2023 Presidency: APC, PDP to shock South East

- PDP may settle for Tambuwal/Okowa ticket
- But Atiku considers Umahi

Laycon wins BBNaija 2020

- Grabs N85m top prize
- Dorathy, Nengi finish 2nd, 3rd

Uzodimma's roads worse than Okorocha's China roads - Report

Faces, factors that'll decide Abia 2023 gov'ship battle

2020 WAEC/SSCE results for release late October
2023 Presidency: APC, PDP shock South East .May settle for Tambuwal / Okowa ticket

By Chiidi Martins

The prospects of the South East producing a Nigerian president in the nearest future seems to have suffered a serious set back. This is following the revelations that both the ruling party APC and major opposition PDP, are not favourably disposed to fielding South East presidential candidates in 2023. A move to push up to a usually reliable source, “both the APC and the PDP will go for northern presidential candidates.

The PDP is planning an Abia South ticket /Ifeanyi Okowa race. Tambuwal is the Sokoto governor, while Okowa is the Delta State governor. Both are serving second term governors. “If the above plot goes through, the meaning is that the South East is left out. However, of course, you are aware that all eyes have been on Peter Obi. Obi will pick the PDP presidential form.

He will contest as aspirant, run a very massive and robust campaign, but will lose the way the late Alex Ekwueme lost to retired General Olusegun Obasanjo on two occasions. If the PDP wins, he will be considered for the position of secretary to the Federal government of Nigeria.

“Another big consideration is Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe who represents Abia South in the national assembly. Since 2017 when Abiara started calling for the release of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu from detention to when he signed as his surety, through his c o m m i t m e n t o f the prescription of IPOB and his defence of Ngbo Ngidi in the face of perceived marginalization, the former Abia State deputy governor had gained a cult figure among the Igbo. He is being considered”.

The source continued, “In a move that the PDP picked 2019 presidential candidate and former president, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, who still nurses a presidential ambition, is said to have concluded plans to pick Governor David Umahi as his running mate if he picks the umbrella party’s ticket. Mind you, these are the current issues for now. Politics is like European football transfer market - it changes trends”.

The reliable source also noted that “The APC is toeing with about three ideas. One, to allow a presidential aspirant, Nnamdi and transport minister Rotimi Amaechi plot, any northerner and Governor Kayode Fayemi assault or, as we are noticing now, the return of President Goodluck Jonathan. The Jonathan idea is to allow the south to rule for just four years and power will go back to the north”.

Tragedy as gunmen shoot chairman, Nsukka marketers association

From Uchechena Ezeadiwe

A p l a s sible tension and fear grips residents of Nsukka town in Enugu Local Government Area of Enugu State, on Saturday, following the shooting of the chairman, Ogige Market Traders Association Nsukka, OGMTAN, Ngosi Ozioko, by yet-to-be-identified gunmen.

The chairman was said to have closed from the Ogige Market after returning home, where he was gunned trailed to her residence and shot her at a close range.

Though she survived the assassination attempt, she is a bullet from the hoodlums caught her on the leg when she hit the gun which one of the assailants pointed to her chest

She said, “I closed from the market yesterday and drove to my house. On reaching my house, I packed and opened my car door and two persons on a motorcycle stopped close to me and your birthright to be chairman of Ogige market and that, he pointed a pistol at my chest. I shouted Jesus and hit down his gun and the bullet went off my leg. He picked the gun and immediately jumped on a waiting motorcycle and they ran away”.

It was gathered that she was re-elected into office for her second tenure last week. Confirming the incident, the spokesperson of Enugu State Police Command, Daniel Ndukwe, said the command was alerted on the incident by the Nsukka Urban Police Division.

This happened on the 28th of this month at about 7.30 pm when three armed hoodlums approached the chairman of OGMTAN, Ngosi Ozioko, and tried to abduct her vehicle in front of her house and shot her on the leg.

“it is basically a case of attempted murder and the Commissioner of Police has d i r e c t e d  a f u l l - s c a l e investigation to unravel who the assailants are and sign the book,” the Police media boss narrated.

Meanwhile, residents who spoke to News Echo correspondent expressed shock at the development.

Also, while praying for her quick recovery, another resident, Mr Emeka Obetta said Nsukka is not known for d a n g e r ” n e v e r f a c e d a s u c c e s s ” that happened to the chairman, adding that the perpetrators will soon be fished out by God’s grace.

On the issue of ameliorating the immediate effects of the removal of petrol subsidy, the group entreated the government to change its approach for subsidy to improve the lives of its originally intended beneficiaries; impoverished Nigerians and not the rich few benefiting from policies of economic growth and d e v e l o p m e n t s u c h as development of rural roads, education, health services and agriculture.”

According to the group, “if the NNPC must remain a player in the game of oil, it must strive to operate under the same conditions and rules as other players in the sector regulated only by the prevailing market forces and competition.”

While commending the government for providing initial regulation to support the deregulation efforts in June 2020, the CSOs noted that the government’s engagement with the public on the effects of the deregulation left a lot to be desired. We encourage the government to ramp up its engagements with the public to improve their awareness and u n d e r s t a n d i n g o f the deregulation process and all it portends for the Nigerians.

According to the group, its CSOs, has also expressed regret that the NNPC failed to publish the expected sums to be spent, their breakdown and how they are expected to be spent”.

The consortium, which took the meeting as a webinar held on Thursday, at the President and the Minister of Petroleum Resources to back up the Petroleum Support Fund in the new deregulation regime. Clarity is required about how that fund is being managed, whether the over-recovery sums was deposited there and how they are expected to be spent”, stated a member of the group.

The consortium also demanded that the government commences moves to repeal the Petroleum Equalization Fund Law, Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulations Act, all acts that ensure a price fixing regime and demonstrate to the Nigerian people that the declaration of full deregulation is merely a statement of intent and not yet honored.

“The consortium also demanded that the government commences moves to repeal the Petroleum Equalization Fund Law, Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulations Act, all acts that ensure a price fixing regime and demonstrate to the Nigerian people that the declaration of full deregulation is merely a statement of intent and not yet honored.

While we await appropriate legislation, we require the government to clarify the role of the Petroleum Support Fund in the new deregulation regime. Clarity is required about how that fund is being managed, whether the over-recovery sums was deposited there and how they are expected to be spent”, stated a member of the group.

It also urged the Ministry of Petroleum Resources to back up its deregulation policy statement by empowering appropriate agencies, including the Federal Competition and Consumer Council to take over the consumer protection interests of Nigerians that were previously taken advantage of in a deregulated downstream sector and to protect the interests of the people who will not suffer exploitation in the hands of profiteering marketers.”

Group pushes for sustained deregulation of downstream petroleum sector

By Jennifer John

A consortium of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has asked the federal government to entranch the benefits of the deregulation of the downstream sector of the petroleum industry by enacting an appropriate legislation or embedding it as part of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) expected to be submitted to the National Assembly soon.

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The military spokesman said the terrorists planted Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on the road.

“The convoy of the Borno State Civilians Relocation Committee was ambushed while driving through the town of Nigeria, Police Force and Civilian Joint Task Force was ambushed by members of the BHT/ISWAP at Barwari village on 25th of September 2020,”

T he Nigerian military says 18 persons died in the attack on the convoy of Borno Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum.

Counter Defaunce Media Operations, Major General John Enenche, gave the details in a statement. He noted that 10 policemen, four soldiers and four civilians were killed.

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Abia NUJ condemns EEDC’s outrageous bills

From Dan Maduagwu, Umuahia

M embers of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, (NUJ) Abia State council have lamented the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC) for issuing outrageous bills to Abia electricity consumers, even when no light was supplied to them.

The council wondered why the NUJ office in Umuahia should be billed over N30,000 per month for light not consumed, warning that it would sue the electricity company if it maintained the alleged fraudulent practices.

Meanwhile, the council commended Governor Okwesili Eze для his commitment towards the completion of NUJ Press Centre, made it known to Umuahia, pointing out that the Governor has maintained his status as a patron of the union.

The union equally reacted to the issue of impending flooding in Abia as alerted by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), calling on all responsible agencies to swing into action to save lives and property.

In their remarks during the congress, Comrade John Emejor, Abia NUJ council Chairman, Ezeogo Boniface Okoro, national officer of NUJ, Uche Ndukwe General Manager of Radio Nigeria 103 FM, among other stakeholders commended the men of the pen for their efforts in sustaining Nigeria’s democratic experience.

**Police to persecute offenders over planned strike by NLC, TUC**

From Uchenna Ezeadigwe

A head of the planned strike action and protest by the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress from today over the recent hike in electricity tariff and fuel price, the Nigeria Police Force has said it will enforce the law on the matter.

Despite two court injunctions restraining the unions and their affiliates from proceeding with the strike, the labour unions said on Friday that they would go ahead with the strike and protest from Monday as they had yet to serve the court orders. The labour unions also added that they would plan their strike step by step against the Federal Government reversed the recent hikes.

Earlier on Thursday the National Industrial Court in Abuja granted an order of interim injunction restraining the unions from disrupting, restraining, picketing or preventing the workers or ordinary Nigerians from accessing their offices to carry out their legitimate duties on September 28, 2020, or any other date.

**Rescue Nigeria’s democracy from collapse – Kogi cleric charges judiciary**

A cleric in charge of **First ECWA Church, Lokoja, Kogi electricity consumers** Paul has called on the **judiciary to shun dictatorship and save the country.** He said they should be firm and resolute in their decisions to save the nation’s democracy from collapse.

As a critical arm of government, he said the judiciary should handle the de-silting exercise to liaise with it. In order to achieve sound success while directing that all scooped wastes be either fined or ordered to sweep the streets.

The exercise was also monitored by Chief Lucky Akabuibe, Transition Committee Chairman of Umuahia North LGA.

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Preserving Igbo identity

There are certain things for which people are known. This represents their identity. When the identity of one or groups of people is lost they in similar manner lose their essence or whom they are. 'Ahamefule' (literally speaking my name should not be lost) is an Igbo name and also captures an aspect of the Igbo philosophy which motivates them to hold their ground and stand to be counted in any venture or struggle.

In the effort to continually demonstrate the identity of the Igbo, the Igbo have made giant strides in contributing to advancing humanity nationwide and globally. A people can be identified through their culture. Culture elementarily defined is the total way of the life of a people, which includes their belief system, their language, food, music, dance, crafts, marital rites, ethics, and how they do every other thing. Our culture is what distinguishes one ethnic group from the other groups and gives it the distinct identity that it enjoys. Culture we have learned is transmitted from a generation to another and parental roles are critical in preserving our way of life. The first education a child goes through in life starts from the home where he is guided through the norms and basic cultures of his people. The roles of parents at this point cannot be over emphasized. The culture of a people is derived from the way they have learned to solve their peculiar challenges.

Today can we in all sincerity beat our chest boldly to affirm that we have done excellently well in sustaining the legacy handed down by our forebears. If we sincerely search deeply everything that we need to advance ourselves as a people is embedded in our culture which we have pushed to the background. We have allowed the influence of religion and westernization to deal a death blow to who we are.

It should be borne in our mind that we are first a people who took root from somewhere and it is from this root that we are able to find our bearing before identifying with the factors or new culture which we have now embraced before abandoning our real selves. It must be stated clearly that no culture is superior to another though we appreciate the dynamic nature of culture to have influence on another.

Some of the soft culture of the Igbo encapsulated in their philosophy include their egalitarian nature, republicanism, doggedness, never say die spirit, competitive spirit, survival in the midst of all odds, identifying with their own, live and let live, (egbe bere ugo bere), being your brother’s keeper (onye agahala nwanne ya).

In so many ways Igbo culture has suffered severe reverses and it is feared it is already going into extinction if serious steps are not taken right now. As many up- coming generation of people have refused to identify with foreign cultures in preference to their own so will our culture continue to ebb away. We are worried that many of our young women today have lost touch with many things rooted in our culture that moulds them into great mothers to be proud of.

Many have become disoriented as a result of religious practices. They lose sight of the fact that religion too is the culture of other people. Many men have refused to take their children home in dread of one thing or another thereby turning them strangers in their own land. So many of these kids who have lost touch with base cannot identify some of the things that are peculiar to their environment. They may have heard of hoe but may have never held one talk more of using it.

News Echo wants to use this opportunity to call on the governments in the South East, the town unions, youth groups, age grades, and women associations etc to join efforts in preserving our traditional practices. There should be more enlightenment through government efforts and other groups to see the minds of people who view our traditional practices as fetish.

The natural medicines and plants which many of us despise were things that our forebears lived on and sustained life. The medical and pharmaceutical institutions should evaluate opportunities of refining some of these products to suit modern trends and seek export opportunities. The Chinese medicines and teas imported into our land are products of their natural roots. We should also explore the opportunities of utilizing our crafts to create employment opportunities for our teeming unemployed youths.

It is never by chance that nature endowed us with all the resources. We should not for any reason despise God’s endowments.
Prevalence of pedophilia and way forward

By Uchenna Ezeadigwe

On the 24th of June, 2020, the Police operatives attached to 3-3 Division arrested one Ifeanyi Atogu in aged 46years of Ohe-Obodo North LGA of Anambra State for allegedly luring his friend’s daughter who is deaf and dumb aged 7years and arrest and unlawful carnal knowledge with her.

Similarly, 60-year old man and convicted accused arrested on Sunday, 14th July, 2020 by the Police in Anambra for allegedly defiling a 9-year old girl in his house at Sunuki Estates Nkwele Ezenaka in Oyi LGA of Anambra State.

Again, a 23-year-old man, Ndubuisi Egbunah, arrested in Orji Owerri North local government area, in Imo state on 15th May, 2020 by police operatives is alleged to have taken advantage of two minors, namely 11-year-old and 9-year-old (names withheld) to offend on a 40-year-old school proprietor Okwubunma Nwaesoace, sometime in the month of May, 2020, at Umubuho, Isiagu.

The ministry of women, children, and development, Edo State, on the increasing incidents of child molestation in the state, the Governor Godwin Obaseki administration has put in place the child rights law. In addition to the child rights law, the Edo State Government has set up a ministerial committee to address the issue of pedophilia.

The committee is made up of representatives of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Development, Edo SUEB, the media, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), among others, is charged with the task of coordinating efforts to arrest and prosecute those caught in the act of molesting primary school pupils.

**Possible causes**

In a country like Nigeria where only a few victims and their family members would damn the stigma associated with being a rape victim and speak out about it, perhaps only one in 10 people become public knowledge. But it is pertinent that we try to understand the word ‘predilection’ (or vice versa).

A pedophile is a person who has a sustained sexual attraction to children, generally aged 13 or younger. Not all pedophiles are child molesters. Child molesters are defined by their acts; pedophiles are defined by their desires.

The vast majority of pedophiles are male, but the number of female pedophiles is still much harder to evaluate given that their deviacy can find outlets that are far more discrete. Pedophiles can be found in all social classes and strata. Some are only attracted to boys (boy-lovers), others only to girls, others to both with or without some degree of preference for one. Some pedophiles have specific preferences for children of a certain age span, or possessing particular physical traits (hair, face, constitution, voice, etc), while others are less specific.

Nigeria is among the 194 countries of the United Nations (UN) that have signed the Convention to the Rights and Welfare of the Child, but not much has been done by parents, guardians, school authorities and the government to protect children from sexual abuse. Yet, on and on go the gory stories of rape and trauma.

In the report produced by the centre in March 2017 to mark its four years of existence, it revealed that a total of 2,342 survivors of sexual assault were helped by the centre in the four-year period between its opening in April 2013 and 31 March 2017, adding that the number of clients had increased significantly each year.

A renowned social worker based in Awka, Mr Okoye Francis blamed the increasing cases of pedophilia in our society on the false belief that raping a child will yield money and spiritual powers, increased low self esteem on the part of the rapist (pedophile), and on the inability or delay of judiciary to prosecute cases of pedophile and insatiable thirst for sex.

Commenting, the Director of Paediatrician unit, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu Teaching Hospital, Awka, Dr Ememchege George noted that some of the root causes of this anti-social behaviour in Nigeria could be linked to quest for spiritual and mental power and in some cases inability of the male to have a partner.

**Effects of child sexual abuse**

Child sexual abuse can cause difficulties in forming intimate and trusting relationships. It may lead to a loss of trust in the gaurdians, school authorities and the government to protect children from sexual abuse. One third of victims and survivors that participated in one Truth Project confessed that they had had difficulties with trust and intimacy.

“It can affect the relationships that victims and survivors have at the time of the sexual assault and for the rest of their lives. They may find it difficult to talk to others, family and friends about the sexual abuse, thereby preventing others from being able to help and offer support. About 42% of victims and survivors who participated in the Truth Project said that child sexual abuse has adversely affected the relationships they have with others.”

The most common problems reported were depression (33%), lack of trust in authority (32%), thoughts of suicide (28%), anxiety (28%), self-harming (22%) and tending to suicide (22%). Participants in the online survey who had suffered the physical and psychological trauma on the false belief that raping a child will yield personal and the society in general, would justify legislative measures to curb this monstrous abuse of the integrity of major roles and extension the entire society.

Mrs Onwulie Uche, Head teacher of Ezechial Primary School, Onitsha reiterated that some possible measures can be taken. According to her, children should be taught the word “no” and children can say “no” when they feel unsafe or want to be picked up. As children get a little bit older, you can give them a code word that they can use when they feel unsafe. This can be used at home, when there are guests in the house or when they are on a play date or a sleepover.

Teach your child how to get out of scary or uncomfortable situations. Some children are uncomfortable with telling people “no” especially older peers or adults. Teach them that some body parts are private. Tell your child that their private parts are called private because they are not for everyone to see. Explain that mommmy and daddy can see them, but people outside of the home should only see them with their clothes on.

In addition, Dr Ememchege succinctly stated that any of these offenders of child molestation should face the law as a warning to others who may want to engage in such ills. Currently, the European Union Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) programme has inaugurated a Sexual Assault Reference Centre for Robust Outcome (SARC) in Enugu-Ukwu, Nkoka Local Government area of Anambra State. All are enjoined to report to appropriate authorities for prosecution anyone caught perpetrating the unholy act of pedophilia!
Fresh World Bank, AfDB, IDB loans may raise Nigeria's debt to N31.7tn

The debt office had said, “The DMO expects the public debt stock to grow as the balance of the new loans disbursed and expected disbursements are made by the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank and the African Development Bank, which were arranged to finance projects in 2020.

When contacted by our correspondent on the additional disbursements being expected, the DMO, in an emailed response, explained that Nigeria was currently expecting a loan of $1.5bn (N568.5m at N379/$ official exchange rate) from the World Bank.

It also stated that a balance of $211.5m (N78.4bn) was being expected from the AfDB before the end of this year.

It was gathered that the $211.5m balance was part of the $500m facility which Nigeria applied for from the bank, as an initial $285.5m had been approved by the AfDB.

Our correspondent further learnt that Nigeria also applied for $13bn (N50.41bn) from the Islamic Development Bank as budget support facility needed to address challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conversations on the loan request are currently ongoing.

We hope to reopen land borders soon

The Vice-President, Prof Yemi Osinbajo, has said the Federal Government may reopen the land borders soon.

The President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd), had in October 2019 ordered the closure of the borders to check the menace of smuggling goods and arms and ammunition into the country and protect local businesses.

The closure was, however, greeted by mixed reactions from professional organisations, economists and individuals.

Heads of countries like Ghana and Benin Republic had also appealed to the President to reconsider the closure, but the President maintained that the borders would remain closed until the final report of the committee set up on the matter was made.

He added that neighbouring countries must also show commitment to curtailting smuggling from their ends.

Meanwhile, Osinbajo, responding to a question on the continued closure of the land borders especially at a time the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement is being pushed for take-off, said on Thursday that the government was working with neighbouring countries on the terms of reopening the border.

Osinbajo, who spoke during a webinar organised by The Africa Report, themed, ‘Bouncing back: Nigeria’s post-pandemic recovery plan’, stated, “We are working with our neighbours to see what terms we would reopen those borders. At the moment, we are undertaking joint border patrols to control smuggling along the borders and we think it is working and I’m certainly not meant to be permanent and we are looking forward to reopening as quickly as possible.”

Ighodalo identifies core areas to transform agric sector in Africa

Chairman, Board of Directors of Sterling Bank Plc, Mr. Azeez Ighodalo, has identified five core areas that should be articulated in the quest to transform the agricultural sector in Nigeria and on the African continent.

He identified the areas at the virtual Agriculture Summit (VAGAS) driven by the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB), which was held on Thursday.

Ighodalo articulated in the quest to transform the agricultural sector in Nigeria and on the African continent.

According to him, to be able to effectively transform the agricultural sector, feed the continent’s growing population, boost her economies, create massive job opportunities, attract her young and not so young people as well as absorb the shocks of the on-going pandemic, small and medium enterprises of key stakeholders across public and private sectors in developing the right policies to aid the agribusiness value chain must increase.

Ighodalo urged the governments in sub-Saharan African economies to optimise the agricultural sector to attract sizeable investments that will help drive expansion and achieve global competitiveness as well as increase financing to key points of the value chain, particularly small holder farmers, to modernize their practices and increase outputs.

Nigeria moves to secure AfCFTA benefits

Four months to the take-off of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Nigeria has ramped up activities to take full advantage of the continental trade integration initiative.

Strategic stakeholders from government and public sectors met in Abuja over the weekend to firm up plans for Nigeria’s participation in the AfCFTA.

In the financial sector, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is pushing for the integration of the 700 banks in the continent.

Dr. Hassan Mahmud, the Director of Monetary Policy Department of the Central Bank of Nigeria, said: “there are about 700 banks in Africa, however, they only account for about 5 per cent of the global banking network. Continental integration and the broader trade system is key to strengthen the sector as a whole in Africa.”

The Executive Secretary/CEO of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Council (NIPC), Ms. Yewande Sadiku, told the participants that Nigeria is prepared for the operationalization of the AfCFTA before most African countries.

According to her, “many Nigerian companies, particularly in the services sector, have long developed the capacity to serve the rest of Africa.”

She added that: “while large domestic markets such as Nigeria the ideal gateway economy, Nigeria’s membership of AfCFTA will add another 8 per cent to the continent’s current 44 per cent, however, the addition is more than seven times the average of the top 20 economies in Africa.”

Ally M. Abubakar, the Director of Trade at the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment said, “Transit is an important component of the AfCFTA. It trade ensures smooth delivery of goods to landlocked countries and fosters Regional Integration.

“Therefore, efficient transit coordination among member countries will contribute tremendously to the success of regional arrangements of AfCFTA, he added.

Abubakar advised the AfCFTA member countries “to engage their Transit Coordinators for effective and efficient implementation of Transit regime. Members are encouraged to ensure better cooperation and adherence to rules governing Transit.”

On his part, the Director General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Capt. Cyril Maduka commended Heads of countries like Ghana and Benin Republic, and recommended the establishment of a Regional Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) as critical to ensuring predictability and security in a regional or continental trading arrangement, such as the AfCFTA.

He noted that “the culture of litigation and arbitration have shown the need for uniform and consistent dispute settlement systems in Africa and the existence of the multi-dispute resolution systems could be sources of challenges for AfCFTA countries.”

Nigeria he said “has a robust legal system and as such, exhausting local remedies should be the first option before engaging an international DSM.”

According to him, “there must be an existing legislation/regulation and its enforcement are encouraged by international organizations as the body responsible to investigate and recommend appropriate remedies for each unfair practice.

Laycon wins BBnaija 2020

The 2020 lockdown edition of the BBnaija sensation came to an end yesterday after 71 days of action, comprising 21 housemates, Omadime Agbedeleshe Moshodoh others emerged the winner.

Laycon emerged the winner. He defeated Dorathy in the final round as he garnered a total vote of 60 per cent while the runners up had 21 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Nengi who had 15 per cent accordingly. It must be pointed out that the N95m prize money is not lump sum. Laycon, 26, is a rapper by profession and his hobby is music. He read Philosophy at the University of Lagos. The episode was made exciting by the announce, Eubek Obi-Uchendu who was so charismatic as usual in his presentations.
Nigerian military kills bandit, arrests six others

The Nigerian Army has said that troops of Operation SAHEL SANITY have arrested six suspected bandits at Dan Ali Forest in Yar Mallamai village, Kankara Local Government Area of Katsina State.

The operatives of the anti-bandit operation also killed one notorious bandit at Daju village in Kaura Namoda Local Government Area of Zamfara State, after a serious gun duel with the marauders who invaded the village.

The acting director, defence media operations, Brig. General Benard Oyeyemi, made this known in a statement Sunday at the Special Army Super Camp.

The spokesman disclosed that three suspects were nabbed after an ambush by the troops.

Operation SAHEL SANITY was launched by the Nigerian military to check sabotage, sanitize the roads, venues and locations well in advance of returning IDPs, while working closely with local communities.

“The President commends the gallantry of soldiers and operatives of Civilian-JTF eternal rest, and comfort their families.”

“The President’s statement by his spokesman, Garba Shehu, is reproduced below:

“President Buhari urges security and intelligence agencies to intensify efforts to check sabotage, sanitize

Six arrested for gang rape, homosexuality in Bauchi

Five persons have been arrested for allegedly gang raping a 13-year-old girl in Bauchi State. This is just as a 28-year-old man was arrested for allegedly raping a 13-year-old boy and forcefully having anal sex with him.

The Bauchi State Police Command disclosed the foregoing in a statement signed by its Public Relations Officer, Ahmed Wakil, a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

He said, “On September 22, 2020, at about 11am, a team of policemen drafted to Gidubo village in Gamawa Local Government Area of Bauchi, arrested the following suspects namely: Sagir Ahmed, Male, (22), Muhammad Tukur, Male, (24), Haruna Babayo, (32), Musa Dahiru, Male, (30) and Bappah Garba, Male, (24), of Ungwar Baba and Ungwar Chadi Gamawa, which have been raping one Hauwa (not real name), female, (14) of the same address at different times by giving her N200 and by threatening her with a knife.

On September 23, 2020 about 1pm, one Usman Ahmed, male, aged 46 years of Ungwan Doye Gombe Road, Bauchi, reported to A Divisional Headquarters, Bauchi that, on the same date at about 11am, one Yusuf Yakuba, Male, (28) of Bayan Gamawa, Yakubu Wank, Gombe road, Bauchi, lured his 13-year-old son by name Salisu (not real name) to his home situated at Bayan Gamawa area and forcefully had anal sex with him.

“Upon receipt of the report, a team of policemen were drafted to the scene and the victim was taken to the General Hospital, Bauchi for medical attention.”

The chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt-General Tukur Buratai, on July 6, 2020, had supported the troops of Operation HADARIN DAJI in tackling banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling and incessant killings bedevilling the North-West zone.

He said: “Following a reliable information about movement of unknown persons suspected to be bandits with six motorcycles by Dan Ali forest around Yar Mallamai in Kankara LGA, Katsina State, troops immediately mobilized and laid ambush in the area and arrested the six suspects.”

The Defence acting spokesman said the Nigerian soldiers apprehended two bandits and recovered two mobile phones, one knife and a cutlass. The arrested bandits were taking refuge in the Market and Angwan Boka in Faskari Local Government Area of the state.

He explained that on September 19, 2020, troops deployed in Dan Ali village, while on active intelligence, thwarted what he said could have been an attempt at luring security personnel in the area and engaged the marauding criminals in a fire fight. The superior firepower of the troops forced the suspects to withdraw in disarray with several of the bandits sustaining gunshot wounds as traces of blood were seen on their escape route during exploitation.”

The Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies remain resolute determined and committed to sustaining the tempo of the operations,” he said.

Gombe road, Bauchi, lured one Yusuf Yakuba, Male, (28) of Bayan Gamawa, Yakubu Wank, Gombe road, Bauchi, lured his 13-year-old son by name Salisu (not real name) to his home situated at Bayan Gamawa area and forcefully had anal sex with him.

“Upon receipt of the report, a team of policemen were drafted to the scene and the victim was taken to the General Hospital, Bauchi for medical attention.”
Drama at Umuahia North L.G.A. HQ as factions reject eze-elect

From Dan Maduagwu, Umuahia

An enthralling drama took place at Umuahia North L.G.A. headquarters, Abia State on Friday as the newly elected traditional ruler of Mbaocha autonomous council in the state on Friday as the newly elected traditional ruler of the community, Comrade Lucky Akaebu was presented to the Abia State Government Council (APC) will likely zone the presidential position to the South East zone in 2023.

According to them, the Eze-elect was not clear in his address, the Eze-elect promised to rule with the fear of God and to sustain peace and stability which his community is known for, while dismissing the need to reward his people's confidence in him with transformational leadership.

Not yet uhuru for Nigeria at 60, says Archbishop Martins

A head of Nigeria's 60th Independence anniversary, the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Most Rev. Alfred Adeawale Martins, has accused the country's leadership of not doing enough to address the underlying issues fanning insecurity and disunity in the country.

I n h i s 60th Independence anniversary message to Nigerians signed by the Director of Social Communications, Rev. Fr. Anthony Gideon, Archbishop Martins, while acknowledging the need for all to thank God for keeping the country as one despite her numerous challenges, regretted that not enough has been done in practical terms by successive leadership to foster a deep sense of patriotism and oneness amongst the various nationalities that make up the country.

He said it was shameful that 60 years after gaining independence from the British, the country was yet to get its acts together; “we still lack the quality leadership needed to guide the country in the path of peaceful coexistence, economic prosperity and security of life and property.”

He said: “We thank God that we are alive to mark the Diamond Jubilee of our country's independence. We are an independent country still searching for how to become a nation where no one is oppressed, and everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Buhari govt reveals plans to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty

The Federal Ministry of Science and Technology is working on plans to create the desired platform for the actualization of President Muhammadu Buhari’s quest of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in the next 10 years.

Dr Ogbonnaya Onu, the Minister said this in Abuja at the inauguration of a Technical Committee for boosting commercialization of the ministry's research products to fast-track the actualisation of Nigeria’s dream of becoming a self-reliant nation.

He said that the benefits of research could only be harvested when it is fully commercialized, which means that the ministry will collaborate with the organized private sector in that regard.

Onu said that the Ministry would strive hard to use its research outputs as catalyst for realizing government’s plans of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty.

He said that research products from the 17 agencies under the ministry covered all sectors of the economy and that the ministry was well positioned to turn around the economy.

According to him, the commercialization of research outputs is important for economic growth as most foods would be produced locally.

He added that part of the expected benefits of research outputs included food sufficiency and surplus for exports, leading to significant reduction in import from other countries.

Onu said that the commercialization of research outputs would create more opportunities for Nigerians as well as reduce the employment deficit in the country.

Former envoy, Felix Oboro, freed from kidnappers' den

A onetime Secretary to the Bayelsa State Government (SG), and also a former Ambassador to Venezuela, Senator Felix Oboro, has been freed after 23 days in kidnappers' den.

It was learnt that his release was made possible after an alleged payment of N11 million ransom by members of his family.

The 75-year-old Ambassador, Felix Oboro, a former Senator who represented Bayelsa West Senatorial district and a Chieflain of the All Progressives Congress, APC, was kidnapped on Friday, September 4, 2020 at his hometown, Elemeibiri, Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

The gunmen, numbering about fifteen, had stormed his residence, twenty-four hours after he arrived the village, dressed in Army uniforms, shooting sporadically before whisking him away to an unknown destination.

It was also gathered that the kidnappers, after abducting him saw a bank alert balance of over N5 million in his account and demanded a ransom payment of N50 million which was later reduced to N11 million.

Mr. Tuebi Sapri, a stepson to Ambassador Felix Oboro, confirmed to newsmen that the abducted Nigerian envoy was released on Saturday to the three-man delegation of family members who travelled on boat to drop the 11 million ransom demands, along the Ayama-Operuma area of Southern Ijaw Local Government Council. The State Police Commissioner was immediately informed on telephone.

He, however, said that, “contrary to the expectation of the family, Daddy (Felix Oboro) is strong and in a healthy state. When the news of his release came, everyone was happy and jubilating.

Reacting to the development, the Former Secretary to the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Comrade Morris Alaga, confirmed to newsmen on Monday that the abduction of the elder statesman, while calling on the security agencies to ensure the arrest of those that Kidnapped Mr. Oboro.

Morris Alaga described the abduction and release of Ambassador Oboro as a very positive development. “From kidnapping of oil workers and foreigners to our own very people, I saw this coming long ago, when they were kidnapping others.”
Uzodimma commiserates with Anyaehie family over loss of patriarch

From Jennifer John

I m o S t a t e G o v e r n o r , S e n a t o r H o p e U z o d i m m a has commiserated with the Anyaehie dynasty of Nkwerre over the demise of late Chief Sir, Godwin Onwuotu, Anyaehie uncle to Bar. Nnami Anyaehie, chief of staff, government house, Owerri. Governor Uzodimma expressed his condolences Saturday during the funeral service of the late patriarch at St Paul’s Anglican Church, Nkwerre in Nkwerre local government area of Imo State.

The Governor noted that despite the fact that the deceased died at 85, death at any age can be painful because of the bond created, but however enjoined the Anyaehie family to take solace in the fact that the deceased left worthy legacies behind. He prayed God to grant his soul eternal rest.

Refund cost of using presidential jet for the president’s aide’s wedding, Reno tells Buhari

From Ogboblara Nwakanma

The Governor noted that while the President has his right of ownership over the Presidential jet, it is the government that must enforce the protocol which states that the jet must only be flown for the President. It also stipulates the sort of occasions the jet should be used for.

Some of the protesting Mbachi Community youths against eze-elect Nwanwko, Umuhia, Abia State.

Refund strike: Reps meet NLC, TUC

T h e H o u s e o f R e p r e s e n t a t i v e s has w a d e d i n t o t h e c r i s i s b e t w e e n t h e F e d e r a l G o v e r n m e n t and t h e o r g a n i s e d labour over the recent hikes in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (petrol) and electricity tariff.

The Nigerian Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress had jointly declared their readiness to embark on a nationwide strike and protests to compel the Federal Government to reverse the hikes. The hikes have generated nationwide criticism.

The Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, on Sunday met with President of the NLC, Ayuba Wabba, and his TUC counterpart, Quadri Olaleye, among others.

B o t h W a b b a a n d G b a j a b i a m i l a deemed that the negotiations between the government and the workers to prevent the imminent strike had failed.

“We, in the House of Representatives, are on the same page with you,” the Speaker told the labour leaders. Gbajabiamila, however, warned the workers to note the dire consequences of shutting down the government at this time, urging the workers to suspend the planned action.

Olaleye hailed the Speaker and the government representatives in labour matters.

The most challenging for most Nigerians. “We were still battling with the effects of insecurities in the land when COVID-19 struck and made life impossible for those who lost their jobs and sources of livelihood. To make life even more impossible, there was an increase in the rate of VAT only to be followed by the imposition of stamp duty on house rent and Certificates of Occupancy. We are working on meeting that timeline.”

Adesifilaye, member of the Lagos State Commissioner for Education, Mrs Folashade Adefisayo, said on Saturday at the launch of the Computer Based Testing (CBT) Centre that entrance exercises would be conducted using CBT from 2021.

Only 210 pupils seeking admission into Lagos State Model Colleges, and upgraded junior secondary schools in the state opted for CBT in 2020.

Adefisayo, represented by the permanent secretary in charge of education, Mrs Abosede Adelaja, said that the CBT will be strictly CBT by next year since the system was not fully upgraded. Moreover, you need to add and embrace modern technologies.”

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T he race for the coveted seat of Governor of Abia State, come 2023 has started. The 2023 game promises to be different from the previous elections, judging by the alignment and realignment of political juggernauts going on now. Victory for an eventual winner will not be determined by several factors.

Major faces that can alter the game

SENIOR ORJI UZOR KALU
He is the Chief Whip of the Nigerian Senate and a two-time governorship candidate, first in 2007 and in 2019. He is regarded as the grandfather of the present crop of politicians in the state, having made Chief T A Orji his successor in 2007. The present governor, Okezie Ikpeazu is also a by-product of Uzor Kalu’s efforts. Uzor Kalu was appointed the local government Chairman of Obingwa LGA, during Kalu’s reign as Abia’s helmsman. It was Ikpeazu’s first major political outing. Kalu is the strongest force to reckon with, as his popularity in the grassroots adds an advantage for any candidate of his choice. In the 2019 general elections, Kalu gave a good account of himself in Obingwa North. Hence, lining the Bende federal house of Reps position for his party, APC which Ben Okezie Kalu won while capping it all with the victory of Hon Nkeiruka Onyejocha, the Umunneochi/Isuikwuato House of Reps member. Onyejocha is today, the federal house deputy chief Whip. This is not forgetting the Bende North State House of Assembly position won by Ham Chijioke Chukwu, of APC.

SENIATOR T.A. ORJI
Senator Theodore Ahamemfe Orji is a political protégé of Senator Orji Uzor Kalu who has now grown to become a power house in political history of Abia State. Take it or leave it, Ochendo, as he fondly known call the shot and was instrumental to the emergence of Dr Okezie Ikpeazu, a university lecturer as Abia’s Governor in 2015 and played a key role in the Governor’s re-election in 2019. Now a Senator representing Abia central constituency, Ochendo counts among the strong ladders through which a candidate must climb to victory in 2023.

HON CHINDEM ORJI (IKKUU)
Hon Chinem Uzor Orji is the Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly and also the first son of Senator T A Orji. Soft in speech but loaded in strategy, this young Orji is an engineer by profession before joining politics, representing the Abia central constituency in the Abia legislature, as many of the young legislators in the House are believed to be his “boys” who are expected to maintain their loyalty to him even up to 2023.

CHIEF B. B. APUGO
Chief Benjamin Apugo, (IB) is a strongman of Umunneochi LGA. He has been a kingmaker since 1991, when his preferred candidate, Dr Oghonnya Onu won the Governorship of the old Abia State. Dr Onu was relatively unknown in the politics, but Apugo “brushed him up” and sponsored him to victory, to the surprise of many people. Compared to Alhaji Lamidi Adebiyi, the late Ibadan political strongman in areas of strategy and ability to sponsor even a rookie to prominence, the Ochijah Ikebu is another face that will determine a winner.

DR UCHEGOH
He is the minister of state for mines and steels. The Onuah Uruwa-born Premier of Master Samuel Orji, ventured into politics in 2015 and has remained relevant since then. He lost to Okezie Ikpeazu during the 2015 PDP primaries and in 2019, flew the flag of the All Progressive Congress (APC) where he lost to the same Ikpeazu, coming second after the polls.

CHIEF REEGAN UFOMBA
Chief Ufomba hails from Ntimga, Isiala Ngwa North LGA and has interests which cut across politics, business, and entertainment. He is, at all times, a winner. He is a grassroots maestro who is loved by his people and a strong apostle of a governor of Ngwa stock. He is a force to reckon with.

PROF GREGORY IBE
Ibe is the founder of Gregory University, Uturu and an investor whose investments are mostly domiciled in Abia State. A former professor of Zoology at the same Uturu University, Ibe was appointed the local government Chairman of Obingwa LGA, during Kalu’s reign as Abia’s helmsman. It was Ikpeazu’s first major political outing. Kalu is the strongest force to reckon with, as his popularity in the grassroots adds an advantage for any candidate of his choice.

ALEX OTTI
Alex Otti is a two-time governorship candidate in Abia on the platform of his former party, All Progressive Group, (APGA) who gave Okezie Ikpeazu a tough and resounding fight in 2015 and 2019 governorship polls. Otti is the number one seat of the state. Operating from a new cruise ship, APC. Otti has declared that “the battle to liberate Abia State from PDP has started.”

ENYINNA ABARIBE
He is the Senate Minority leader, from Obingwa LGA. He is an experienced politician and a trusted member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). His personality looms large in entire Ngwa nation and Abia politics in general because of his fearless disposition. He is an enigma, a four-time senator and a loud voice for Ndigbo and the Peoples Democratic Party.

FACTORS THAT WILL SHAPE THE GOV’SHIP RACE
The new Chairman of PDP in Abia, Chief Allwell Asisoro, on assumption of office recently, declared that “Abia is a PDP State, Abia has been a PDP State and Abia will remain a PDP State. We are united and formidable than ever.” Asisoro continued, “I shall consolidate on the achievements recorded by my predecessors in ensuring that our dear state remains a one hundred percent PDP.”

This statement by Asisoro simply captures the mood of the umbrella party which is not ready to lose its winning streak since 1999. The friendly image of the PDP in the country home that “The seat of governance which Dr Okezie Ikpeazu has built” has been strengthened over the years.

The Ngwa group insist that Okezie Ikpeazu (Obingwa in Old Aba Division) would leave office in 2023 when his tenure ends but power should not head to Abia North Senatorial zone which is in Old Abia, but should head to Umunneochi which is made up of Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South and Osioma Ngwa.

A strong politician and philanthropist, Chief Reegun Ufomba of Ntimga, Isiala Ngwa North aptly captured this argument when he told journalists during a gathering at his house, that “The house of Which Dr Okezie Ikpeazu is occupying today, made it possible. But somewhere along the line during the move to actualise the governorship, it is the people of Isiala Ngwa decided to support a candidate from Ngwa, irrespective of the local government the person comes from. I believe that the gesture we showed our brothers will be reciprocated if a good person presents himself to lead Abia in the future.”

A holistic examination of Ufomba’s call reveals that the Ngwa nation is not ready to allow a power shift to the Old Abia. They are going to be free for all Old Abia including Ndi Ngwa. However, the visits of Senator T A Orji and his son, Chinem Uzor Orji to the Abaja home of Senator Orji Uzor Orji left many mouths agape. This is because the three men were, until the visits, sworn political enemies for 11 years. Political watchers believe that the visits may have been informed by the need to perfect a return of power to Old Bende, in line with rotational governorship. Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has been wise on the issue, preferring to talk about governance than who should succeed him.

At Ariaria market, Aba, a trader, Thaddeus Okoye made it clear that traders care less about who rules Abia, but who the people that offer the people, especially the traders. According to him “An average Ariaria trader does not care about who rules Abia. We care about our own welfare. If you provide us good goods, good dranaries, good security, we traders are capable of taking care of light, water and accommodation” said Okoye. Abia 2023 game will indeed be an interesting scenario to behold. The gladiators are positioning. The electorate are waiting.
NFF to announce new Super Falcons coach this week

The Nigeria Football Federation President, Amaju Pinnick, has hinted that the new coach for the country's women national team, the Super Falcons, will be made public this week.

In a chat with newsmen in Lagos, Mr Pinnick said the Federation is looking at unveiling their choice of manager on Tuesday.

The NFF had last Friday named new head coaches and technical crew members for a number of national teams but omitted that of the Super Falcons.

However, the NFF President, who reiterated his admiration for the women's national team and their globally unmatchable achievements, said a new handler will be named on Tuesday.

“We respect the women and are very proud of their achievements, they have won more continental titles than every other country in the world... by Tuesday we will be announcing the coach of the Super Falcons, and I have the idea of it now,” Mr Pinnick stated.

There had been earlier reports on the likely candidates that could take over the Super Falcons coaching job.

It was learnt that the federation is favourably disposed to the idea of expanding expatriate to handle the women's team just as the case with the Super Eagles currently being tutored by Franco-German, Gernot Rohr.

On the burning issue of equal pay for male and female teams gradually being championed globally, the NFF President said it can also be considered but subject to availability of funds.

Replace Woodward with Emenalo, Wright charges Man Utd

Arsenal icon, Ian Wright, has charged Manchester United to replace the club's football director, Ed Woodward with former Nigerian international, Michael Emenalo, if England's most successful club wants a return to the glory days.

United's chief executive Woodward, currently in charge of making transfer decisions as well as the signing and appointing of managers, has been widely criticised for his transfer strategy in recent seasons.

Known for his hard-nosed approach, the club'sronic dealings, the Old Trafford bigwig has secured some huge signings for the club.

But he has also missed out on a host of top quality players, including Erling Haaland, Antoine Griezmann, Eden Hazard, Virgil van Dijk, and most recently, Spanish left-back Sergino Reguilon.

Emenalo would be the ideal replacement for Woodward, says Wright, who is impressed by how the Nigerian administrator helped oversaw the most successful spell in Chelsea's history, first as assistant coach and then as technical director between 2007 and 2017.

The former Super Eagles full-back is credited with signing the likes of Thibaut Courtois, Eden Hazard, and Cesc Fabregas. He is being tipped to read the classic magic at Old Trafford.

"For me, and it's blatantly obvious to me, you've got someone like Michael Emenalo who was at Chelsea, 'Wright said in The Kelly & Wright Show, as per The Express.

"We're talking about Em in [R] [m] Abramovich with three different managers, and he's still managed, because he's a football man, to get the job done.

"What happened with Chelsea was that when we

Kida, NBBF rewriting basketball history in Nigeria – Dare

Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr Sunday Dare has showered encomiums on the talents of the Nigeria Basketball Federation for its continued efforts in rewriting the history of basketball in the country.

Speaking recently in Lagos, Mr. Sunday Dare noted that the inclusion of Nigeria in the leadership of Engr Ahmadu Musa Kid, who has done great with great achievements and the way he has gone about it.

Reeling out the achievements, the minister who recently celebrated his one year in office, lauded him that, “Nigeria's Men's teams are the first in Africa and 23rd in the world. D'Tigress are the first in Africa and 14th in the world. These rankings were premised on the numerous victories and accolades by both teams at both Africa and world levels.”

"First team in the world to qualify for the 2019 FIFA World Cup in China, 17th place finish at the World Cup which ensured qualification for the 2020 Olympics as Africa's best-placed team after beating hosts China.

"Nigeria is the only African team to have qualified for the Olympics and the only African country to have the men's and women's teams at the Olympics. If you hold these two facts up anywhere in the world, it is going to stand and swell the performances ever by any African country for that matter.

"I got a clear sign, a moment of epiphany that perhaps the first victory coming from basketball was a clear sign that I must devote time, resources, and support to basketball.”

I'm committed to succeed as Chelsea's first African goalkeeper –Mendy

New Chelsea signing Edouard Mendy, has revealed that he's committed to succeed as the club's first-ever African goalkeeper.

Sengal international Mendy joined Chelsea last week from Rennes.

He declared: “The brightest African talents have played for this club: Drogba, Essien, Eto'o, Milan.

“When you see this, you want to follow in their footsteps. As for the goalkeepers, I am

Leicester boss Rodgers eager to add to Iheanacho, others

Leicester City boss Brendan Rodgers, has admitted that he's eager to add to his squad before the transfer window shuts.

Rodgers is desperate to add a centre-half and another forward, while winger Demarai Gray is among the players who will be allowed to leave if a suitable offer comes his way.

He said: “We said before the season that we may need up to five players. If we could bring in five I felt that would strengthen the squad and really help us to keep progressing.”

"It’s never easy. We’ve been able to bring in a couple and we see the impact that Timothy Castagne has made and Cengiz Under will help us for sure.

“There are other areas we want to improve on. But if we can’t do that, then we’ll still be excited by the players we have as there’s a lot of good improvement.”

Another VAR controversy gives Newcastle late equaliser against Spurs

Newcastle had another controversial handball decision go against them after their run of play from the penalty spot after another controversial handball decision.

Spurs could have been 5 up if they had taken their chances by the time Andy Carroll headed a cross against Eric Dier's arm from close range.

The decision was made after video assistant referee consultation.

Callum Wilson stepped up to score from the penalty with practically the last kick – and Spurs boss Jose Mourinho walked down the tunnel in despair.

Lucas Moura had put Spurs ahead at the back post from a low cross by Harry Kane, the England striker's fifth assist in two league games.

Spurs would have been out of sight had it not been for Magpies goalkeeper Karl Darlow, who made 10 saves including two excellent ones to deny Kane.

Son Heung-min, who scored four goals in last weekend's 5-2 win over Southampton, hit the woodwork twice but was replaced at half-time.

Newcastle were cautious and created very few chances as they failed to have a shot on target until the late, late drama.

The Newcastle manager pointed out the fact that United had 17 shots to Newcastle's 6, 73% possession compared to 27%, and 10 corners to the Magpies' none, but was still frustrated by the result.

Mourinho said: “I’m not happy with this result. I think it was a difficult game for us and we didn’t play well, but we didn’t deserve to lose.

“I’m not happy with the result but I’m happy with the performance. We didn’t play well, but we didn’t deserve to lose.”

Newcastle's performance was largely uncharacteristic of their recent form, which has seen them climb to seventh in the Premier League table.
Strong voice echoes the truth

Unpaid government house correspondents' stipend: Is Uzodimma still verifying their data?

We have heard from the Imo Governor Hope Uzodimma many times that his government does not owe anybody. Last week he made similar statement when he had a meeting with heads of government ministries and agencies. Contrary to his claims journalists covering him in the government house are lamenting that they have only received just one month stipends since the governor assumed office.

Some of the government house correspondents as they are popularly called lament the lies of the governor but lack courage to confront neither the governor nor his media aides. When two of them spoke to yours sincerely, they regretted that the man has no recognition for the media and does whatever he likes irrespective of whatever anybody feels about it. According to them, this is the worst; no governor denies correspondents that here.

On the efforts of the governor's media aide to ameliorate their situation, one had this to say. “We notice a tussle between the Chief Press Secretary and the New Media handler who are at logger heads with each other fighting for supremacy.” And from the other, “do we need to remind them to fight for their colleagues. Truth is the governor is not media friendly. While he was governor, how many times have you seen address media or parley journalists.”

Government House correspondents are supposed to be receiving 10k stipend monthly for covering the governor. Mocking the governor, one of the journalists quipped, “It is possible they are still verifying our data to fish out ghost correspondents as the governor used to say.” Sadly, the list of the number of persons owed by our government has continued to elate in spite of persistent denials that the government is not owing anybody except 500 workers keeping accounts with Micro Finance banks.

The unending salary issue in Imo

Since Gov Hope Uzodimma assumed power in January one intractable problem he found difficult to manage is the salary challenge. Uzodimma has drowned Imo workers in severe hardship since he came to power drawing from the comments making the rounds. Many workers are owed up to 8 months salary eg the Water Corporation people. Some of the governor's aides speaking to yours sincerely under conditions of anonymity declared that nothing is happening in the government.

“We are not seeing anything o, most of us are not paid o. We are just suffering and smiling and pretending that all is well. We don't know what the governor is doing” when one was queried on why the governor appropriated the payment of salary to his office. The government claims that the payment of salary is now done in the government house through the use of a consultants. This is reported to be fraught with some mounting irregularities contrary to what the government claims that they want to resolve. While there are some over payments many are short paid.

Many workers have reported short payments in their salaries. A senior staff of IBC was paid 6 months’ salary cumulatively and 25k was deducted for each month but because of the excitement of the accumulated payment he could not press further for the refund. A female teacher in a primary school has about 8k deducted from her salary each time she manages to receive payment since Uzodimma came. In her school, some are still owed since March while she is owed 4 months as at date.

The government keeps claiming that it does not owe anybody except those with documentary issues. This claim comes as untrue when compared to the hues and cries of many workers. Some have alleged that the government which receives monthly allocation do fix the vote for salary payment and earn accrued interest which is why there are numerous arrears of unpaid emoluments. The government is silent on this.

Even ISOPADEC workers that get their votes direct from Abuja have their salaries owed as well. The numerous protest actions have not moved the government that appears stone hearted. Imo economy is dependent on civil service and the unpaid wages have affected adversely economic activities.

A teacher who got tired of borrowing from friends and relations got into frying Akara (bean cake) suffered casualty when the son fell into the hot oil. That is double tragedy. This represents some of the problems caused by the government. What is shocking about the whole scenario is the inability of the stakeholders, the labour, traditional rulers, the priests and pastors who collect tithe to speak truth to power in defense of their subjects.

While the government claims that they want to be paid the workers are dying and begging to be paid. Before Uzodimma came Ibedioha had kept fate with the workers. The question now is when Imo workers will smile again.

Uzodimma's roads worse than Okorocha's China roads

When Imolites lamented what they called 'China' roads (sobriquet for a substandard product) foisted on them by the past Okorocha government they were mistaken when they thought that they have seen the last of it. They are yet to define the quality of road from Gov Uzodimma. All I can say is that Okorocha’s china road is far better than Uzodimma's. Take a trip to Port Harcourt road and the MCC/Uratta road and you will be shocked. These two roads are less than two months but are anything far from new. I am not convinced that work has been completed on these roads.

From MCC road you will see patch works ongoing on a road with that span of life. It is terrible. The road has already broken down with pot holes and some parts not covered with tar. Is this what the Shared Prosperity or Poverty noise is all about? It is important to call attention to this because this is like a rape on the people's scarce resources. Are we supposed to be going forward or backward?

Important questions are very necessary at this point. Who certified the road okay for use and was it completed on the basis of the contract terms. Which contractor performed the job? The governor should take a trip to visit these roads and confirm for himself that that is the prosperity or poverty that he has planned for Imo people. Imo deserves something better.

An Owerri-based reporter has described the roads as Aba-made roads lower in quality than the China experience.