contribution if there is a push on the side of the commission to ensure that there is a legislative framework to coordinate and ensure the return of the loots and funds back into the country to address the revenue gap. So, what we are trying

to do is have a system whereby you can confirm if this visa is genuine or not there and there, because anybody that wants forex and wants to travel genuinely will go through the process of getting visa.

"That angle of looking at if the visa is genuine or not is not there yet, so you can as well affix any passport or visa on that passport, so it's more like saying just do the needful and I will give you the dollars. But if you are working with embassies, it could make it very easy, there and then, you can send those things and within two or three days, once it's confirmed that it's fake, then EFCC will take over from there and we will get to the root of the matter."

In his presentation, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Director, Legal Services, Mr. Kofo Salam-Alada, said the ban on sale of foreign exchange to BDCs operators has been yielding positive results.

While assuring the people that the apex bank would spare no effort towards ensuring the stability of naira, Salam-Alada explained that the stability of the value was the key for investors, who were coming into the country for the projection of their investment.

According to him, "The panelists may not have been aware, a lot has been going on regarding all the associated issues, which we are dealing with. Nobody can be more concerned about this than Central Bank of Nigeria. Why, the Institute that put this together also, is a child of the parliament, its ancillary to the Parliament and the parliament has donated certain powers to Central Bank of Nigeria.

"Section 2 of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act, 2007 sets out the mandate of the Central Bank and one of it is that, we issue legal

tender currency and management of foreign reserve to ensure the value of that legal currency, which is the naira.

"You can see that these three things are inter-twin. Nigerian populace has come to ascribe the value of the currency to just the activities of the Central Bank, forgetting the most important part, which is the fiscal part of it. So, these are the things the CBN has been doing.

"It's when you manage liquidity that you can also impact the value of the currency itself. And in doing most of the things we do, apart from what is statutory, there are other fallout of those statutory powers and that's collaboration with other agencies of government."

On his part, Deputy Chairman, House Committee on Finance, Hon. Saidu Abdullahi, disclosed that the lawmakers would meet with the apex bank to interrogate various intervention programmes initiated by it.

Abdullahi expressed concern over the foreign exchange crisis and huge fund being used for the payment of under recovery.

While affirming that the country was in a very dire situation financially and was in need for deliberate policy to ensure price stability and effective foreign exchange management, the lawmaker stressed the need to measure the performance of CBN in terms of achieving their set out objectives.

Earlier, in his remarks, NILDS Director General, Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, while applauding the contributions of the BDCs to economic development, stressed the need for a paradigm shift by ensuring diversification of the country's economy.

He noted that exchange rate policy remained one of the most important indices that shaped economic growth, especially, for developing countries.

"With the increasing globalisation, varying factor endowment and the compelling needs to engage in trans-border exchanges, exchange rate has become indispensable in international economic transactions. Most developing countries such as Nigeria depend on import of machineries, spare parts and other finished goods for capital development and consumption purposes.

"These require foreign exchange reserves for build-up to ensure that panic measures are not resorted to when foreign exchange receipts dwindle or when there is disequilibrium in the foreign exchange market caused by inadequate supply of foreign exchange reserve," the DG added.



Abba Kyari

### FBI Indictment: No Formal Extradition Request For Abba Kyari – IGP

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Alkali Baba, says he is yet to see or receive a formal extradition request for Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Mr Abba Kyari following his indictment by a US Court.

Kyari had earlier in the year been accused of being a conspirator in a 1.1-million-dollar fraud deal involving Instagram celebrity Ramon Abbas, popularly known as Hushpuppy.

Giving an update on the case, IGP Alkali Baba disclosed on Thursday that he had only heard it on social media, stressing that there was no extradition request as some have reported.

The Inspector General further explained that the panel constituted to investigate the case has submitted its report to the Secretary General of the Federation (SGF) Boss Mustapha for vetting and advice on the findings.

He added that the Force has only just received feedback from the SGF and is contemplating the next step to take.

The police chief's comment is the latest on the controversial issue in spite of a warrant issued by a US magistrate judge, Otis Wright, ordering the arrest of Kyari.

About a month ago, Minister of Police Affairs, Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi while affirming that investigations have been concluded and findings submitted, noted that President Muhammadu Buhari will have the final consideration on the matter.



## NECO Releases 2021 SSCE Results

The National Examinations Council (NECO) has released the results of the 2021 Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE).

Professor Dantani Ibrahim Wushishi, the Registrar, who announced the release of the results at the Council's Headquarters in Minna, Niger State, said out of 1,233,631 candidates who registered for the examination, 1,226,796 sat for it.

He said the number of male candidates was 657,389, representing 53.28%, higher than the number of female candidates which was 576,242, representing 46.71%.

Wushishi revealed that 878,925 candidates, representing 71.64% had five credits

in English Language and Mathematics, with a decrease of 2.25% as compared to the results of 2020.

He said 1,226,796 candidates, representing 94.04% obtained five credits and above irrespective of English Language and Mathematics with an increase of 2.13% as compared to 2020 results.

The Registrar said the council recorded 20,003 various cases of examination Malpractices, representing 1.63% this year, which is lower than the 2.61% cases in 2020.

He said one school each in Bauchi, Kaduna and Bayelsa and two in Katsina States were de-recognised for two years for their involvement in Mass Cheating while 20 supervisors were also blacklisted for

various offences including "poor supervision, Aiding and Abetting, Connivance with non-candidates to write answers on chalkboard, compromise and extortion."

"The council has a long-standing tradition for zero tolerance for malpractice. Thus, it can be noticed that the malpractice incidence in 2021 dropped compared to 2020," he said.

Wushishi said the late release of results this year was due to challenges "as a result of some actions by agencies that have direct bearing on our operations."

The Registrar also announced the release of the BECE results and directed the candidate to visit the Council's website to check their results.



# Entertainment

## No regrets over my failed marriage – Actress, Damilola Adegbite

The award-winning Nigerian actress, Damilola Adegbite, has said she has no regrets over her failed marriage.

Finding the perfect romance in her fellow actor, Chris Attoh, on the set of *Tinsel*, Adegbite believed she had found her own fairy-tale. Both actors had gotten engaged in 2014 and welcomed their son, Brian, a month later.

They tied the knot on February 14, 2015, at a private wedding at the La Villa Boutique Hotel in Accra, Ghana.

Unexpectedly for the actress, this perfect haven came crashing down three years into the marriage, and the news went viral.

After months of speculation and denials, in September 2017, Attoh finally admitted that his marriage to the Nollywood actress was over.

Attoh would later marry an American, Bettie Jennifer, who was shot dead in May 2019. The U.S. police officials later revealed that the deceased was married to two different men, one of whom is a convicted Baltimore drug lord.

In a new episode of *WithChude*, anchored by the founder of Joy, Inc., Chude Jideonwo, the actress discussed how her career turned out to be a walk in the park and how she was able to come out of her marriage scandal strong.

She also revealed how she had consistently refused to grant interviews because she had felt they would cause her more harm than good. One interviewer, in particular, had gone ahead to “make up a false interview on her behalf.”

When the actress was asked about the circumstances that led to the end of her marriage, she replied, “It didn’t work. I learned a massive lesson from that experience and it is that love is not enough. When you meet somebody and you want to spend the rest of your life with them, love is just one of the qualities that you need, but it’s not everything.”



## 375 Nollywood movies produced in Q3 of 2021 –NFVCB

*“The report is for onward submission to the relevant Federal Government authority for the compilation of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the third quarter (GDP) Q3, 2021”.*

The National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) says it received and censored a total number of 375 movies produced by the Nigerian film industry, also known as Nollywood, in the third quarter of the year.

The Special Assistant on Media to the Executive Director/CEO, NFVCB, Joshua Olomu, made this known in a report on

Saturday, in Abuja.

The Department of Film Censorship and Classification of the board made this known in its report for the third quarter of the year, which captured all films submitted to the board’s offices from across the country.

“The report is for onward submission to the relevant Federal Government authority for the compilation of the

nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the third quarter (GDP) Q3, 2021”.

According to the report, Lagos had the highest number of movies produced for the period with 159, while Abuja followed closely with 108 movies and Onitsha with 83 movies.

The analysis by location further showed that Kano had

eight, while Port Harcourt and Jos recorded six, respectively, and Benin had five movies for the period under review.

The third-quarter report, however, cited the number of movies produced during the quarter as a sharp decline, as against the 635 produced in the second quarter and 416 in the first quarter.

## How I landed my first romantic role in “Ghana Jollof” -Comedian Funnybone

*“Funnybone, in the latest Showmax original, “Ghana Jollof”, plays Jasper”, a first-class graduate who moved to Ghana in search of greener pastures after failing to secure a job in Nigeria.*

Stanley Chibuna, a Nigerian comedian, popularly called “Funnybone”, on Wednesday; said he bagged his first romantic role in the latest Showmax original, “Ghana Jollof”.

The Africa Magic Viewers Choice Award (AMVCA) winner disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos.

Funnybone, in the latest Showmax original, “Ghana Jollof”, plays Jasper”, a first-class graduate who moved to Ghana in search of greener pastures after failing to secure a job in Nigeria.

He acted alongside Ghanaian actress, Joselyn Dumas, for the first time.

“It was actually my first time being in a romantic space with a female on set, I have never done scenes where I had to kiss or hug somebody.

“But shout out to Joselyn Dumas for her skill and professionalism, she gave me the vibe and energy I needed to make the scene work, she would say to me, ‘calm down’.

“If it was someone else, I probably would not have done that scene as well as I did it, she gave me the freedom I needed.

“But on the whole, Joselyn is really cool, when she walks into the room, it is all good vibes, she is smiling, talking to you, and wants you to be on the same wavelength with her, she earned my respect for

life,” he said.

Funnybone confessed that he shares certain traits with the character in *Ghana Jollof* in real life.

“I share Jasper’s humour in real life but I am not a nerd, am also intelligent like Jasper but am not a first class student because I cannot kill myself,” he said.

On how he got the role, Funnybone said: “Right after the AMVCA, Basketmouth told me he had something he would like us to do together and that was it. About eight months later, he gave me the script to read and asked me to come through so we could discuss it.

“As someone I had worked with for a long time, I think he

understood what I could do, and my range, the role challenged me but I liked it because it is my first time doing drama and not just sitcoms.





# Diplomatic Corner

## Sudan coup: Khartoum barricaded by pro-democracy activists

Sudanese protesters have barricaded roads in the capital, Khartoum, as part of week-long demonstrations against a military coup.

Three people were killed on Saturday when security forces fired shots and tear gas to disperse protesters in the nearby city of Omdurman, medics said.

The interior ministry denied that live rounds had been fired.

The army seized power on Monday, detaining Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and other civilian leaders.

The UN's Sudan envoy, Volker Perthes, met Mr Hamdok at his residence on Sunday.

Mr Perthes said Mr Hamdok was well but remained under house arrest.

"We discussed options for mediation and the way forward for Sudan," he added.

Coup leader Gen Abdel Fattah Burhan dissolved civilian rule on Monday.

The general, who also called a state of emergency, said his actions were justified to avoid "civil war" and stop political infighting. The military takeover has drawn widespread international condemnation.

Saturday saw the biggest demonstrations yet, with tens of thousands marching across the country with Sudanese flags and chanting, "No to military rule!"

"These protests are going to continue being peaceful even when faced with the guns," Shaheen al Shaheef, a member of the Khartoum Resistance Committee, declares.

More than 10 protesters have died in clashes with security forces last week.

The Sudanese authorities have cut off the internet and other communications.

Until Monday's coup, civilian and military leaders had been in an uneasy power-sharing agreement since long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir was overthrown in 2019.

The deal was designed to steer Sudan towards democracy, but it proved to be fragile with a number of previous coup attempts.

Gen Burhan, who was head of the power-sharing council, said Sudan was still committed to the transition to civilian rule, with elections planned for July 2023.



Leaders posed for a picture by the famed Trevi Fountain on Sunday morning

## G20 in final push to reach deal on climate at Rome summit

The leaders of the world's richest economies will spend Sunday trying to reach a meaningful deal on preventing climate change.

The G20 is hoping to make progress ahead of the COP26 summit in Glasgow, which begins on Sunday.

However, they have yet to announce any firm new commitments to reduce carbon emissions in the coming years.

The G20 group, made up of 19 countries and the European Union, accounts for 80% of the world's emissions.

The first day of the summit, being held in Rome, Italy, focused on Covid and the economy, with an agreement being reached on a global tax rate which will see the profits of large businesses taxed at least 15%.

It follows concern that multinational companies are re-routing their profits through low tax jurisdictions.

Sunday is dedicated to discussions on climate, with Britain's Prince Charles addressing the group.

He urged the leaders to take action "for

the sake of humanity", but acknowledged with the costs for new infrastructure likely to spiral into "trillions of dollars" it needed both government and the private sector to work in tandem.

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi - who is hosting the event - went on to call on his colleagues to accelerate phasing coal and investing in renewable energy, while outlining long term goals.

However, reaching an agreement on how best to cut carbon emissions - and to stop climate change getting worse - is proving difficult.

After years of talking, the planet is now at least 1.1C hotter than the pre-industrial level. Climate scientist want warming restricted to 1.5C to prevent climate catastrophe.

There were already concerns reaching a deal would not be easy, as among the leaders not appearing in person is China's President Xi Jinping. China is the world's biggest polluter - although, per person, its emissions are about half those of the US.

Activists are disappointed with what is

currently being discussed. Reuters news agency suggested that the agreement in latest draft communiqué did not toughen the language used in previous versions and has even been softened in parts.

Oscar Soria, of the activist network Avaaz, told the agency there was "little sense of urgency" coming from the group, adding: "There is no more time for vague wish-lists, we need concrete commitments and action."

However, others have been keen to paint the G20 as a stepping stone to COP26, which will see delegates from about 200 countries gather to discuss cutting carbon emissions.

A US official told reporters the G20 was about "helping build momentum" before the leaders headed to Glasgow later on Sunday, while France's President Emmanuel Macron told newspaper Journal du Dimanche that "nothing is ever written before a COP".

"Let's not forget that in Paris, in 2015, nothing was decided in advance," he told the weekly.

## Sudan coup: Khartoum barricaded by pro-democracy activists

A man has been left in a critical condition after a knife and arson attack on an underground train line in the Japanese capital, Tokyo.

At least 10 others were also injured in the incident, which happened at around 20:00 (11:00 GMT) near Kokuryo station, in the city's western suburbs.

Passengers ran for their lives, some climbing out of windows, as fire raged in a carriage on the Keio Line train.

The suspected attacker, a man in his

20s, was arrested at the scene.

Eyewitness reports say the suspect sprayed a clear liquid around the carriage before setting it alight.

Images from the scene show some passengers running from the attacker, stumbling through a connecting door into the next carriage. The train later stops in a station - but the doors remain closed as the train begins to fill with smoke.

Finally, the trapped passengers start forcing the windows and climbing on

to the platform.

There have been a number of knife attacks in Japan in recent years - two on Tokyo's subway system in 2021. In August nine people were injured by a knife wielding man. And in the same month two people were injured in acid attack at subway station.

In 2019, a man also attacked a group of schoolchildren waiting for a bus in Kawasaki. Two people were killed and at least 18 were injured.



# Sports

## Rodgers explains why Ndidi did not feature in Leicester City's 2-0 loss to Arsenal



The Super Eagle spent Saturday afternoon on the bench as the Foxes fell to the Gunners at home

Leicester City manager Brendan Rodgers has revealed his plan of introducing Wilfred Ndidi for a few minutes against Arsenal backfired since his team were chasing the game.

Gabriel and Emile Smith Rowe's

strikes in the first half handed the Gunners a 2-0 Premier League win over their hosts at King Power Stadium in Saturday's early kick-off.

Later on, the tactician explained why the Nigeria international, who has been out for several weeks, was not involved despite being included in the squad.

"He has just trained this week.

He was to come on [in the last] fifteen to twenty minutes maximum, that was our plan [on Saturday]," Rodgers told the media as quoted by All Nigeria Soccer.

"But obviously we were chasing the game so there wasn't that need to put him on. [But] it's great to have him back and available and we'll see how his fitness looks over

the coming days."

The former Liverpool coach went on to explain why his team lost the match against the North Londoners.

"A poor start cost us, it's a lack of concentration and then you're chasing the game against a good side," Rodgers told Leicester's website.

"We have been able to do it in a few games recently where we've not had a great start and come back, but you can't give teams a 2-0 start, especially a good team like Arsenal.

"We were too passive, so it is a concern. When you have players finding the level and the constant mentality, if you don't start the game well, then it can cost you and today it cost us. In the second half, we can't have any complaints. I thought we were excellent.

"We had to make changes to shift the dynamic of the game, but we got punished for that opening 20 minutes. Both [Harvey Barnes and Ademola Lookman] were excellent. They gave us that pressure higher up the pitch. We could condense the game up there and we were much better."

After the loss, Leicester are now placed 10th with 14 points while Arsenal climbed to sixth with 17 points.



## Crystal Palace did not let Manchester City play - Zaha raves about Etihad win

The Elephant played a crucial role in helping the Eagles cause an upset in the Premier League outing away to the Citizens. Crystal Palace attacker Wilfried Zaha has revealed they had to stop Manchester City from playing to stand a chance of winning at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

The Ivory Coast international was on target and contributed immensely to Conor Gallagher's goal, when he got into the final third, held the ball before passing to the unmarked Michael Olise, who provided an assist and ensured the team won 2-0 in the Premier League match.

"It was just about getting in their faces and not letting them play, we know how good they are, but today was about us not letting them play, and showing them what we can do. That's what we did," Zaha said as quoted by the club's official portal.

"I feel like we're a threat going forwards, but the difference you see now is that we keep the ball from the back. We keep the ball around the pitch and we make our chances. We're now exploiting the talent we have up-front and all around the pitch.

"I scuffed it [for the opening goal] but a goal is a goal. I was just buzzing that I saw it go in, and that's the way you want it to start. I was happy."

The 28-year-old has further commented on the influence of Gallagher as well as his manager Patrick Vieira.

"[Gallagher] brings a lot of energy, obviously, playing up top I needed people to link up with. He gets up and down which makes a lot of difference when he gets up and helps out," Zaha continued.

"Obviously [Vieira] knows what he's talking about. We've all seen him do it. It's a bit surreal because I've seen him and he's an amazing player.

Article continues below

"The way he's trying to play, because he's done it himself, it's easy to buy into it.

"The players are buying into it, and the performances are coming as well. Obviously, it's coming bit by bit - it's different, but slowly the results will come."

After Saturday's win, the Eagles moved to the 13th position on the table with 12 points from 10 matches.

## 'Koulibaly and Osimhen are extraordinary players for Napoli' - Salernitana manager Colantuono

The Garnets are in the relegation zone and the tactician concedes it will be tough against their visitors

Salernitana manager Stefano Colantuono has described Victor Osimhen and Kalidou Koulibaly as "extraordinary players" ahead of Sunday evening's match against Napoli at Arechi Stadium in Salerno.

Nigeria international Osimhen has been influential for the Naples charges this season, starting each of the last eight Serie A matches and scoring five goals in the process.

At the back, Senegal star Koulibaly has also been a rock and to date, the team has conceded just three goals in the league this season.

But while Osimhen, is expected to miss the trip to Salernitana due to a muscle strain, the center-back is fit and ready for the match.

"Koulibaly and Osimhen are two extraordinary players, but Napoli are a very strong team, which deserves great consideration,"

Colantuono said as quoted by Area Napoli.

"They are living. a moment of grace, they have won almost all of [league matches this season] and we can't do anything wrong otherwise they will punish us.

"We will try to play with our characteristics, working in the details that will make the difference. Napoli, together with Milan, are the strongest [in the league]."

The 59-year-old has further commented on their opponent's attack that has so far scored in nine of the 10 league matches. The tactician has hinted they will not be sitting back to defend.

"Napoli attack in many ways. They have depth, dribble, jump the man, have a center forward that is difficult to limit. If you enhance his characteristics he is a striker who puts not Salernitana in crisis, but the whole championship," Colantuono continued.

"Isn't it a shame to stoop to protect the goal? No team has had a bold attitude against them."



Salernitana have collected just seven points from the 10 matches they have played.

They have managed just two wins and a draw, with the remaining seven matches ending in defeats. The promoted side have also

scored just 10 goals and conceded 22 which puts them deep in the relegation zone.

Napoli lead the table with 28 points from 10 matches as well. They have managed nine wins and a draw.



The novel coronavirus has shown glaring flaws in the world's collective ability to respond to infectious disease outbreaks, with none more evident than wealthy countries' self-destructive unwillingness to cooperate on vaccine equity for the benefit of the entire global population.

Since the world's wealthiest countries have been the primary contributors to the great global disparity between the vaccine haves and have-nots, it's time that African leaders push G20 heads of state to address and rectify the life-threatening vaccine imbalance at the upcoming summit in Rome, Italy at the end of October.

As of early October, 3.6 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses had been administered globally, with 78 per cent of those going to people in high- and upper-middle-income countries. Less than 7 per cent of the 1.3 billion people on the African continent have received even one dose. The discrepancy is worse for people in low-income countries, where less than 1 per cent have gotten a shot.

It's no surprise that there are not enough doses to vaccinate our world when wealthy countries have secured enough vaccines to inoculate their populations as much as five times over, according to Duke University. Even though the world will have created 11 billion total doses by the end of this year, almost 9.9 billion of those have already been promised to wealthy nations.

The Covax initiative, while promising, was supposed to supply lower-income countries with sufficient vaccine doses. However, that mechanism clearly has fallen short of its initial goal to vaccinate 20 per cent of recipient countries, which is still far too little when the World Health Organisation (W.H.O) states that a vaccination rate of 70 per cent is required to protect the world.

A debate in the U.S. and other high-income countries now centers around booster shots, while Africa and other hard-hit regions struggle. W.H.O Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently said it was "unconscionable" that some countries are now offering booster shots "while so many people remain unprotected."

The time has come for African leaders to amplify their voices in a

## Backpage Column

### G20: THE NEED TO STOP COVID-19 VACCINES APARTHEID

By Penninah Lutung



combined effort to demand that G20 leaders prioritise global vaccine access for the majority of nations that desperately want to vaccinate their populations.

That must start with pushing pharmaceutical companies to share their know-how and technology to increase production in Africa and globally. Africa can no longer wait for vaccine charity, it is time to get rid of patent monopolies

*The global COVID-19 response has been abysmal since the start, but African leaders have the opportunity to rally together and speak as a united force for the good of all Africans and the world. If one nation is under threat from COVID-19 with no access to vaccines, all nations are in danger. The G20 leaders must acknowledge that reality and act accordingly.*

for successful vaccines against the coronavirus, whose development was supported by \$100 billion in public funding from taxpayers in the U.S., Germany, and other countries.

Taxpayers were the primary funders of COVID-19 vaccine research, development, and production – the world owns that intellectual property, not the drug companies that continue to profit from the pandemic.

According to Action Aid, Moderna, BioNTech, and Pfizer are reaping astronomical and unconscionable profits due to their monopolies of mRNA COVID vaccines, with the three corporations having earned more than \$26 billion in revenue in the first half of the year.

Further steps that leaders of the wealthiest economies must take are raising at least \$100 billion, enough to vaccinate our world, committing to international cooperation as the most fundamental way to address pandemics, and drafting a new Global Public Health Convention to serve as the worldwide health governance system to rapidly respond to future outbreaks.

The global COVID-19 response has been abysmal since the start, but African leaders have the opportunity to rally together and speak as a united force for the good of all Africans and the world. If one nation is under threat from COVID-19 with no access to vaccines, all nations are in danger. The G20 leaders must acknowledge that reality and act accordingly. The fate of the world is in their hands at the upcoming Summit. By ensuring vaccine equity, we will be protecting the entire world.

*Penninah Lutung is Bureau Chief, Africa – AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF).*