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News

Aba stinking city: Group decries level of environmental decay

From **Nonye Udumiri, Aba**

Foundation for Environmental Rights Advocacy and Development (FENRAD) has lamented over the state of environmental decline and degradation in Abia, especially in Aba, the commercial hub of the state.

FENRAD said that the manner in which the environmental condition of Aba is deteriorating under the watch of Chief Roland Nwakamma, Deputy Director, Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA) Aba zone is worrisome charging him to sit up or resign his position.

The statement was signed by Comrade Nelson Nnanna Nwafor, Executive Director, FENRAD and Barr. Akande Femisi, Head Corporate Accountability and Human Rights, Enforcement and made available to News Echo.

According to FENRAD, "The Foundation called on Chief Roland Nwakamma to sit up as his task is demanding or honourably step aside if he cannot handle this task as Aba people are paying sanitation fees without any value for same."

The foundation demands an urgent recovery of the Enyimba City, stressing that as an environmental rights group, FENRAD is concerned that the environmental regime under Chief Roland Nwakamma has recently gotten only worse whether in the rainy or dry season.

"According to a recent citywide assessment made in Aba by the group, many major roads in Aba now host refuse and have become dumping sites.

"Port Harcourt Road leads the pack in this ugly situation with places like the famous Crystal Park Hotel, National High School Aba nearly inaccessible, even on foot.

"Ngwa Road by Mosque; Aba-Owerri Road along Union Bank Junction and Immaculate Heart Avenue Aba; Azikiwe Road by Asa; Obohia and many other strategic Roads - to name just a few - in the city now have in them specks of dirt and rubbish heaps in reeking state of putrefaction."

The right group condemned the dirty condition of Aba, adding that infectious diseases spread quickly even as pathogens and microbes thrive in an unhygienic environment especially in this era of pandemic and other epidemics like cholera.

FENRAD also called on the Abia State Ministry of Environment to, as a matter of urgency, up its game in ensuring that environmental inspection, tips and awareness are carried out in Aba and its environs to remedy the situation and also serve as a robust environmental action.

The foundation said that the budgetary numbers assigned to the ministry of the environment must count and not just for writing sake.

FENRAD also called on the Aba zone ASEPA DG, Nwakamma to take action towards mitigating environmental abuse and disaster in the city of Aba.

"It is pertinent to note that while it could be said that Aba residents need a reorientation that provides the right presence of mind and attitudinal change towards the environment, such is not happening in the city nor in the state where the governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, rode to office based on his outstanding achievements as head of environmental protection agency."

FENRAD expressed worries that contrary to the cliché "cleanliness is next to godliness," Abia, known as "God's Own State," is losing (if it has not lost entirely) any godliness that cleanliness affords.

"God's own state cannot exist under this form of decay. At this rate, FENRAD said, investors, holidaymakers, tourists and all manner of visitors to the state may have a rethink and shelve visiting, not to talk of planting any enterprise therein."

FENRAD however called on Aba residents to follow the path of environmental discipline because the environment itself is a common good that affects not only the state or nation but the entire universe.

"Marketplaces, like Azikiwe/Asa where Shopping Centre is located, are usually untidy during and after market hours with detritus and specks of dirt as gutters there brim with plastics and other nonbiodegradable waste. The same goes for Ariaria, Ahiaohuru and Cemetery markets.

"While the market unions are partly to blame, we could not establish any record of an interface between the unions and the Agency. This is condemnable as Aba and Abia are becoming objects of ridicule among other cities and states.

"We regret that receptacles and collectors are filled with domestic waste for days without any ASEPA worker on hand to convey same to where they could be treated or burnt. When they manage to come, some of their waste trucks still litter the streets from collection to tipping points.

"Aba is now recording the worst environmental regime if something is not done to salvage this. On the industrial waste sector, many factories today channel bad and wastewater or industrial effluent into rivers destroying aquatic lives and denying locals access to water whose actions are not being challenged."

Bishop urges youth to deploy music for job creation, national peace

From **Dan Maduagwu, Umuahia**

The President of Vision Africa Radio, Bishop Sunday Onuoha has urged Nigerian youths to apply their musical creativities to promote peace in the country.

Onuoha, who is a Bishop of Methodist Church Nigeria, made the call in Umuahia during the grand finale of 8th edition of annual Vision Africa Icon Reality show, held at Michael Okpara auditorium, tagged Peace to the Nation.

The clergy explained that the music reality show was used to promote peace and unity in the country, adding that it was designed to project the talented participants unto global stage.

Earlier in his remarks, the Chairman of the occasion, Prof. Bassey Udo stressed that the high rate of crime in the country could be checkmated if youths utilise their creativity.

Udo who charged the youths to appropriate their creativity in building the nation, made it clear that only the fear of God would propel their visions.

He commended Bishop Sunday Onuoha for his talent-hunting initiative and urged governments at all levels as well as wealthy individuals in the society to emulate the Methodist Bishop.

The reality music show star price was won by Master Onuma Nelson Chukwubuikem who smiled home with prize of N500,000 (Five hundred thousand naira) while the two runner-ups also cruised home with handsome financial rewards and free music recording contracts respectively.

Secretary to Abia State government, Barr. Chris Ezem, Head of Service of Abia State, Sir Onyii Wamah, State Commissioners and legislators attended the event.

Consumers lament hike of cooking gas

By **Grace Ofurum**

Following the incessant hike in LPG commonly known as cooking gas, consumers have decried the high cost of cooking gas.

News Echo reports that before now a kg of gas was sold at 350 naira. This has further doubled as it's been sold between 750 and 800 naira. 12.5 kg now sells between 8000-9000 naira.

This hike according to report has brought untold hardship to the users. People wonder what could be the cause as no reasonable answer has been given as the cause for the hike.

According to the NLNG, the demand of liqiudfied gas has increased, though it said that the company has produced over 450,000 metric tons of gas whereas the marketers were able to purchase over 350, 000 metric tons which is as a result of infrastructural and logistics challenges. NLNG through its spokesman said it's supply however falls below the demand rate as some percentage of gas is been imported.

Speaking to newsmen in Owerri, a housewife who gave her name as Amara said that the situation is horrible especially that government is doing nothing about the hardship people are going through. She called on the government to intervene to make life easier.

She hinted that if nothing is done to reduce the price of gas, consumers might resort to alternative and cheaper means of cooking for those who may not afford the current prices.

Anglican Bishops laud Ugwuanyi on development strides

From Chuma Austin, Enugu

The Bishop of Nike Diocese (Anglican Communion), Enugu, Rt. Rev. Christian Onyeka Onyia, his predecessor, Rt. Rev. Prof. Evans Ibeagha (Rtd.) and the Bishop of Jalingo Diocese (Anglican Communion), Taraba State, Rt. Rev. Foreman Nedison, have lauded Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State for developing the state, especially the peaceful coexistence in the state.

The clerics made the commendation during the Thanksgiving Service heralding the installation of Hon. Justice Harold Obiajunwa Eya of the Enugu State High Court as the Chancellor of the Diocese of Nike (Anglican Communion) held at The Cathedral Church of St Cyprian, Abakpa-Nike, Enugu.

The Bishops in their separate prayers for the governor asked God to continue to bless, guide and protect him to successfully complete his tenure in grand style, stressing that the peace he has entrenched in Enugu State is highly treasured by the church and residents of the state.

In his remarks, the Bishop of Nike Diocese (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev. Onyia pointed out that Governor Ugwuanyi, who entered the church unannounced, respects God, saying: "When the message was ongoing, our governor quietly walked in and sat down unlike others who will make noise and distract the church sermon".

Applauding the governor's exemplary leadership and disposition to God, Bishop Onyia urged him to keep it up as "the Lord will continue to uplift you in your future endeavours".

On his part, the Bishop of Jalingo Diocese (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev. Nedison, prayed to God that "you (Ugwuanyi) will end your tenure successfully and in grand style and be lifted up to the glory of God".

Appreciating Ugwuanyi for the peace enjoyed in the state, the immediate past Bishop of Nike Diocese (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev. Ibeagha, prayed fervently that the peace the state is enjoying presently will continue to be enjoyed after the governor's tenure.

He thanked the governor for attending the event in spite of his tight schedule, stressing it was an indication that he respects and honours God.

In his speech, Justice Eya expressed gratitude to God for his successful installation as Chancellor of Diocese of Nike (Anglican Communion), saddled with the responsibility of handling all legal issues concerning the Diocese.

News

Ebubeagu arrests 15 suspected criminals in Ebonyi

From **David Eze, Abakaliki**

The Ebubeagu security outfit has arrested fifteen (15) suspected hoodlums for allegedly terrorizing the innocent citizens of Abakaliki metropolis and involvement in other various crimes in the state.

The Special Assistant to Ebonyi state governor on Internal Security, Mr. Eze Ikechukwu Patrick who disclosed this to newsmen in Abakaliki said the suspects were arrested during a stop and search operation carried out by the Ebubeagu security outfits in the various streets of Abakaliki metropolis.

He further claimed that suspects were arrested with locally made gun and have been handed over to the commissioner of police Ebonyi state command for further investigation and action.

According to him, "Those boys were the major suspects that were terrorizing the state and we apprehended them with a locally made rifle.

When contacted for confirmation, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ebonyi state command, DSP Loveth Odah said, "I am not aware that Ebubeagu handed over suspects. They may have arrested and handed over to the police but I'm not aware as the spokesperson of the police command" she stated.

Rivers Police recovers decomposed body of kidnapped retired military officer

From Godson Nwosu, PH

The decomposed body of a retired Military Captain, identified as Godfrey Zalamac who was kidnapped and killed by his abductors has been recovered by Rivers State Police Command led by Commissioner of Police Friday Eboka.

Three suspects arrested in connection to the incident led the police officers and military personnel to a forest within a new layout off Igboo Etche where the victim was kidnapped and killed to recover the carcass of the victim.

The Rivers state police commissioner, Friday Eboka who addressed newsmen at the scene of the incident said although the police were not informed about the kidnap nearly a month, but that the suspects were arrested few weeks after the kidnap was reported to them based on intelligence report.

CP Eboka said the victim who hailed from Benue state was abducted around Agboncha in Eleme Local Government and brought to the forest.

The Rivers State Police boss however advised members of the public to always contact the police whenever there are cases of kidnap and other forms of insecurity to enable the police act promptly.

Two of the suspects including Frank Ishia and Gumba Okparaji admitted to committing the crime.

They said their intentions was to collect ransom of two hundred million naira which they demanded from him, but shot his leg when he began being stubborn. They expressed regrets at their actions, saying it was orchestrated by the devil.

The remains of the retired captain was picked up in parts and handed over to the family for proper burial.

Anambra election: Umahi denies challenging result in court

From David Eze, Abakaliki

Governor David Umahi of Ebonyi State has denied statement credited to him alleging that he rejected the outcome of last Saturday Anambra governorship election and threatened to seek redress in Court.

Umahi in a statement issued by his Special Assistant media and Publicity, Francis Nwaze in Abakaliki described the comment as fake and the handiwork of mischief makers while urging the public to disregard such frivolous statement.

According to the statement: "Our attention has been drawn to an infantile Facebook post on the timeline of one Chijinkem, alleging that the Governor of Ebonyi State, Engineer David Umahi declared that the last Saturday's gubernatorial election in Anambra was fret with irregularities".

"The poster equally implied that the Governor rejected the outcome on behalf of the All Progressives Congress, APC, and people of Anambra State and threatened to seek redress".

"Ordinarily, we wouldn't have bothered responding to the ill-fated post by the attention-seeking fellow but we have elected to clear the doubt of some discerning minds".

"The Governor David Umahi, at no point, made such remarks about the Anambra State gubernatorial election".

"It is, however, uncomplimentary to imagine governoship speaking on behalf of the standard-bearer of the APC and a party that has a full-fledged structure, moreover, in an election that its outcome has not been concluded by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)".

"We also like to use this medium to remind the poster and other Social Media purveyors of fake news that the State Law on fake news is very much in place to deal with potential recalcitrants".

"The general public is advised to ignore the post as it did not emanate from the Governor of Ebonyi State". The statement stated.

Lawmaker extends free medical treatment to over 2,758 patients

From Chuma Austin, Enugu

Succor came to the way of 2,758 patients in Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State yesterday as a member of House Representatives, Rt. Hon. Toby Okechukwu, extended his medical outreach to them.

The villagers received treatments during the recent free medical outreach organised by the member representing Aninri/Awgu/Orji River Federal Constituency, Hon. Okechukwu.

The outreach which held at Awgu Local Government Area, Enugu State witnessed a large turnout of rural dwellers.

The flag off of this year's event at the UNTH Outpost Ugbo in Awgu featured such services as eye treatment and surgery, free gynecological check up and surgeries, fibroid, Hernia, appendix and others, all handled by specialist doctors.

Speaking prior to the event, Hon.Toby Okechukwu stated that his reason for hosting the free medical outreach annually was because of his belief that health is wealth and was ready to do anything in his reach to ensure that his people live a healthy life.

The lawmaker said there are some interventions needed to be carried out to help those in the rural communities who may have health challenges but do not have the fund to solve their health problems "though we cannot help everyone at the same time."

"This is to complement the efforts of the state government regarding health care. And it's deliberately meant to be done in rural communities. This has been done in Achi Joint Hospital, it has also been done in Cottage Hospital Nenwe and also been done in Awgu General Hospital, and Ihe and we are doing it to spread across our communities to make sure that it has the right impact.

"Today we are here at Ugbo and the UNTH health care workers are going to test this facility as they have gotten an outpost for this area and for rural communities.

Speaking on his expectations for the outpost, he said "Our expectation is that it will be properly equipped as a hospital so that instead of going to UNTH in town people can come here, see medical doctors, see pharmacists, and see nurses and receive adequate healthcare.

The team leader of 'Doctors On The Move', Dr. Joseph Haruna Kigbu said that this is not their first time of working with Hon. Toby Okechuukwu as they have worked with him for the past 7 years.

On some of the works they did this year in the outreach, he said "We've given out free glasses for those who have eye problems requiring eye glass, and helped those with bigger eye sight problems such as glycoma. "We have also perfumed several surgeries in this past 3 days for people with health issues such as appendicitis and fibroid, and all these are being done by our specialist doctors.



Anambra Deputy Speaker, Pascal Agbodike addressing Journalists

EDITORIAL

Anambra election: Embracing spirit of sportsmanship

Now that a winner has emerged in the Anambra governorship election, it behooves the major and minor political parties that contested the election to extend their hand of sportsmanship to the winner and resolve to work with him.

The essence of having many political parties in an election is to enable electorate make informed choices of the leader they want especially that, at any point in time, one leader must emerge.

While the Anambra governorship election has come and gone, with about four major political parties/contestants in the upper count of the votes, they must not delay and drag the needed development that tends to drive to the state by unnecessary court cases.

The electorate has taken their decision at the polls and the early that political decision is allowed/respected for even development, the better for all and sundry.

Nothing drags a state down more, than unnecessary court cases that do not bring any progressive insurance and assurance to the state. Both the complainants and respondents will be trapped in the web of the jurisprudence at the expense and detriment of the stability of the state.

When development comes to a state, the utmost beneficiary is not the leaders but the led and it is about time, we understood that and keep that court file away and work with the new governor in Anambra for collective and endearing development of the state. This can only happen when the spirit of camaraderie is evident.

There's no explanation that the electorate of Anambra didn't vote their choice. Despite the towering personalities of all the candidates at the Anambra governorship election, the citizens have weighed the options upon which their choice of who leads them manifested at the poll.

One thing that must coast home in Anambra is the fact that despite the huge security threat, the people dared the situation, came out and voted for their choice. That action of courage alone should be commended.

News Echo therefore calls on the candidates of the just concluded governorship election to extend hand of fellowship and develop the state with the new governor.

The development lane upon which Anambra cruises must not be stalled by unnecessary court cases. More can be done by imbibing the spirit of sportsmanship and collaborative effort aimed at further distributing basic social amenities to the 21 local government areas of the state. This is better than litigative distraction.

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To pioneer new ways to serve the public and provide credible reports across all media platforms.

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To inspire and promote exceptional journalism, innovation and excellence through a quality newspaper which is reliable and accountable.

Opinion

Rotten Nation, Dying people



Magufuli


Buhari


Macron

By **Bright C. J. Okereke**

Almost every Nigerian knows and rightly too, that in the past two decades or more, this era, has topped the rating as the nation's worst experience.Apart, from the years of the Nigeria Civil war and the inglorious era of Late General Sani Abacha; this present era, under the watch of a retired military general, Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari, is counting as the darkest, of the post Independence, Nigeria. An era that has forced the citizenry, through vicious and horrendous degrees of terrifying experiences; ranging from excessive deprivations of fundamental human rights to untold humiliations, massive economic woes and human annihilation, synonymous to the devastating treatment of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzer to the Israelites. Frankly, this administration is gradually wearing the semblance of the inglorious and dehumanizing leadership of Saddam Hussien of old Iraq, who was demystified and decimated by United States troops, under the watch of George Bush Jnr. Leaders of unblessed memory, who brought shame and disrepute to their generations. A leader, that caused his people untold trauma that adversely affected their physical and psycho mental personalities. Even, at no provocation, he treated citizens agonizing death sentence.But! Can't we have leader leaders with right frame of mind, high degree of moral rectitude with respect for God and humanity, Leaders who can deliver justice, peace and fairness to the people, those who have concern for the people's lives and wellbeing; I mean, the likes of John Magufuli of Tanzania, who died just a few months back, leaving giant strides as legacy, Emmanuel Macron of France and Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. Haba! Leaders, who build bridges and respect for the sanctity of human life.This era, have had peoples' lives frequently cut-off in cold blood, as a result of total collapse of law and order, as well the absolute collapse of security and its operational support chain; many Nigerians have lost their lives ruthlessly in armless civil protest aimed at reawakening the dead conscience of the nation's leadership, which has lost its sense of direction and submerge into a high grade of crass that encourage nepotism, ethnic divisiveness and egocentrism. Protests that seek to caution the government against its gross display of tyrannical tendencies resulting from suspected feats of paranoia which exposes the government's ineptitude are met with terror and inhuman treatment from the government.This era has canonized banditry, terrorism and kidnapping, because it is coming from the Fulani herdsmen and vilified civil requests because it came from the other tribes.Nigeria, has became a place, where someone who abducts and or kills thousands of people, unsuspecting students, villagers and farmers; request for negotiations and peace talks with their families yet they are seen as bandits and not terrorist. Could it be that in Nigeria banditry is no longer a criminal offence that an Islamic Cleric, Gumi is no speaking for them?Frankly, the consequences of this embarrassing maladministration is blood curdling and the fear of a anarchy is gradually taking control of the peoples' psyche; even the media gets muffled as dissent brutality and mayhem is censured. And, very unfortunately, some State governor copying and trying this trending evil.Indeed, the situation is getting messier, scary and terrifying; but, who do we run to and where do we go?

Education



Get ready for possible hike in school fees, ABSU VC hints students



The Vice Chancellor, Abia State University Uturu (ABSU), Professor Onyemachi Ogbolu, has hinted of possible upward review of school fees in the institution to reflect the current economic realities.

Professor Ogbolu who gave the hint at a pre-convocation press briefing said that the current fees were no longer sustainable as the cost of running the university is becoming increasingly huge.

He noted that a situation where Medicine & Surgery students of the university pay N112,000 as school fees per session whereas their counterparts in neighbouring universities pay up to N3 million, is becoming unsustainable.

The VC appealed to parents and guardians as well as other stakeholders to understand the plight of the university and adjust their minds for the eventual fee hike if the university should continue to serve optimally.

He however noted that the proposal might be jettisoned if the institution gets someone to subsidise the fees.

Professor Ogbolu sympathized with parents and guardians but argued that for the university to deliver quality education to its students it needs funding.

"Let's start preparing for the adjustment of our fees to reflect the current realities. We pay N112,000 per session for Medicine and Surgery students but elsewhere they pay N3 million.

"Some of our students pay N45,000 to N90,000 as school fees. These fees were set about 15-20 years ago and they are no longer sustainable because we all go to the same market to shop for lecturers."

The VC who assumed duty last December said his administration was exploring opportunities to expand the academic programmes of the institution.

He hinted at plans to introduce Aeronautic Engineering, Dentistry, Community Health among others to meet the admission requests from applicants.

The VC also disclosed that the federal government had indicated interest to partner the university to expand its discovery on geo-mapping of covid-19 pandemic.

He disclosed that 5,712 students would be graduating at the 27th and 28th convocation ceremony scheduled for Friday November 12.

According to him, 29 students made the first-class list while others made different categories of marks.

On the welfare of staff, the VC said his administration with the support of the State Government was making efforts to defray salary arrears and pay workers at the end of every month.

According to the VC, former Chairman of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief Nnia Nwodo would deliver a pre-convocation lecture entitled: " Nigeria Political and Economic Future: The Dangers We Can Avert".

He also said that some distinguished Nigerians including the Chairman of Air Peace, Chief Allen Nwachukwu; Nnamdi Ezeigbo of Slot Systems; and Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor would be conferred with an honorary doctorate degree at the event.

Similarly, some eminent professors in the university including former VC, Professor S. O Igwe; Professor G. I Nwaka; and Professor A. I Nwabughogu (posthumous) would be conferred with professor emeritus.

Parents groan, beg UNIMED to reduce school fees

Parents of students of the University of Medical Sciences, Ondo, Ondo State, have appealed to the management of the institution to have a downward review of the school fees, which was recently increased to more than 100 per cent.

The management of the university recently announced a new fee for the fresh students.

In a statement, the institution now charged over two million for the non-indigene students while indigenes would be paying over 1.5 million for medical programmes.

The students going for other programmes of the institution would also pay the newly increased fees.

Some of the parents of the affected student who spoke with our correspondent, urged the state governor Mr Rotimi Akeredolu to look into the matter to avoid drop-out of students whose parents could not afford the new fees.

Mr Gbenga Amoo, whose child had already been offered admission by the university, said the new fee was too outrageous for the parents to afford. He called on the school management to have a review of the development.

He said, "We don't have option than to beg the school to review the new fees. We all know the state of this country economically, how things are very difficult for many people because there is no money. I will appeal to Governor Rotimi Akeredolu, to consider the masses. How many people can afford that money? That is why we will continue to beg the government to look into it to allow our children have access to the university education. "

Another parent, Mrs Funmilayo Owolabi, in her own view, complained about the disparity in the fees to be paid by the indigenous and non-indigenous students of the school.

She said difference in the payment between indigenes and non-indigenes was not too much in other states.



KWASU lecturer docked in Ilorin over alleged sexual harassment, exam malpractice

Pelumi Adewole, a lecturer in the Kwara State University, KWASU, Malete, on Tuesday appeared before a Magistrate's Court over alleged intimidation, sexual harassment and examination malpractices.

He was arrested by operatives of the State Intelligence Bureau, SIB.

The offences according to the First Information Report, FIR, contravened Sections 397, 95 of the Penal Code Law and Section 3(320) of the Examination Malpractices Act CAP E 15 Law of the Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004.

Adewole, was, however, granted bail in the sum of N200,000 by the presiding Magistrate, Ibrahim Mohammed.

The FIR, stated among others that a student of the Department of Pure and Applied Science, in the institution, Adegunsoye Faith Tosin wrote a petition, dated October 15, 2021.

In the petition, the student alleged that sometime in September 2021, Adewole, a lecturer assigned to teach her a course MLS 212 Cell and Molecular Biology, called her and threatened to fail her in her forthcoming exams if she refused to have sex with him.

Following the threat by the lecturer, the police instructed Adegunsoye to play along with him in order to obtain raw evidence.

The lecturer then lured the student into his bedroom at about 8.30p.m at Taoheed Road, Basin area of Ilorin.

The lecturer, gave her a new question paper and answer script of KWASU to rewrite her exams with a promise to have sexual intercourse with her till day break

Unknown to the randy lecturer, detectives of the SIB who were hiding at a distant location apprehended him in the act.

Although, he confessed to the allegations during investigation, Adewole however, later denied them in his remarks.

Police prosecutor, Nasiru Yusuf, in his submission, informed the court that the offences were not bailable and that sexual harassment was now rampant in the society.

Nasiru, therefore urged the court to deny the suspect bail.

Lead defence counsel, Barrister A.J.Opalekunde, urged that the defendant is still presumed innocent until proven guilty and sought bail for the suspect.

Magistrate Ibrahim, in his ruling, granted the accused bail and adjourned the case till December 8,2021, for further mention.

Education



Reps pass Buhari's bill raising teachers' retirement age



The House of Representatives, on Tuesday, passed an executive bill that seeks to raise the retirement age of teachers in Nigeria.

The passage followed consideration of the report on the bill by the Committee of the Whole on Tuesday.

The President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.), had on June 2, 2021, sent the executive bill to the Senate and the House, seeking to increase the retirement age for teachers in the country from 60 to 65 years. It also seeks to extend the years of service for teachers from 35 to 40 years.

Buhari, in the letter addressed to President of the Senate, Ahmad Lawan; and Speaker of the House, Femi Gbajabiamila, respectively, explained that the piece of legislation would provide for a harmonised retirement age for teachers in Nigeria.

The letter read in part, "Transmission of the Harmonised Retirement Age for Teachers in Nigeria Bill 2021 to the National Assembly for consideration

"Pursuant to Section 58 subsection 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), I forward herewith the harmonised retirement age for teachers in Nigeria Bill, 2021 for consideration by the Senate.

"The harmonised retirement age for teachers in Nigeria bill 2021 seeks to increase the retirement age for teachers from 60 to 65 years, and also increase the possible years of service from 35 to 40 years.

"While appreciating your usual expeditious consideration of this submission, please, accept, Distinguished Senate President, the assurances of my highest consideration."

FG using JAMB surplus to fund varsities, polytechnics, says spokesperson

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board has vowed to continue its practice of remitting its operating surpluses to the government, saying the funds are used to manage universities, polytechnics, and other tertiary institutions.

The spokesperson of the board, Fabian Benjamin, said this in a statement on Monday.

According to Benjamin, the board does not believe in holding on to surpluses and hence remits it to the Federal Government.

"Recall that the humongous remittances are the first in the history of the four-decade-old agency. The first landmark remittance was made in 2017, and the feat was repeated in subsequent years, in line with its belief that rules are made to be obeyed and, at any rate, the board does not believe it should hold onto money that does not belong to it,"

The statement added, "In addition, it might also interest the public to know that never in the history of tertiary institutions in Nigeria have the institutions benefited from the board's operations as they now do."

He added that the board would continue its practice of remitting the constitutionally-mandated proportion of its operational surpluses, in line with the extant government's directive on the remittances.

"For instance, a huge chunk of these surpluses are ploughed back to the tertiary institutions through the National Tertiary Admissions Performance Merit Award and other platforms.



Kola Daisi installed chancellor, donates N1bn to varsity



The Basorun of Ibadan, Chief Kola Daisi, has announced the donation of N1bn as his initial subscription to the KolaDaisi University Endowment Fund.

Daisi, made the announcement in his address after his installation as the first chancellor of the university at its maiden convocation held in Ibadan.

He said the university had been growing at a remarkable pace, saying he hoped it would, in no distant future, become like the Harvard and other Ivy League Universities.

Daisi said, "I believe that an educated society is essential to a successful democracy and in this era of technology, it is very certain that, probably, as much as 70 per cent of jobs in our future economy will require university education.

"To commemorate this occasion and especially so as to attain the competitiveness and distinction that I envisage, a special Endowment Fund has been established for the KDU. I hereby wish to subscribe the sum of o1bn as my initial subscription to the university's Endowment Fund."

The Vice Chancellor of KDU, Prof. Adeniyi Olatunbosun, said the university produced graduates with First Class out of the 52 graduates.

He urged the fresh graduates to be good ambassadors of the university, saying they had been primed with what they needed to succeed.

The Vice President, Prof.Yemi Osinbajo, who delivered the convocation lecture advised the graduates and other youths to take the advantage available on the Internet to further equip themselves with useful skills.

He urged them to always prepare themselves ahead for opportunities and to imbibe the policy of honesty and self-discipline which he said were critical factors to their success in life and business.

Osinbajo said, "You are graduating at the most advanced moment in human history. The smartphone you have in your hands today has more computing power than in the Apollo Spacecraft that took man to the moon in July of 1969.

"Let me assure you that there is plenty of hope; there are more opportunities available for success now than ever before. There is a whole new world of opportunity especially with the Internet and digital technology."

Politics

Anambra voters answered but INEC faltered









By **Azuka Onwuka**

It was heart-melting to see elderly people and physically challenged people in Anambra State coming out last Saturday to vote. Before the November 6, 2021 gubernatorial election in Anambra State, the fear many people had was that insecurity and fear could work against the conduct of the election. It was feared that many people would choose to remain indoors for fear of the unknown and that the unknown gunmen could strike at different parts of the state, creating more fear among the people.

The first signal that things could go bad was that though the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra announced a cancellation of the seven-day sit-at-home order scheduled to start on Friday, November 5, it was still held in the five states of the South-East of Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive. That had been the response to such cancellations. Many people had been attacked for venturing out on days that were said not to be a sit-at-home day following an announcement by IPOB. Consequently, the fear of coming out even after such cancellation had been the beginning of wisdom.

Since most people did not come out on Friday despite the cancellation of the sit-at-home order, it was feared that the next day – which was election day – would see most people not coming out to vote. There were even fears that the electoral officers might also be afraid to come out on election day.

Interestingly, on election day, Anambra voters surprised all permutations by coming out to vote. Voters of all ages came out. Secondly, there was peace in Anambra on the day of the election. There were no attacks by unknown gunmen.

The irony came from a different source: the Independent National Electoral Commission. The first deficiency was that INEC officials did not arrive at the venues of the election on time. According to Yiaga Africa, INEC officials only arrived early in 17 per cent of the polling units. There are 5,720 polling units spread across the 21 Local Government Areas of Anambra State.

The second was that there were glitches with the electoral machines which caused delays and frustration among the voters, thereby disenfranchising many voters. The major cause of the problem was the Bimodal Voter Authentication System, which malfunctioned in many voting centres. However, many of the voters waited patiently for several hours before voting. The candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance, Prof Chukwuma Soludo, for example, had to wait for over five hours before voting. Many had to go home and return repeatedly to know if the BVAS had started functioning. Many could not vote on Saturday, which made INEC announce an extension of voting till the next day.

As if that was not enough, INEC could not declare the winner of the election by Sunday as had been the tradition. By Sunday evening INEC had announced the result of the election in 19 LGAs out of the 21. Soludo of the APGA had won 17 LGAs, while Mr. Valentine Ozigbo of the Peoples Democratic Party won one LGA and Dr. Ifeanyi Ubah of the Young Progressives Party also won one LGA. Initially, the result from Orumba North could not be announced because of some discrepancies. On the other hand, there was no election in Ihiala LGA because of some threats. Consequently, an election that was supposed to have been completed over the weekend would remain inconclusive for some time.

Therefore, while the voters played their role of coming out to vote and churning violence, INEC that had repeatedly claimed that it was ready for the election failed to keep its side of the bargain. The implication is that suspension will prevail in Anambra until the election is completed. This is not tidy. It creates fears and suspicion that underground plans are in the offing to deny the people's choice victory. This is something that Anambra does not need, especially at a time like this when it is still battling to shake off the insecurity that was unleashed on it by the activities of unknown gunmen.

Eventually, around midnight, INEC announced the result from Orumba North LGA. The candidate of APGA won it again, making it 18 LGAs for him, while his two opponents from PDP and YPP still had one LGA each. INEC also announced that there would be a supplementary election in Ihiala LGA on Tuesday, November 9. This put everything concerning the election on hold. The jubilation by the winners is on hold. The lamentation by the losers is on hold. The burden of deciding who rules Anambra in the next four years has been put on the shoulders of Ihiala voters.

Hitherto, the security operatives in Anambra State have been commended for maintaining the peace by keeping off the politics of the state. There was a deployment of about 35,000 police officers to Anambra State. Because of this huge deployment, those that had carried out attacks under the vague name of unknown gunmen were smart enough to suspend all attacks. In addition, to the relief of many people, there was no report of security operatives intimidating voters or helping some people to snatch ballot boxes or chasing party officials away from the collation centre. They stayed at strategic spots in each community and allowed the free flow of movement.

It is expected that the security operatives would maintain their neutrality in the supplementary election. People have already seen the trend of the election. Because of the need to be part of those who will decide who will be the next governor of Anambra State, more people will come out to vote today, Tuesday. All the top four candidates and parties will make efforts to win voters to their side. Some will attempt to use illegal means to get more votes. For some politicians, the logic is that one should win an election by all means first and leave it to the court to adjudicate if the election was actually won or rigged. Those who think like this believe that courts can use technicalities to ratify electoral results obtained by fraudulent means. The duty of the security operatives should be to ensure that nobody uses violence or illegal means to achieve electoral advantage. If they do it successfully, they will be commended. On a final note, Anambra people have pleasantly surprised many people by their actions regarding November 6, 2021. They have shown their resilience and independent-mindedness. INEC and the Federal Government should fulfil their own side of the bargain.

The Afficionado's Side

With Nnamdi Elekwachi
Phone: 07031976008



Government must defend citizens against insurgency, banditry



We do not need any diagnosis to tell away the fact that Nigeria is plagued with terrorism - whether the domestic or the transborder type - as all the clinical manifestations of terror are themselves there for all to see, even the blind. But the major challenge for Nigeria is in her poor management of her own self-inflicted condition of terror - both domestic and transborder - which, though, now metastasizing, she has been living with for years, the latest of which, due to her incurable love for a neutral trope has remained in the lexical confines of the term "banditry."

In the transborder sector, Nigeria, in the Lake Chad Basin, battles with Boko Haram, Ansaru fundamentalists (whose activities are now ebbing), Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and other fundamentalist sects in that "axis of evil." Nigeria, however, in the face of terror, takes a conciliatory approach instead: forgiving and reintegrating "repentant" terrorists. On the domestic front, Nigeria is confronted with terror-related attacks by armed Fulani herders, "bandits" and recently separatists. My focus here, in this piece, is on the bandits whose activities, though known in various parlance, are not given a proper designation.

Occupying the forest axes of Katsina, Kaduna and large sprawling vast ungoverned spaces of Nigeria's Northwest, bandits, whose activities include kidnap for ransom, coordinated attacks on security installations and personnel (like that seen at the nation's premier military degree-awarding institution, NDA), maiming and killing of defenseless citizens and gunning down military fighter jets, now administer taxes in their own controlled spaces and portions within Nigeria. What that should tell us, ordinarily, is that the state that is Nigeria is failing and a state within a state emerging therefrom in the form of non-state actors who always act when state actors and all institutions of state fail. For the sake of emphasis: taxation constitutes one of the ways of maintaining governance presence over an administered area and is therefore one of the legitimate ways a government establishes its authority within her territorial spaces effectively. If a non-state actor assumes such role, it means government has failed or is failing, if not entirely absent. So, having stated this, I refused to be schooled by Lai Mohammed!

For any group to gun down, using sophisticated weapons such as surface-to-air missile, a nation's military (not civilian) jet with such precision and boldly come out to accept responsibility for such aerial attack is not only an act of war but a clear declaration of it against that government to which the military and the jet belong. And for any entity that cherishes to be called a government, it requires a strategic approach, perhaps a more devastating attack on the position and location of such enemy, a kind that does not only counter but degrades it permanently or largely. Let it also be known that, by international law standard, highjacking of an aeroplane itself tantamounts to terrorism, not to talk of gunning a nation's military jet fighter down. But Nigeria remains silent and fails to call terror by its name! Worse is that it is now claimed in many quarters, including in the foreign media spaces, that Nigeria, rather than take war to bandits in their hideouts takes fat ransom thereto; a certain report - to which the Nigeria Air force has already issued a refutation - made the rounds, claiming that a princely 20 million in sum was given to the bandits to shelve an attack against the president's jet.

What troubles one even the more is that among the members of the Buhari-led cabinet, against whose government the said attack was targeted and launched, is this apparent lack of synergy or parity on what the activities of these nihilists are or constitute. To the minister of information, Lai Mohammed, it does mean no more than "common criminals" collecting taxes from motorists and by extension other road users as seen in other parts of the country (seemingly the South). This comparison draws one to that by the nation's Chief Law Officer which likened the activities of armed, sanguinary, killer herders to those of automobile spare parts dealers. Such categorisations show us where the bread of the government in office is buttered, especially when viewed against the background that it was with a largely uncommon immediacy that our military - even when it was not within their constitutional sphere - declared unarmed ragtag group of banner-waving IPOB members terrorists after its ignoble operation codenamed "Python Dance II", in a face-saving denialism which a court has helped to sustain. Still on the plane of confusion for the government at the centre, Garba Shehu, media aide to the president properly calls the activities of bandits' terrorism, contradicting the position of Lai Mohammed. Both Garba Shehu and Lai Mohammed are spokespersons, each in a sense - the former to the president and the latter to his government. That both officials are at conflict with what the activities of the bandits constitute is revealing of the fact that Buhari's entire cabinet and officials may be at divergence, and not at convergence, over what is plaguing Nigeria's Northwest.

The confusion is not only what we see among government officials who squabble over what the terrorism is or is not, but that we have in Sheikh Ahmad Abubakar Gumi, an armchair diplomat who allegedly operates the government's back channel with the bandits telling us they are only disgruntled lads needing petting; a subtext and subterfuge which means "forgive and reintegrate"! Sheikh Ahmad Abubakar Gumi, our self-appointed ambassador plenipotentiary running the Nigerian mission in the forest domain of the bandits speaks of amnestying terrorists; it gets worse even. Gumi, who under this diplomatic immunity, takes pictures with gun-toting bandits recently tells us that though the activities of bandits constitute terrorism, declaring war against them could "end" Nigeria with tendency of fundamentalists joining and giving such war a religious dimension, yet the cleric is at large. I did not miss the point here as Gumi's message was simple and direct. Banditry, if we read Gumi well, is one and the same with fundamentalist terrorism, after all has not Gumi himself told the so-called bandits once that their killers are Nigerian soldiers of the Christian South not those of Muslim North?

Whilst we relax and name what we want terror and what don't want nothing, let me remind this nation that now revels in "sin by silence" that we are not safe within the confines of its spaces anymore. How difficult is it for the entire intelligence community and security agencies to come to terms with the fact that a group that attacks schools and takes students hostage for ransom, that guns down flying objects, and that bombs a moving train is now an amphibious formation encircling the Northwest, one willing to take us on air, land and, who knows, by sea? While we keep muddling through in the face of this undeclared war and butchery it is fitting to ask whether the Commander-in-chief has lost his command or is still in command. Has not the Mallam Governor of Kaduna, one of the terrorised states, told us of barrage of letters he sent out to the president over the same matter wherein the governor claimed to have demanded a proper labeling for the bandits, one which allows our military to carry out a frontal and conventional warfare against these unnamed and numbered foes?

Special Report

How INEC B-VAS influenced voter's apathy in Anambra guber election

By Uchenna Ezeadigwe





Earlier on Saturday 6th November of the very much expected and planned Anambra election, voters across the 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Anambra State, headed to the designated polling units to elect their next governor.

News Echo correspondent who monitored and took part in a non-partisan observing electoral process across 12 LGAs in the state reports that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) promised of conducting a credible and fair election was marred by the Bi-Modal Voters Accreditation System (B-VAS) failure, although some areas recorded compliance in the technology driven election.

The election however didn't take off as scheduled in many polling stations due to late arrival of electoral officers, election materials, low performance of the machine, fear of being attacked among others.

The election also witnessed low turnout of voters a development which may not be unconnected with security breaches witnessed in the state few days to the election.

Security Situation

Despite threats by non-state armed groups and concerns over the heavy deployment of security agents, very few incidents of intimidation and violence have been reported defying the context of fear and uncertainty that preceded election day.

Despite the heavy deployment of state security agents, observers have noted a surprisingly scanty presence of security personnel in numerous reports from across the state. Where security agents have been present, reports indicated that they have largely respected rules of engagement and acted with professionalism. This is highly commendable and we hope that this mode of engagement with voters is sustained till the end of the electoral process in other elections. Likewise, the withdrawal of the sit at home order pronounced by IPOB has contributed to the opening of the polls and the relatively peaceful atmosphere that was witnessed.

Nkemdili Okeke, YPP party agent at Onitsha north, ward 1, said "We noted that as the hours progressed, more voters began to show up at the polls, as information spread that accreditation and voting were proceeding largely peacefully. However, we noted that the worrying security context ahead of the polls sustained a heightened level of uncertainty among many voters, and exacerbated voter-apathy".

INEC Logistics

Reports from CDD's observers indicated widespread delays in the commencement of accreditation and voting as a result of late arrival of poll officials. For instance, at 9:55am, CDD observers reported that INEC officials had not arrived at Otolo Ward 2, Nnewi North LGA. Likewise, in Ihiala LGA, observer reports indicated that INEC officials and electoral materials had not arrived at 1pm. The lateness of officials in commencing accreditation and polling has left many voters frustrated, necessitating INEC's extension of the voting period till 4pm. This likely contributed to the late closing of the polls and the delayed announcement of the election results.

Malfunctioning BVAS

One repeated occurrence that threatened to mar the quality of the election outcome has been the widely reported failure of the Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System (BIVAS) across numerous polling units in the state. In several instances, the BVAS failed to recognize voters' faces and fingerprints, and those affected were asked to wait until the challenge was resolved. CDD's EAC observers also reported malfunctioning of the BVAS in Ayamelum LGA with three polling units affected.

The wider security atmosphere leading up to the polls has likely impacted INEC's preparedness, particularly its capacity to train Ad-Hoc staff on the use of the BIVAS technology. In some polling units, INEC officials resorted to the manual methods of accreditation and voting. This was observed in Awka South, Akwa North, Idemili North, Idemili South, and Anambra West. CDD observers further reported that in cases where the BIVAS worked, its pace was frequently slow, leading to longer wait times than necessary for voters. In several reported cases, frustrated voters were forced to return home without casting their votes. The resort to manual voting generated uncertainties about the validity of votes cast.

Low turnout of voters

As expected, CDD observers recorded a low turnout of voters across the state. This reflected the climate of uncertainty leading up to the election, as well as the historically high levels of voter apathy that have been recorded in the state. The heightened voter apathy will likely be accentuated in several polling units as news spreads about the disruptions caused by the malfunctioning of the BIVAS.

Conduct of security

Although there have been pockets of reports indicating the absence or low presence of security officials, there have been no widespread reports of misconduct by security officials deployed for the elections. This is a noteworthy development considering that the expectation of intimidation and abuse from state security officials was a source of concern ahead of the elections. We commend security agencies for the high level of professionalism they have so far shown, and once again urge them to sustain this humane approach to election security through the voting, collation, and announcement of results

Vote buying

We also noted widespread incidents of vote-buying that will

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Special Report

...How INEC B-VAS influenced voter's apathy in Anambra guber election

Continued from Pg. 10

likely negatively impact the credibility of the election result. CDD observers reported numerous not-so-discreet cases of "see-and-buy" in polling units across the 21 LGAs of the state. In many reported cases, police officers have been alleged to have looked the other way, likely as a result of having themselves being compromised. This practice, which appeared to cut across party lines, has been an increasing feature of Nigerian elections and requires more concerted remedial efforts by INEC and other critical stakeholders.

Contributing, Director of Research Centre for Democracy and Development, during the press statement on Anambra election Analysis Centre (EAC), in Abuja, on Saturday, said "Despite concerns over the heavy deployment of security agents, very few incidents of intimidation and violence have been reported defying the context of fear and uncertainty that preceded election day".

"Security agents were frequently absent at the commencement of accreditation in several polling units, which likely heightened uncertainty among voters and officials.

He added that there were persistent incidents of the failure of the Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System (BIVAS) across numerous polling units, which have impaired the smooth conduct of the elections, and will likely disenfranchise some intended voters.

Furthermore, "The lateness of INEC officials in commencing accreditation and polling has left many voters frustrated, leading to voters Apathy in areas like Anoacha, Njikako, Ogbaru local government area as at 10am necessitating INEC's extension of the voting period till 6pm against INEC stipulated date of 2pm.

Former vice presidential candidate, Peter Obi while speaking with journalists after voting in his polling unit at Agulu ward 1, Anaocha LGA, said there was some delay relating to the late arrival of voting materials and malfunctioning of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in some parts of the state.

"I have been here since morning waiting for this process to commence. It took quite a while for the process to start, but I must say that now that they have started, it went well," he said.

"But I have been getting calls all over the state. For most communities, it is the issue of non-arrival of all voting materials across the state.

"I got calls that machines are not working and of course, here it was delayed for a long time which shouldn't be. There should be improvements in all these but you can see that there is no much improvement.

People's Democratic Party candidate, Val Ozigbo, however, expressed worry over the poor internet connectivity experienced by voters in Anambra state as Independent National Electoral Commission deploys Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System

He said that it took him over twenty minutes to cast his vote and wondered what other voters would experience in various parts of the State.

He further decried late arrival of materials in some parts of the state and urged INEC officials to ensure materials get to those areas to avoid disenfranchising voters.

Another candidate, All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Sen. Andy Uba while commenting on the large turnout of voters in his area said that he was able to assure the voters that nothing would happen to them.

In the same vein, the All Progressives Grand Alliance APGA candidate, Prof. Charles Soludo at his Isuofia polling unit expressed concern that old men and women who arrived the venue as early as 7.00am could not vote due to late arrival of materials as well non functional machines.

Also, the Minister of Labour and Productivity, Dr. Chris Ngige could not vote in Alor because of malfunctioning BVAS machine.

Meanwhile, following the ugly trend, the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law in a statement signed by Emeka Umeagbalasi and Barr Chidimma Udegbunam has called for the immediate sack of Mr. Chidi Nwafor, INEC's National Director of ICT for allegedly colluding with principal national network providers to engage in high tech rigging of the Anambra governorship election through perpetration of mass failure and mal-functioning of Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System machines in many, if not most of the polling centers across the State.

The BVAS's mass failure or malfunctioning of same according to the group has rigged out over 70% of the courageous voters that had come out to be electronically captured to vote.

Sir Victor Imeh who spoke to our correspondent at his hometown, Aguluezigbo ward 1, lamented over the power turn out of the machine. According to him, most of the elders who came to vote could not and got tired of waiting before they left".

Member representing Njikaoka/Aniocha Federal Constituency, Hon. Dozie Nwankwo lamenting, said "I am totally dissatisfied , what I am seeing here is a little bit of sabotage, I am not impressed, because no machine is working. And I am quite surprised that INEC is not prepared, all they are telling us is not true. Everything is here but the machines are faulty".

Contradicting, a retired civil servant who voted at Ward 1, polling unit 011, Urualor village Enugu Ukwu, Comr ABC Ubani (JP), said he is confident of a successful outcome, because people turned out en-masse to vote and had themselves conducted in a peaceful manner.

"I have gone round almost all the polling unit, no problem, there were minor issues with the machine but it has been rectified, he added.





News

Imo Assembly saga
Emeziem licks impeachment wound
…Accepts defeat
…Battles with suspension fever

Hon. Paul Emeziem, was last Monday sacked as the Imo State House of Assembly Speaker, in what looks like a palace coup, during a plenary that held in his absence.

The impeachment which replaced Rt. Hon. Emeziem with Hon. Kennedy Ibeh, representing Obowo, was moved by Hon. Chinedu Nwaneri, representing Oru East and was endorsed by 19 members of the House.

The sack news which reportedly hit Hon. Emeziem, like Anthoney Joshua's jab, got the embattled Speaker, cut short his engagement for the day and raced to the Imo Assembly Complex to save his position but met a fierce looking security agents who refused him entry and ordered him back.

The former Speaker, according to Imo House of Assembly sources was impeached for high handedness, conducts likely to cause instability in the house, abuse of power and office and grave unparliamentary conducts.

However, the former Speaker, who was according to reports weakened by the overwhelming support of his impeachment by his legislator colleagues, has subtly conceded defeat and probably lobbying for soft landing hence his press release, praising and vouching his support for governor Hope Uzodimma and his 3R mantra, while claiming to hold no grudges for the 18 lawmakers who toppled his administration in a commando-like style.

Meanwhile, the new Speaker, Rt. Hon. Kennedy Ibeh, who has been longing for the office, since, the days of Emeka Ihedioha, as governor, tested his new power with dissolution of all standing committees and the indefinite suspension of three house members, Rt. Hon. Paul Emeziem of Onuimo, Hon. Ekene Nnodumele of Orsu and Rt. Hon. Okey Onyekamma of Mbaitolu, for alleged desecration of the sanctity of the house, acts of forgery, conducts that are likely to cause instability in the house and grave unparliamentary conducts.

The new administration of the House also set up an adhoc committee of five (5) members to investigate the forgery claims leveled against the former speaker and his cohorts. The five (5) member adhoc committee included: Hon. Kanayo 'Dele' Onyemaehi as Chairman, Hon. Frank Ugboma of Oguta as vice Chairman, Hon. Duru Johnson of Ideato South - member, Hon. Emeka Nduka of Ehime Mbano - member and Chigozie Nwaneri of Oru East - member.

Anambra election: Uche Nwosu says APC's poor outing 'self-inflicted'

The 2019 governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress in Imo State, Uche Nwosu, on Tuesday, said that the ruling party was the cause of its poor outing in the Anambra State governorship election which was held on Saturday.

Nwosu said that the party's woeful outing in the Anambra State governorship election which saw it not even winning any local government area in the 21 LGAs the Independent National Electoral Commission had collated results, was "self-inflicted."

Nwosu accused the APC of not having respect for the founding chieftains and members of the party in the South East zone.

He said the party had abandoned those who worked hard to form and grow the party in the South-East region and preferred those who joined it from the other political parties.

Nwosu also disclosed that the APC had no reward system for its founding members, adding that he was not surprised the party didn't do well at the polls in Anambra State.

He said the party had no reason to have neglected Okorocha; the Minister of Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige; Minister of Science and Technology, Ogbonnaya Onu and George Moghalu as regards the Anambra State governorship election.

Nwosu said Okorocha, Ngige, Onu, Moghalu and others formed the APC structure in the South-East, regretting that the current leadership of the party had refused to reward them for bringing the APC to the South-East region.

Nwosu said, "What is happening to the APC in the South-East is a result of a poor reward system.

"The APC undermined those who worked so hard to plant the party in the zone and instead embraced newcomers who do not have what it takes to endear the party to the people," he said.

He insisted that unless the party retraced its steps in the conduct of free and fair primaries, and declare the winners without manipulation, reconcile all the aggrieved old members, it may not recover from the self-afflicted crisis before the 2023 general election.

The APC chieftain maintained, "If the founding fathers of the party are not appeased and handed back the reins of the APC, its fortune will continue to go down."



Hon. Toby Okechukwu and his entourage during the flag-off of the free medical treatment at Awgu, Enugu

Anambra election
Soludo floors Andy Uba, Ozigbo, 15 others

Results from the Ihiala LGA supplementary elections gave Prof. Charles Chukwuemeka Soludo of the All Progressive Grand Alliance an overwhelming lead making the former Central Bank Governor the winner of the Anambra Governorship election. The APGA candidate polled a total of107, 421 votes to come first. The People's Democratic Party candidate Valentine Ozigbo came by a distant second polling a total of 53,102 votes while Andy Ubah of the All Progresives Congress followed closely in third place with 43,327 votes. According to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) the supplementary election took place in 326 polling units in the LGA. The November 6 election was declared inconclusive by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to allow for a supplementary election in Ihiala LGA where no poll took place. This was after results from 20 out of 21 LGAs in the state had been collated and announced.

Before the final result was called, Akachukwu Nwankpo, candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) on Tuesday, cast his vote in support of Chukwuma Soludo of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). After voting for APGA in the supplementary election, Nwankpo said since his party did not secure enough votes after collation on Sunday, he decided to support "the winning party". "APGA is also a sister party because the founding members of APGA founded ADC and I also came from APGA to ADC. More so, Professor Chukwuma Soludo is my friend. "We believe it is time to finish this election by helping the winning party to make it to the end, so that the military can leave and we can have a more relaxed environment for us to focus on issues that concern our communities. He also urged other governorship candidates and political parties to imbibe the spirit of sportsmanship and peace.

NAWOJ sensitizes girls on the importance of good hygiene

The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) Imo State chapter has flagged off her sensitization on the importance of the Girl Child Health tagged " The Girl Child Health, Donate A Pad" with a visit to Enyiogugu Secondary School in Mbaise.

Speaking to students during the one day seminar, the chairman of NAWOJ Imo state, Barr. Vivian Ottih tutored the girls of Enyiogugu Secondary School Mbaise on how best to take care of their bodies and the importance of good hygiene in order to leave happily in future.

Barr Ottih further encouraged them to take their studies serious stressing that girls who develop hard passion for their studies and ambitions always excel. On the theme of this year's international day for the Girl child celebration, the NAWOJ boss assured them that NAWOJ is making frantic efforts to talk to authorities concerned to make provisions for girls to get every necessary help to get in tune with technologies so as to fit in the Digital world pointing out that this year's theme is aimed at repositioning young girls to take advantage of technology to become great investors in future.

She reminded them that every 11th of October is a day organized by the United Nations to celebrate the girl child with attention on the needs and challenges of the growing young girl as well as the need for mainstreaming girls' empowerment and fulfillment of their human rights.

The children were taught so many things including management of menstruation and the importance of using sanitary pad only during menstruation.

News

Anambra supplementary poll: Security agents bar Umeh from entering Ihiala

From Ovat Mike, Onitsha

Security operatives on Tuesday, barred the former chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Senator Victor Umeh from entering Ihiala Local Government Area, where supplementary governorship election held.

News Echo gathered that, there had been a restriction of movement in and out of Ihiala Local Government Area, with stern-looking military operatives manning the borders to the community.

Umeh who hails from Aguluzoigbo in Anaocha Local Government Area was said to have entered Ihiala but made to enter the local government secretariat, where materials for the election were being distributed when he was prevented by security operatives on duty.

Umeh, a state agent of the party who arrived at the Ihiala Local Government secretariat around 10:30am in the company of other party members was turned back by the General Officer Commander GOC, 82 Division of the Nigeria Army, Enugu, Enugu State. He said he was at the secretariat to ensure things went well. According to the GOC, the former lawmaker had no business being at the secretariat as he was a state agent. "You are not supposed to be here. You are a state agent not an LGA agent," the senior military officer replied.

...As ADC candidate votes APGA, Soludo

From Ovat Mike, Onitsha

Governorship candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Nze Akachukwu Nwankpo, on Tuesday, voted for the All Progress Grand Alliance (APGA), and its candidate, Professor Chukwuma Soludo, on the ongoing supplementary election at Ihiala Local Government Area of the state.

He said he took the decision to vote for APGA because his party could not make it as planned.

According to Nwankpo, who addressed Journalists, shortly after he cast his vote at Umuapani ward, polling unit 004, Okija in Ihiala council area, explained that after a keenly consultation with Ihiala Youths, he was told to vote for APGA, who has 90 percent chances of winning the election, to avoid wasting more resources.

When asked, whether his decision has ADC's acknowledgement , he said the move was personal to enable him key into the laudable achievement of the APGA led- government of governor Willie Obiano.

He commended the security agencies for their commitment in ensuring a peaceful environment before, during and after the election.

The Deputy Speaker of Anambra State House of Assembly, Hon. Pascal Agbodike, who also voted at about 10:30am, in his polling unit 001 Mbosi Ward 20, at St. Augustine College, Ihiala, commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the election Observers, security agencies, particularly, the Police for changing the negative perception towards Anambra governorship election.

New Echo correspondent who went around the area to ascertain the situation, gathered that there was a massive turn out of voters, security presences in all the polling units with a peaceful atmosphere.

2023: Group urges Igbo politicians to declare interest for presidency

From Chuma Austin, Enugu

Igbo Unity Forum (IUF) a socio-cultural association has urged politicians of Southeast extraction to come out and contest for the position of President ahead of 2023 general elections.

The group led by a former member of Federal House of Representatives, Chief U.S.A Igwesi made the call recently at Abuja residence of the former Senate President Anyim Pius Anyim when they paid him solidarity visit.

The group expressed worries that South Easterners are not indicating interest to contest the plum job as is the case with their counterparts in the Northern part of Nigeria.

They expressed regrets that this is happening at a time the zone is agitating that is their turn to produce the next President of Nigeria.

The group warned that the position cannot be served as on a platter but requires continued engagement, lobbying and constant interfacing with other ethnic nationalities to achieve results.

They called on the Igbo home and abroad with convincing credentials and capacity to come on board stating that power cannot be taken from the fridge but from the oven.

The group observed that Senator Anyim Pius Anyim is a cerebral politician with rich political antecedents and credentials having paid his dues in the political engineering and administration of this country when he was the Senate President, Chairman of the 4th National Assembly and Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria and demanded that he should give a taught to their request.

Earlier in his speech; Senator Anyim thanked the group made up of seasoned politicians, technocrats and business moguls for their visit and solidarity during and after his interface with EFCC and commended the leader of the delegation, Chief U. S. A Igwesi, describing him as a man of few words and one not known for frivolities and recalled his days in the National Assembly.

Anyim reiterated his determination to serve the country in any capacity stating that he has since given a taught to their request but now the group has energized it, that he will soon roll out drums in that direction.

He went further to state that the visit was not only timely but auspicious especially now that the country is in dire need of an upright and tested character to steer her ship and provide leadership in all sectors of the economy.

The former Secretary to the Government of the federation, insisted he is going to contest the position of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria come 2023 not because of the principle of zoning even though he believes in it but primarily because he is a Nigerian and qualified to contest, using every known parameter, observing that the present day Nigeria needed a president with experience, capacity and humane disposition to provide leadership and unite the country as one indivisible united entity.

In his vote of thanks, another member for the delegation and a legal practitioner, Chief Ifeanyi Nwabueze extolled the virtues of the Former Senate President, describing him as a child of destiny whose political antecedents have portrayed him as a tested and impeccable leader who can not only be trusted but a huge asset to the country.

Chief Nwabueze went memory lane and insisted that Sen. Anyim raised the legislative bar during the 4th National Assembly.

It could be recalled that Senator Anyim told the press at the recently concluded National convention of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) that he will contest the position of the President of Nigeria because of his personal conviction and calls from different groups, minds and well-wishers.

29 bag first class as ABSU holds convocation

From Dan Maduagwu, Umuahia

A total of 29 students from Abia State University, Uturu have earned First Class Honours in their various fields of study.

This figure is drawn from 5,712 students who will participate in the combined 27th and 28th convocation ceremony of the school, holding on Friday.

The Vice Chancellor of ABSU, Prof. Maxwell Ogbulu made these known at ABSU Senate building, while addressing members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, (NUJ), Abia State council.

Flanked by Prof. G.N Emezue, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and the Registrar, Acho Elendu, the Vice Chancellor pointed out that the 27th convocation slated for 2020 was suspended because of Covid- 19 lockdown.

He further explained that some completed projects in the school are to be commissioned by Abia State Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, noting that Chief Nnia Nwodo, ex-President-general of Ohanaeze Ndigbo would deliver pre-convocation lecture for the school.

Among the projects to be commissioned, according to Prof. Ogbulu, are post-graduate building, donated by the Alumni of ABSU, a new Optometry building funded by Tertiary Education Fund (TETFUND) while 25-room ongoing guest house in the school is also at advanced stage.

He expressed satisfaction at the recent performances of ABSU graduates in Nigeria Law School and distinguished records set by graduates of the school in National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) in various States.

He appreciated Governor Okezie Ikpeazu for his financial support to the institution and for addressing security challenges around the school.

He stated that teaching and non-teaching staff of the school have been promoted in line with staff welfare policy, while inherited staff salaries have been reduced drastically.

This, the VC said, is in addition to comprehensive financial independence plans by the school in response to dwindling funds, occasioned by global economic recession.

Chairman of Air Peace LTD, Allen Onyema and some notable Nigerians are also to be awarded honorary doctorate degrees.

Anambra poll: Race is over - Soludo

It's no longer news that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reportedly declared a supplementary election which was scheduled to hold on the 9th November due to the disruption of election in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State.

However, in a recent report, Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo, the candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) in the Anambra State Governorship election, disclosed that he is already the winner of the election, saying that "the race is over."

Soludo made the declaration in a post he shared on his Facebook page on Tuesday morning, 9th November.

Part of the post read: "Let's do simple math. Ihiala has 148,000 registered voters but only 42,000 voters picked up their PVC. So INEC statistics shows that you won't get more than 42,000 votes in Ihiala. It is game over."

Chukwuma Soludo further disclosed that, "with the current statistics shown by INEC, he will be declared the winner of the 2021 Anambra governorship election."

Recall that, the poll could not be conducted in Ihiala on Saturday, 6th November, due to non-arrival of election materials and irregularities.

Fact check

Did Uzodimma say APC will challenge Anambra guber election at Supreme Court?



On Saturday, several posts on social media and blogs claimed that Hope Uzodinma, governor of Imo, said the All Progressives Congress (APC) will challenge the outcome of the ongoing Anambra governorship election in court. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is currently conducting the governorship election across 21 LGAs in the state and the final result has not been declared yet. However, the viral posts online claimed that the governor reacted to the Anambra governorship election in a statement as the results from most polling units were being announced.

"Not even INEC can intimidate the APC candidate for the Anambra Governorship election. We've gotten lots of signals over the malpractices going on in different ward (sic) of the state," the governor was quoted to have said. "We are peace abiding Political Party but if anything undemocratic goes on in this election and the collation of Polling Units results, we have no other options than to challenge the election process in the court of law." On Twitter, some users claimed the governor said the results of the election will be contested at the supreme court.

"We will challenge Anambra election results to the Supreme Court," a user wrote.

— chiji ke, Ph.D., Nuclear Engineering(Affidavit). (@Ekwulu) November 6, 2021

BACKGROUND

On January 14, 2020, the Supreme Court sacked Emeka Ihedioha as governor of Imo, affirming Uzodinma as winner of the March 9, 2019 election. Uzodinma had come fourth in the election with 96,458 votes, according to the results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Owing to the Supreme Court declaration, Uzodinma has often been regarded as the "supreme court governor" — a tag that the governor had rejected saying it is "height of ignorance" to call him such a name.

VERIFICATION

The post claimed that the governor made the comment in a press statement. A review of the verified pages of the governor and Imo state media shows that such statement was not issued by the governor. Also, no credible news platform has published the statement credited to Uzodimma. When newsmen reached out to Oguwike Nwachukwu, chief press secretary to Uzodimma, he said the statement didn't emanate from the governor.

"Governor Hope Uzodimma follows credible avenues to communicate to the public. He will never shy away from using those appropriate channels any time he wants to say something of public interest," Nwachukwu said. "He talks to the media directly or indirectly through his designated competent officials. He can issue statements and statements can also be issued on his behalf."

VERDICT

The claim that Uzodinma said the APC will challenge the Anambra governorship election at the supreme court is misleading.

Have police reinstated DCP Kyari after probe of role in Hushpuppi's fraud?

Last weekend, multiple reports on social media and blogs claimed that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has reinstated Abba Kyari, suspended deputy commissioner of police. The viral post also claimed that Kyari has been cleared of all allegations levelled against him by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the fraud involving Hushpuppi, the self-confessed international fraudster.

Some of the reports further claimed that Kyari has been deployed to Anambra state for the November 6 governorship election as his first assignment after the suspension was allegedly lifted. On Twitter, a verified account with the handle — Gold Myne TV — with about 44,000 followers shared the post alongside a picture claiming that the "reinstatement" of Kyari has generated "wild jubilations".

"Wild jubilations as police hierarchy gives suspended DCP & Hushpuppi Associate Abba Kyari, the green light to resume duty as an officer," the post claimed. The post was shared last Saturday and as of the time of filing this report, it had generated over 335 retweets, 143 likes and 82 comments. Nigeria Police has allegedly Recalled Supercop, DCP Abba Kyari, after Months of Suspension. He is to be Posted to Anambra State As He Resumes Work.@FBI Is the man below above the law? #FreeMaziNnamdiKanunow pic.twitter.com/D7hDspTAUH — #Ikonso #IkonsoInMillions #ESNForever (@kalu_philly) October 30, 2021

BACKGROUND

In July, FBI revealed how Kyari allegedly collaborated with Hushpuppi to jail one of the latter's associates after a dispute over a $1.1 million scam on Qatari businesspeople. The FBI also alleged that the embattled social media celebrity sent money to the crack investigators via a third person bank account and hosted Kyari in his Dubai apartment. Following the allegations, the top detective was suspended and a panel was set up by the inspector-general of police to probe the FBI allegations. But Kyari denied the allegations, claiming that his "hands are clean". The issue has fueled several misleading contents in the public space, some of which have been fact-checked

VERIFICATION

To verify the claim, the report subjected the picture used to support the claim to reverse image search on multiple search engines. In the picture, Kyari was being lifted up by some men in what appears to be a celebratory mood. The earliest version of the picture according to the image search was posted on a news website on June 12, 2017

In the article, Kyari was praised for his heroic act in the arrest of Chukwudimeme Onwuamadike, a suspected kidnap kingpin better known as Evans. It also added that the "super cop" was lifted up by his colleagues in celebration of Evans' arrest.

Also, a review of online reports showed that no credible media platforms published the report that Kyari has been asked to resume work. However, Punch newspaper, in a report, said police sources have confirmed that Kyari is still on suspension. In other words, there is no evidence in public that the suspension slammed on Kyari has been lifted. News men reached out to Frank Mba, police spokesperson, for comments but he did not respond to his calls or reply to text messages.

VERDICT

There is no sufficient evidence to back the claim that the police authorities have reinstated Kayri. Hence, the claim that the suspension has been lifted is misleading

Crime Watch





The arrested kidnappers

Police arrest 'kidnappers' in Ekiti, recover guns, ammunition

The police in Ekiti have arrested Bunmi Ogunremi, identified as the son of the late Sesan Ogunremi, a chief, and one Ige Adu for alleged kidnapping. Speaking on Monday at a media briefing in Ado-Ekiti, Sunday Abutu, spokesman of the police command in Ekiti, said the suspects confessed to kidnapping several persons in the state.

According to the police, the suspects said they were involved in the abduction of Suleiman Akinbami, an oil dealer in Ekiti, and the attempted kidnap of Abiodun Ajayi, a traditional ruler in the state.

While narrating his experience in January 2021 after he was freed, Akinbami had said his abductors spoke Yoruba fluently.

According to the police spokesman, five locally-made guns, one Toyota Corolla car, 13 rounds of live cartridges and two locally-made double barrel guns were recovered.

"During interrogation, the suspects confessed to be responsible for the kidnapping of one Olowo Bolaji 'm' in Ipoti-Ekiti on 29/01/2020. They also confessed to have kidnapped one alhaji Suleiman Akinbami, a petrol dealer, who was kidnapped on 10/01/2021 in Ado-Ekiti," the spokesman said.

"The suspects stated that they kidnapped one Mrs Olalusi Dapo, the wife of a former Ekiti state surveyor-general sometime this year.

"The suspect further confessed that their syndicate kidnapped late chief Abiodun Ajayi earlier this year in Ado-Ekiti who jumped from their vehicle but later died in the hospital during treatment due to the injuries he sustained.

"The suspects said they usually keep their victims in his father's house, one late chief Bafon, located at water works, Ado-Ekiti, and sometimes move them to Ayere forest in Kogi state before demanding for ransom. They mentioned one Banji Akeem a.k.a. Oro who was earlier arrested by the RRS operatives for the offence of armed robbery and still in RRS custody.

"They also mentioned one Samuel a.k.a. Samuel Ebira, Jimoh Dele a.k.a. Dele Petim, Dayo a.k.a. Dayo Igwe and Johnson a.k.a. Yellow Okada, who are presently at large as other members of their gang. Concerted effort led to the arrest of one Taiwo Fayoke 'f' who confessed to being their food supplier whenever victims are held hostage."

He said sum of N5 million reward will be given to anyone who has credible information that could lead to the arrest of the suspects at large.

"The command appreciates the good spirited members of the public as well as the various security agencies whose cooperation and support have always helped the police," Sunday added.

Two killed as gunmen attempt to kidnap lawmaker in Akwa Ibom

Two people were killed by gunmen at a traditional wedding ceremony at Uquo community in Esit Eket LGA of Akwa Ibom. According to reports, Usoro Akpanusoh, a member of the state house of assembly, confirmed the incident on Tuesday.

Akpanusoh said the gunmen came to the ceremony with the intent to abduct him, but he was lucky to escape after struggling with one of them.

"I went for traditional marriage in Uquo in Esit Eket with the family of the deputy political leader of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in my ward," he said.

"After staying for about 40 minutes, I bade the couple goodbye and approached my car.

"While attempting to enter my car, I saw a Nissan Sunny that blocked it and a guy came out with an AK-47 rifle and started shooting sporadically into the air and people thought that he was a policeman.

"I saw him pointing the gun at my car and started shooting at people directly and bullets hit two guys." Akpanusoh, who said the event occurred last Thursday, added that one of the gunmen attacked his driver.

"Fortunately, the driver struggled with the guy and as God would have it, he was able to find his way back to the crowd," he said.

He said many other people were injured and rushed to the hospital.

Reacting to the incident, Odiko Macdon, police public relations officer in Akwa Ibom, said the commissioner of police had asked the divisional police officer in Esit Eket to investigate the incident.

"We are aware of the attempt to abduct the house member and the police are trying to determine the extent of the crime," Macdon said.

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'100 for 100' policy: CBN pegs loan limit at N5bn for companies

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has fixed N5 billion as the maximum loan an obligor can access in its new financial instrument tagged, 'The 100 for 100 PPP — Policy on Production and Productivity.' The apex bank disclosed this in its guidelines for the implementation of the policy, recently issued by Yila Yusuf, CBN's director, development finance.

Under the new policy, Godwin Emefiele, CBN governor, had said the apex bank would advertise, screen, scrutinise and financially support 100 targeted private sector companies in 100 days, beginning November 1, 2021.

Last week, the apex bank unveiled selection criteria for companies to participate in the initiative.

The CBN said the broad objective of the initiative is to reverse the nation's over-reliance on imports by creating an ecosystem that targets and supports the right projects with the potential to transform and catalyse the productive base of the economy.

"Loan amount shall be a maximum of N5bn per obligor. Any amount above N5bn shall require the special approval of CBN's management," the document reads.

The CBN said the interest rate under the intervention would be at not more than five per cent per annum (all inclusive) up to February 28, 2022, adding that interest on the facility would revert to nine per cent p.a. (all inclusive) effective from March 1, 2022.

On the facility's tenor and moratorium, it said that the term loans would have a maximum tenor of 10 years depending on the complexity of the project, not exceeding December 31, 2031.

The CBN said the initiative would be funded from its Real Sector Support Facility – Differentiated Cash Reserve Requirement (RSSF-DCRR) window or any other funding window it decides to use.

"The initiative shall select 100 private sector companies with projects that have potential to significantly increase domestic production and productivity, reduce imports, increase non-oil exports, and overall improvements in the foreign exchange generating capacity of the Nigerian economy," the document adds.

"The initiative, which shall be bank-led, will be rolled over every 100 days (that is, quarterly) with a new set of companies selected for financing under the initiative."

The apex bank further explained that focal activities covered under the initiative would be existing businesses and projects (brownfield) with the potential to immediately transform and catalyse the productive base of the economy, and new projects (greenfield) with equal potential may be considered under the initiative, subject to CBN management's approval.

The CBN said that activities could be in manufacturing, agriculture and agro-processing, extractive industries, petrochemicals and renewable energy, healthcare and pharmaceuticals.

Others are logistics services and trade-related infrastructure such as cold chain solution, quality assurance infrastructure and any other activities as may be prescribed by the apex bank.

On the exit date, the CBN said the initiative shall be operated in the first instance for a period not exceeding December 31, 2031, depending on the complexity of the project.



NBS: 36 states, FCT recorded N849bn IGR in six months — up by 39%

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) says the 36 states and the federal capital territory (FCT) recorded N849.12 billion in internally generated revenue (IGR) in the first half of 2021. The figure represented a 39 percent increase year-on-year after the coronavirus pandemic impacted revenue generation.

This is according to the IGR report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Monday.

According to the report, IGR was N398.3 billion in Q1 and N450.9 billion in Q2, indicating a positive growth of 13.21 percent quarter-on-quarter

The report also noted that Lagos State has the highest IGR with N267.2 billion, representing 31 percent of the total IGR in the first half of 2021.

Lagos is followed by FCT with N69.1 billion; Rivers state N57.3 billion; Ogun state N54.8 billion; and Delta state N41.9 billion.

Yobe state, on the other hand, generated the least IGR (N4 billion) in the first half-year of 2020, followed by Taraba with N4.77 billion, Gombe with N5.44 billion and Adamawa with N6.09 billion.

IGR by Zones in the first half of 2021 shows that the south-west zone recorded the highest revenue, which amounted to N385.4 billion, followed by the south-south zone with N156.2 billion, while the north-east zone recorded the least internally generated revenue with N42.9 billion.

It also shows that Lagos State generated 69 percent of the entire IGR of the south-west.

This means that Lagos generated IGR of N267.2 billion is more than what the entire northern states generated and more than south-south and south-east put together.

Among the components that make up IGR, PAYE contributed the highest which amounted to N488.1 billion, this was followed by revenue from MDAs which amounted to N173.5 billion. The least category was Road Tax.

Meanwhile, while Lagos is top in terms of the amount of IGR generated in half-year 2021, other states recorded the highest growth recorded in terms of IGR generated between half-year 2020 and half year 2020.

Further analysis showed that Jigawa State recorded the biggest growth in the total IGR in half-year 2021. Specifically, Jigawa generated N3 billion IGR in half-year 2020, while the state's IGR rose to N9.3 billion in half-year 2021. This implies that Jigawa recorded a 210 percent increase in its total IGR between half-year 2020 and 2021.

Also, Ogun and Ekiti states ranked second and third, respectively, with the biggest growth rate in IGR. Specifically, Ogun generated N23.7 billion IGR in half-year 2020, while the state's IGR hit N54.8 billion in half-year 2021. This means the state's IGR rose by 131.5 percent.

Bitcoin price hits all-time high at $68,000 as crypto market rallies

Bitcoin, the world's largest cryptocurrency by market capitalisation, has surged to a fresh record high of $68,000. The price of the cryptocurrency traded 4.1 percent higher on Tuesday afternoon, reaching $68,013 by 3:41 p.m., according to data obtained from coinmarketcap.com.

The last record set by Bitcoin was in October at $67,000 mark.

The cryptocurrency has continued to gain acceptance worldwide as an alternative mode of payment to fiat currency.

It has received endorsements from Elon Musk, the world's richest man and Tesla CEO; Mastercard, among others.

The Bank of New York Mellon Corp., an American investment banking services holding company, had announced that it would hold, transfer and issue Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies for institutional customers.

Since the start of October, Bitcoin has seen a bullish run, with the crypto market in total adding nearly $1 trillion to its total value in one month.

The total market capitalisation of the crypto market currently stands at $2.94 trillion.

Ethereum, the second-largest cryptocurrency by market capitalisation, also reached a record high of $4,833, surpassing the $4,800 level for the first time.

In Nigeria, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had warned citizens against trading in cryptocurrencies.



The apex bank, in February, directed banks to close accounts of persons or entities involved in cryptocurrency transactions. It warned that cryptocurrencies pose the risk of loss of investments, money laundering, terrorism financing, illicit fund flows and other criminal activities.

The apex bank has, however, launched its own digital currency, eNaira.

News Analysis

Imo Waste Agency: Lawmaker makes case for environmental cleanliness

By **Casmir Robert**



Though the bill for the creation of Imo State Waste Management Agency, ISAWAMA, was an executive bill, Hon. Eddy Obinna played significant role in getting it passed.

As the chairman of the Imo State House of Assembly Committee on IGR, it was his committee that carried out due diligence on the bill since it fell into the committee's schedule of duties.

One of the primary duties of that committee is leveraging legislative instruments to shore up the states internally generated revenue, and since revenue generation was among key aims of the proposed agency alongside environmental cleanliness it was only natural that its bill should be referred to IGR Committee for crossing of t's and dotting of i's.

The Deputy Chief Whip and member representing Aboh Mbaise and his committee never wasted time in doing the needful as soon as the draft bill reached them.

They did that task assiduously and diligently and with him still leading the committee also rallied other lawmakers in the House to give accelerated second and third reading to the bill.

At the end of the process came the passage of the bill for the creation of Imo State Waste Management Agency, ISAWAMA.

Those who do not know the affable and amiable lawmaker well may not really grasp why he fought tooth and nail to get ISAWAMA Bill passed.

For those who may not know the lawmakers life long quest to positively touch lives informed his dogged push for passage of that bill, because long before he ventured into public service he has exuded so much passion and drive in giving meaning to lives through empowerment and employment.

In fact, it was that passion that became his unique selling point when he took to politics, and eventually helped pave the way for his success in 2019 election.

Being an elected lawmaker whose primary duties revolve around lawmaking and oversight, the strong desire to turn gloomy faces into smiling ones has remained as constant as the northern star in him.

That was why in December 2020 he carried out what could aptly be dubbed the biggest empowerment programme in the annals of House of Assembly representation in Aboh Mbaise.

Beyond financial and material empowerment, he has relentlessly been using his office to try to put his constituents and Imo youths in government, as soon as opportunities open up in Ministries Departments and Agencies, MDA.

It was in continuation of that age long culture of trying to get people meaningfully engaged that he committed so much resources, and did everything within his powers to see to the passage of the ISAWAMA bill which, was also promptly signed by the governor as soon as clean copy was forwarded to him.

Therefore, it was not surprising that, after months of hard work, it was an elated and excited Hon Obinna that joined other government functionaries to officially flag off ISAWAMA operations and inaugurate its pioneer staff.

The Head, Revenue, Business Development and Mobilization in the agency Mr Patrick Njoku, who opened the floodgate of the good packages that will come to the state and its citizens from the outfit, said it was starting operation with over one thousand workers.

He equally revealed that the take off number is just one fifth of potential capacity of more than five thousand, which will be engaged when full operations begin in no distant time.

He further posited that the anticipated job windfall will come from the over two hundred revenue sub heads contained in the law establishing the agency.

He then singled out the state governor Senator Hope Uzodinma and Hon Eddy Obinna and IMHA for praise for making the job creation agency dream a reality.

When he rose to speak Hon Obinna told the crowd that his key motivation for working tirelessly to ensure the passage of the bill was its job creation potentials. According to him he is prepared always to make sacrifices once it is about uplifting the socio economic condition of his constituents and Imo people.

Not done he strongly assured that he will never rest nor relent in pushing the frontiers of good governance in his effort to make life worth living for people, as he emphasized that touching lives remains the key reason he is occupying public office.

The lawmaker also heap praises on the governor over his youth empowerment and job creation initiatives which, he said, are yielding fruits.

However, that is nothing but the gospel truth. Naturally, he is a man of less words and more action and so each time he speaks you can be sure he is speaking from deep down his soul and saying the truth.

More than anything else his unimpeachable record of visible and verifiable achievements since assumption of office two years ago, speaks most eloquently about his genuineness.

If you go to Aboh Mbaise Constituency his footprints have almost reached the entire twelve wards in the LGA. Though he has made commendable strides, there is no sign around him that he is about slowing down. He continues to push hard towards using his office to improve the living condition of his constituents.

It is as a result of his notable impact and performance that bookmakers have rated him one of the most productive state lawmakers Aboh Mbaise and Imo State has ever produced.

That acclamation is really true in view of the fact that his people are increasingly embracing his person and even more his political ideology and leaning.

Of course, however you analyse it you will agree with me that enjoying the goodwill of Aboh Mbaise people is not a small achievement because the people are exceptionally politically sophisticated and highly knowledgeable.

The same way he is doing well at home he is also contributing his quota to the success of the government of Gov Uzodinma and Imo State.

By all standards that is exactly what the recent take off ISAWAMA depicted especially in view of the thousands of jobs it is billed to churn out to help reduce unemployment in the state.

Indeed, looking at the great effort the hardworking and productive lawmaker has put so far into changing peoples lives and their stories within his constituency and Imo, within two years, it can easily be guessed that he still has a great deal of service in his legislative bag.

Consequently, it has become very necessary that he should be supported, particularly by his constituents to continue delivering quality and result oriented representation.

SPORTS



Why we dragged Super Eagles to Morocco – Liberia FA boss



Liberia are one of the 'homeless' African teams among the 40 jostling for group leadership to qualify for the last qualifying stage of Qatar 2022.

The others include Central African Republic, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau.

The poor state of stadium facilities is partly responsible for the denial of their home ground. The exception is probably Guinea which political situation could not guarantee safety of visiting teams and hence opted to play home games in Morocco.

Thus, Morocco will be on record as the nation with most hosting of Qatar 2022 qualifying matches. Liberia which played against Cape Verde in Accra last month also joined those taking their home games to Morocco.

Speaking on local station, Spoon Network, Liberia FA President Mustapha Raji said Morocco was selected as an alternative home venue because of the minimum cost attached and the cordial relationship between the LFA and FRMF (Royal Morocco Football Federation).

Sergio Ramos finally nearing a return after a long injury spell

The former Real Madrid star still hasn't featured for Paris Saint-Germain since his move to the French capital over the summer.

Ramos moved to PSG on a free transfer during the summer after Los Blancos withdrew their contract offer, which was time-limited.

Injuries plagued last season for Ramos, who missed more than 30 games last season through various setbacks.

Those injury troubles have continued this term, and months after signing, Ramos is yet to make his debut.

The veteran defender has already missed 13 Ligue 1 outings, but the end is in sight.

As reported by Mundo Deportivo, Ramos is now training with the group at PSG after months of individual work.

Very few PSG first-team stars are actually present due to the international period, but nevertheless, it will be a huge plus that Ramos is within the first-team group and working in the final stages of his recovery.



Lionel Messi expected to play for Argentina against Uruguay despite injury

Lionel Messi has trained with Argentina and is expected to play against Uruguay, despite being in the process of recovering from a knee and hamstring issue.

The Paris Saint-Germain man had been sidelined for the club's last two games, having been taken off at half-time in the match against Lille, and was undergoing treatment.

The forward has been carrying a knee knock since a harsh challenge he suffered two months ago, in a match against Venezuela.

The Argentina medical staff have given Messi the go-ahead to play for the entirety of the game against Brazil on November 17, while he could either start or be on the bench against Uruguay on Saturday.

Paris Saint-Germain are frustrated at Messi being rushed back, as well as Leandro Paredes presence in the team, the midfielder having only just started running exercises again after being sidelined for a month with a thigh injury. Both Paredes and Messi trained separately from the rest of the squad.

Director of Sport Leonardo had lamented the fact that the two injured players were called up, speaking to Le Parisien: "We do not agree with letting a player leave for international duty who, for us, is not in physical condition or is at the recovery stage. It's not logical, and these kinds of situations merit that we establish a rule with FIFA."



Howe Confirmed as new Newcastle boss

Eddie Howe has been confirmed as the new head coach of Newcastle on a contract until summer 2024. The former Bournemouth manager is the first managerial appointment made by the Saudi-led consortium since their takeover of the club in October; Howe was in the stands to watch his new side draw at Brighton on Saturday. Howe, who has been out of work since leaving Bournemouth in 2020 following their relegation from the Premier League, replaces Steve Bruce at St James' Park. Newcastle had previously reached out to former Arsenal and current Villarreal boss Unai Emery about the vacancy, but he opted to remain with the La Liga side. "It is a great honour to become head coach of a club with the stature and history of Newcastle United," said Howe, who will take training at the club for the first time on Tuesday. "It is a very proud day for me and my family. "This is a wonderful opportunity, but there is also a lot of work ahead of us and I am eager to get onto the training ground to start working with the players. "I would like to thank the club's owners for this opportunity and thank the club's supporters for the incredible welcome they have already given me. I am very excited to begin our journey together."



SPORTS



Angelo Ogbonna: West Ham defender sustains ACL injury in win over Liverpool



West Ham United have confirmed Angelo Ogbonna sustained an anterior cruciate ligament injury during Sunday's Premier League win over Liverpool, although a timeframe on his recovery remains unclear. "Angelo will see another specialist this week and we will then have a clearer picture around his timeline of recovery," West Ham head of medical Richard Collinge said; Virgil van Dijk returned from ACL injury after nine months, James Justin remains out after suffering damage in February. A scan on Monday revealed damage to his right knee, and West Ham said the Italy defender has started his recovery programme at Rush Green. Head of medical Richard Collinge said: "After being substituted following a separate incident that led to him suffering a cut above his eye, Angelo felt some discomfort in his right knee so we scanned him to ascertain the extent of the injury.

"That scan has shown up some damage to the anterior cruciate ligament and we have begun his rehabilitation immediately. Angelo will see another specialist this week and we will then have a clearer picture around his timeline of recovery." Recovery times can vary for ACL injuries, although Ogbonna is set for a lengthy spell on the sidelines and could miss the remainder of the campaign.

Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk missed the rest of the 2020-21 season when injuring his ACL last October and was back playing nine months later.

Meanwhile, Leicester's James Justin sustained ACL damage in February and is yet to return to action - Brendan Rodgers hopes to have him back this month after the player resumed light training.

Ogbonna started the 3-2 win over Liverpool and played a part in the opening goal at London Stadium when putting pressure on goalkeeper Alisson Becker, who got a touch on the cross to ensure it went down as an own goal.

Injured Pogba out of France's World Cup qualifiers

Midfielder Paul Pogba has been ruled out of France's World Cup qualifiers against Kazakhstan and Finland after suffering a right thigh injury, the French federation (FFF) said on Monday.

The Manchester United player was seen leaving Monday's training sessionwith team doctor Franck Le Gall.

"Paul Pogba is forced to withdraw from France's next two games at the Parc des Princes against Kazakhstan and against Finland in Helsinki," the statement read.

He is being replaced in the squad by AS Roma's Jordan Veretout.

France are top of their qualifying Group D with 12 points from six games and victory against Kazakhstan will secure them a place in next year's World Cup finals.

Coach Didier Deschamps, however, warned against complacency as the world champions take on a side who have not won any of their seven group games.

"The important thing is to reach our goal, to qualify for the World Cup. All my energy and our concentration must be on that," Deschamps told a news conference.

"We must not think that we are already qualified because it is only Kazakhstan. We're going into the game with all our determination and strength to win."

France will also travel to Finland next Tuesday.



Xavi instantly implements eight rules for Barcelona players ahead of first training session

New Barcelona boss Xavi Hernandez is said to have already implemented a number of new rules.

Xavi was officially presented as Barca's newest boss on Monday following a week of negotiations with his now former club Al-Sadd.

The legendary former Blaugrana midfielder returns to the club after six years away, playing for Al-Sadd for four years before becoming their head coach and spending two years in charge of the Qatari side.

Xavi has already promised to bring more discipline to the Barca dressing room, telling the media and fans on Monday that 'rules' will be brought in.

And Diario AS are reporting what those rules are following Xavi's first day of training.

The former midfielder took his first training session today, kicking off at 11am, and ahead of the session, he laid down the law with his players.

Very few were actually present for the session, with just five first-team stars present due to injuries and internationals, though many more were present for the briefing, including the likes of Gerard Pique, Ansu Fati and Pedri.

According to Spanish reports these are the rules Xavi has already put in place:

Players must arrive for training at least an hour and a half early.

Staff must arrive at least two hours early.

Players must eat at Cuitat Esportiva.

Fines will be in place for lateness and will multiply per offence.

No arriving home after 12am within 48 hours of a game.

Starting spots awarded completely based on performances in training. There are no guarantees for any players.

Risky activities (such as surfing) are prohibited during the season.

Players must represent Barcelona properly whether they are on the pitch or not

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Anambra supplementary poll:

ADC candidate votes APGA, Soludo

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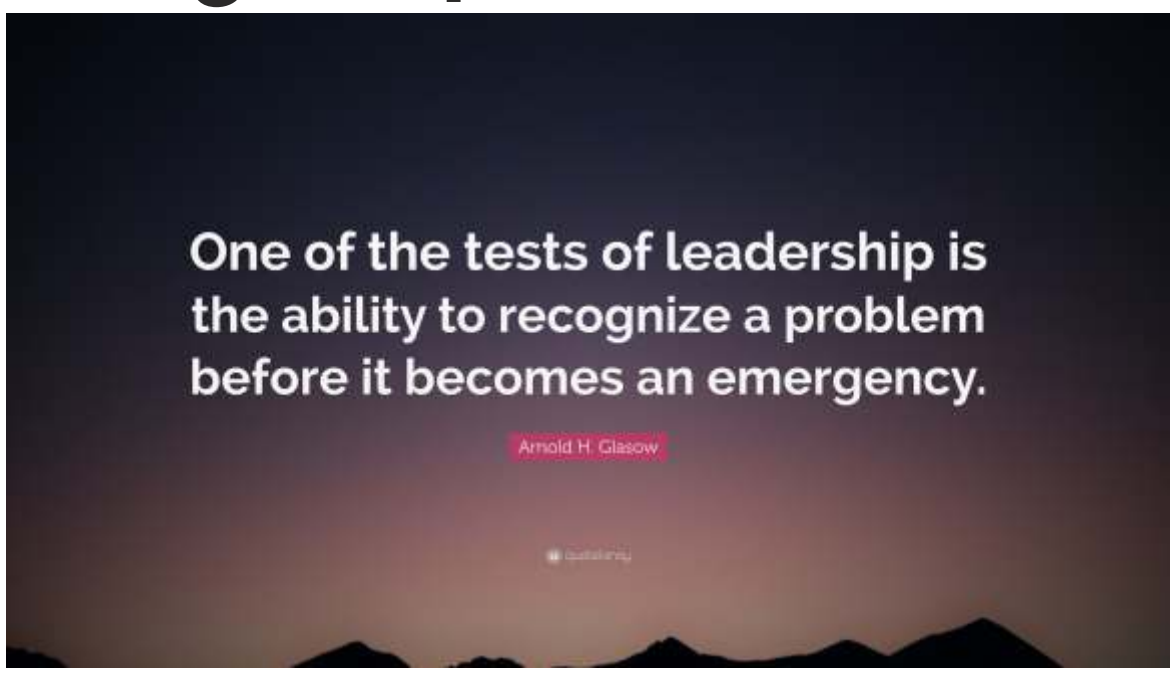
Bitcoin price hits all-time high at $68,000 as crypto market rallies

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Guest Columnist

Ability to recognize problem, test of leadership

By Comrade Okoye, Chuka Peter



Southeast Nigeria, which used to be one of the most peaceful regions in the country is now nose-diving into a state of chaos, given that the region seems to be lacking in the blessing of some form of leadership which understands that "everything in the universe is tending towards to disorder". In other words, this state of chaos is simply a fall-out of irresponsible governance.

Chinua Achebe once said, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigeria problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmark of true leadership".

Leadership is not so much about titles (e.g. Governor, L.G.A. Chairman, etc.); it is about providing direction for a people in a world where everything is tending towards chaos. And also the ability to always engender people oriented policies, implement same and all ratified treaties, memoranda of understandings, including campaign promises. If we take our minds back, we will remember that the outcome of the three (3) years Nigerian civil war is agreed to be of 'No victor No vanquish', although it is being professed as a genocide against the eastern region. The mutual understanding to reunite and engender peaceful coexistence was established with the introduction of the three R (Reconciliation, Reintegration and Reconstruction) by the then federal government. Unfortunately, the 3R was never implemented as widely believed by Igbos because there was never a genuine reconciliation and proper reintegration of Igbos nor the reconstruction of Ala Igbo by the federal government, since then till date. We all can still remember that the Igbos were given paltry sum in equivalent to whatever they had in their bank accounts before the civil war, including other said unfair treatments being meted out to the easterners by the federal government till date.

However, we all know the constitutional stance in continuity of government that should have made the successive regimes to implement the aforesaid mutual understanding (The 3R), in order to uphold the acceptance of 'No victor No vanquish'. Nevertheless, I wish to disclose that after a thorough research, it downed on me that the aforesaid ill-treatments alleged to be on the increase in this present time, is the root cause of the ongoing clamour for self-determination cum re-establishment of Biafra state by the South Easterners. Supposedly, being facilitated by the federal government and intensively aided by the South East leaders, whose leadership pattern has failed to initiate and entrench a holistic development of the region. Consecutively ended up reducing the peoples' confidence in them to a very low percentage, thereby creating an unimaginable leadership lacuna presently casing great confusion in the entire Southeast.

Down to the Eastern regional governance, its present state is somewhat similar to 'a commercial vehicle on a high way, that narrowly escapes being crushed by an approaching heavy truck. And when the passengers of this commercial vehicle later found out that their own driver was under the influence of alcohol, there arose a commotion among them which brought about a volunteer-driver. But having succeeded in disengaging the drunk driver, some passengers later on began to grumble alongside the former driver, lamenting that the volunteer-driver is insulting to everyone on board and reckless as well. Meanwhile, there are some others who are more concerned about not having a driver that is under the influence of any substance so to speak'.

In view of the foregoing allegory, it is evident that the present situation in Southeast is facilitated by the irresponsibility of those in leadership. Everyone may not agree with the volunteer-driver, but at the same time it is more dangerous when a driver - regardless of his age at driving - is guilty of 'lack of exemplary leadership'.

For instance, the people of Anambra would be going to the polls come November 6, 2021. If a new governor eventually emerges, obviously it is going to be a new dawn for the people of the state. But inside every new dawn, there will be a dusk. A dusk is a time of test for anyone in the position of leadership. Question is, does anyone whoever emerges as the new governor has the awareness that his or her leadership, in the long run, must be tested? In light of that, Abraham Lincoln once said, "The true test of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency".

It is very unfortunate what is happening in the Southeast today, but at the same time a lesson to all leaders and would-be leaders in the region.

There is an urgent need for a holistic interventions towards the redemption of the southeast which has to start with the leaders at all levels of governance. It is high time these Southeast leaders understood that it takes all sorts to be a leader. First, they should avoid making empty campaign promises to a suffering masses; anti-peoples' policies and undemocratic approach in handling issues, which are major causes of the chaotic state of the region today.

Okoye, Chuka Peter is presently the Executive Director of Centre for Human Rights Advocacy and Wholesome Society (CEHRAWS), a private not for profit, non-religious and non-partisan, pro-democracy organization committed to the entrenchment of good governance, respect for the rule of law and protection of the universal human rights of Nigerians, particularly the vulnerable, with base in Aba, Abia State. He is a native of Enugwu-Agidi in Nijikoka local government area of Anambra State, born and raised in the ancient city of Aba, Abia State

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