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COVID-19: Scare in Delta Assembly as Majority Leader dies after one week on oxygen

There is apprehension in the Delta State House of Assembly following the death of the Majority leader, Sir Tim Kome Owhefere.

Owhefere, a four- time member of the House, was said to have died around 11pm on Wednesday at the Federal Medical Centre, Asaba, after being hospitalised for about two weeks.

Owhefere, who represented Isoko North Constituency until his death, hailed from Akiowhe community, in the council area.

His Media Aide, Palmer Ogheneyole Nathaniel, confirmed the development in a Facebook post where he drew several condolence messages.

The scare in the house was because Owhefere was said to have been on oxygen for a week before his death, fueling speculations that he might have died of COVID-19.

This speculation is said to be causing some ripples among members of the assembly as some colleagues who visited him at the hospital in Asaba where he was first admitted were apprehensive.

Man hangs self at deity's shrine in Enugu Community

From Chuma Austin, Enugu

There was confusion at Akpa-Edem Community in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State last Tuesday when a middle-aged youth of about 25 years allegedly hanged himself on a tree beside a dreaded deity shrine in outskirt of the community.

Reports from the area said that the youth whose name was given as John Asogwa dressed himself up to attend a funeral ceremony on that fateful day only to end up in the deity's shrine where his lifeless body was discovered hanging while his bag parked with clothes hanged on a nearby tree of the deity.

A source close to the family told reporters that the young man had in the early hours of that fateful day eaten his meal before taking his bath for the journey he never returned.

It was learnt that the body of the deceased was brought down after some rituals and taken to the deity he was allegedly committed to before he took his life.

He was buried at the shrine of the deity to fulfill his alleged contract he had with the deity before his mysterious death.

The state Police Public Relations, Daniel Ndukwe could not be reached but a source at the police circle in Nsukka confirmed the controversial death of the young man.

Anambra police arrest 30-year old notorious robber, recover car, arms

From Uchenna Ezeadigwe, Awka

Police operatives of the Command Rapid Response Squad in Onitsha has arrested a 30 years old suspect, named Chidi Anieke for allegedly robbing a victim of Toyota Corolla car at gunpoint.

News Echo gathered that the suspect who hails from Mbu town in Isiuzo Local Government Area of Enugu State had on Tuesday 26th, January, 2021 in Enugu snatched the car from the owner and drove it down to Awada, Onitsha his hideout.

Confirming the incidence, Police Public Relations Officer, Anambra State Police Command, CSP Haruna Mohammed, said "On 27/1/2021 at about 7. 15 am, police operatives attached to the Command Rapid Response Squad (RRS) while acting on information arrested in Awada Area one Chidi Anieke 'm' aged about 30years of Mbu town in Isiuzo Local Government Area of Enugu State".

"Suspect had on 26/1/2021 at about 9pm allegedly snatched a Toyota Corolla car belonging to the owner at Independence Layout Enugu while the victim was driving into his residence. Consequently, the suspect drove the Car to his hideout in Awada where he was subsequently arrested".

"Exhibits recovered in his possession included the snatched Toyota Corolla Car with Reg. No ENU 269 PH, one locally made double barrel shot gun and seven life cartridges, adding that investigation is ongoing".

14 illegal revenue collectors arrested in Onitsha

From Uchenna Ezeadigwe, Awka

The Operatives of the Anambra State Police Command have arrested fourteen illegal revenue collectors in Onitsha.

According to Haruna Mohammed (CSP) the Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO of the Command, the suspects were nabbed while carrying out their nefarious activities.

The arrest of the four - teen suspects he said is in furtherance to its determination towards eradicating illegal revenue collections, harassment and extortion on innocent citizens on the road in the name of IGR collection.

He said that police patrol teams attached to the Area Command Onitsha and Okpoko Division had between Monday and Wednesday, 2021, while on patrol along, Upper Iweka, Owerri Road and Head Bridge all in Onitsha arrested the illegal revenue collectors under false pretense of being government revenue agents in the State.

Mohammed said that the latest arrest brought the number of suspects arrested for illegal revenue collections so far to forty three within one week.

The PPRO said that the operation was in compliance with Anambra State Government directives on the 7th December, 2020 "banning all forms of illegal revenue collections by persons claiming to be State Revenue Agents or Officials.

He said suspects would be brought to book as soon as investigations are concluded.

Flooding: NEMA distributes relief materials to 867 households

From Chukwudi Chidiebere, Port Harcourt

National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), South/South zone has commenced direct distribution of relief materials to five communities in Abual/ Odual Local Government Area LGA of Rivers State, affected by the flood disaster.

Distributing the items to 867 households of the various communities, the Director General (DG) of NEMA, AVM Muhammad A. Muhammd rtd, represented by the Zonal Coordinator South South, Ibarakumo Brandon Walson, expressed federal government's concern for the plight of the distressed households in particular and LGA at large.

"The Federal Government led by President Muhammadu Buhari, felt concerned about your situation and is currently working hard and synergizing with relevant stakeholders within and outside the country, with a view to proffering a lasting solution to this natural disaster issue", he noted.

Taking delivery of the items on behalf of the LGA, the Vice Chair-person Jon (Mrs) Igoma A. Ibuna commended NEMA, for its humanitarian posture, and timely response, while she promised to notify the agency early enough, via the Ministry of Special Duties, whenever such a situation repeats itself.

Ibuna urged the Federal Government to fashion out a permanent solution, to their fate through the construction of durable and permanent Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in the LGA, as in other areas in the North.

She also appealed for more of the relief materials, revealing that the second coming of the corona virus pandemic had rather devastated their already poor and pitiable condition.

The relief materials distributed included food and non-food Items such as: rice, garri, yams and building materials while officials of the State Ministry of Special Duties, Abual/Odual LGA and Nigeria Red Cross, along with NEMA supervised the distribution.

28-year old man murders wife, daughter with shovel in Anambra

From Uchenna Ezeadigwe, Awka

Police operatives in the Anambra State Command have arrested a twenty eight year old young man for allegedly killing his wife and daughter with a shovel in Ozubulu, Ekwusigo LGA of Anambra State.

Haruna Mohammed (CSP) the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the Anambra State Command revealed this in a press statement.

He said that about the 7:45pm on Tuesday, 26th, 2021 police operatives attached to Ozubulu Police Station, arrested twenty eight year old Chukwuemeka Obijofa of Ofufe Nza village in Ekwusigo LGA of Anambra State who allegedly ran insane in circumstances yet to be ascertained and attacked his wife, one Chisom Chukwuemeka, 'f', aged 26 years, and own child, named Amanda Chukwuemeka, 'm', aged 4 years, both of same address, with a shovel on their heads.

Mohammed said that the suspect equally used same object and wounded a vigilante man who tried to rescue the victims. The PPRO said police detectives visited the scene and rushed victims to the Joint Hospital, Ozubulu, for medical attention where the two victims were certified dead by a medical doctor on arrival.

According to Mohammed, the wounded vigilante is responding to treatment, while the corpses of the victims were deposited at the hospital's morgue for autopsy

ABSU lecturer drags police to panel over alleged assault

From Dan Maduagwu, Umuahia

A Political Science lecturer, Dr Udoh Ogbonnaya, has told the Abia State Panel of Inquiry on Police Brutality, Extra-Judicial Killings and Other Related Matters how a police man brutally slapped and assaulted him to the extent of inflicting injury to one of his ear and eyes.

Ogbonnaya made the allegation while testifying before the panel headed by the retired former Chief Judge of Abia State, Justice Sunday Imo, at Aguiyi Ironsi Conference Centre, Umuahia.

According to him, as he was exiting from the Shop-Rite Complex, Umuahia, on January 26, 2020, the police officer on duty at the complex mistakenly hit his vehicle with his baton.

When he alighted from his car, he was told that the baton was meant for tricycle operator that was disrupting traffic.

As the matter was getting out of control, he advised that more police officers be invited from outside to assist him arrest the situation.

"The moment the invited police men arrived on the scene one of them accosted me and mercilessly slapped and assaulted me, seized my clothes as well as charged his gun on me.

When the situation was brought understand control, only the Keke operator was whisked away by the police", he said.

Because of incessant tingling sounds he was receiving from his ear as a result of the police assault, he went to the Ear, Nose and Throat, ENT, Unit of the Federal Medical Centre, FMC, Umuahia, for treatment.

According to Ogbonnaya, ENT doctors told him that his left ear has issues and on no account should he allow water to enter his ear, adding he urgently needs medical operation or surgery from India hospital, to correct the health challenges.

He told the panel that all efforts to get justice were in vain as his petition to the commissioner of police, Abia State Command on the matter, was not attended to, neither was the suspect identified.

The reliefs, the University don asked the panel to compel the police to pay him N50 million compensation, to enable him take care of his medical bills in India, including travel expenses and accommodation in India.

But the police counsel, Barr Augustine Udo, in his submission told the panel that the person who assaulted the complainant was not a police man.

The matter is adjourned to March 9, 2021, for adoption of written addresses from both counsels.

NEWS

Hunter kills wife, son, sets self, house ablaze

Maduako Eleweke, Awka

A 65-year old Hunter from Amunike community in Awka North local government area of Anambra State Uchechukwu Nweke, in the early hours of Thursday shot his 55-year old wife, Mrs. Patricia Nweke using his single barrel gun.

He also burnt his house along with his son, Obinna Nweke, aged 29, in circumstances yet to be ascertained.

The suspect also shot himself to death with the same gun after he burnt his house.

An eyewitness report said that on the fateful day, about 3am, the suspect shot his wife, set the house alongside his 29 years old son and later killed himself.

Confirming the incident, Anambra State Police Command spokesman, CSP Haruna Mohammed said the police on 28/1/2021 received a report from Amunike community in Awka North LGA of Anambra State that, a hunter, one Uchechukwu Nweke, aged 65 allegedly shot his wife Patricia Nweke, aged 55 with a single barrel gun and also burnt his house along with his son named Obinna Nweke aged 29 years in a circumstances yet to be ascertained.

He also stated that suspect equally shot himself using the same gun.

Meanwhile, Mohammed said that the police detectives attached to Achalla police station had visited the scene and took victims to the hospital for medical attention, where the three victims were certified dead by a medical doctor on arrival.

According to him, the corpses of the victims have been deposited at the morgue for autopsy, while investigation is ongoing to ascertain circumstances surrounding the incident.

YPP condemns military killings at Orlu

By Ikenna Orioha

The Young Democratic Party (YPP) has condemned the killing of innocent citizens at Orlu, Imo State.

YPP, through its Woman Leader, Chika Uju, regretted the destruction of lives and property by the military supposedly in revenge of the death of their colleagues who were allegedly murdered by Eastern Security Network.

In an interview yesterday in Owerri with our reporter, Uju frowned at the bloodbath at Orlu, describing it as a "crime against humanity".

The party urged the government to mandate the military to leave the area, reiterating that no amount of provocation could have triggered the military to wage war against unarmed civilians. YPP however called on the citizens to remain law abiding and not take the law in their hands.



● L-R, Police Sports Officer Supol Raphael Ubah; Sports Journalist, Kennedy Onwunali; Imo State Police Commissioner, Nasiru Mohammed (4th); when the commissioner received winning officers at the Abuja OSOM games in his office in Owerri.

No face mask, risk six months jail *- Buhari*

It is now an offence punishable by six months imprisonment for anybody stepping out of their houses without wearing a face mask.

This is, according to a new law signed by President Muhammadu Buhari on Wednesday to check the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Executive Order made it mandatory for wearing of face masks, hand washing, and the use of hand sanitisers, amongst other regulations.

Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha, who disclosed this on Wednesday while handing over five ambulances donated by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to the Federal Ministry of Health in Abuja, said that the law stipulated a penalty of a fine or a prison of six months for offenders.

Mustapha said that the bill, entitled 'COVID-19 Health Protection Regulations 2021', is an exercise of the powers as conferred on the president by Section 4 of the Quarantine Act.

"The regulations enforce physical distancing of at least two metres and a regulation of the number of people to be admitted in an enclosed environment.

While reading from an extract of the law, Mustapha said that the president exercised his powers as conferred upon him by Section 4 of the Quarantine Act, Cap. Q2 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2010 and all other powers enabling him in that behalf; and in consideration of the urgent need to protect the health and wellbeing of Nigerians in the face of the widespread and rising number of COVID-19 cases in Nigeria.

"The first part of the new regulations imposes restrictions of gatherings and enforces a physical distancing of not less than two meters between persons at all times," the PTF chairman added.

Orlu crisis: Police arrest officers for molesting 5 civilians

The police in Imo State have arrested officers caught in a viral video allegedly assaulting five civilians in Orlu.

The Commissioner, Nasiru Mohammed, confirmed the arrest in a statement issued by the spokesman of the command, SP Orlando Ikeokwu, on Thursday.

Mohammed said the officers were seen in a viral video committing the act at Banana Junction in Orlu.

The commissioner said that disciplinary action was being taken against the officers whose conduct was deemed unprofessional.

While condemning the act, which he described as "inhuman," he advised the public to report any unprofessional conduct of officers of the command to the Assistant Commissioner of Police, X Squad, and Public Compliant Bureau or to the office of the commissioner of police.

According to him, the officers were seen forcing five persons to lie on the floor, flogging them in the process, which is unethical, unprofessional and unacceptable.

"The command, while condemning the action, wishes to inform the general public that the officers have been identified, arrested and disciplinary action commenced," he said.

COVID-19: NOA to monitor resumption of schools in Anambra, Feb. 1

By Ovat Mike, Onitsha

As schools in Anambra state resume on Monday, 1st February, 2021 after extension of the holidays because of COVID 19 upsurge, stakeholders in education sector have been called to play their roles to stem the tide of the infection.

Anambra state Director, National Orientation Agency (NOA), Barrister Charles Nworji, made the call during a press briefing in his office in Awka on yesterday.

Nworji asked parents to play their role starting from the home by giving basic advice to their children on the non-pharmaceutical protocols of COVID 19 as well as providing hand sanitizers for their children as they return to school.

He reminded school children that as they resume school, that it is no longer business as usual, urging them to avoid crowded areas to stay safe.

For teachers and school authorities, Nworji also asked them to double their efforts to ensure that the children are properly guided while in school and as well provide preventive measures for their safety.

The NOA director called on government to assist schools in providing the preventive facilities noting that government should be more interested in the welfare of the Nigeria children.

He disclosed that about one hundred and five NOA field Officers stationed across the twenty one council areas of Anambra state will monitor school resumption on Monday to ensure that schools adhere to COVID 19 safety protocols.

Oil communities fight as Reps consider Petroleum Bill

A free for all broke out at House of Representatives as members of the host communities engage in physical combat fight during the ongoing public hearing organised by the House of Representatives on the Petroleum Industry Bill.

Trouble began when leaders of the oil-rich areas under the aegis of the Host Communities of Nigeria Producing Oil and Gas were called to the podium to make a presentation.

Some other bodies of host communities, however, stood up, leading to a rowdy session. The fight broke out at exactly 12.10 pm when the chairman of the Ad-hoc committee on PIB, Hon Mohammed Monguno, who had been presiding over the proceedings, called the host community to make their representation

The situation was worsened when members of the opposing sides began to exchange blows, forcing the lawmakers to seek the intervention of security operatives.

The leaders of the oil-rich areas openly rejected the 2.5 per cent proposed for them in the Petroleum Industry Bill 2020, being considered by the joint Senate Committee on Petroleum Resources, (Downstream, Upstream and Gas).

The scenario threw the venue, Room 028, of the public hearing on the petroleum industry Bill, PIB, into pandemonium.

They insisted that nothing short of the 10 per cent of the operating expenditure they were demanding would be acceptable to them because the proposed 2.5 per cent was grossly inadequate to provide basic social amenities and improve the standard of living of their people.

But the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, faulted the position of host communities who are insisting on collecting 10 per cent of the operating expenditure of the oil firms to set up a trust fund.

The hearing was temporarily halted when lawmakers and other participants scampered for safety.

EDITORIAL

Buhari's continued marginalization of Ndigbo

Nigeria is a country of so many tribes and people from diverse backgrounds. The Igbo is one of the three major ethnic groups in the country. It played its role creditably in the struggle to wrestle Nigeria's independence through her powerhouse of dedicated, patriotic and intellectual politicians.

The contributions of the Igbo in the development of Nigeria are quite evident everywhere you go. The Igbo is the only ethnic group that builds bridges across the land and provides a strong unifying factor. They can be found settling everywhere in the country and finds a home anywhere they inhabit and impacting their places of abode. This cannot be said of other ethnic groups.

The Igbo parades very unique characteristics that stands them out and can survive under the harshest of conditions. There is no doubt that this has been the envy of others. There is virtually no area of endeavour that they have not distinguished themselves quite creditably irrespective of the numerous challenges lined on their path.

Before the civil war, the South East where the Igbo are dominant is touted as the fastest growing economy of the world leveraging on agricultural products to improve its fortune. After the pogrom which was designed to exterminate the Igbo, various measures have been instituted to continually keep the Igbo under the jackboot.

To mention just a few, such policies as the failure to rehabilitate the Biafra land after the war, the 20 pounds refund to anybody who wants to convert his old currencies or bank balances, the Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree or the Indigenization policy, manipulated population census, are all repressive.

Others include the creation of more states and local governments in favour of the north, lack of development of the sea ports in the Igbo axis, lack of standard international airports and other exploitative actions. All of these formed the overt and indirect actions to diminish the ability of the Igbo people to compete on a level playing ground with other regions.

The excessive road check points and the continuous harassment of custom officials of Igbo business men as well as excessive levies on Igbo shops and businesses in other states like Lagos are all part of the efforts to undermine the people.

The South East remains the only region with the least number of states among the other regions and every cry to increase it has been falling on deaf ears. This is not only a political impediment but negatively impacts the economic potentials of the group who are dominant in the commerce of this country.

At no time has the Igbo been marginalized than under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. His actions are very glaring and he is not hiding it.

Buhari had stated categorically in his first tenure in an interview with an international media organization that he was not going to treat the South East who gave him 5% votes like the rest of Nigeria who gave him 97 percent. He made good this assertion by abandoning the federal character principle and denying the Igbo all the positions they ought to have.

It was not anything different in his second tenure in 2019 and the recent appointments of service chiefs that excluded the Igbo shows he is unrepentant and ready to perpetuate his stand in spite of the outcries of the Igbo people. Today the South East is still under represented in nearly all top positions and thoroughly neglected by the federal authorities in spite of the huge capacities and potentials it can boast of.

During the week, President Buhari appointed a set of new service chiefs and shockingly no Igbo of South East extraction was picked. This has set tongues wagging among the Igbo. Many have alluded that the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff from Delta State represents the Igbo slot. We wish to quickly remind that Delta State is not South East neither would the appointment of the Transport Minister who bears an Igbo name from Rivers State represent the South East.

The continued marginalization of the Igbo we wish to remind is the reason why the agitation for a separatist state has continued unabated and would continue so long the government is not prepared to make amends.

News Echo wishes to advise the federal government to cease from making any part of the country appear as not belonging to the whole. The Igbo are agitated over the manner the issues affecting them have been handled. We believe that the government can do better.

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Opinion

Sunday Igboho, Fulani herdsmen and failure of leadership

By Niran Adedokun


Igboho

Of all Nigeria's many challenges, some of which are not uncommon to other countries, two things complicate its chances at quick emancipation. The first is the country's almost pathological ineptitude to learning from experience, whether its own or others. The other is the perennial inability of leaders to grasp the import of their remit. Let me explain.

Concerning the first, the English man says experience is the best teacher. This means that if any challenge you have experienced ever comes your way again, lessons derived from your first encounter should handily help you tread that path more deftly. And even when you are faced with a novel event or problem, which had never been your lot, the experiences of others who have walked that route in the past should guide your response.

This is why the Yoruba say that 'the fall of one person into a pit should teach others to be more circumspect.' But that is not Nigeria. The people of this country take no lessons from the past, whether they are theirs or of any of the person. It is foolishness that passes all understanding, one which must confound even the most foolish of peoples.

So, what is this all about? For no reason at all should a country that fought a 30-month civil war in which about two million lives were lost, ever find itself fiddling with ethnic distrusts the way Nigeria is doing currently.

Over the past couple of years, nearly every other ethnic group in Nigeria has had a bone or two to pick with nomadic herdsmen and the Fulani ethnic group to which they predominantly belong.

Aside from the nuisance these pastoralists and their cattle are believed to constitute to farmers in so many parts of the country, they have also been accused of crimes ranging from kidnapping, rape and armed robbery. Some Nigerians in fact, hold the opinion that there are expansionist motives in the recent actions of the Fulani and that the fact that Nigeria's current president is of same pedigree has emboldened them!

Without dabbling into the merits or otherwise of these suspicions, recent events in the South-West states of Oyo and Ondo should tell that this country had hitherto treated this matter with kid gloves and that the wounds have gone very deep. The events also indicate that things are beginning to get out of hand and that a conflagration, may ensue unless the country finds a comprehensive solution to the issues and fast.

One of the dangers of neglecting to deal with this issue of crime and the alleged involvement of herdsmen over the years is the increasing, even if unwitting ethnicisation of these criminal activities.

Even if herdsmen are found amongst those who perpetrate the crimes of kidnapping, banditry and what have you, timely investigation, arrests and prosecution of culprits would have saved Nigeria the tendency to assume that every Fulani man is a criminal to be wary of.

Truth is that a crime is a crime. Crimes have no ethnic, religious, regional and political coloration. There are criminal elements among every ethnic group that make up Nigeria and it would, in fact, be impossible for any group to carry out these crimes without the active collaboration of people from other tribes.

For instance, when a Fulani man kidnaps a victim in the Ibarapa area of Oyo State, he keeps his victims for two weeks in an unmapped forest, during which he feeds, takes care of their health needs and communicates with their families. How does he do this without the collaboration with people who may not necessarily be Fulani?

One reality Nigerians must own up to is that money has become such a god to many of our compatriots that sentiments like blood and tribe do not restrict people from collaborating to commit crimes that bring substantial financial benefits.

The other day, I saw a video of about four Yoruba men who submitted a girlfriend and a friend for ritual killing for sums as paltry as N2000 and N5000 respectively! Were the hoodlums alleged to have razed Sunday (Igboho) Adeyemo's Ibadan home on Tuesday Fulani, for instance? If they were, can we say they did not have the support of some Yoruba people? Criminals and politicians share an affinity to forget ethnic boundaries when mutual benefits are involved, I dare say.

But then, government's (federal and state) failure at going the whole hog in dealing with this issue has accentuated the current narrative giving ethnic colorations to these crimes. This is dangerous to national integration and security and unhelpful in dealing with the overwhelming level of insecurity.

And this brings us to the other point, which is the failure of leaders to understand the purpose of their positions. You see, leaders are made for tough times; this is when their real value is revealed. The effectiveness with which leaders can solve real and imagined problems and bring change to society they lead is the real measure of impact.

Just recently, we saw the result of the sacrifices that past (and even current) leaders of the United States of America made in building resilient institutions and systems, capable of resisting the madness of any incumbent. In modern Africa, it is not likely that history will forget the role played by Paul Kagame in the evolution of Rwanda. Nigerian leaders and those who serve at their pleasure must understand the importance of true service devoid of the feeding of parochial and selfish appetites.

Nigerian leaders must understand the need to build institutions and use the same for universal good. Spokespersons for political leaders must avoid temptations to appropriate roles that do not belong to them. They must not say anything that portrays them as deploying state resources to protect the interests of themselves or their principals because such pronouncements build suspicions that no retraction can obliterate. And then, legislators must wake up to and adorn the full weight of their responsibilities.

As I ruminated over the incident in Oyo State, I thought about how much the National Assembly can do to change Nigeria. I remembered the "Minority Report and Draft Constitution for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976," put together by Prof Olusegun Osoba and the late Dr Yusufu Bala Usman published in Lagos last year and how much that tells about where Nigeria is.

One of the issues raised by these two intellectuals over 40 years ago was the need to eradicate "state citizenship" to create a situation where every Nigerian would be legally entitled to live and work in any community without let or hindrance. Another was the need to make the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy, enunciated in Chapter II of the Constitution, justifiable such that Nigerians can legally hold their government accountable.

Would members of this National Assembly ever consider the benefits that a parliamentary rather than presidential system of government could be to Nigeria? Tough decisions like this made in the overall interest of the future of the country is what leadership is all about. This is unfortunately lost on most Nigerian leaders who only crave transactional opportunities.

It is this confusion about purpose that breeds the negligence, which throws up overnight heroes like Adeyemo popularly known as Sunday Igboho. Igboho has not asked for the votes of anyone, but he feels sufficiently motivated to champion group interests neglected by state actors who are carried away by other considerations.

Of course, when sub-national concerns are at the fore, Igboho's intervention would be seen as heroic. But in a federation like Nigeria where there are laws, it is one step in the direction of failed statehood.

Let Nigerian leaders know that governance is a serious calling requiring full attention and intellectual energies. Let all state actors who are intellectually handicapped and infected with primitive desires for wealth accumulation and the promotion of selfish interests wake up from their affliction. Let them begin to appreciate the honour and privilege of providing leadership to a people who deserve to have the best of life. Let them consider the essence of legacy and not burn Nigeria down by their incompetence.

Cover

Appointment of Service Chiefs:
South East leaders knock Buhari

By Afam Echi

The appointment of new Service Chiefs by President Muhammadu Buhari has attracted widespread reactions against his choice which excluded the people of the South East. Majority of the chieftains and leaders in the area have expressed their angst wondering why Buhari has sworn to marginalize the Igbo.

So many interpretations have been made since the number one citizen announced the names of the new service chiefs. Prior to now the Igbo have been raising serious issues of marginalization alleging hatred of the Buhari administration against its people.

Buhari seem to have validated their fears in a statement he made to an international media organization of repute shortly after assumption of office. In the widely circulated document, the president had stated categorically that he was not going to treat the South East who gave him 5% votes like the rest of Nigeria who gave him 97 percent. He made good this assertion by abandoning the federal character principle and denying the Igbo all the positions they ought to have.

It was not anything different in his second tenure in 2019 and the recent appointments of service chiefs that excluded the Igbo shows he is unrepentant and ready to perpetuate his stand in spite of the outcries of the Igbo people.

The newly elected president of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Prof George Obiozor did not align himself with the action of the president because according to him it was not in line with the federal character principle as enshrined in our statute book.

An extract of his comment reads "We particularly thank Mr. President for the appointment of Major General Lucky Irabor a tested General and a gentleman.

"However, Mr. President, one way of ensuring compliance with Federal character provision of the Nigerian constitution is to observe the distribution of important and vital offices of the Federal Government in accordance with the zonal structure.

"Mr. President, particularly in the area of the security architecture of the country, the South East zone which was conspicuously absent in your first term has now again not been included so far in your recent appointment of service chiefs.

"Ohanaeze Ndigbo hopes and believes that Mr. President in continuation of appointments in this sector would consider the South East zone".

Prince Clinton Uba, an Umuahia based public analyst and the publisher of the News Mirror, had this to say. "The Biafra war is not yet over. Ndigbo in the South East are still being treated as second class citizens in Nigeria. Just know very well that President Buhari fought the civil war against Ndigbo and that mentality that this is a conquered territory is still there."

Dr Patrick Enuneku, National President, National Forum for South East Presidency (NFSEP), described PMB's action as an aberration. In his words, he stated that, "the exclusion of South East from the appointment of Service Chiefs is an attestation that the present government is trying to exhaust all the opportunities of serving Nigeria for South East come 2023.

This exclusion of the South East from the current appointment of the service chief is to indirectly tell the South Easterners to wait for their turn for Presidency come 2023. Exclusion of a South Easterner in service Chief appointment is therefore an aberration.


Buhari


Obiozor


Amadi

According to Emmanuel Ejiogu (KSM), a commentator on national issues, "The exclusion of the South East in appointment of the Service Chiefs is a glance at the gross nepotism and tribalism in Nigeria. It is not a government of inclusiveness"

Member, Board of Trustees and leader of Ohanaeze Ndigbo in Rivers State, Dr Omenazu Jackson, says he is more concerned with the security of Nigeria. According to him, there is no security in the country, so it does not matter wherever who can fix that it comes from.

Continuing, he says, "Criminal elites have succeeded in balkanizing us along ethnic lines. It calls for concern really. Ethnicity is even more pronounced in the military. President's body language does not show he is a Nigerian leader but a Fulani leader. The president should free himself from acts of nepotism. On the looting table the criminal elites are united and pretending to be at war against each other."

Former chairman of the National Electricity Regulatory Commission, (NERC) and former APGA governorship aspirant in Imo, Dr Sam Amadi, in his comment says "I am not more concerned about the change of service chiefs as if it is the answer to the problem of insecurity. The crisis is with the president himself. We are happy that he listened to make the change. The issue of South East marginalization is not the same thing as Igbo marginalization. Igbo is an expansive word.

"We want to see the new service chiefs, change directions of the military, improve operations of the military, and stop the governors from using them to settle internal crises. Buhari has been there for 6 months and his pattern remains with him and we have to judge him because he has not been fair with his appointments from the South East. But beyond that we should be talking about strategic institutional change and not about symbolic gestures of appointing people from the South East.

The South East remains the only region with the least number of states among the other regions and every cry to increase it has been falling on deaf ears. This is not only a political impediment but negatively impacts the economic potentials of the group who are dominant in the commerce of this country.

At no time has the Igbo been marginalized than under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. His actions are very glaring and he is not hiding it.

Igbo is one of the three major ethnic groups in the country. It played its role creditably in the struggle to wrestle Nigeria's independence through her powerhouse of dedicated, patriotic and intellectual politicians.

The contributions of the Igbo in the development of Nigeria are quite evident everywhere you go. The Igbo is the only ethnic group that builds bridges across the land and provides a strong unifying factor. They can be found settling everywhere in the country and finds a home anywhere they inhabit, impacting their places of abode. This cannot be said of other ethnic groups.

The Igbo parades very unique characteristics that stand them out and can survive under the harshest of conditions. There is no doubt that this has been the envy of others. There is virtually no area of endeavours that they have not distinguished themselves quite creditably irrespective of the numerous challenges lined on their path.

Before the civil war, the South East where the Igbo are dominant is touted as the fastest growing economy of the world leveraging on agricultural products to improve its fortune. After the pogrom which was designed to exterminate the Igbo various measures have been instituted to continually keep the Igbo under the jackboot.

To mention just a few, such policies as the failure to rehabilitate the Biafra land after the war, the 20 pounds refund to anybody who wants to convert his old currencies or bank balances, the Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree or the Indigenization policy, manipulated population census, are all repressive.

Others include the creation of more states and local governments in favour of the north, lack of development of the sea ports in the Igbo axis, lack of standard international airports and other exploitative actions. All of these formed the overt and indirect actions to diminish the ability of the Igbo people to compete on a level playing ground with other regions.

The excessive road check points and the continuous harassment of custom officials of Igbo business men as well as excessive levies on Igbo shops and businesses in other states like Lagos are all part of the efforts to undermine the people

The South East remains the only region with the least number of states among the other regions and every cry to increase it has been falling on deaf ears. This is not only a political impediment but negatively impacts the economic potentials of the group who are dominant in the commerce of this country.

Entertainment/Showbiz/Music/Fashion

Jumpsuit wedding gown is taking the 2021 trend

Creativity runs in every woman's veins and we always have to appear stunning.

Everybody including the groom can't wait to see the apparel his wife-to-be would wear for their holy matrimony.

Serwaa got married to the love of her life recently. They decided to break the usual fashion game at weddings this time.

In what we term as simple and classy, the bride won our hearts with her gorgeous apparel. Serwaa's designer provided her a gorgeous unconventional wedding dress look. It was one of the highlights of the wedding.

For the exchange of vows, she walked down the aisle in a stunning jumpsuit sleeveless white gown that perfectly flattered her figure. We could hardly keep our eyes off the dress though, taking in the panels and crystal embellishment that decorated the top of the dress.

She accompanied her look with flawless makeup and beautiful hair making her look like a real princess. We love her laced stilettoes which complemented the dress perfectly. Even the white fascinator was something for the book.

It was truly a beautiful celebration for the couple and their guests. Pulse.com.gh wishes the couple a lifetime of bliss, love and laughter.





Heart Talk

With Ogechi Erondu



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Building healthy relationships

All romantic relationships go through ups and downs and they all take work, commitment, and willingness to adapt and change with your partner. But whether your relationship is, is it just starting out or you've been together for years, there are steps you can take to build a healthy relationship. Even if you've experienced a lot of failed relationships in the past or have struggled before to rekindle the fires of romance in your current relationship, you can find ways to stay connected, find fulfillment, and enjoy lasting happiness.

What makes a healthy relationship?

Every relationship is unique, and people come together for many different reasons. Part of what defines a healthy relationship is sharing a common goal for exactly what you want the relationship to be and where you want it to go. And that's something you'll only know by talking deeply and honestly with your partner.

However, there are also some characteristics that most healthy relationships have in common. Knowing these basic principles can help keep your relationship meaningful, fulfilling and exciting whatever goals you're working towards or challenges you're facing together.

1. You maintain a meaningful emotional connection with each other. You each make the other feel loved and emotionally fulfilled. There's a difference between being loved and feeling loved. When you feel loved, it makes you feel accepted and valued by your partner, like someone truly gets you. Some relationships get stuck in peaceful coexistence, but without the partners truly relating to each other emotionally. While the union may seem stable on the surface, a lack of ongoing involvement and emotional connection serves only to add distance between two people.

2. You're not afraid of (respectful) disagreement. Some couples talk things out quietly, while others may raise their voices and passionately disagree. The key in a strong relationship, though, is not to be fearful of conflict. You need to feel safe to express things that bother you without fear of retaliation, and be able to resolve conflict without humiliation, degradation, or insisting on being right.

You keep outside relationships and interests alive. Despite the claims of romantic fiction or movies, no one person can meet all of your needs. In fact, expecting too much from your partner can put unhealthy pressure on a relationship. To stimulate and enrich your romantic relationship, it's important to sustain your own identity outside of the relationship, preserve connections with family and friends, and maintain your hobbies and interests.

3. Communication

Good communication is a fundamental part of a healthy relationship. When you experience a positive emotional connection with your partner, you feel safe and happy. When people stop communicating well, they stop relating well, and times of change or stress can really bring out the disconnect. It may sound simplistic, but as long as you are communicating, you can usually work through whatever problems you're facing.

4. Tell your partner what you need, don't make them guess.

It's not always easy to talk about what you need. For one, many of us don't spend enough time thinking about what's really important to us in a relationship. And even if you do know what you need, talking about it can make you feel vulnerable, embarrassed, or even ashamed. But look at it from your partner's point of view. Providing comfort and understanding to someone you love is a pleasure, not a burden.

If you've known each other for a while, you may assume that your partner has a pretty good idea of what you are thinking and what you need. However, your partner is not a mind-reader. While your partner may have some idea, it is much healthier to express your needs directly to avoid any confusion.

Your partner may sense something, but it might not be what you need. What's more, people change, and what you needed and wanted five years ago, for example, may be very different now. So instead of letting resentment, misunderstanding, or anger grow when your partner continually gets it wrong, get in the habit of telling them exactly what you need.

5. Take note of your partner's nonverbal cues…

To be continued...

Entertainment/Showbiz/Music/Fashion

Top 10 highest earning Nollywood movies of the decade

With a new record set, another appears to have solidified. Nine of the titles on the top 10 highest grossing Nollywood movies are comedies. Here is a look at the list:

1. Omo Ghetto (The Saga) N468,036,300

The comedy film directed by **Funke Akindele** and husband, **JJC Skillz**, follows the chaotic life of **Shalewa** aka **Lefty** (Funke Akindele). Lefty struggles between living a life of wealth and comfort provided by her adopted mother or returning to her ghetto lifestyle.

Released on December 25, 2020, 'Omo Ghetto (The Saga) is a sequel to the actress's 2010 trilogy 'Omo Ghetto' based on twin sisters who get displaced at birth.

2. The Wedding Party N453,000,000

Kemi Adetiba's 'The Wedding Party', released in December 2016 became the monument of Nollywood success after it broke the record of the highest grossing Nollywood movie.

Starring celebrity couple, **Adesua Etomi** and **Banky Wellington**, the Ebonylife Films, FilmOne, Inkblot Production and Koga Studios collaboration had just the right amount of romance and comedy and became both a local and international success. Like the title suggests, the romcom is based on a wedding and the drama associated with making a successful one.

3. The Wedding Party 2 N433,197,377

The sequel to 'The Wedding Party' followed in 2017 and received just as much support as the first. 'The Wedding Party 2' directed by **Niyi Akinmolayan** delivered an even more grand party this time uniting a British and Nigerian couple.

Set in Nigeria and Dubai, the movie grossed N433,197,377 in box office making it the third highest grossing Nollywood movie of all time.

4. Chief Daddy N387,540,749

EbonyLife film's 2018 December special, 'Chief Daddy' grossed N387,540,749 in box office making it the fourth highest grossing film of the decade.

Directed by **Niyi Akinmolayan**, the movie is based on the dysfunctional family of Chief Daddy, a polygamist and philanthropist. Upon his death, his children struggle to get a fair share of their inheritance.

5. Sugar Rush N287,053,270

Nollywood's fifth highest grossing movie is 2019 comedy 'Sugar Rush' directed by Kayode Kasum and produced by GreOH Media, Jungle Filmworks and Empire Mates Entertainment.

The heist comedy released on Christmas day stars **Adesua Etomi, Bisola Aiyeola** and **Bimbo Ademoye.**

6. King of Boys N244,775,758

The Kemi Adetiba Visuals film is the only film on the list that is not a comedy or a romcom or even remotely close.

The 2018 crime thriller starring **Sola Sobowale, Adesua Etomi** and star rapper **Reminisce** grossed **N244,775,758** in box office. Adetiba's success birthed hope in non-comedy genres becoming a commercial success.

7. Merry Men: The Real Yoruba Demons N235,628,358

The **Toka Mcbaror** film premiered to rave reviews in 2018. Starring **Ay Makun, Ramsey Nouah** and **Jim Iyke** as the Merry Men, the film sought to deliver a well-timed action comedy.

8. Merry Men 2: Another Mission N233,958,963

The sequel released in 2019 continued the adventures of the Merry Men. The action comedy grossed N233,958,963 earning itself a spot on the top 10 highest grossing Nollywood films of the decade.

9. Your Excellency N186,340,948

The EbonyLife film launched Funke Akindele's directorial career. The politics themed comedy joined the list of 2019 December releases. Maybe not as successful as its predecessors -'Chief Daddy', 'The Wedding Party', the movie still grossed enough to earn it the number nine spot on the list.

10. A Trip To Jamaica

Directed by **Robert Peters**, the Corporate World Entertainment production is the 10th highest grossing Nollywood film. The comedy grossed N180,264,964 in box office. It continues the hilarious adventures of **Akpos (Ay Makun)**.













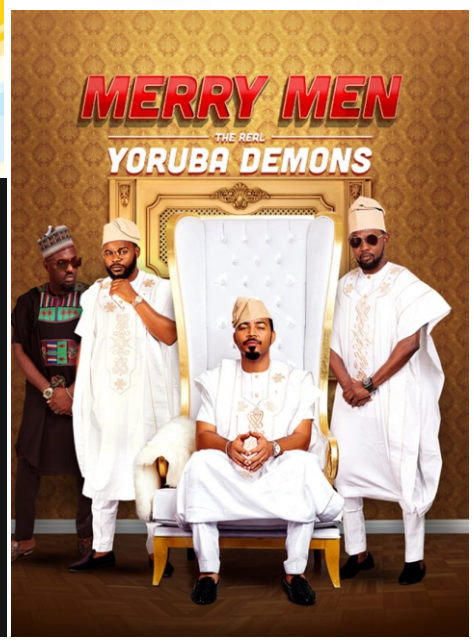








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Entertainment/Showbiz/Music/Fashion

Emmy award-winning actress, Cloris Leachman is dead



■Young Leachman



■Aged Leachman

Emmy and Oscar award-winning actress, Cloris Leachman has died at the age of 94.

A statement by her publicist, Monique Moss said the actress died in her sleep of natural causes at her home in Encinitas, California.

"It's been my privilege to work with Cloris Leachman, one of the most fearless actresses of our time.

"There was no one like Cloris. With a single look, she had the ability to break your heart or make you laugh till the tears ran down your face.

"You never knew what Cloris was going to say or do and that unpredictable quality was part of her unparalleled magic.

"We pray that God grants rest to her soul," the statement said.

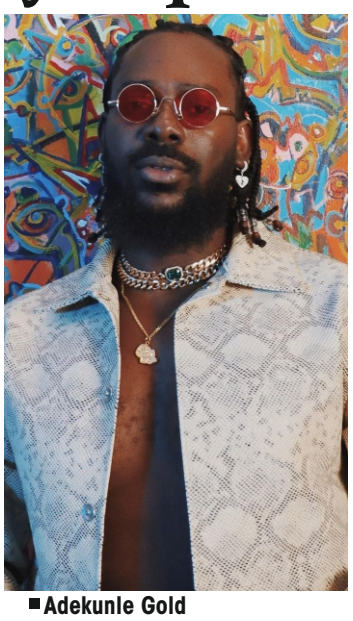
Prior to her death, Leachman won a supporting actress Oscar for the role she played in Peter Bogdanovich's elegiac, "The Last Picture Show."

She also featured in the Last Picture Show, Young Frankenstein and the Mary Tyler Moore Show.

Vee tackles Adekunle Gold for his birthday request



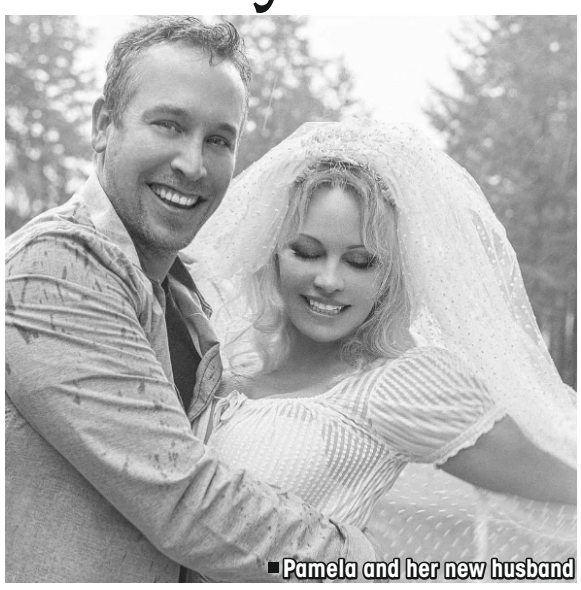
■Vee



■Adekunle Gold

One quality BBNaija's Vee was known for in the house was her bluntness and it is nice to see that she has not lost it alongside her sense of humour. The ex-housemate took to social media to reply the singer, Adekunle Gold, who asked his fans if he would get the BBNaija standard treatment for his birthday or just sit down with no expectations. "It's my birthday tomorrow. Will I get BBN type gift from you people or I should goan sit down?" Vee advised him to find somewhere to sit as the only birthday they care about is his daughter, Deja's. "We only care about Deja's birthday. E lo joko sibikan sir"

Canadian actress Pamela Anderson, secretly marries bodyguard



■Pamela and her new husband

53-year-old Canadian actress Pamela Anderson has found love again, and this time, it's with her personal bodyguard Dan Hayhurst. It was reported that the media personality fell in love with her new man from spending time together during the lockdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Pamela and Dan decided to take their love life more seriously when they tied the knot in a private ceremony on the actress' Vancouver Island home in Canada on Christmas Eve.

The ceremony witnessed the attendance of the bride and groom, a priest, and a witness that blessed them. However, she stated that they received the blessings of their family members and friends. Talking about her new marriage, the film star stated that she is exactly where she needs to be, adding she is in the arms of a man that truly loves her. According to her, she feels like they have spent seven years together.

Speaking of her wedding day, she said: "I am in love. We were married on Christmas Eve. I was married on the property I bought from my grandparents 25 years ago, this is where my parents were married and they are still together. I feel like I've come full circle. "I think this romantic property has a lot of healing energy, I'm at peace here."

Hushpuppi's lawyers set to abandon his case



■Hushpuppi

Gal Pissetzky and Vicki Podberesky, the two US lawyers who were representing Nigerian Instagram celebrity, Ramon Abbas, better known as Hushpuppi, have applied to withdraw from the case.

They have both filed an application at the United States District Court in California, stating their intent.

The application was submitted on January 21 and the court will hear it on February 22.

The lawyers cited communication problems as the reason for the withdrawal and also that Hushpuppi has hired new lawyers to defend him.

"Both family and jail staff have told me that they have conveyed my messages to Mr Abbas to call me. He informed me that he is retaining new counsel.

"I informed him that I and Ms. Podberesky were moving to withdraw given his refusal to communicate and cooperate with us," Pissetzky said.

Hushpuppi is being tried on a four-count charge of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, engaging in monetary transactions in property derived from specified unlawful activity, money laundering conspiracies and international money laundering.

The trial is scheduled to continue on May 4, 2021.

Singer, Paul Okoye, flaunts multimillion naira SUV

When you work hard for your money, it is only a fair game to flaunt the rewards and that is exactly what singer, Paul Okoye, is doing. The former Psquare member recently took to his official page on Instagram with a cool picture that set tongues rolling. Paul who also goes by the name King Rudy was looking stylish as he posed for a nice picture atop his sleek Mercedes Benz SUV.

King Rudy did not disclose if the sleek automobile is a new addition to his fleet of super-expensive cars. In his caption, the singer simply pointed out the importance of keeping people in suspense and eventually making a surprise move on them. From indications, the music star is building anticipation for his next project.



■King Rudy posing with a Mercedes Benz SUV

NEWS

Police promotes 20,356 senior officers

The Police Service Commission (PSC) has approved the promotion of 20,356 senior Police Officers. Nine Commissioners of Police were promoted to the next rank of Assistant Inspectors General of Police and another nine, promoted from the rank of Deputy Commissioner to Commissioners of Police.

The promotion, according to the Head, Press and Public Relations, Ikechukwu Ani, was one of the decisions of the 11th Plenary Meeting of the Commission held in Abuja on Wednesday, January 25th, 2021 and presided over by its Chairman, who is also a retired Inspector General of Police, Musiliu Smith.

The commission also approved the promotion of three Chief Superintendents (CSP) to Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACP), 1, 577; Deputy Superintendents (DSP) to Superintendents of Police (SP), 2, 293 Assistant Superintendents (ASP) to Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSP).It also approved the promotion/confirmation of 7, 283 unconfirmed Assistant Superintendents (ASP11) to Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASP1), 9, 072 Inspectors to Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASP11) and 110 Inspectors promoted to Senior Inspectors.The new Assistant Inspectors General are Aminu Saleh Pai, former Commissioner of Police Kwara and Bayelsa States Command, former Force Quarter Master General and currently the Executive Secretary, The Police Multi Purpose Cooperative Society, Lagos; Dasuki Danbappa Galadanchi, former Commissioner of Police/Executive Secretary, The Police Multi Purpose Cooperative Society, Lagos and presently acting AIG Force CID Annex, Lagos; Okon Etim Ene, former Commissioner of Police Benue and Abia State Commands, CP SARS and currently CP Explosive Ordinance Disposal, (EOD) Force Headquarters and Abang B. John, former Commissioner of Police Akwa Ibom State Command and presently Commissioner of Police Anambra State Command.Others are Joseph Gobum Mukan, Former CP, Airport Command, Lagos and currently CP Rivers State; Aji Ali Janga, former CP Kaduna and Kogi State Commands and currently CP Sokoto; Mukaddas Mohammed Garba, presently CP Benue State Command; Habu Sani Ahmadu, former CP, IGP Monitoring Unit; CP Intelligence, Force Headquarters and CP Bauchi State Command and presently CP Kano State and Imohimi D. Edgal, former Commissioner of Police Lagos and Akwa Ibom States Command.The nine DCPs promoted to CPs are Abubakar Adamau Alhaji, presently DCP Operations, Rivers State, Benjami Nebolisa Okolo, currently at the National Defence College, Abuja; Abdul-Yari Laffia Shuyamu, presently DCP, Finance and Administration, Taraba State Command; Oyediran Adesoye Oyeyemi, DCP State CIID Ebonyi; Samaila Shu'aibu Dikko, DCP State CIID Adamawa and Jimwan David Dazong DCP Zonal CIID, Zone 12 Bauchi.Others are Monday Bala Kuryas, DCP Operations, Ondo State; Hussaini Rabiu, DCP, Operations Imo State and Rabi Umar, former Assistant Force Secretary and presently DCP, Force Education, Force Headquarters, Abuja.The three Chief Superintendents of Police promoted to Assistant Commissioners of Police are; Gotom Tijani Richard, Joseph Kaide O, and Giade Sabo Abubakar.



■ L-R Justice Dominica Okwuchi Okoroji, Governor Hope Uzodimma, new Chief Judge of Imo State, Justice Alma Ngozi Eluwa and former acting Chief Judge, Justice Ijeoma Agugua, after the swearing-in of the new chief judge by the governor at the Exco Chambers of Imo Government House, Owerri... yesterday

Judiciary, most important arm of government - Uzodimma ... Swears in new judges

By **Jennifer John**

Imo State Governor, Senator Hope Uzodimma has described the judiciary as one of the most important arms of government which serves as an arbiter between the Executive and Legislative arm.

Uzodimma made this assertion, Wednesday, at the Sam Mbakwe Expanded Executive Chambers, Government House Owerri, during the swearing in of two new judges.

He said apart from the invaluable role it plays in the sustenance of democracy, it is also the last hope of the common man.

"Because the judiciary protects the interest of all, those who serve in its temple must be above board. This means justice must be served to all manner of people, without fear or favour. This sacred duty presupposes that our Lordships must be blind to friendship and sentiments in the discharge of their duties".

He said his government believes so much in the doctrine of separation of power between the arms of government, reason he said his government has been taking the welfare of judges very seriously and created an enabling environment for them to operate independently.

He charged the newly sworn in judges to defend the oath they took, by ensuring that they serve the course of justice without fear or favour.

Responding, Hon. Justice Alma Eluwa expressed profound gratitude and immense appreciation to the governor for their appointment as Judges of High Court of Imo State.

She pledged on behalf of others to work diligently and assiduously to justify the confidence reposed in them by the governor. She pledged that new judges will be incorruptible, exhibit impeccable moral and behavioural attributes.

Crisis rocks Imo NLC as two factions emerge

By Uzoma Ogoke

The crisis rocking the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Imo State chapter has taken a new dimension as two different factions are now laying claims to the leadership of the labour union in the state.

A faction of the labour union had recently through Mr Nicholas Uba and Ogu Maduabuchi said to had moved and passed a vote of no confidence on the executive led by Austin Chilakpu.

They were said to have installed one Ndubuisi Ucheghara to replace him and after the installation, marched to the Imo State Government House with their supporters (many who were said to be non labour members)

The governor who received them at the government house pledged to work with the new leadership to guarantee the welfare of Imo workers. He however warned them against being confrontational with the government, an action he said will always have adverse consequences.

Ucheghara, while fielding questions from newsmen, said Chilakpu was unable to guarantee the welfare of Imo workers, reason for the vote of no confidence. He attributed the inability of the dethroned executive to guarantee worker's welfare to its confrontational approach, positing that all over the world, labour unions exist just to compliment the government and not to confront it on issues.

However in a reaction through a press release issued by the leadership of different unions that make up the organized labour in the state, made it clear that the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) executive, Imo State chapter, led by Comrade Austin Chilakpu was very much intact.

The union however berated the Imo State Government led by Senator Hope Uzodimma for dissipating much energy in sponsoring some persons who are unknown to the organized labour to lead thugs who unleash mayhem on the secretariat of the union in the state, an energy the union said the governor should have invested in paying thousands of workers and pensioners who are owed several months arrears of their salaries.

The press release alleged that Mr. Nicholas Uba and Ogu Maduabuchi who were sponsored by the state government, led the hoodlums who looted the secretariat of the organized labour and carted away documents belonging to the union.

Shekau mocks new service chiefs: You'll fail like others

Leader of Boko Haram terror group, Abubakar Shekau, has mocked the newly-appointed service, saying that they will fail woefully like their predecessors.

It will be recalled that two of the service chiefs had headed the 'Operation Lafiya Dole, the military task force on military operations in the North East.

Major General Leo Irabor who was appointed as Chief of Defence Staff and Major-General Ibrahim Attahiru as Chief of Army Staff had at one time or the other commanded the military operations in the North East;

Shekau said to have spoken in a nine minutes, 56 seconds-long video, according to HumAngle.

Other service chiefs newly-appointed were Rear Admiral A.Z Gambo as Chief of Naval Staff; and Air-Vice Marshal I.O Amao as Chief of Air Staff.

The failure of the immediate-past service chiefs to conquer the insurgents had ignited the clamour for their removal. Indeed Attahiru was removed as the commander of Operation Lafiya Dole because he failed a 40-day ultimatum given to him by President Muhammadu Buhari to capture Shekau.

In the new audio according to HumAngle, Shekau mentioned the names and the roles of the new service chiefs and called them to repent because they can't do anything to destroy his terror gang.

"Leo Irabor, the head of the military, you should have sympathy for yourself, repent and convert to Islam. There is nothing you can do," Shekau reportedly said.

The terror group leader also reportedly said Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru should not deceive himself because he has a Muslim background.

"Even if you are Muslim but you conduct polytheistic practices, you are no longer a Muslim," Shekau was reportedly quoted in the video.

Relationship

The problem with over-using words of endearment with people you are not dating



As an isolated case, being called 'dearie' just one time by an outsider who has only answered your questions for eight minutes and has never seen your face is not a problem. However, on a grander scale and as related to romantic relationships, misuse of words of endearment is actually something worth talking about.

Think about it; you must know three, four, maybe more people who punctuate almost every sentence with affectionate words such as 'love', 'baby', 'sweetheart', 'lovey,' 'darling' and so on and so annoyingly forth.

It does not matter that these are people they just met and it also doesn't seem to matter that these people actually have partners. Not to sound stuck up or to act as a wet towel, I sincerely think words of endearment should not be thrown around anyhow. Doing this dwindles the importance and value those words are supposed to have.

They become so commonplace that their purport is lost on those to whom they should mean something, those who should feel good hearing them.

Words of endearment are meant to make you feel good. They are affectionate words that convey feelings; and they are supposed to ascribe some sort of special feeling on whoever you say them to. Friends can call each other with some endearing words, parents use words of endearment for their kids and more relevantly, partners use cute, specially-created words for each other.

Generalising these endearing names and titles belittles their special nature, downplays the feelings attached to them and could cause problems in your relationship/marriage.

So you affectionately call your boyfriend 'Hunk' and he likes it. It makes him feel manly and attached to you in some unique, cutesy way.

Now imagine him hearing you call every other guy by that name and with the same amount of honey in your inflected voice as you do so.

The significance of that name as bonding tool in that your relationship becomes reduced, if not completely lost if you keep up the habit.

There might also be questions to answer, depending on how jealous the man is and how much value has been attached to that endearing word.

Similarly, imagine your boyfriend calling many other babes 'Angel', when you thought that was a name you felt he adoringly set apart just for you.

It is also, in a way, a matter of respect for your partner.

You can't be in a relationship and continue giving every **Cynthia**, **Amaka** and **Damilola** you come across endearing names. Same thing applies to ladies, who seem to even be guiltier of this behaviour. You shouldn't be using those special, endearing words with other men.

Kill that habit even if your partner hasn't been complaining.

Misappropriating these terms of endearment will not necessarily cause problems or steer your relationship into ruin; nonetheless, since you now know better, you need to do better.

5 reasons to kiss more in your relationship

If kissing has never been a strong part of your relationship, you actually don't know what you are missing out on.

For some people, it is even unimaginable that someone who has a dislike for kissing would express desire for a relationship. That's like saying you want to work as a lifeguard at a public pool but you never want water to splash water on you.

Kolewerk.

Below we list five reasons you need to kiss more in your relationship.

1. Helps bonding

Whether it is a casual kiss on the forehead before you rush out in the morning or when you are snuggled up on a cold night warming each other with kisses, intimacy is built between partners when this happens.

2. Helps arousal and enhances sex

Imagine sex without foreplay. I bet that doesn't appeal to you. Now imagine foreplay without kissing…not very appealing either, right?

Kissing is a very important of your sexual experience. It helps increase the chances that both partners will have a good and pleasurable erotic experience.

3. Better marriages

Kisses improve the bonding and intimacy in your relationship and marriage. And a marriage based on a bind that keeps increasing is surely a great one.

The more you are together, the more of each other you know and the stronger the love between you both.

4. Makes you happier

Kissing releases endorphins, and to quote **Elle Woods** from "Legally Blond," "Endorphins make you happy."

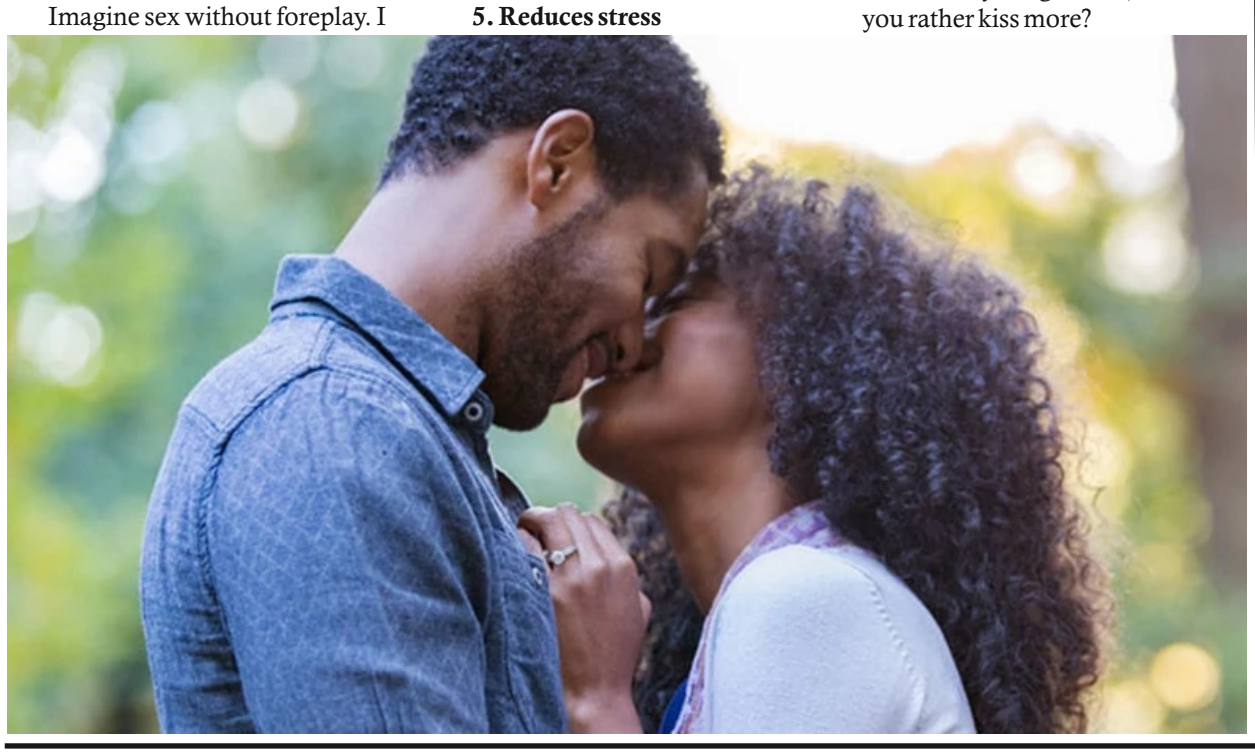
Now wouldn't you rather kiss more?

5. Reduces stress

Apparently kisses also helps you relax your frazzled, dog-eared nerves.

Kissing has been said to lower **cortisol** levels. And cortisol is actually not good for the body because it has a negative effect on your immune system, endocrine system and brain health.

Now that you know that kisses make everything better, wouldn't you rather kiss more?



Types of men you should date in your 20s



When it comes to knowing love, there is no rule. Every single person's situation, as well as experience, is entirely different.

However, some principles teach you exactly what you need to know, no matter how it's delivered.

Looking at specifically from a woman's perspective, she should date a few different types of men who can teach her various things about finding true love, while she's in her twenties.

Here's a list of the kind of men every woman should date when she's in her 20s:

The one who challenges you

A man who can keep challenging you to try and experience new things every now and then should definitely be in your life while you're in your 20s. This man will make you think, reflect and dive into waters you've never dared to dive in before. This is the kind of love that will have depth and it often presents itself as many layers at first.

The one who knows what he wants

Ladies, find a man who knows what he wants as he will serve as a guide. You grow when you watch someone else who exactly knows what they want in life and how they are growing. It serves as an inspiration and guides you through too. It offers clarity and validation.

The one you have nothing in common with

There's definitely a connection that is lacking in such kind of a relationship. It lacks a certain type of intimacy and closeness because it's more about learning each other's likes and dislikes at all times. You try to understand this man's perspective towards love and life while he tries to understand yours.

The one from your past

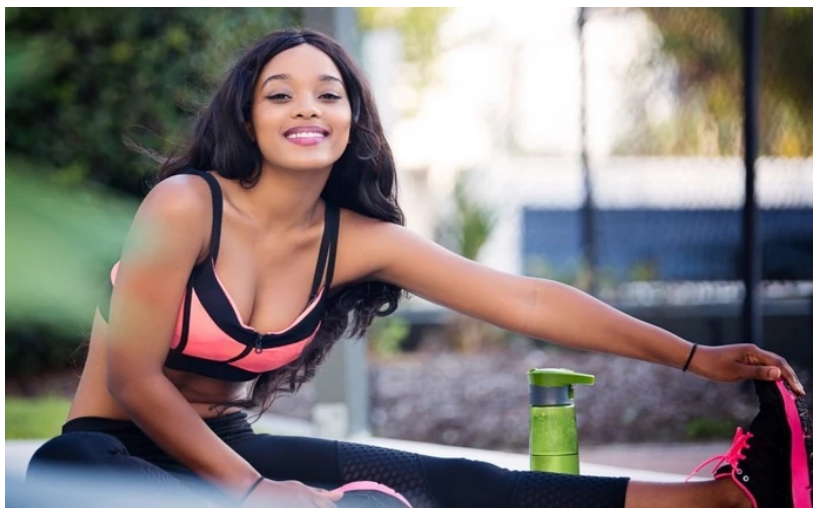
This man is the one that shows up on days when you least expect. This one is a familiar person who teaches you parts about how homely it can feel with just a person. This person never really goes away until he teaches you what you need to know.

The one who is close to your family

This kind of love allows you to envision your future family by watching the man with your own family. There's a certain kind of hope and trust that you feel when this kind of deeper meaning and attachment with this person. They make you see how your future can look with them and the family.

Health

5 important things you should do daily before working out



The things you do before you visit the gym and after have a whole lot to do with achieving that body goal you're aiming for.

Whether you're working out for a physical or mental balance, you need your routines to be as beneficial and effective as possible.

If you know and understand the things you need to do before and after every workout session, you'll know how to make your fitness routine work for you.

From the kinds of food you need to eat or the habits you need to do away with, we got you covered on the pre-workout tips you need to achieve a great result in 2020.

Here are the things you need to do before hitting the gym in the morning or evening.

1. Get adequate and quality sleep

The only time your body gets to fully rest is when you sleep. Your body automatically goes to recovery mode when you sleep.

You must get enough and quality, so you're energized to the point that you can go through your routines without any hurdles. If you can't do 7-8 hours, 6 hours is still manageable.

Ensure you don't show up at the gym without adequate sleep a night before.

2. Eat up

Filling up your stomach before you hit the gym is very important to achieving the right body goals. If you workout on an empty stomach, your body gets the energy it needs to sustain itself during the workout by burning your muscle mass.

We know that's not what you want. You want to build your body mass not burn it.

Ensure you eat 1-2 hours before you start your exercises. You're not eating to be full, just something light to supply your body energy.

3. Drink more water

The importance of getting hydrated can never be overemphasized. Drinking water is very crucial to your workout. Remember you're sweating it out in the gym, you need to replace the moisture that was lost while exercising.

Being hydrated helps to maintain your energy levels while you're working out.

4. Dress the right way

Your fitness routine might involve jumping, stretching, running, and getting into certain poses and positions that have nothing to do with your athletic qualities

Wearing the right clothes is important. Get the right sneakers, sport bra and jeggings for a smooth workout routine.

5. Have a dynamic warmup

Preparing your body for what lies ahead is very important to your fitness routine. A dynamic warmup will build your core temperature, help your blood flow to your muscles, lessen risk of injuries and makes your body flexible.

Ensure you have between 7-10 minutes warm-up session to help put your body in the right position for what lies ahead.

Causes and treatment of fingernails falling off

There's nothing as painful as a fingernail falling off from your nail bed.

At least this is how people who have had the experience, describe it.

We find it hard to agree with them though because it is hard to concur with the claim that it is the most painful experience to have.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to argue against the fact that losing one's fingernail can be very painful and frustrating.

It makes a simple task more difficult and painful to execute.

There is also the painful ugliness that comes with the exposure of the nail bed. It gives the finger a look that can be said to be gruesome and unsightly.

However, it is important for us to know the causes of this painful condition; as it will not only help us prevent a re-occurrence but also help identify the best treatment option.

Read on to find out the possible causes of falling fingernails.

1. Injuries

A serious finger injury may damage your fingernails, which often lead to the fingernails falling off from the nail bed.

The experience is always unbearable.

However, anyone can sustain such injuries but they are relatively more common in sportspersons related to volleyball, basketball, etc.

2. Fungal nail infection

Fungal nail infection can be one of the many reasons for fingernail falling off. Because there are many types of fungi that can cause nail infections.

Once your fingernail is infected, chances are the appearance of your nail will change. Your nails will become discolored first and then damaged and thickened.

It will fall off, eventually and leave you in serious pain.

3. Onychia

Onychia is nail disorder caused mostly by virus and bacteria. It can affect both adults and children, and it can cause the tissues of the nail bed to become inflamed.

Additionally, it sometimes affects the tissues around the fingernail plate.

You develop this problem when a virus, bacteria, or other pathogenic microbes enter these tissues through cuts and injuries. And can develop pus around and underneath the nail plate.

When this happens, the affected fingernail usually falls off.

4. Other causes

There can be many other relatively uncommon causes of fingernail falling off. They include:

However, problems with the nails can sometimes be related to serious medical conditions and should be investigated.



The doctors who will be well qualified to discuss this issue with you include your primary care doctor or your dermatologist.

On the other hand, it can occasionally be normal for an isolated nail to fall out; especially for people who repetitively tap their fingernails.

There are also cases where severe nutritional or vitamin deficiency may lead to nail loss. And for people taking chemotherapy, various drugs or toxins may also cause them to lose nails.

Treatment

Natural remedies are usually best when it comes to healing and relieving the pain.

Treatment usually involves removing the nail and keeping the affected area dry to prevent any kind of added infection.

You have to take precautionary measures until your nail grows back. And while you do, treating the underlying condition that may have caused the nail to fall off in the first place is equally important as well.

4 foods to improve vagina health

Naturally a healthy vagina is one with balance PH level (with healthy bacteria meant to keep infections at bay).

It's important to maintain a hygienic lifestyle as well as take in foods that benefits the body (as well as the vagina).







For a healthy and PH balanced vagina, these foods help a lot:

A healthy vagina has a naturally acidic pH level and plenty of healthy bacteria to help ward off infections. Good hygiene and several foods can help keep your vagina healthy and your pH levels balanced.

1. Kale

Kale is great for vagina health because it's rich in Vitamins C and A that helps with immunity as well as proper blood circulation.

It is great to include Kale as part of a diet or combined with other leafy greens which works to keep the vagina lubricated as well as keep itching and dryness at bay!

2. Garlic

Garlic smells funny but it's filled with anti fungal and antimicrobial nutrients that helps keep infections as well as vaginal discharges, itching/burning away from it!

Add garlic to your diets or eat it raw daily if the smell isn't a turn off.

3. Lemon

Lemons contain antioxidants that helps both vaginal health by providing a balance of the pH level and healthy vagina needs. Lemon also works to help keep infection at bay.

Drinking lemon water daily/early in the morning helps the body and by extension the vagina.

4. Yoghurt

Yoghurt -especially Greek yoghurt is great for overall vagina health as it keeps the vagina's acid level just as it should be. Yoghurt is known to provide the 'good bacteria' in the vagina.

Arts and Culture



Eze Nri

The meaning of *eze* in Igbo culture

By **Mazi Mike Odenigbo**

The Igbo term "eze" as regards to the Igbo ontology has as its nearest English equivalent the term "priest". Eze means priest (priest in this sense means those who specializes and are naturally gifted in divine matters and serves as a mediator between God/the gods and particular Igbo society). Ezeship is something that is believed to be a thing of divine gift, and never a thing to be dragged or contested for.

In a typical Igbo community setting, when things goes wrong and it's believed to be a divine matter, it is the duty of the priest as a naturally gifted expert on divine matters to intercede for the people. The ezeship has its oldest documented trace in Igbo land to Nri, which the eze nri is referenced as the religious leader of the nri traditional religion, and that is why he's presently called a priest-king.

An Eze aside his/her divine duties may also be a leader, a guide; he may preside over several gatherings (but not in the sense of an absolute monarch) and sometimes may lead the people to wars.

Over the recent years, Ezeship has been wrongly interpreted to mean kingship, and this was because of the influence and political arrangements of the British which redefined and acknowledged the ezes as traditional "rulers" (kings).

This is in order to achieve their indirect rule in the Igbo territories, and since then ezeship has been politicized removing the essential aspect of it, today it can be contested for even by those who has no divine gift of intercession.

On a probable note, it may be due to this leadership influence bestowed on ezes in most Igbo communities as the eyes of the people that the colonizers found it as being closest to the concept of kingship, and thus this was where the misinterpretation began after they were interpreted to mean kings in English language.

This misinterpretation created a problem of semantics our new Igbo generation finds it difficult to solve. Due to this misinterpretation of eze to mean king in European settings, it became a necessity for many scholars to use the term "king" in reference to the Igbo term "eze" in their academic works, and from there, the misinterpretation gained more ground especially when the medias (Nollywood), and Bible translators adopted that wrong interpretation.

In the book "Arrow of God" Achebe identified Eze ulu as the chief priest of the god, Ulu, worshipped by the six villages of Umuaro. The book begins with Ezeulu and Umuaro fighting against a nearby village, Okperi. The conflict is abruptly resolved when T. K. Winterbottom, the British colonial overseer. However, Eze ulu was a leader and was never defined as an absolute monarchy. Maybe this confusion is because of inability to distinguish between a leader and a ruler.

Some examples of different types of eze in Igbo ontology are; Eze mmuo (Ezema or Eze-mama Nsukka dialect) is a male priest of an Oracle. Eze Nwaanyi is a female priest of an Oracle (recently misinterpreted to be queen) Eze mmiri is the priest of the waters, deals with the spirit of the waters. Eze ani is the priest of the earth, deals with the deities of earth etc.

However, due to how ezeship is believed to be a thing of natural gift in expertness, the term "eze" can also be used metaphorically to designate "the gifted one" in other fields of life, example are; Eze opi; an expert in flute Eze ji; gifted in yam cultivation and harvest. Eze ike (Ezike); gifted with strength

Eze ego; gifted with money etc.

Hence, both the eze as per priesthood and eze in metaphorical sense is connected to the agwu spirit (study agwu for better understanding). It is this agwu that befalls one with these gifts and talents.

Note: ask yourself, if king means a ruler/monarch as many of you may think, then what makes you think a human can be king to the gods/spirits?

Remember there's ezearo (aro deity), ezema (maa in Nsukka is god) etc.

Also the term "Di" (Dikwu, Dibia, Diani Etc) is also equivalent to "Eze" but that would be explained another day.

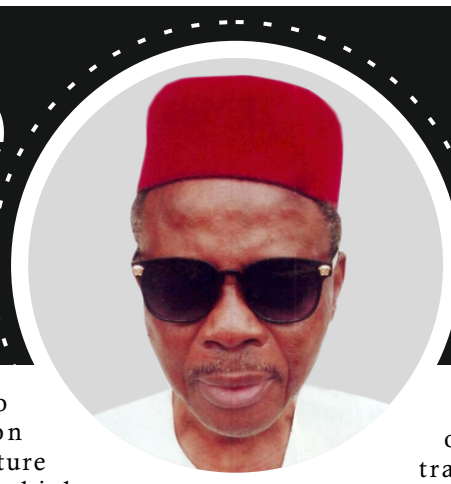
This write up is open for critics as critics are the food that grows knowledge. Let's learn together.

Column

Echoes of culture

With Dr. Chuks Osuji

Phone no: +234 803 391 9188 Email: researchcom3@gmail.com



Is there anything like a 'befitting burial'?



Funeral service

Admittedly, there are two main aspects of Igbo culture which every Igbo man cherishes, almost worships and laments over if need be. These are two core aspects of Igbo tradition and culture. These are births and deaths. Without any doubt, every Igbo family welcomes the birth of a new born baby. Although a lot of things have changed in our culture process, the admiration and hilarious celebration with which a newborn baby is welcomed cannot be over emphasized.

No matter how impoverish a husband may be, he prepares for the arrival of a new baby once his wife becomes pregnant. Why is it so, one may ask? There are two aspects of it. One is the biblical injunctions since many of us are Christians or to limited extent pagans (this is diminishing in our culture). "Go ye into the world and multiply". The second reason is traditional and cultural. Child bearing is seen as evidence of the blessing of God to a couple.

That is why a couple that has not been blessed with a child in their marriage is often thrown into confusion and indeed agony. No wonder Helen Nkume, a celebrated female artiste in one of her lyrics, lamented, "When I was looking for a child, I was willing to do anything including, if I were asked to eat a toad, I would gladly do it just to get a child." Our society is punctuated with myriads of challenges and problems which face every marriage that has not resulted in at least a child bearing.

Another group of musicians, the dynamites have lamented over the sorrowful disposition of a woman who after many years had not been able to have a child. She was exposed to series of abuses, insults and condemnation. According to the lyrics, "She was assailed with abuses, caricatures and caused, including accusation of, "a regular child eater (orinwa)." In fact, a housewife who has not been blessed with pregnancy and child bearing suffers a lot of humiliation. It is worse if her mother-in-law is alive.

It is so because on daily basis, the abuses and curses from her mother-in-law usually sends her to a spree of insults, caricature and curses in addition to her mother-in-law regularly and frequently asking her son,"why did you bring in a male into this house as a wife?" Therefore, once a couple begins matrimonial co-habitation in order for tongues not to wag, the couple will be expecting an early pregnancy from the woman.

A story was told of a father whose daughter-in-law had stayed almost 9 months without any sign of pregnancy. One evening, he sent for his son for a discussion on the issue. Of course, as we know, men are more subtle and diplomatic than mothers in-law. After asking the son to take a seat, the son was wondering the reason for such invitation from the father. After he had seated, the way the father began the conversation was very astonishing.

The father began by saying, "my son, when you asked me to lead you to your prospective in-laws to get your wife, I did with all support from my kinsmen. The young man listened with all attention and inquisitiveness. The father dropped a bomb saying, "Why did you deceive us that you were going to marry a female instead of telling us that you were going to marry your fellow male?" The son almost lost his breath as he began to sob because he could not manage the question because his father did not spare any iota of diplomacy and wisdom.

According to the story, since he could not manage the situation, he walked away from his father. So many things came to his mind because the father had added a monumental insult to an injury in the childlessness of his son's wife." Thus in every family particularly the newly married, expectations for pregnancy and a newborn baby is very high because the Igbo tradition and culture attaches high premium on the arrival of a new baby.

That is why in olden times and to a lesser extent in modern times, when a wife is pregnant she is always pampered and sometimes over pampered by the mother-in-law. And this is why during the nursing period, the wife gets everything she needs and is always given the best of foods. Correspondingly, if the woman's mother is alive, she is relocated to her in-laws house for maternity period to take care of her daughter and the new baby (Omugwo).

In some cases, after she has stayed the usual 3 months or a little more, upon her leaving, she is given a lot of items and that is why a story was told of a mother-in-law who while returning from a nursing visit from the house of her son-in-law could not be recognised by her husband at the entrance gate because the daughter took very good care of her including giving her more to make an attractive hair including the fact that she added weight and was over refreshed, her new outfit and all made her husband not recognise her at the entrance gate. This is the case in many instances. Indeed a new baby means a lot.

In the same way the birth of a child is celebrated, the death of a family member is mourned and grieved. Because the family is thrown into a prolonged period of mourning and agony. No matter the age and quality of the death, it is always a monumental loss. Therefore, as the Igbo culture welcomes a new baby into any family, so also is the death in the family indeed a lamentable thing. Unfortunately, everybody that is somebody must agree that our society has witnessed a lot of deaths between March last year and now. The rate of deaths has quadrupled beyond human comprehension.

To some who have the means to give their loved ones "befitting burial "sometimes, make the burials to look like a festival of a kind. There is no average man or woman who has not suffered the death of few members of the family, friends or relations, if not at home then at the in-laws place. Attending burial ceremonies these days have almost become a permanent featu re of o u r tradition and culture. Because on weekly basis, an average Igbo will attend one or two burial ceremonies.

Added to the fact that we are facing a severe economic crunch, many indeed in order to archieve the level of "befitting burial" go the extra mile to selling lands or make heavy borrowing. Fortunately, most of the dead in the past one year in our society were those on the advanced age bracket. This makes it imperative for members of their families to over task themselves to give their loved one a befitting burial.

Painstakingly, while immediate members of the family of the dead are struggling to give their loved ones a "befitting burial" many people who attend burial ceremonies today are those who are in want of food to eat or something to drink. In those instances, today, there is no burial ceremony today that does not attract large mourners. Of course, some are genuine mourners while others are those who are trying to cash in to help eat the available food.

Therefore, while we may do everything possible because of our tradition and culture, trying to give a "befitting burial to our departed, we must understand that indeed and in fact, there is nothing like a befitting burial. Because after every burial, there will be many who will leave with frowning faces complaining that they did not eat.

Yet, the people have over stretched themselves to achieve, a "befitting burial." The question is simple, do we have to die or commit suicide because we are trying to please the mourners many of whom can never ever be pleased? One advice is that our people must moderate their spending spree in trying to bury our loved ones. This is because after the burial, life goes on for the living and there is nothing like a befitting burial.

NOTE: I have in the last column invited scholars, students, traditional rulers, members of Eze's cabinet and others who may have any question/issue concerning Igbo tradition and culture to get in touch with me without charge for full discussion or analysis on any issue or subject. This is my own contribution to Igbo tradition and culture.

Echoes from the past

Ikeja bomb blast killed 1000:
19 years after, Nigerians still die of explosions everyday

By **Afam Echi**

Nigeria is regarded as a developing nation. Relatively speaking it can be viewed as a village when likened to developing nations in terms of sophistication. Way back in 2002 bombs and bombing were rare finds in Nigeria. That was when a building housing an armory including bombs exploded to rock the entire Lagos State and indeed Nigerians.

Today, Nigeria as part of the global village is growing in leaps and bounds. Bomb scare is no longer a strange find. It is detonated at will everywhere by evil minded people. The use of Improvised Explosive Device (IED) by the religious extremist group, Boko Haram, has almost turned Nigeria in another Pakistan. The deliberate action of the perpetrators clearly indicates their lack of respect for human lives.

The Ikeja bomb explosion of January 27, 2002 is unarguably one single catastrophe with the highest number of casualties in the history of Nigeria. The impact and lessons from the incident is mouthful.

Occurence

According to a reported account, on the afternoon of 27 January, a fire broke out in a street market being held next to the base, which was also home to the families of soldiers. At around 18:00 the fire apparently spread to the base's main munitions store, causing an enormous explosion. This blast killed many of the base staff and their families and immediately destroyed several nearby streets, flying debris starting numerous fires further afield.

Tremors from the explosion also collapsed many buildings in the area, trapping people in the ruins and starting new fires from damaged cooking appliances. These tremors were so powerful that windows shattered 15 km away and the blast could be felt more than 50 km inland.

Also thrown up by the blast were thousands of as yet unexploded military munitions, which fell in a rain of exploding shells, grenades and bullets casting further destruction across most of the northern section of the city. Thousands of people from Ikeja and neighbouring districts, seeing explosions and fires breaking out, fled their houses in an attempt to leave the affected areas.

As the streets became more and more crowded, explosions amid the fleeing crowds from shells falling from the initial explosion created panic. A stampede developed as panicking people fled in all directions, trampling those who fell underfoot. Reports also described people jumping from burning high-rise buildings and being killed in desperate attempts to cross the busy Ikeja dual carriageway

Impact

In central Lagos there is a large canal, which runs from north to south parallel to the Isolo-Oshodi expressway through the centre of the city. It borders a banana plantation, which many refugees thought might be safe from the falling shells and spreading fires. However, the canal separated the plantation from the city and was covered by water hyacinths and thus invisible in the darkness.

As the crowd surged towards the plantation, hundreds of panicking people fell into the water. Those on the bottom were crushed by yet more people falling into the waterway, and in the struggling confusion, at least 600 people were killed, many of them children. Many of these bodies drifted down the canal, some being found as far as ten kilometers from the explosion.





■ Mass burial for the victims of the Ikeja Cantonement explosion, Lagos.



■ Mass burial for the victims of the Ikeja Cantonement explosion, Lagos.

The affected areas of the city burned through most of the night, with explosions continuing to boil out of the wrecked armoury until the afternoon of 28 January. The emergency services were woefully inadequate to deal with the devastation, as there were not enough fire crews or water points available to cope with the fire, which consequently consumed large parts of the city's northern suburbs.

City hospitals were also utterly overwhelmed, many injured going for hours without any medical attention even if they did manage to reach an undamaged medical facility. The military, too, having suffered the loss of many of its Lagos-based personnel in the initial explosion, was not in a position to assume control of the city and did not appear in large numbers until late on 28 January.

At the end it was actually difficult to determine the exact death toll but the records of the Nigerian Red Cross Society indicated that over 1000 bodies were recovered and many persons declared missing were never found. Further, over 5000 were injured and about 12,000 were rendered homeless.

When President Obasanjo arrived the scene next day he demanded explanation from the military who tried to make up excuses that got Nigerians infuriated. The Red Cross Society were on hand to do their job and had their hands full. There was so much relief materials served victims and efforts were made to re-unite over 2000 families forcibly separated by the incident.

The revelation from the explosion showed that the military authorities were negligent in the management of the armoury. The popular question that played on the lips of Nigerians was why locate an armoury very close to residential areas of the state. Even as we reminisce on the incident and sympathize with the numerous victims we must not fail to remind that some government policies are still not protecting the citizens.

In some cities, some residents live under very high tension cables while some have electric cables cross over their buildings. Again, fuel stations are co-habiting with residents of some areas even when we are familiar with consequences of any untoward situation.

Nineteen years may appear so long a time but the memory still lingers for many of the victims who were impacted by the incident. While we have dusted it behind and moved on we must continue to demonstrate that lessons were actually learned to avoid a repeat.

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...Strong voice echoes the truth ISSN: 2736-0512 FRIDAY, JANUARY 29,2021 VOL. 2 NO. 12 N150

Shekau mocks new service chiefs: You'll fail like others

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Orlu crisis: Police arrest officers for molesting 5 civilians

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SPORTS

FIFA Clears aspirants for CAF Presidential Polls

Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) has cleared all four candidates aspiring for the position as president of the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

This is the prelude to the anticipated election scheduled for Rabat, Morocco on March 12.

The candidates are Jacques Bernard Daniel Anouma (Ivory Coast), Augustine Senghor (Senegal) and Ahmed Yahya of Mauritania.

Patrice Motsepe Tlhopane Motsepe (South Africa), Augustine Emmanuel Ahmad, who has been at the helm since 2017.

They are in the running to replace the beleaguered Madagascan, Ahmad

Last November, FIFA slapped him with a five-year ban for financial misconduct.

CAF is one of FIFA's biggest affiliates, with 54 members.



Lockdown breach: Ronaldo, Rodriguez 'face police probe'



Ronaldo, Rodriguez

Italian Police authorities have commenced a probe into how Juventus striker, Cristiano Ronaldo, and girlfriend Georgina Rodriguez broke the lockdown rules to enjoy a romantic blues.

Police are looking into concerns that the couple broke Italian lockdown restrictions for a night away in the Alps.

Authorities have placed a ban on travelling between regions with the Juventus star and his partner leaving Turin for a stay in Valle d'Aosta.

On Tuesday evening, Rodriguez celebrated her 27th birthday with Ronaldo in the five-star Le Massif hotel.

The couple reportedly had dinner together and spent the night before a snowmobile ride around the Alpine sights of Val Veny.

Their trip was documented on social media with snaps of the wintery retreat posted to their millions of fans.

According to La Stampa, police visited the hotel on Thursday and found it shut.

Several businesses in the holiday destination have decided to close due to the lack of visitors during the coronavirus pandemic.

It is said that Italian authorities will not be able to punish Ronaldo or Rodrigue with the 400 euro fine for unauthorized movement.

Fines must be handed out on the spot, at the moment of the breach after police questioning on why they were in the area.

The star forward could also claim to have travelled legally, with a number of necessary activities allowed by law.

Furthermore, the hotel is legally not allowed to demand the reasons behind Ronaldo's stay.

The 35-year-old is expected to be back in action for Juventus on Saturday, when the Old Lady face Sampdoria.

Azarenka dreams another Aussie Open title

Two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka is dreaming of another title in Melbourne even as launched a podcast on mentality, created during lockdown and underlining how her own changing mindset has been behind her recent resurgence

"People say 'hashtag' goals. Whatever you do, no matter what you want to do, I think that the outside judgment should never stop you from going after your dreams,."

The 31-year-old from Belarus is well placed to talk about mindset, and about challenges – she is emotional on the court, and she's passionate off it too. With well-documented issues put to one side, she has been able to flourish once again since tennis returned after suspension due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Azarenka, who claimed both her majors in back-to-back years in Melbourne heads to this year's tournament as a contender for the title once again following an unexpected run to the US Open final in September.

"I won't say I'm surprised by my run or surprised by my results. It's not that I'm not humble – I just think when people say that it's a bit of a lie!" she laughs.

"It wasn't necessarily surprising for me, but I was so grateful that all of the work I'd been doing was paying off. Now, it's like… I want to do this, do that, and let me see how I can get there. The excitement level is rising and rising."

I won't apologise for 2010 World Cup goal miss -Aiyegbeni

Former Super Eagles striker Yakubu Aiyegbeni said he would not apologise for the goal he missed at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa against South Korea.

On June 22, 2010 at the Moses Mabhida Stadium, Durban, Yakubu notably missed an open goal from three metres against South Korea in the last Group game but later went on to score a penalty.

Aiyegbeni's penalty made sure that Nigeria earned a 2–2 draw, but this was not enough for his side to progress out of the group stages.

The miss is often regarded as one of the worst misses ever in the World Cup and 'The Yak' still receives angry messages eleven years later from angry Super Eagles fans.

"I don't need to say sorry to Nigerians. I did not do it on purpose. People miss chances," Aiyegbeni fondly called Yak said.

"Even Obafemi Martins missed some chances at that World Cup but nobody talks about it.

"I have always done my best to help the country but Nigerians forget about the sacrifices I have made on their behalf.

"I played in all the games during 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup Qualifiers and scored two goals in the all-important 4-0 win at Sudan but I was still dropped by Adegboye Onigbinde before the tournament – Did anybody say I deserved to be there? I deserved to be at that World Cup."


Aiyegbeni against South Korea at the 2010 South Africa world cup

"I do not need to say sorry for that miss because nobody has come to tell me "sorry, Yak, we did not take you to the World Cup. It's the same," the second highest African goal scorer in Premier League history added.

Imo CP commends officers for winning at OSOM games

The Imo State Commissioner of Police Mr Nasiru Mohammed has assured that men of his command are ready for any sporting competition they are invited to participate in the country.

CP Mohammed who was excited at the performance of his men at the just concluded OSOM (One Service, One Medal) Games in Abuja. He made the comment in appreciation of the efforts of the Command representatives in the competition.

In the game, Sgt Nnadi Okechukwu and W/Cpl Sandra Ndukwu won three gold medals each from weightlifting and W/Cpl Osinachi Dike won a bronze medal from tennis which helped the Police team to emerge tops at the games for the first time.

Mohammed commended the officers for their dedication to duty and promised to assist the officers in their training towards becoming better in their various sporting events.

He noted the command is blessed with an able sports officer who is a world champion in Judo in the person of Supol Raphael Ubah and who has over the years prepared the men for the competitions.

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