Djokovic sets up Alcaraz rematch in Wimbledon final

After Suspending 3 Private Jets, FG Invites Dangote, Adenuga, Others for Verification

Fibroid: Therapists proffer herbal solution as cases rise amongst women

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

PEOPLE COMPLAIN OF CORRUPTION, BUT WHEN IT FAVOUR THEM IT IS CALL CONNECTION

EFCC Peace Walk Was An Option For Advocacy

Supreme Court Affirms Local Governments' Financial Autonomy, Declares Caretaker Committees Illegal



89 Years After Christening, Olakulehin Mounts Olubadan Throne Today

Why APC, Okpebholo shouldn't be in Edo guber race - PDP

Tunde Opalana
Abuja

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Friday advanced reasons why the All Progressives Congress (APC) and its candidate in the September 21, 2024 Edo State Governorship election, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, should be out of the race.

According to the party, a shocking revelation that the APC candidate is not a registered voter as reportedly revealed by checks in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Portal is enough to disqualify Okpebholo.

The National Publicity Secretary of PDP, Hon. Debo Ologunagba in a statement yesterday also accused the APC candidate of declaring a fake voter card.

The party said "the alarming discovery that the APC candidate allegedly presented a fake voter card in his Form EC9 submitted to INEC is a self-inflicted blow which clearly and irredeemably signals the end of the road for the APC and its candidate in the 2024 Edo State Governorship election.

"It is indeed scandalous that the APC sponsored a candidate with alleged questionable documents as a governorship candidate for Edo State that is noted for very credible and highly respectable citizens.

"Moreover, it is now apparent as to why the APC submitted to INEC a blurred and unreadable voter card purporting same to be that of its candidate and had remained silent since the news broke out that the said voter card is allegedly forged."

According to the PDP, "this act of impunity by the APC amounts to an assault on the sensibility of the generality of the people of Edo State and our nation's democratic practice."

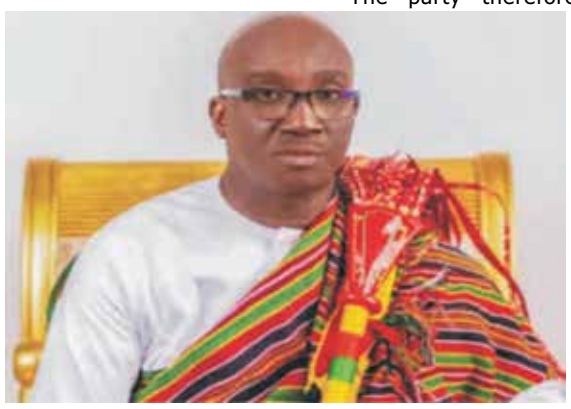
The party therefore asserted that "without remedy, the APC and its candidate, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, are not eligible to contest the September 21, 2024 Edo State Governorship election by virtue of the express provisions of Section 182 (1)(j) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), Section 114 (g) of the Electoral Act, 2022 and Section 467 of the Criminal Code Act.

"The clear implication is that the APC campaign in Edo State is a journey to nowhere as any vote cast for the APC in the September 21, 2024 Edo State Governorship election would be a void vote and effort in futility.

"Disturbingly, available information to our Party indicate that some APC leaders are allegedly mounting pressure on certain INEC officials to compromise the Commission's data and input fabricated voter registration information for the embattled APC candidate."

The PDP cautioner the electoral umpire, INEC "not to succumb to the pressure by the APC as the public is already aware of hard evidence available in INEC Portal showing that the APC candidate is not registered as a voter."

It asked the APC and its candidate to immediately "withdraw from the race as they cannot legally participate in this election."



Senator Monday Okpebholo

LG polls: Ex-APC legal adviser in Adamawa vows to mobilise for PDP

Tom Garba
Yola

Former Legal Adviser to the Adamawa State chapter of the All Progressives Congress, Barr. Shagnah Pwamaddi Maboyofe has pledged his support for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the coming local government election in the state.

He called on Adamawa citizens to come out enmass to vote into power candidates of the PDP vying to become council chairmen and councillors in their respective local government areas.

According to him, voting for PDP in the forthcoming Adamawa State Local Government elections is to ensure absolute compliance with the judgment of the Supreme Court delivered on 11/07/2024 that finally laid to rest the debacle of Joint Allocation Account Committee (JAAC).

Shagnah vowed to mobilize votes for PDP and reiterated that the call becomes very imperative in view of the unprecedented vision of President Bola Tinubu who described the Supreme Court decision as emancipation judgment.

Shagnah who was a diehard progressive and a staunch supporter of President Tinubu Renewer Hope Agenda made this known to our medium in his home town Gyawana in Lamurde LGA area of the state.

He said that voting PDP candidates into both chairmanship and councillorship positions today is tantamount to voting for a guaranteed Local Government financial autonomy that will ensure good governance at the grassroots as well as in 774 LGA'S in Nigeria.



Barr. Shagnah Pwamaddi Maboyofe

Barr Shagnah specifically warned the would-be local council executive and legislators to desist from any corrupt, illegal, unlawful and unconstitutional means of spending the LGC's funds or direct allocations from the Federal Government, as it is no longer business as usual.

"JAAC is gone and is gone forever. Any Local Government Chairman that is found romancing with the State Government to recklessly squander the tax payers funds without significant developmental projects or programmes to show for will be resisted by the people and will be shown his/ her or their way out by the law.

"Let it be known that the citizens have resolved to hold the Supreme Court judgment tight to their chests and to resort to the Constitution of Nigeria, the Anti Corruption Laws, Freedom of Information Act and other apt legislation to unearthed corruption and to promote accountability and transparency at the grassroot where the sovereignty lies with the majority of electorates." Shagnah said.

Makinde vows commitment to expansion of Oyo economy via road construction

Stephen Gbadamosi
Ibadan

Oyo State governor, Engineer 'Seyi Makinde, has reaffirmed his commitment to expanding the economy of the state through road infrastructure and interconnectivity of rural and city centres.

Makinde stated this on Thursday at the commissioning of 38.48 kilometres feeder roads rehabilitated in Ibadan metropolis.

The event was held at former D'Rovans Hotel Bus Stop, Ring Road, Ibadan.

The rehabilitated feeder roads, which fall within Ibadan South-West, Ibadan North-West and Ibadan South-East local government areas of the state capital, were part of the total lots of 95.58 kilometres awarded in December 2023.

The governor noted that feeder roads played significant roles in encouraging businesses, improving economy and making residents happier, assuring that the rehabilitation of inner roads would be extended to other zones of the state in the third quarter of the year.

He reiterated that the road leading to Ikere Gorge Dam from Iseyin would be constructed before the end of his administration.

The governor also directed that the road stretch from Bode to Challenge as well as the whole of Felele Straight and Felele RAB, which were not earlier slated for reconstruction, should be included in the list of roads to be reconstructed.

"As a government, our job is to do our best with the little resources we have to keep the residents happy and attract more people to come to our state. This is the way we grow our economy. We also acknowledge that we do not have all the resources at our disposal. So, we cannot meet all our needs at the same time.

"This commissioning today will be the first of many. Our administration earmarked an initial 95.58-kilometre of feeder roads for asphaltic improvement and reconstruction in December 2023. This is just half-way through it and they are to be completed within 12 months.

"We are now in July with over 38 kilometres completed and the remaining 57 kilometre ongoing. So, I can rightly say we are over half-way done.

"When we assumed office, I spoke about our plans and direction that we wanted to go with construction; many people did not understand it. But I need to also say that I feel embarrassed every time I have to come out to say we are commissioning roads. This, ideally, is something that should be routine, because we have bigger things to do.

"Also, we look forward to rehabilitating more roads within the state and I can say today that we are in Ibadan zone. There will be a phase two of this project, which will be in other zones of the state. And we will start by the end of third quarter of this year. So, we are coming.



From left, Oyo State, deputy governor, Mr. Bayo Lawal; the state governor, Engineer Seyi Makinde; Commissioner for Public Works and Transport, Professor Dahud Shangodoyin; wife of former governor of Oyo State, Mrs. Mutiat Ladoja; and former deputy governor, Engineer Hamid Gbadamosi, during the commissioning of 38.4-kilometre feeder roads in Ibadan metropolis on Thursday. Photo STEPHEN GBADAMOSI.

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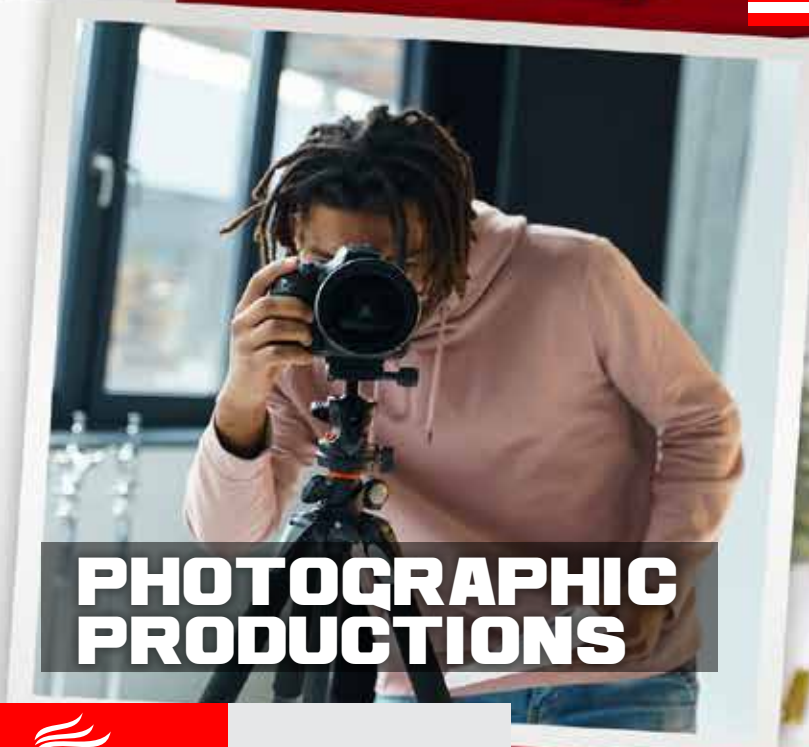
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Court Jails Two in Onitsha over N39.5m Fraud

Justice Victoria Nwoye of the Anambra State High Court, sitting in Onitsha has convicted and sentenced the duo of Ikechukwu Obiekwe and Ugo Chukwudi to prison for fraud.

They were prosecuted by the Enugu Zonal Directorate of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC on 10-count charges bordering on conspiracy, fraudulent conversion, stealing and retention of proceeds of crime to the tune of N39,528,530 (Thirty-nine million, Five Hundred and Twenty-eight Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Naira).

Count two of the charge reads: "That you, Ikechukwu Obiekwe, between 2016 to 2018 in Onitsha within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, with intent to permanently deprive the owner of his money, fraudulently converted to your own use, the sum of N18, 145, 530. 00 (Eighteen Million, One Hundred and Forty-five thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Naira) being money belonging to Rainbow Hair International Company Limited and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 342 of CAP 30, Criminal Code Law of Anambra State and punishable under Section 353 (6) of the same Law"

Count three reads: "That you, Ugo Chukwudi between 2016 to 2018 in Onitsha within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court transferred the sum of N5, 399, 000 (Five Million, Three Hundred and Ninety-nine Thousand Naira) to account number 0012766443 domiciled in Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc belonging to Emma Ogonna Obiekwe, a nominee of one Ikechukwu Obiekwe when you know or reasonably ought to know that the said money was stolen by the said Ikechukwu Obiekwe and therefore formed part of proceed of crime and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 17 (A) of the EFCC Act 2004 and punishable under Section 17 (B) of the same Act."





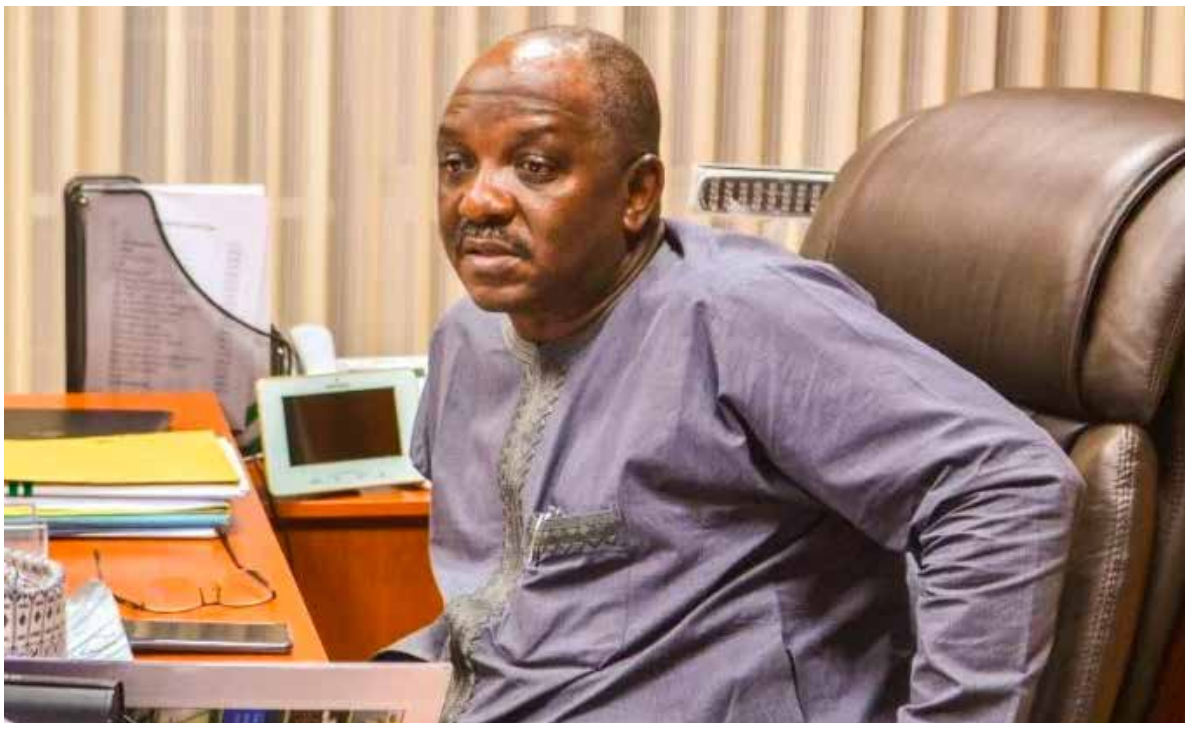
In the course of the trial, prosecution counsel, Mainforce Adaka Ekwu presented six witnesses and tendered several documents in evidence.

Justice Nwoye in her judgment on July 9, 2024, held that the prosecution proved its case beyond reasonable doubt and sentenced both men to one year imprisonment each without an option of fine. In addition, he ordered that the sum of N39, 528, 530 (Thirty-nine million, Five Hundred and Twenty-eight Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Naira), being the proceeds of their crime be forfeited by the convicts to their victim.

The convicts' journey to jail began on May 19, 2019 when the victim through a petition to the Commission alleged that Obiekwe, who was his apprentice, diverted the sum of N39, 528, 530 (Thirty-nine million, Five Hundred and Twenty-eight Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Naira) from the company's sales account and when confronted he denied and absconded. Upon investigation by the Commission, it was discovered that Obiekwe used Chukwudi to divert the said sum to different accounts.

The convicts were arraigned in December 2019.

EFCC Arraigns former Power Minister Saleh Mamman for Alleged N33.8bn Fraud



The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on Thursday, July 11, 2024, arraigned a former Minister of Power, Saleh Mamman before Justice James Omotosho of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja.

He was arraigned on a 12 -count charge bordering on conspiracy to commit money laundering to the tune of N33,804,830,503.73 (Thirty-Three Billion, Eight Hundred and Four Million, Eight Hundred and Thirty Thousand, Five Hundred and Three Naira, Seventy-Three Kobo).

Count one of the charges reads: "That you, SALEH KWAGYANG MAMMAN (Male), sometime in 2019, in Abuja, within the jurisdiction of this court, whilst you were the Minister of Power conspired with other officials of your Ministry and some private companies to indirectly convert the total sum of =N=33,804,830,503.73 (Thirty-Three Billion, Eight Hundred and Four Million, Eight Hundred and Thirty Thousand, Five Hundred and Three Naira, and Seventy-Three Kobo) through various private companies which sums you reasonably ought to have known formed part of the proceeds of unlawful activity, to wit: criminal breach of trust in relation to the funds released for the Mambilla and Zungeru Hydroelectric Power Plant Projects by the Federal Government of Nigeria; and you thereby commit an offence contrary to Sections 18(a), 15(2)(b)of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011 (as Amended), and punishable under Section 15(3) of the same Act."

Count two of the charges read: "That you, SALEH KWAGYANG MAMMAN (Male), sometime in December 2019, in Abuja, within the jurisdiction of this Court, conspired with SAMSON BITRUS to make a cash payment of US$655,700:00 (Six Hundred and Sixty-Five Thousand and Seven Hundred United States Dollars) to MOHIBA INVESTMENT LTD (acting through Mohammed Asheik Jidda), without going through a financial institution, and that you thereby commit an offence contrary to Sections 1 and 18(a) of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011 (as Amended), and punishable under Section 16(2)(b) of the same Act."

After the charges were read to the defendant, he pleaded "not guilty" to all the 12 count -charges, prompting the prosecution counsel, Adeyinka Olumide-Fusika, SAN, to ask for a trial date.

Before the arraignment on Thursday, Mamman collapsed within the court premises frustrating the proceedings of the court

The proceeding was postponed till the former Minister regained his balance. His counsel, Femi Ate, Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), informed the court of his client's health issue when the case was called.

Ate requested an adjournment for the arraignment to be rescheduled till September but the judge declined, citing the tight business of the court. Ate subsequently withdrew the oral application for an adjournment.

The Judge inquired if Mamman was fit to proceed with the arraignment and he responded in the affirmative. He also explained that his collapse was due to taking his medication on an empty stomach thereby causing unfavourable reactions in his body.

The defence counsel also complained about an error in the name on the charge served his client, prompting the judge to postpone the arraignment for some hours. At the resumption of proceedings, the prosecution counsel informed the court of an amended charge which had been served on the defence team.

Meanwhile, Ate filed a bail application which the court could not hear before Justice Omotosho adjourned the matter till Friday, July 12, 2024, to hear the application.

Mamman served as Minister of Power from 2019 to 2021. He was detained by the EFCC on May 10, 2021, following his removal from office by President Muhammadu Buhari on September 1, 2021, in a cabinet reshuffle.

Wike-Kingibe: Oga, Do You Remember How Many People You Sent To That Senate?

In a scathing social media post, Hilda Dokubo, the chairman of the Rivers State Labour Party, has called out Minister Nyesom Wike over his handling of the Senate representation for Rivers State. Dokubo's remarks come in response to Senator Ireti Kingibe's comments on Wike's performance in Abuja since taking office. In her post, Dokubo reminded Wike that as a minister, he has a responsibility to respect the democratic process and the people who elected Senator Kingibe to office. She highlighted Kingibe's achievements in the Senate, including sponsoring several bills, and emphasized that it is Wike's duty to support and work with her. However, Dokubo's main criticism was aimed at the individuals Wike sent to represent Rivers State in the Senate. She claimed that many of them have not even introduced themselves to their constituents, let alone made any meaningful contributions.

Some of them have not coughed since they got to that Senate," she said, using a popular Nigerian idiom to convey her frustration. Dokubo also pointed out that Rivers people are unaware of who these senators are and what they are doing in the Senate. They are sitting down there. We are waiting to hear them introduce themselves," she said, emphasizing the need for accountability and transparency.



Yahaya Bello: Rights Group Slams EFCC for Double Standards in Anti-Corruption Fight

A political pressure group, Movement for the Protection of People's Rights (MPPR), has slammed the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for double standards in the anti-corruption fight.

The group in a statement on Saturday signed by it's secretary general, Comrade Musa Abdullahi and director of media and publicity, Comrade Abiola Adegbite said the EFCC must desist from further overheating the polity, from undemocratic and unconstitutional practices in the handling of cases of anti-corruption.

Since the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC) in 2002, its activities have elicited both support and suspicion in the fight to tackle graft cases in Nigeria. Patriotic citizens from all walks of life have consistently stood by the EFCC in the difficult mandate given to it through an Act of the National Assembly.

Going through the recent press statement issued by the EFCC in which it has accused an imaginary named former Governor and two ex- ministers of spearheading a planned protest against the Commission is not only baseless, absurd but also cowardly. The story credited to the EFCC giving credence to some faceless 259 civil society organisations under the aegis of nonexistent Coalition for Transparency is a disgrace carried too far in the anti- graft war in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

With the story credited to the EFCC, one would think that the Commission was deliberately fashioned for lies, gross mischief and drain pipe purpose – a channel of deception and castration of Nigeria's puberty. From all indications, the groups being celebrated by the EFCC are either the creation of the Commission or the agency cash and carry, non existent nor unregistered NGOs/ CSOs arrangement and hatchet jobbers with them on retainership basis. Not long ago, one of such beneficiaries wrote a petition to the National Judicial Council,(NJC) against a Judge handling the case between the EFCC and a former Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello. Sadly, the author of the said petition to the NJC was once arrested and charged to court by the Nigeria Police for mischief, falsehood and frivolous claims against a former Attorney-General of the Federation. What a shame and a coincidence for the EFCC- to be hobnobbing with such a disgruntled and malicious character parading himself as an activist.Has the EFCC forgotten the ethos of crime101 of profiling and carrying out due diligence of any of its friends before association?

Rather than remain a vile witness of dishonour, false alarms, arbitrariness and politicization of the anti-graft war, we must posit that the era of fighting the anti-corruption war with disobedience to court orders, selective prosecution, intimidation, gestapo like arrests, defamation of character and blackmail are gone forever with the wind. The Commission should rather concentrate its energy on the investigation of N23 billion Kano- Maiduguri abandoned rail line contract, the CCTV contract scam awarded for Lagos and Abuja worth over USD100 million, monies in billions spent by NDDC, the Humanitarian Affairs Ministry's mind boggling "N729 billion" fraud, among others and also during the COVID-19 lock down.

Consequently, they also have an obligation to identify the Nigerian government officials that have been collecting bribes and perpetuating money laundering through Bitcoins platforms since 2016. But they all left these serious state matters in the coolers to go after a political assumed enemy and a juggernaut who has become a rallying point for the youths in Nigeria and a formidable ally of Mr President. These are all in a bid, to please their monstrous paymasters and retain the office of the Chairman of the EFCC. How long will Olukayode be using unethical methods and gestapo like arrests and movements to persecute and hound Yahaya Bello in order to please his self-serving ambition and cohorts?

Nigeria is a country founded on constitutional democracy, anchored on the rule of law and due process. Therefore, we challenge the EFCC to disclose the identity of the ex-Governor and two former ministers spearheading the concocted protest against the EFCC, including the venue and time where the meeting took place. They must furnish Nigerians with details of attendance list of the meeting and the money earmarked for the imaginary and phantom protest as alleged! How can the Commission stoop so low to embark on the dissemination of such hearsay, falsehood, orchestrated plots, red imaginary shadows, misrepresentation and innuendos without due process and the rule of law? The EFCC has become the accuser, prosecutor and judge in its own case' What a misnomer?

We must state categorically, to those who are either ignorant of the law establishing the agency or trying to display some affinity with the arrogance of the EFCC to note the motive behind the creation of the Commission wasn't meant for the abuse of prosecutorial powers or usurp political authority. This presupposes that the Commission and its agents must act in accordance with the constitution and civil conduct in the discharge of their duties in consonance with the rule of law and civility in all its obligations to the citizenry, but the reverse is now the case under the present leadership.

We wish to ask the EFCC some salient questions relevant to the handling of their case against Alhaji Yahaya Adoza Bello. Why are they shopping for a pliable Judge to handle their persecution of Bello? Contrary to the standing operational procedure? Why did the Chairman place a call directly to Bello and wants him to follow the back door if there is no hidden agenda? What was the motive behind the Chairman's placement of direct call to Bello? Why was he interested in ushering him via the Chairman's special entrance gate and exclusive door? A back door arrangement that Bello rejected outright till date, has become his being hounded regrettably!

This brings us to the shadow boxing placement of Bello on the watch list of Interpol. The apt description of the action of the EFCC in this regard can be described as ultravires, premeditated, teleguided and an agenda for settling scores, having an axe to grind.

It is a big shame, ridiculous and embarrassing for obvious reasons, the EFCC is granting interviews and issuing statements in a clearer attempt to ambush and preempt judicial officers handling their case against Bello who are already in various courts of competent jurisdiction. What a shameless act by the agency!

The EFCC must desist from further overheating the polity, from undemocratic and unconstitutional practices in the handling of this case and others. The era of plotting shenanigans and suffocating excuses in the fight against graft is over. Therefore, all cases before the courts must be allowed to be exhausted in full and the outcome decided. The anti-graft body must not be seen to probate and reprobate in a desperate bid to crucify any accused persons under investigation or prosecution under its watch. Actions of resorting to self help, amounts to prejudicial and subjudicial, that are entrenchently intolerable in terms of both legal and moral compliance.

Only an institution that has abandoned its core mandate would embark on a proxy war, name calling and grandstanding. Blaming white witches and village people for their incompetence, lack of due diligence and unprofessional conduct. Wasting tax payers' monies on wild goose chase that would lead Nigerians to no where, except the land of voodoo warriors insinuating about planned and sponsored protest against the EFCC.

For the umpteenth time, let us state that the placement of Bello on the watch list which is already before the court is mischievous, self serving, arbitrary obnoxious and devoid of fairness.

Wife Of Former Nationalist Passes On At 91



Madam Augusta Olujoke Davies (née Oluwole), a widow of a leading Nigerian founding father and nationalist, late Chief Hezekiah Oladipo Davies Q.C., has passed on, aged 91. A friend of her children, Folu Olapade, in a tribute to the deceased Davies' matriarch, on Tuesday, described her as an epitome of kindness and devotion, and a strong advocate for the less privileged and humanity at large.

The tribute was titled; Farewell to Chief H.O. Davies Matriarch – Augusta Olujoke Davies. It read in part; "The family of late Chief H.O. Davies has lost their loving Matriarch, Madam Augusta Olujoke Davies (nee Oluwole). The beloved nonagenarian returned to be with the Lord on 11th May 2024, aged 91.

"Madam Augusta Olujoke Davies was the widow of Chief Hezekiah Oladipo Davies Q.C., a leading Nigerian founding father and nationalist, and mother of Mrs. Olufunmilayo Goka, the former Deputy Managing Director of Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC), and other illustrious and accomplished children.

"It has been a celebration of life since her demise, as she is fondly remembered by many as an epitome of kindness and devotion, "a strong advocate for the less privileged and humanity at large" and "the proverbial Mother hen who went the extra mile to see to the progress, well-being and protection of not only her biological children, but everyone in her orbit." He stated that to many others, her legacy is not just in the love she gave or the challenges she overcame, but in the community she nurtured around her.

Natasha Akpoti's son stuns in photo on 2nd birthday



Reign-Emmanuel Uduaghan, son of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, has clocked two.

The lawmaker, on Friday, shared a photo of her son on social media to celebrate him.

she said it was honour to be his mother, adding that she looked forward to more decades of parenting him with love and affection.

"Please join me in wishing our son Reign-Emmanuel Otuoze Toritsemotse Uduaghan a happy 2nd birthday," she implored her followers.

The kogi legislator added, "Ebira's strength 100%, Itsekiri's confidence 100%, Family love 100%, God's blessings 100%.

"It's an honour being your mother and I look forward to many decades of parenting you with affection and love."

Supreme Court affirms local governments' financial autonomy, declares caretaker committees illegal



The Supreme Court's Thursday judgement includes far-reaching decisions that will significantly alter local government administration in the country.

The Supreme Court has affirmed the financial autonomy of Nigeria's 774 local governments.

In the unanimous judgement of its seven-member panel on Thursday, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the suit brought by the federal government to strengthen the independence of local governments in the country.

A member of the panel, Emmanuel Agim, who delivered the court's lead judgement, held that the local governments across the country should, from Thursday, receive their allocations directly from the Accountant-General of the Federation.

He ruled that it is illegal and unconstitutional for governors to receive and withhold funds allocated to local government areas (LGAs) in their states.

He noted that ordinarily, the Nigerian constitution permits the federal government to pay local government allocations directly to them or through the state governments. However, he said, "Demand of justice requires a progressive interpretation of the law."

"It is the position of this court that the federation can pay local governments allocations directly to the local governments or through the states. In this case, since paying them through the states has not worked, justice demands that local governments allocations from the federation account should henceforth be paid directly to the local governments," Mr Agim ruled. "I hold that the states' retention of local government funds is unconstitutional."

He then ordered that "the amount standing to the credit of local government councils must be paid by the federation to the local government councils and not by any other person or body."

He added, "An order of injunction is hereby granted restraining the defendants from collecting funds belonging to the local government councils when no democratically elected local government councils are in place.

"An order that henceforth no state government should be paid monies standing to the credit of the local government councils.

"An order for immediate enforcement and compliance with these orders by the state governments and successive governments henceforth."

The new arrangement ordered by the Supreme Court empowers the Accountant-General of the Federation to bypass the state governments in the monthly disbursement of federal allocations to the local governments.

The Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, filed the suit in May.

The panel of seven justices of the court led by Garba Lawal heard the suit on 13 June and reserved judgement.

The local government is Nigeria's third tier of government, the level of government closest to the grassroots.

But for over two decades, local governments have been almost crippled in most states, where the governors seize their federal allocations and only release funds to them piecemeal to barely keep them going.

The long-running funding arrangement, upended by Thursday's Supreme Court judgement, had helped governors exert absolute control over the local governments.

In the states, governors withhold local government funds in the controversial joint accounts that supposedly operate jointly with the local governments.

However, the umbrella body of all local government chairpersons across the country has said most members do not have access to the controversial accounts in their states.

The governors' control includes arbitrary dissolution of elected local government executives, despite repeated court decisions adjudging such an action as illegal.

The lack of independence of the local governments also stems from the governors' overbearing influence on other subnational institutions, such as the states' independent electoral commissions.

With that, the governors' political parties fielding the governors' handpicked candidates always recorded 100 per cent or near total victory in local elections.

This has ignited calls for transferring the responsibility of conducting local government elections to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The Supreme Court's Thursday judgement includes far-reaching decisions that will significantly reposition local government administration in the country.

One of the other far-reaching decisions of the Supreme Court is the declaration of the appointment of caretaker committees to replace elected local government executives.

The court held that the 36 states must ensure democratic governance at the local government level.

"The said amount must be paid to local government councils that are democratically-elected," the court further declared on Thursday.

Johnson Usman, who represented the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), praised the Supreme Court's decision on Thursday.

"The judgement delivered by the Supreme Court has finally put to rest the issue of local governments' financial autonomy," Mr Usman said.

He applauded the court's declaration that joint accounts supposedly run by the state and local governments are not mandatorily the only way local governments can receive their federal allocations.

He said the federal government would begin to pay funds directly into local government accounts, ensuring compliance with the judgement.

However, Odoh Uruchi, Chairman of the Body of States Attorneys General and Attorney General of Ebonyi State, indicated that state attorneys would review the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the judgement before formulating a position.

The Attorney-General of the Federation filed suit marked SC/CV/343/2024 at the Supreme Court to strengthen the autonomy of the local government areas as guaranteed by the Nigerian constitution.

It sought to prevent state governors from unilaterally dissolving democratically elected local government councils and establishing caretaker committees, actions that violate constitutional provisions.

The AGF argued that the constitution mandates a democratically elected local government system and does not allow alternative governance structures.

The suit also prayed that the funds from the Federation Account be channelled directly to local governments, bypassing the allegedly unlawful joint accounts managed by state governors.

The federal government also sought an injunction to stop governors and their agents from receiving or spending local government funds without a democratically elected local government system in place.

It contended that the governors' failure to establish such a system constitutes a deliberate subversion of the 1999 Constitution.

The Supreme Court heard parties to the case on 13 June, with the state governments, through their respective attorneys-general, opposing the suit. Meanwhile, Odoh Uruchi, Chairman of the Body of States Attorneys General and Attorney General of Ebonyi State, said his members would review the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the judgement before formulating a position.

Fibroid: Therapists proffer herbal solution as cases rise amongst women

BY ADA DIKE

A prominent medical therapist has disclosed that African women are most prone to have fibroids.

President of Savealife Foundation, Dr. Richard Okoye, in a video he shared recently online, assured Nigerians that fibroids can be removed with ease by African doctors.

In his words: "Fibroids is not a white woman's problem. It is mostly found in African women and can be handled best by African doctors."

Many women are having fibroids in their uterus. Some have done operations to remove it, while others resorted to using traditional methods due to fear of surgery.

A 35-year-old woman revealed how she was unable to take in, then she did scan and discovered that there were three fibroids in her uterus. She then did surgery. "I took in after six months and have a baby girl. Now, I have three children," she stated.

An anonymous woman shared how she prepared for surgery to remove fibroids that almost took her life. She narrated how she used pads and pampers yet staining everything and everywhere. "I remember using maternity 16 pads in one day, having periods that lasted 14 to 21 days every single month.

"I remember my doctor telling me to use tampons in addition to pads. The flow was so heavy that even inserting the tampon was frustrating and impossible because the flow of blood made it impossible to push the inner part in!"

She begged doctors to operate on her, drank vegetable juice to boost her blood, but the flow continued.

"I remember bleeding to the point I started going i hospital for 11 days because there was a breach during surgery and I had to carry a urinal catheter for eight days.

"I remember the post-surgery backache, learning to walk, learning to pee, not being able to lift my baby niece, and all of that.

But Look at me today. Using tampons with ease. Having a period that lasts only three days and using about eight regular pads in a month."

In a nutshell, she did surgery and became free from the pains from fibroids.

Recently, many therapists have suggested that herbs can dissolve fibroids.

A herbalist, Blessing Ngozi, is of the opinion that fibroids can be dissolved using "Ikale Cure with Bitter melon (Egusi bara)."

"It treats blocked fallopian tube, fibroids; infections; ovarian cyst cancer; arthritis and low sperm count. recipe:-bitter melon (egusi bara or wild melon), pap water (omidun or mmiri akamu)

"Method:- Cut your melon into pieces, pour pap water and cook at least, 30 minutes. Take half glass first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Depending on your body type. You can take a full glass also. It might turn your stomach and make you parade convenient room. But never mind, you are perfectly okay.

"Bitter melon is also known as egusi bara. Go to alagbo or elewe omo or lekuleja any how you know them. Tell them you want bàrà. Buy matured bàrà it works better."

She warned ulcer patients to stay away from the recipe.

Also, another therapist, Sarah Temilade, advised women with smaller fibroids around one centimeter to get 'Prekese', soursop leaves and plantain leaves. "Boil them and drink 100ml three times daily for a month, go for a scan, and it will be either gone or left with something small.

"It's also good for women who have already done fibroid operation. Take this for a week in every month, and it will not germinate again," she said.

Meanwhile, a young woman said she tried the brekese, garlic, the other pepper, cinnamon, ginger, it only flushed out the cysts, but it did nothing to the fibroids.

"It's a tough combination that I forced myself to take, even though I'd vomit sometimes due to the smell. I need something that can end these four years of try and error. I've never lived a day without medicine since 2021."

But, a renowned herbal fertility therapist, Madam Olubukola Akeju, has advised fibroids patients to check whether they have vitamin D deficiency.

According to Akeju, some women with fibroids worsen their situations because of deficiency in Vitamin D.

"You frequently use sunscreen "onye skincare" which blocks you absorbing Vitamin D provided by the sun for you. You do not even bother taking Vitamin D supplements. You may need to adjust in all the necessary areas, a little sun will go a long way.

"For those trying for children too, Vitamin D is a very important vitamin as it is connected to your reproductive health especially for hormone production. You need to find ways to collect that early morning sun, they did not force that particular education on us in school for nought," Akeju added.

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Okpue's 'A Song From The Dark' starring Wale Ojo, Nse Ikpe Etim goes live on Amazon Prime

After winning Best Director (First Feature Film) at Africa Movie Academy Awards 2022, as well as Best Director at the 2023 American Black Film Festival, ABFF (world's largest black film festival), filmmaker and multimedia creative designer, Ogo Okpue, has announced at a press briefing that his first feature film, A Song From The Dark, will be released on Friday July 12, 2024 on streaming platform, Amazon Prime.

Starring Nollywood's Nse Ikpe Etim, Wale Ojo alongside gripping performances from British Ghanaian Vanessa Vanderpuye, Lola Wayne, Garcia Brown, Peace Oseyenum and Paul Coster amongst others, the film is a fantasy-horror, positioned to ingrain heroes and heroines of African traditional mysticism with similar audacity as western films have entrenched the Superman, Wonderwoman and Ironman. Okpue, whose short films like Saving Cain, Cat Face have been recognised and screened at major film festivals around the world, says the film draws a lot of inspiration from the stories he heard as a child whenever he visited the village with his parents.

He says: "The inspiration of the story dates back to a certain period of my childhood when my family would visit my grandmother in our village. She happened to be a well-respected traditionalist. Tales of her would intrigue us and as I grew older, I regretted not knowing her more. She was an enigma and I wondered what it would have been like if some of her tales were captured in books. The world of African mysticism has not been explored enough in world cinema. And most times it is vilified. America has Superman and Ironman, the United Kingdom has James Bond and Harry Potter. Japan and China have Flying Swordsmen and mystical Ninjas, India has Tonnes. What do we have? I think in Africa, our superheroes have slept long enough, African stories are as diverse and as entertaining as the continent itself, so I thought, 'why not add more African heroes to the fictional world of cinema?'.'A Song From The Dark' is unlike any film seen in the black cinematic landscape. Some call it 'Lovecraft country meets Buffy the vampire slayer but with a Nigerian spin'. With striking visuals, suspense filled scenes and engaging performances, 'A Song from the Dark' is not your typical horror film. If anything it embraces suspense and drama like the great horror classics so there is something in the story for non-horror fans as well. At the heart of it, it is a family drama and a cautionary tale with poignant social commentary. It's confident blend of drama and multilayered subtexts will leave viewers reaching for repeat viewing and days long post credit conversations.

In 2022, 'A Song From The Dark' got AMAA nominations in categories such as: Best Actress in a Leading Role, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Award for First Feature by a Director, Michael Anyiam Osigwe Award for Best Film by an African-born Director Living Abroad and Award for Best Achievement in Make-Up.



Simi begs for wearing body-revealing swimsuit



STORIES BY ORJI ONYE–KWERE

Singer Simisola Kosoko, popular known as Simi, has apologised for wearing body revealing swimsuit to a pool after she was heavily critised on the social media by some Nigerians.

The singer through a post on her Instagram handle apologised for her action, as she also accepted that she was not thinking when she wore the outfit to the pool . She noted that her friend had earlier advised her against wearing it, but she never took it seriously.

"My friend told me, 'Sims, you can't wear a swimsuit at the pool; you're married'. I should have known better; I didn't know better, and I'm sorry.

"Next time, I will go to the swimming pool and as a sign of respect to my husband, I will wear a kaftan. I will do better than the best. I don't want to disappoint you.

"I just came here feeling repentant. Yesterday I went to the swimming pool and I wore a swimsuit, guys, and I'm just so sorry," Simi admitted.

Why I'm having surgery to reduce my breasts –ex-BBN's Nina

Big Brother Naija, Nina Chinonso Onyenobi, aka Nina Ivy, has revealed that she would soon go under the knife to reduce her breasts. The mother of two expressed joy that she could finally have a new life and be who she wants to be.

The reality star who is living abroad with her hubby and two children, made this revealation via her Instagram page. She said that after two kids, she never really felt comfortable and confident about herself but she is extremely excited to effect that change now. She noted that she has been waiting for this for a long time and she is excited that the time has finally come.

"I've been waiting for this day my entire life, and finally, the time is here. After 2 kids, I've never really felt comfortable and confident about my breasts, and I am super excited to make a change. Finally, a NEW LIFE".

Last year, Nina set tongues wagging when she revealed that she was undergoing a Brazilian Butt Lift popularly known as BBL. The reality star made this known on her Snapchat account while sharing a video of her in a hospital, with



Stop driving me insane, Toyin Abraham begs cyber bullies



Popular Nollywood actress Toyin Abraham, has cried out over her continuous bullying on the social media. She also came had on those criticising her for allegedly arresting an X handle user alongside his mother for defaming her . She denied ever arresting anybody's mother as she claims she is also has a mother. However, Toyin expressed her frustration and extreme distress in the past couple of days, following the backlash she received on the social media. She vowed not to spare anyone defaming her, adding that she was ready to die.

The actress addressed this during a live Instagram chat with fans, where she cleared the air on the said According to the film maker, she never ordered for anybody's arrest but only petitioned the police against the social media user who defamed her.

"I've had it up to here because you people cursed my child, but I did not arrest anybody's mother. I simply wrote a petition, and they said I should go to the cybercrime department, which I did, and I wrote a petition there. The only reason I didn't put Anthony was because he didn't defame me; he only insulted me and I insulted him too. The truth would come out soon."

"These people were paid to ruin my career and ruin my life, but I have not committed any crime, so I'm not scared. I am ready to die but before I die, I will make sure that I won't take it easy on everybody who bullied me and defamed me," she lamented

Toyin continued,"I said I wasn't going to say anything anymore, but there are some things that you can't accuse me wrongly and expect me not to say something. I would not arrest anybody's mum because I have a mother as well. I never arrested anyone's mother. I have not committed any crime and I have only exercised my democratic rights, and they keep bullying me."

"I came online on social media to beg everybody to leave me the hell alone. As I am, I want to die. I am ready to die, but before I die, a lot of you bullies will die with me. You bullies have pushed me to the wall and I have gone insane. Now I want to die; I wish to die; I did not commit any crime; I came out to beg you guys and tell you that I did not collect any money from anybody,"

It will be recalled that in June 2024, she cried out to the public to stop cursing her children as her children are innocent, rather they should whatever they want to say to her.

Ubi Franklin still in love with Lilian Esoro, his ex-wife

Ubi Franklin, the ex-husband of Nollywood' actress Lilian Esoro, has confessed that he is still in love with the mother of his son and willing to get back with her because they have a son together.

Franklin, an artist promoter and talent manager said this during a live Instagram chat, after a fan asked him if he is still in love with his ex- wife

When asked by another fan if he was ready to remarry either Lilian or another woman, his answer was in the affirmative

Another fan asked about his plans to remarry, saying, "When are you getting married again or maybe to your former wife? I like you two together, I swear."

He answered, "Help me find a wife. The application portal is open now."

Franklin and Esoro got married in 2015 and separated a year after welcoming their son. Esoro first filed for divorce in a Lagos High Court, and it was denied. Franklin then filed in Abuja,




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Now, Local Governments Would Be Expected To Fix Some Schools, Tar Some Road – Femi Falana

Senior Advocate of Nigeria and human rights activist Femi Falana has publicly supported the recent Supreme Court ruling that instructs state governments to stop controlling the federal allocations intended for local governments.

Speaking on Channels Television's flagship program, Sunrise Daily, on Friday, Falana emphasized that the judgment aims to foster accountability at the grassroots level rather than diminish state influence over local government affairs.

Falana explained, "A lot depends on the Nigerian people because right now, it is difficult to talk about the autonomy of the local government. The state's electoral commissions are manned by appointees of the state governors. And what they have done over the years is to manipulate the local government elections in a way that only the candidates of the ruling parties would be declared the winners."

He further elaborated on the expected responsibilities of local governments, stating, "Now, local governments would be expected to fix some schools, tar some roads, and even pay some workers. So, it is not that state governments will no longer participate in the affairs of the local governments…the state governments should create state economic councils and allow the local government to participate in them, just like they are part of the federal economic council."

The Supreme Court, in its lead judgment delivered by Justice Emmanuel Agim on Thursday, mandated the Federal Government to commence the immediate and direct payment of local government funds into their exclusive accounts. This ruling addresses the long-standing issue of financial autonomy for local governments, which has been obstructed by state governments for decades.

Falana concluded by urging state governors to study the judgment carefully, noting, "The judgment has to be studied by the governors so that everybody will appreciate that what the Supreme Court has done is to promote public accountability at the grassroots levels."

This landmark ruling by the apex court is seen as a huge step towards ensuring financial independence and improved governance for local governments across Nigeria…



Court Jails Three Illegal Bureau de Change Operators in Maiduguri

Justice K. Dagat of the Federal High Court, sitting in Maiduguri, Borno State, has convicted and sentenced three illegal bureau de change operators to one year imprisonment each.

They were arraigned on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, by the Maiduguri Zonal Directorate of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on a one-count separate charge for operating illegal bureau de change business.es.

The defendants are Buba Ahmadu Aliyu, Mohammed Mustapha, and Muhammad Zarami.

The count against Aliyu reads "That you, Buba Ahmadu Aliyu sometime in May 2024, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, did carry on, other financial business without license issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria contrary to section 57 (1) and (2)b and punishable under section 57 (5) b of the Banks and other Financial Institutions Act, 2020."

While the charge against Mustapha reads: That you, Mohammed Mustapha sometime in May 2024, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, did carry on, other financial business without license issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria contrary to Section 57 (1) and (2)b and punishable under 57 (5) b of the Banks and other Financial Institutions Act, 2020."

The defendants pleaded "guilty" to the charges when they were read to them.

Thereafter, prosecution counsel, A.B Aliyu prayed the court to convict and sentence the defendants accordingly, while counsel for the defendants H. Basharu urged the court to temper justice with mercy while convicting them.

Justice Dagat thereafter convicted and sentenced the defendants to one-year imprisonment with an option of N100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira) each.

The convicts bagged their imprisonment when they were arrested for operating bureau de change businesses without an appropriate licence.



Six Internet Fraudsters Bag Jail Terms in Calabar

Justice Ijeoma Ojukwu of the Federal High Court sitting in Calabar has convicted and sentenced six internet fraudsters to six months imprisonment each for criminal impersonation, love scam and identity theft.

The convicts are: Chibo Udoka (aka Zxoya Andric, Kelly Rose, Chimata Harry), John Inimfon Okpokpo (Grace Boar),Emediong Ekerete Bassey (aka Thiwe Ploka), Otu Ginikachi Samuel (alias Chris Hemsworth), Goodluck John Bassey (aka Tom Jones) and Asogwa Ifebuche Lukas (alias Daniela Crystal).

They were charged to court by the Uyo Zonal Directorate of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC, on two-count separate charges, to which they pleaded guilty.

One of the counts reads: 'That you, Otu Ginikachi Samuel (aka Chris Hemsworth) sometime in 2024 in Nigeria within the jurisdiction of this Honorable court fraudulently presented yourself as Chris Hemsworth (a United State of American Citizen) to Tymoshenko Anatoly Grihorovych (Ukrainian Citizen) on Facebook with fraudulent intent, gained advantage of the sum of N1, 000, 000 (One Million Naira) for yourself from the said Tymoshenko Anatoly Grihorovych and thereby committed the offence of identity theft contrary to Section 22 (2) (b) (0) of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, prevention) (amendment) Act 2024 and punishable under 22 (b) (iv) of the same Act.

Another reads: 'That you Chibo Udoka Mgborogwu (aka Zoya Andric, Kelly Rose Chimata Harry), sometime in 2024 in Nigeria within the jurisdiction of this Honorable court with intent to obtain property and gain advantage for yourself, fraudulently presented yourself as ZOYA ANDRIC,KELLY ROSE CHIMATA HARRY on Social Media platform (Whatsapp, Instagram) and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 22 (2) (b)0) of the Cyber Crime (Prohibition, Prevention Etc) Amendment Act 2024 and punishable under Section 22(b) (iv) of the same Act".

The defendants pleaded guilty to the charges when they were read to them and based on their pleas, prosecution counsel, Khamis Mahmud prayed the court to convict and sentence them accordingly, but the defence counsels Udeme Tom, Innocent Ekeize and Henry Effiong prayed the court for lighter sentences for the defendants, on the ground that they were first time offenders.

EFCC Opposes Emefiele's Quest for Overseas Medical Trip



The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on Monday, July 8, 2024, opposed the application of a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, for the release of his passport to enable him to make an overseas medical trip.

Defence counsel, Labi-Lawal had filed an affidavit seeking the release of Emefiele's passport to enable him travel to the United Kingdom for medical treatments which was objected to by the EFCC.

Monday's affidavit by the defence and the counter-affidavit by the prosecution was in furtherance of the ones made earlier on the matter on June 25, 2024 by both teams.

Prosecution counsel, Muhammad Abbas Omeiza in furtherance to the counter-affidavit told the court that there was no medical report before the court showing that Emefiele was plagued by an ailment, and that if there was, there was no evidence to support that it could not be treated locally in Nigeria.

Omeiza further noted that Emefiele deposited his passport with the court as part of the fulfilment of his bail conditions, arguing that releasing it to him would amount to the court varying his bail conditions.

While also arguing that Emefiele was a flight risk, the prosecution counsel noted that "the defendant has co-conspirators all over the world. One Anita and Tony are all aides of the defendant who are currently in the UK. The defendant might be tempted to jump bail because he is standing trial in three different courts."

In response, the defence counsel dismissed prosecution's arguments as speculative, noting that the prosecution can issue an international red alert on the defendant to enable his arrest if he made the overseas medical trip and refused to come back.

Justice Mu'azu, after listening to both counsel, adjourned ruling on the application till July 16, 2024.

EFCC, NOUN to Review MoU for Enhanced Collaboration



The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, and the National Open University of Nigeria, NOUN, have reached an agreement to re-strategise and come up with a more mutually-beneficial Memorandum of Understanding, MoU to strengthen the fight against economic and financial crimes and other acts of corruption.

This development came recently in Abuja when the Vice Chancellor of NOUN, Professor Olufemi Peters led a delegation of his management team to the headquarters of the EFCC on a courtesy visit.

Speaking on the visit, Peters explained that NOUN had a long-standing relationship with the EFCC and the visit was meant to bolster the existing relationship between the two agencies . He stated further that since the signing of the MOU in 2021, the two agencies have been able to build synergy on cyber security and forensic studies.

"Since our initial agreement, the synergy between our institutions has strengthened and our collective efforts have significantly contributed to building capacity in the areas of recognising and combating cyber threats in Nigeria"

"Our two institutions, having become aware of complementary features inherent in the execution of our mandates, signed an MOU to build synergy on cyber security and forensic studies. Since our initial agreement, the synergy between our institutions has strengthened and our collective efforts have significantly contributed to building capacity in recognising and combating cyber threats in Nigeria", he said.

He recalled the joint International workshop organised by ACTEL in collaboration with the International Information Development Agency, African Centre of Excellence in Mathematics Computer Sciences and Applications and the EFCC. Additionally, he spoke about the Digital Footprint organized by NOUN in June 2023 which featured five of EFCC staff in active participation.

"We are proud to note for the records that an EFCC staff member, Mr. Kennedy Ketebu was among the first four students to bag a Phd degree in Artificial Intelligence from our University. This staff also benefitted from a Digital Science Support Fund that enabled him to showcase his research work at the World Bank office in Washington, USA, in October 2022. Our partnership is indeed yielding results. Over the past two years, we have witnessed other notable achievements such as joint seminars, workshops, supervision of Masters and Phd programmes in artificial intelligence, cyber security and management information system", he said.

He pressed for enhanced collaboration and renewal of the MoU with the EFCC to allow for internship opportunities, technology-based services, research, capacity building, supervision and facilitations and public awareness campaigns.

"As was before, we hope that the MOU will be managed through collaborative efforts and activities and projects will be jointly developed and implemented. "I'm confident that renewal of the MOU will further solidify our partnership and lead to even greater achievements. Together, we will continue to make significant strides in enhancing cyber security, preventing financial crimes and contributing to the overall development of our great country", he said. He appreciated the dedication and commitment of the Executive Chairman of the EFCC, Mr. Ola Olukoyede since he assumed office and charged him to continue to do the good work he is doing.

Olukoyede, while responding, appreciated the visit of the delegation and thanked them for the extension of hand of fellowship and comradeship to the EFCC. He assured that the Commission was ever ready to continue the relationship between the two agencies. He harped on the need for public awareness to the ills of corruption and "the best way to create public awareness is through educational services which NOUN is providing". He commended NOUN management for the distance learning opportunities Nigerians are getting through the institution.

The EFCC boss also charged the institution to develop a curriculum on anti-corruption studies to build in their students requisite skills and knowledge against corrupt practices. He assured the VC and his team that the EFCC would renew and review the MoU with the institution for stronger and more fruitful collaboration. "We are ready to collaborate with you and strengthen the relationship. We are not just just going to renew the MOU, we are going to review it to allow for fresh inputs to be put into it", he said.

Court Orders Final Forfeiture Of $16,500 , N127m Diverted From NIMASA Treasury

Justice Kehinde Ogundare of the Federal High Court sitting in Ikoyi, Lagos, on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, ordered the final forfeiture of the sums of $16,500 and N127m, which were fraudulently diverted from the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMASA.

The funds are forfeited to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The Judge had, on May 23, 2024, ordered the interim forfeiture of the funds ,following a motion ex parte filed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC.

The EFCC, through its counsel, Suleiman I. Suleiman, had sought the interim forfeiture of the funds under Section 17 of the Advance Fee Fraud and other Fraud Related Offences Act No. 14. 2006; and Section 44 (2)(B) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended).

The Judge, in granting the interim forfeiture order, had also directed the EFCC to publish the order in a national newspaper for interested parties to show cause why the money should not be finally forfeited to the Federal Government.

At the resumed sitting on Monday, Suleiman told the court that the funds were reasonably suspected to be proceeds of unlawful acts, and that the Commission had recovered $16,500 in cash and N118 million from one Uche Obilor and his companies.

While moving the motion for the final forfeiture, Suleiman said: " Pursuant to your lordship's order made on May 23, 2024, the publication of the order was made on June 6, 2024 of Punch newspaper.

"The said application is supported by 22-paragraph affidavit deposed to by Oghare Ogbole, an investigator with the EFCC.

"The application is accompanied by two exhibits, the interim order of the court and the Punch publication of June 26, 2024; and it is supported with a written address.

"We respectfully adopt same and pray the court to grant all the reliefs sought", he said.

In the affidavit, the EFCC submitted that: "The funds sought to be forfeited are reasonably suspected to be proceeds of unlawful acts of diversion of funds from the treasury of NIMASA, through Mr. Uche Obilor, his companies and other cronies.

"That during the course of investigation, the total sum of $16,500 USD cash, was recovered by the Commission, part of the funds diverted from the treasury of NIMASA. And that for using his companies as mentioned above, Mr. Uche Obilor, upon invitation to the Commission during the course of investigation agreed to return the sum of N118 million, admittedly received and retained by his companies from the funds fraudulently converted from the treasury of NIMASA.

At the sitting today, no interested party appeared in court to contest the interim order.

Consequently, Justice Ogundare, after listening to the counsel to the EFCC, held that "order granted as prayed."

Court Jails Three for Internet Fraud in Kaduna







Justice A. Bello of the Kaduna State High Court, sitting in Kaduna has convicted and sentenced the trio of Saadu Salisu, Omoruyi Osavbie (a.k.a Antonio Hendo Henderson) and Daniel Japheth (a.k.a Cain Steven) to various jail terms for internet fraud.

The convicts were prosecuted by the Kaduna Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on one-count separate charges. While Osavbie and Japheth's charges bordered on impersonation and cheating, that of Salisu bordered on obtaining by false pretence and cheating.

Salisu's charge reads: "That you Sa'adu Salisu and Ihasas Ventures Nigeria Limited on or about the 1st of March,2021 within the jurisdiction of this Honorable court, cheated and dishonestly induced one Adamu Bakori to part with the sum of N300,000.00 (Three Hundred Thousand Naira only) with the promise to secure a job for him and you thereby committed an offense contrary to and punishable under Section 311 of the Kaduna State penal Code Law, 2017."

Osavbie's charge reads: "That you, Omoruyi Osavbie (a.k.a Antonio Hendo Henderson) sometime in May, 2024, in Kaduna within the jurisdiction of this honorable court, represented yourself as one Antonio ahendo Henderson (A military personnel in the United States of America) on Facebook (an online social media platform) and in such assumed identity, cheated unsuspecting victims the total sum of N87,000 (Eighty Seven Thousand Naira) , and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 308 of the Kaduna State Penal Code Law,2017 and punishable under Section 309 of the same law."

Each of the three defendants pleaded "guilty" to their charges when they were read to him, prompting prosecution counsel M. Arumemi and M. Lawal to pray the court to convict and sentence them accordingly.

Justice Bello, afterwards, convicted and sentenced Salisu to three years imprisonment or a fine of N200,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira). In addition, he forfeited N300,000.00 (Three Hundred Thousand Naira), being the proceeds of crime to the federal government.

Japheth bagged four years imprisonment or a fine of N400,000 (Four Hundred Thousand Naira). Additionally, he forfeited the sum of £75.00 (Seventy-five British pounds), being proceeds of the crime and his iPhone 11 mobile phone to the federal government, while Omoruyi was sentenced to seven years imprisonment or a fine of N450,000.00 (Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira). In addition, he forfeited the sum of N400,000 (Four Hundred Thousand Naira), being proceeds of his crime and his iPhone X max to the federal government.

Salisu's journey to prison began when his victim petitioned the Commission, alleging that he convinced him in May 2021 that he could secure a job for him in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and later demanded the sum of N300,000.00 (Three Hundred Thousand Naira) from him for the job placement, which he paid into the convict's bank account but neither got the job nor his money back.

NLNG Boss to Olukoyede: "We are Proud of You"

The Managing Director of the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited, NLNGL, Dr. Philip Mshelbila has expressed satisfaction and confidence in the leadership of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, assuring that he is proud of its Executive Chairman, Mr. Ola Olukoyede and his team.

This disclosure was made in Abuja on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 when the NLNG management team, led by its managing director, paid a courtesy visit to Olukoyede at the Commission's corporate headquarters.

Mshelbila said that Olukoyede has inspired hope in Nigerians through his handling of the anti-corruption works. He urged him to continue in the tempo he has generated in that regard. "We know that



our country is where it is because things are often done the way that they should not be done. And so when there is an organization that can act as a conscience of the country, it is something that we are very proud of. We are proud of you, the Executive Chairman; we are proud of your team and we pray that you continue in doing all that you have been doing and show forth the light even when there is darkness all over the country", he said.

He noted that integrity was a common denominator in both the EFCC and the NLNG, thus making the Commission a natural choice for collaboration and partnership with NLNG.

"One of the reasons for the courtesy visit is because of the very nature of this organization. This is one of the organizations that upholds integrity and transparency. This organization represents to us integrity in Nigeria. And you may not understand why that is crucial to us in NLNG. We have what we call core values. Our core values are made up of a number of things which include safety. And after safety which means being alive to do the work, it is integrity. Integrity is the number two core value that we have as a company and we uphold it seriously. So when we see an organization that stands for nothing but integrity it becomes something that appeals to us as a company and also as Nigerians because integrity is something that we crave for", he said.

While pledging to support and aid the work of the Commission, the NLNG boss hoped for an enduring and mutually beneficial relationship going forward. "We hope that the relationship that we are establishing today would be a lasting and enduring one", he said.

Olukoyede in his response, expressed appreciation for the initiative of the NLNG management and assured the delegation of the willingness and preparedness of the Commission to work with the company in the interest of the anti-corruption fight. "We will look into your books when we have to, but it is important for us to work together. It is important for us to synergize and take it to the next level. Our mandate is to prevent corruption and financial crimes and we are committed to the work," he said.

The EFCC boss, who further noted that tackling the country's systemic rot was foundational in winning the anti-corruption war, stated that while enforcement remained crucial in the work of the Commission, prevention has been given priority by his leadership.

" I have set up a Directorate of Fraud Risk Assessment and Control (FRAC). We will go into MDAs to monitor project execution, to track money and they are cooperating with us. Anything that filters out, we will run after it and see what we can recover. In the next one year Nigerians will see the impact of the new measures that we have put in place".

89 Years After Christening, Olakulehin Mounts Olubadan Throne Today

Today, Oba Owolabi Olakulehin officially ascends to the throne as the Olubadan of Ibadan land. In this piece, LAOLU AFOLABI highlights the monarch's humble beginnings, his journey to the throne, the unique nature of the Ibadan non-ruling house chieftaincy, and the symbolic coronation ceremony that coincides with the new monarch's christening date

On July 5, 1935, a charming boy was born in the serene Okugbaja Village, located near Akanran in what is now the Ona Ara Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The joyous occasion was celebrated by his proud parents, Pa Ishola-Okin Owolabi and Madam Adunola Aweni Ope Ajilaran Omoyoade Owolabi. Following the rich and time-honoured Yoruba tradition, the family waited until the eighth day after his birth to officially bestow upon him his name. In a ceremony held within the family compound on July 12, he was given the name Akinloye Olalere Owolabi Olakulehin. The name, rich with cultural significance and family heritage, marked the beginning of his journey in life.

Today, another July 12 and the 89th anniversary of his christening, the boy once known as Baby Olakulehin is set to ascend to one of the highest traditional titles in Yoruba land. In a grand ceremony that will take place at the historic Mapo Hall, he will be enthroned as the Olubadan of Ibadanland. This significant event will see him don the prestigious beaded crown, symbolising his new status and authority. With this ascension, he will be officially titled His Imperial Majesty, marking a momentous occasion not only for him and his family but also for the entire community that holds the Olubadan title in high esteem.

The coronation will be witnessed by the crème-de-la-crème and the influential personalities in the country and beyond, as against the family compound naming ceremony held 89 years ago. Dignitaries led by President Bola Tinubu, governors, ministers, eminent traditional rulers, captains of industries, and academics, among others, will witness the coronation of the 43rd Olubadan in history, at the historic Mapo Hall, built in 1929, six years before the birth of the new Ibadan monarch. Today, on another christening anniversary, Olakulehin will lift the banner of his ancestors, being the first from his lineage to become the Olubadan. He has chosen to bear the name of the family, Olubadan Owolabi Olakulehin, Ige Olakulehin 1.

As a mark of honour for this historic christening, the Babaloja General of Oyo State, Alhaji Yekeen Abass, ordered markets in Ibadanland to be shut today, between 7 am and 2 pm, in honour of the new Olubadan of Ibadanland. To demonstrate that it was beyond the family compound christening, the Babaloja said the closure of the markets is to give honour to the first class Oba and allow free flow of traffic. It then asked all market traders and leaders to move en masse to Mapo Hall, the venue of the presentation of the instrument of office to the new monarch.

Another honour for the new Olubadan of Ibadanland is that he would be the second Olubadan to rule from a befitting palace, after the famous Olubadan Yesufu Oloyede Asanike, who first lived in the old palace at Oja'ba. The ultramodern historic palace sitting magnificently on Oke-Aremo, inaugurated by Governor Seyi Makinde on Wednesday, is to be the new official residence and palace of subsequent Olubadans, starting with Oba Olakulehin. Hitherto, the personal residence of the succeeding Olubadan had always served as the palace, upon ascension to the throne.

Oba Olakulehin's coronation is a significant blessing to Ita-Baale Olugbode, his ancestral homestead within the ancient city of Ibadan. This momentous event revives a historic lineage, as the last ruler from Ita-Baale was Baale Ajayi Oyesile Olugbode, who reigned from 1851 to 1864. The name "Ita-Baale" literally means the courtyard of the ruler, derived after the title of Baale Olugbode. It is noteworthy that since the title "Olubadan" was officially created in 1930, the Ita-Baale Olugbode area had not produced an Olubadan until now. The community holds a special place in the history of Ibadan, not only for its ancestral significance as a conglomeration of families in Ibadan but also for its religious heritage. It is renowned for being where Olubadan Akinyele established his church, the Christ Apostolic Church Olugbode. This church remains a prominent landmark, reflecting the deep-rooted spiritual and cultural heritage of the community. With Oba Olakulehin ascending the throne, Ita-Baale Olugbode is poised to regain its historical prominence, celebrating a new chapter in its rich legacy and contributing to the enduring story of Ibadan's traditional leadership.



Oba Olakulehin is a royalty personified. Both parents are from the established Ibadan recognised chieftaincy families. His maternal lineage derives from the Kusidi Family whose ancestral farmland is in Kusidi Village in Egbeda Local Government Area. Their ancestral homestead is within the ancient metropolis of Ibadan at Ile Kusidi in Elekuro.

Every Ibadan family is rooted in a dual heritage comprising both an ancestral farmland and an ancestral homestead. This tradition signifies that every Ibadan indigene has a village and a family compound within the city. For the members of the Olakulehin family, their ancestral village, where a Baale (village head) presides, is located at Okugbaja, within the Akanran area. Their ancestral homestead, however, is situated at Ita-Baale Olugbode, which holds profound significance as the place where Oba Olakulehin began his journey towards becoming the Olubadan, starting as Mogaji (family head) of the Ige Olakulehin family.

In the societal structure of Ibadan, the position of Mogaji is held in high esteem and is considered senior to that of the Baale. The Baale is an appointee of the Mogaji, underscoring the authority and respect commanded by the family head. This hierarchical distinction highlights the Mogaji's pivotal role in both the governance of the family and the broader community. For Oba Olakulehin, his ascent to the Olubadan throne is deeply intertwined with these familial and cultural traditions. His leadership journey commenced as Mogaji of the Ige Olakulehin Family of Ita-Baale Olugbode.

A Mogaji will begin the journey to become the Olubadan the day he becomes Jagun Olubadan or Jagun Balogun, depending on where the vacancy exists. There are two lines to the Olubadan, the Otun line (civil) and the Balogun line (warrior). The Otun line has 22 steps to climb to become the Olubadan while the Balogun line has 23 rungs to the zenith. To emerge as Jagun on either line is a Herculean task and very competitive. It is a battle royale for all family heads contesting for a space.

For Olubadan Olakulehin, he became the Mogaji for the Ige Olakulehin Family of Ita-Baale Olugbode, in Ibadan North-East Local Government Area of Oyo State, in 1983. He was installed as the Jagun Balogun of Ibadan land by Oba Asanike in 1986. He then rose through the ladder and was elevated in 2006 to the Olubadan-In-Council, under Oba Yinusa Bankole Ogundipe, the 38th Olubadan of Ibadan. In 2016, Oba Olakulehin became the Balogun of Ibadanland, following the promotion of Oba Saliu Adetunji to the throne of the Olubadan. Olakulehin served as Balogun of Ibadanland for eight years.

A member of the Olubadan-in-Council qualifies to serve as the head of the traditional council in various local government areas across Ibadan. Royalty begins as any chief of the Olubadan becomes the High Chief, following the emergence at the Ekaarun Olubadan or Ekaarun Balogun rungs of the ladders. The council comprises the Olubadan, Otun Olubadan, Balogun, Otun Balogun, Osi Olubadan, Osi Balogun, Ashipa Olubadan, Ashipa Balogun, Ekerin Olubadan, Ekerin Balogun, Ekarun Olubadan, Ekarun Balogun and the Iyalode. Aside from the Olubadan and the Iyalode, the other 11 members are to serve as heads of traditional councils in the 11 local government areas of Ibadanland. The Iyalode is the head of all women's affairs in the land.

For Oba Olakulehin, it was a journey of 38 years from Jagun Balogun – Ajia – Bada – Aare Onibon – Gbonnka – Aare Egbe Omo-Oota – Lagunna – Aare Ago – Ayingun – Asaju – Ikolaba – Aare Alasa – Agba Akin – Ekefa – Maye – Abese – Ekaarun Balogun – Ekeerin Balogun – Ashipa Balogun – Osi Balogun – Otun Balogun, Balogun and finally to the zenith of the ladder, the Olubadan of Ibadanland. He successfully stepped on each rung of the ladder until he got to the zenith.

Today, Oba Olakulehin has a date with history as he tours the Oluwo Labosinde Compound at Oja'ba, Ibadan, where he will perform traditional rites and the Ose Meji Shrine, where he will be crowned as the new Olubadan of Ibadan land, before the presentation of staff of office and instrument of office to him by Makinde at the Mapo Hall.

To Oba Olakulehin, today's event affirms the question he asked when he became Mogaji in 1986. He spoke briefly with journalists on June 14, 2024, when he went on an inspection visit to the ultramodern Olubadan Palace, from where he will rule today. He said, "When we started the ladder (Mogaji), I asked, 'Do we get to the climax?' And they said yes. So, I knew that I would become Olubadan of Ibadanland. Now we are there."

From a small beginning, Olakulehin started his primary school education in the village at St James Primary School, Oke Akaran. He subsequently moved to Ibadan where he attended Islamic School, Odoiye. He later went to St Peter Primary School, Aremo, where he concluded his primary education. Shortly after graduating from primary school, Olakulehin taught as a primary school teacher at Wakajaiye in the Akobo area of Ibadan, before he gained admission to Yaba Technical Institute for his secondary school education with vocational study in printing and artwork. Upon graduation, he worked at the Ministry of Works, Western Region Government in Ibadan from 1959, starting as a third-class clerk. While working, he gained admission to the Yaba College of Technology to study and obtained his Ordinary National Diploma and Higher National Diploma in Building.

Olakulehin was recruited in 1970 through the Direct Short Service Commission as a 2nd Lieutenant after he transferred his service to the Nigerian Army Corp of Engineers. He served the Army in Benin and Sapele under General Olusegun Obasanjo as his commanding officer. Oba Olakulehin later served in various positions and locations across the country. He rose through the ranks to the position of Major. As an officer, he held various positions. These included the Commanding Officer of the Army Maintenance Regiment in Jos, Kaduna and Lagos. He retired voluntarily from the Nigerian Army as a Major on October 1, 1979, after a remarkable 25-year career in military service.

Upon disengagement from the military service, Olakulehin founded and incorporated FAKOL Nigeria Ltd, a building contracting company which undertook various contracts for private individuals, corporations and the government, including the Nigerian Army. He also engaged in various enterprising endeavours. These include the ownership and operation of a successful printing press (Olakulehin Press, later renamed Solid Prints); the establishment of FAKOL Bakery, which was very famous for the production, distribution and supply of Fakol Loaves, Pastries and other pioneering confectionaries within the city of Ibadan.

He made a foray into politics. Olakulehin was a founding member of the Social Democratic Party in Oyo State during the Third Republic. He was elected as a member of the House of Representatives in 1992, the same period the Otun Olubadan of Ibadan, High Chief Rashidi Yekini, became Senator. Olakulehin represented Ibadan South East Constituency and served as Chairman of the House Committee of the Nigerian Army.

Today, Oba Olakulehin opens a new vista in the traditional institution of Ibadanland. The journey, though predictable for each stage, was, however, not smooth. He emerged as the Olubadan-designate following the death of Oba Lekan Balogun on March 14, 2024. His emergence came with controversies over his health, due to old age. As a statesman, he made no statement condemning anyone or the government. He bore no grudges. He was focused, and determined. He made exceptional appearances when necessary to ward off rumours. The waiting periods are over. Here comes Oba Akinloye Owolabi Olakuleyin, the Ige Olakulehin 1. Long Live the King!

Dozens missing as landslide sweeps buses into river in Nepal

The accident took place in the central district of Chitwan

Rescuers are searching for more than 60 missing people in Nepal after a massive landslide swept two buses into a river.

Some spoke of their terrifying ordeal, with one saying he was "thrown out of the window of the bus into the river".

Only three people appeared to have survived the accident, which took place in the early hours of Friday.

Authorities said the landslide had been triggered by heavy rains.

Nepal, along with other parts of South Asia, is in the midst of the monsoon season and has seen heavy rainfall in recent weeks, triggering floods and landslides that have affected millions.

The accident took place at 03:30 local time (21:45 GMT Thursday) on Friday in Chitwan along the Narayanghat-Mugling highway, about 100km (60 miles) from the capital Kathmandu.

Survivor Nandan Das told the BBC's Nepali Service that the bus had been on the road for about an hour and a half when it "started rolling down all of a sudden into the river... I felt like I was going to die".

He said he managed to swim to safety even though it was "very dark at night... I found the river full of huge boulders and some foliage.

"We were chanting the name of God and swam and swam and swam. God saved us.

"I did not know if I was swimming out to the river or inward... but I came to the bank at last. Then I started climbing the slope."

He said that he and another survivor reached the highway at the same time, and were shortly joined by a third person. They managed to get help from a driver, who called the police.

Another survivor, Jogishwar Raya, described the bus as "trembling and overturning four or five times before plunging into the river".

He said he managed to swim out of the bus, but his family members were still missing.

"My son, daughter-in-law , grandson, and a granddaughter were on the same bus. Out of five family members, I was alone to survive; the rest vanished," he said.

Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has called for all government agencies to join in the search and rescue operation.

Scores of people are estimated to have died this monsoon season, with key highways blocked and some bridges swept away by swollen rivers.

Authorities have urged residents in the south-east of the country to be on alert as the Koshi river, which courses through Nepal and India, is flowing above the danger level.

Nepal also often sees deadly crashes due to poorly maintained roads and reckless driving.



Irish economy grew strongly in 2023

The Republic of Ireland's economy grew strongly in 2023, official figures suggest. The headline measure, gross national income (GNI), expanded by 5% according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Most countries use gross domestic product (GDP) as the key measure of economic performance but Irish GDP is badly distorted by the activities of multinational companies.

GNI, which has been used since 2017, strips out the most distorting effects to give a more accurate picture of the real economy.

It involves subtracting the retained profits of some firms which have Irish HQs and making adjustments for some foreign-owned assets which are located in Ireland.

In contrast to the increase in GNI, there was a 5.5% fall in GDP due to reduced goods exports by multinational companies.

The CSO's assistant director general, Chris Sibley, said: "The more globalised sectors of the economy contracted for the first time since 2013. Overall, the multinational sector contraction was 16.2%."

By contrast the figures point to a recovering domestic economy with personal spending on goods and services rising by almost 5% in 2023.

'Strength of the labour market'

The Irish labour market has performed strongly over the last year with unemployment at record lows.

Minister for Finance Jack Chambers said the CSO figures confirmed strong growth in the domestic economy.

"Despite facing significant inflationary pressures, consumer spending nevertheless drove growth in the domestic economy," he added.

"This performance reflects the strength of the labour market, which has been at full employment since mid-2022."

Figures for the first quarter of 2024 suggest the growth momentum has continued.

The key short term measure of domestic economic performance, modified domestic demand (MDD), grew by 1% compared to the final quarter of 2023.

Mr Chambers is planning to increase public spending by almost 7% in a pre-election budget in October.

He has faced criticism from an independent spending watchdog that a generous budget risks reigniting inflation.



Chris Sibley

Indian tycoon Ambani's son sets off in grand wedding procession

The wedding procession of the son of Asia's richest man has begun in the Indian city of Mumbai. Anant Ambani, son of Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani, is set to tie the knot with Radhika Merchant, daughter of pharma tycoons Viren and Shaila Merchant.

On Friday, the groom set off from his residence in a luxurious red car covered in strings of white flowers, as joyful guests danced around it.

The four-day wedding extravaganza is the final stop in a string of lavish parties the family has hosted since March.

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian and former UK PM Tony Blair are among the international guests attending the ceremony.

The procession, known as the baraat, is on its way to the wedding venue - a convention centre owned by the family.

Reports says the bride and the groom will exchange garlands at 20:00 local time (14:30GMT). The pheras - the main wedding ritual of the couple walking around the sacred fire seven times - is set for 21:30 (1600GMT).

Key roads in the city are sealed off for several hours a day until the festivities end on Monday.

The months of lavish celebrations have already featured performances by popstars like Rihanna and Justin Bieber.

But it has also led to backlash - city dwellers have complained of traffic snarls, while others have questioned the ostentatious display of wealth at the seemingly never-ending celebrations.

On Friday, the city witnessed heavy rains with waterlogging reported in some parts.

The marathon Indian wedding turning heads around the world

Mukesh Ambani, 66, is at present the world's 10th richest man with a net worth of $115bn, according to Forbes. Reliance Industries, founded by his father in 1966, is a massive conglomerate that operates in sectors ranging from petroleum and retail, to financial services and telecoms.

Anant Ambani is the youngest of his three children, all of whom are on the board of Reliance Industries. The 29-year-old is involved in Reliance's energy businesses and is on the board of Reliance Foundation. On Friday, the couple will get married in a traditional Hindu ceremony at the Jio World Convention Centre.

Reports say the family will host a grand reception at the weekend, before a final reception for their household staff on Monday.

Rumours on the internet suggest that Adele could be performing at the wedding, but the family has not confirmed this.

Reports say the sisters have brought a team of stylists, including celebrity hairstylist Chris Appleton, along with a group of producers to capture every detail of their trip.

Former Indian president Ram Nath Kovind, British High Commissioner to India Lindy Cameron and US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti are also in the city to attend the wedding.

Mumbai police have labelled the wedding a "public event" since it would be attended by several international and Indian VIPs, reports Reuters news agency.

The city police has also imposed traffic restrictions around the venue.

From Friday to Monday, roads around the convention centre will be open only for "event vehicles" between 13:00 India time (07:30 GMT) to midnight, it said.

Rajan Mehra, CEO of air charter company Club One Air, told Reuters that the family had rented three Falcon-2000 jets to ferry wedding guests to the event.

"The guests are coming from all over and each aircraft will make multiple trips across the country," he said.

The restrictions have sparked anger among the city residents who say they are already struggling with traffic jams and monsoon flooding.

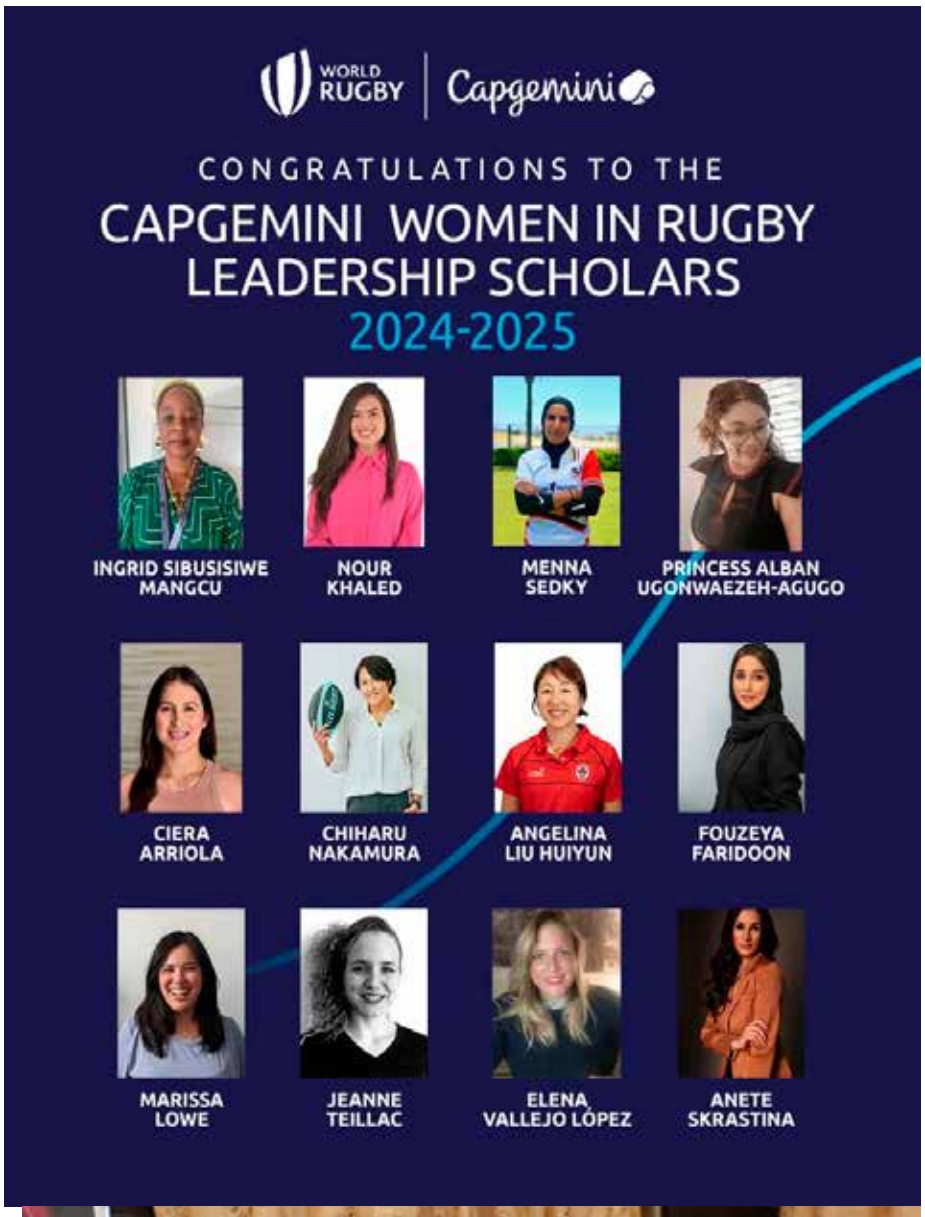
The Kardashian sisters have posted on Instagram about the warm welcome they received on arrival at the city's Taj hotel

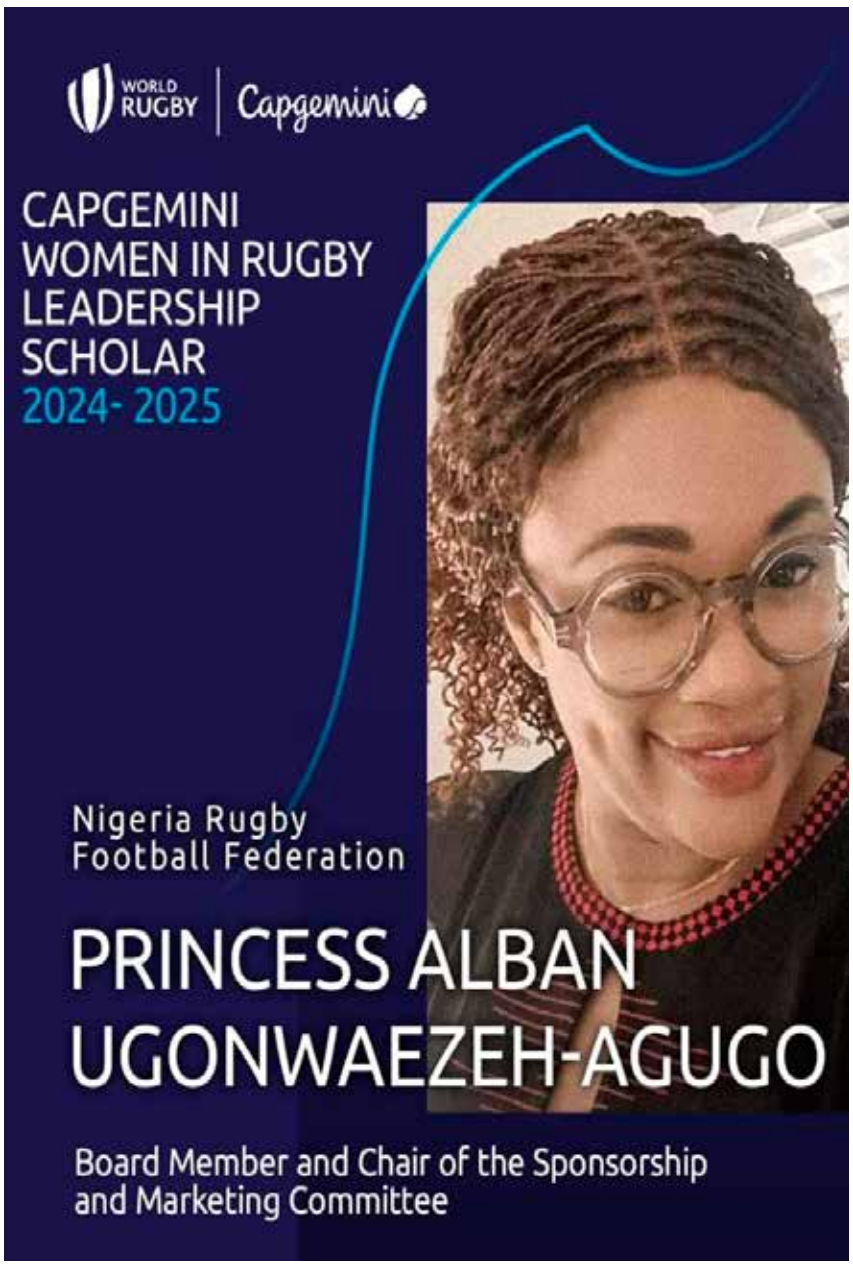
The wedding festivities began in March when the family held a three-day pre-wedding party in their home state of Gujarat.

Among the 1,200 guests to attend the celebration were international celebrities, politicians, and members of the




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After Suspending 3 Private Jets, FG Invites Dangote, Adenuga, Others for Verification

The federal government has asked owners of private aircraft flying in the country to present their papers for permission.

The notice with the order was issued by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

According to the NCS, the exercise's objective is to identify privately owned aircraft that have been incorrectly imported without the required documentation, ensure correct imports, and optimise tax collection.

The statement reads:

"The Nigeria Customs Service announces a verification exercise for privately owned aircraft operating in Nigeria."

"This exercise aims to identify improperly imported private aircraft without documentation, ensuring proper imports and maximum revenue collection."

The 30-day program is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, June 19, and will be held at the Nigeria Customs Service Headquarters, 4 Abidjan Street, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja, in the Tariff and Trade Department Room.

The verification exercise is scheduled to take place every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

The notice states that those who own and operate private aircraft within the nation must present certain necessary documentation.

These include aircraft Certificate of Registration, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority 's Flight Operation Compliance Certificate, NCAA's Maintenance Compliance Certificate, NCAA's Permit for Non-Commercial Flights, and Temporary Import Permit (if applicable).

The development comes one year after the FG put the exercise on hold. The government had planned to recover import duty, running into billions of naira from some private jet operators who had taken advantage of technical loopholes to evade the payment of import duty.

Wealthy Nigerians, prominent businessmen, and major commercial banks were among the approximately 17 owners of foreign-registered private jets that filed a lawsuit against the federal government sometime in 2021 to prevent their aircraft from being grounded due to purported import duty default.

This was happened after the federal government authorised the NCS's decision to halt around 91 private aircraft due to their purported failure to pay import tariffs totalling more than N30 billion.

The NCS began reviewing import taxes paid on private aircraft bought into the nation since 2006 in 2021.

This was stated in a Riot Act signed by Captain Chris Najomo, the acting director general, and posted on the NCAA website on Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

Earlier on Monday, Festus Keyamo , the minister of aviation and aerospace development, warned the private jet operators that their operations were costing the federal government a significant amount of money since they were operating without a license to provide commercial services.



Creates 5 new strategic commands, deploys body cameras for operational efficiency



Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) has approved the promotion of a total of Five Thousand and Forty-Two (5,042) personnel in an exercise that saw two senior officers elevated to the rank of Deputy Commander General of Narcotics, DCGN; 22 as Assistant Commander General of Narcotics, ACGN and 66 as Commander of Narcotics, CN.

The promotion, which followed weeks of examination and interviews conducted for qualified candidates, is part of an ongoing exercise to enhance human resource management, particularly on staff motivation and welfare, for efficiency and effectiveness in the achievement of organizational goals.

Speaking in Abuja on Wednesday 10th July 2024 at an event to decorate some of the promoted officers with their new ranks and reward 15 commands and 70 personnel for outstanding performances in the first half of 2024, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) said prompt and timely promotion of all deserving and qualified officers remains top on the agenda of his leadership.

According to him, "I am pleased to say that we continue to wax stronger on this journey we embarked on three and a half years ago when we decided to turn around the fortunes of this agency, by improving our performance as a precursor to reversing the perilous drug use situation in our dear country, Nigeria.

"On this occasion of the 8th edition of the commands' awards and commendations ceremony, we have every reason to be thankful because our performance continuously justifies our conviction in Offensive Action, WADA and other reforms that we undertook. For our modest efforts, we have received plaudits at home and abroad. What that means is that we have to do more. The reward for work well done is more work, and in our case, we cannot rest on our oars until all the objectives of our mandate are fully achieved. May I remind us that the bottom-line is a drug-free Nigeria.

"On our part as management, we are trying to keep the motivation going, by ensuring that we provide everything necessary to make this work safe, secure and conducive for everyone working in this Agency. Our new barracks in Adamawa, Abuja and Lagos are almost complete and will be commissioned soon. The recent promotion of 5, 053 officers speaks volumes about our dedication to prompt and timely promotion of officers. It is symbolic of our effort to break the jinx of stagnation, which was once an albatross for our personnel.

"To further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations, we are creating five strategic commands in Lagos, FCT, MMIA, Apapa and Tincan. Also in this regard, we'll be deploying body cameras for the use of our officers on strategic operations for the purpose of ensuring their safety and the integrity of such operations."

For the officers, men and women of the Agency, Marwa charged them to remain upright in the discharge of their duties. His words, "Let me also seize this occasion to pass some messages to the NDLEA personnel. We have come a long way. In three and a half years, we have taken down as many as 50 identifiable drug cartels, some of them important spokes in the wheel of cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine distribution in the country and the global trafficking network. We have seized a huge quantity of illicit drugs and we have convicted record numbers of drug offenders.

"We have achieved many milestones without soiling our integrity and I expect us to continue on that course. Our core values of integrity, hardwork and transparency, among others, must be respected at all times. We need to continue to justify the trust reposed in us by society, and our government, as well as our international partners and governments supporting us across the globe. We have raised the standard and it must not be lowered at any cost or by any means.

"That is to say, we will not take kindly to any news of infractions, indiscipline or corruption from the field or any command. The least we demand of any officer of this proud agency is to be upright and committed to our goals, while management continues to work on our welfare. The strides of the past three years have put behind us the tribulations of the previous 30 years. We owe the agency allegiance to maintain its integrity. We owe the public a duty to not betray the trust reposed in us. We owe our government, and our partners and stakeholders supporting us a duty to get the job done.

Tinubu Appoints New NPA Managing Director

President Bola Tinubu has sacked Mohammed Bello-Koko as Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and appointed Abubakar Dantsoho as his replacement.

In his press release, Presidential spokesperson Ajuri Ngelale stated that Tinubu expects the new leadership to improve port services and industry outcomes.

This change comes less than two years into Bello-Koko's tenure, which began under the Buhari administration.

Dantsoho holds a Doctorate degree in Maritime Technology from Liverpool John Moores University in the United Kingdom, as well as a Master's degree in International Transport from Cardiff University in Wales.

Prior to his appointment as NPA Managing Director, Dantsoho had served in various roles within the Nigerian Ports Authority, including Assistant General Manager, Technical Assistant to the Managing Director, Port Manager of Onne Port, and Principal Manager of Tariff & Billing.

With his extensive experience and impressive academic credentials in the maritime sector, Dantsoho is expected to bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to drive forward the mission of the Nigerian Ports Authority and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the country's port operations.

In a related move, former senator Adedayo Adeyeye has been named chairman of the NPA board.

Adedayo Clement Adeyeye is a Nigerian politician who belongs to the All Progressive Congress (APC) party. He is a former Minister of State for Works and a former Senator representing Ekiti South Senatorial District.

The maritime sector awaits the impact of this unexpected leadership shift on Nigeria's port operations and economy.

FIRS revitalises Nigeria's tax system, generates N3.94trn revenue in Q1

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has stated its commitment to restructuring the tax system which will boost economic growth and development within the nation.

This is as FIRS said it generated N3.94 trillion in revenue in the first quarter (Q1) of 2024. An exemplary initiative in this regard is the unveiling of the National Single Window, a programme that has significantly bolstered economic growth.

By streamlining processes and reducing bureaucracy, this initiative has facilitated easier access to global markets for businesses, particularly at the nation's ports, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and increasing government revenue.

The chairman of FIRS, Dr Zacch Adedeji represented by the special adviser on Tax Policy, Mr Femi Olarinde and other officials of the agency disclosed this to newsmen during a media parley held in Lagos.

Olarinde stated that "since assuming office in September 2023, great progress has been made under Adedeji's leadership." He highlighted the significant improvement in tax compliance among international shipping companies engaged in crude oil lifting operations in Nigeria.

"Notably, the Agency, under Adedeji's stewardship, surpassed its revenue target for 2023 by collecting a commendable N12.36 trillion, representing 107 per cent of the set target of N11.55 trillion.

"Another feat of the Agency is the achievement of 81 per cent of the collection of first quarter 2024 revenue amounting to N3.94 trillion being an all-time highest in the same quarter and 56 per cent higher than Q1 2023. The FIRS has equally integrated nine new modules on the tax administration system, TaxProMax, automating over 80 per cent of manual processes."

He added that, "Adedeji, through strategic planning and innovative initiatives, has transformed the tax office into a modern and efficient 'One-stop shop' system that caters to various taxpayer categories.

"By categorising taxpayers into Large, Medium, and Small segments, the office has successfully boosted customer satisfaction levels and significantly decreased complaints from the fourth quarter of 2023 to the first quarter of 2024. Furthermore, the Agency has made significant strides in simplifying tax-related procedures by providing tailored services and enhancing tax education programs, resulting in a notable 20 per cent increase in tax compliance rates."

According to him, the recent reorganisation of the FIRS underscores the Agency's commitment to optimizing operations, improving efficiency, and fostering a customer-centric culture. The revised structure now prioritises People-Centric solutions, Effectiveness & Efficiency measures, Cohesiveness, Data-Driven Approaches, Adaptability, and cutting-edge Innovation, aligning the FIRS with its new strategic objectives. These strategic shifts demonstrate the agency's dedication to meeting evolving targets and ensuring enhanced service delivery to all taxpayers.



Dr Zacch Adedeji

NGX Group unveils e-Offering platform with 3 banks utilising APIs

Temitope Adebayo

Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group) has unveiled NGX Invest, a digital platform designed to streamline public offerings and rights issues in the Nigerian capital market.

The platform, which has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), is now live, promising an efficient, convenient, and seamless experience for managing primary market transactions.

NGX Invest represents a significant leap forward in improving stakeholder experience within Nigeria's capital market. Building on the success of the country's first digital public offering in 2021, which attracted over 150,000 new retail investors, 75 per cent of whom were female and 85 per cent under the age of 40, NGX Invest enhances transparency and accessibility in primary market transactions.

NGX stated that the launch of the platform comes at a crucial time, coinciding with the Central Bank of Nigeria's Banking Recapitalisation directive, which has prompted numerous offers for subscription and rights announcements by Nigerian banks, saying, Access Holdings Plc, FCMB Group, and Fidelity Bank Plc are already utilizing the NGX Invest APIs to distribute their offerings to retail investors.

The director-general of the SEC, Dr. Emomotimi Agama commended the initiative, stating that, "the e-offering platform aligns perfectly with our objective of futureproofing the Nigerian capital market. By digitalising and automating financial intermediation processes, we are fostering a more efficient, transparent, and inclusive capital market. At the Commission, our focus is on creating an enabling regulatory environment that promotes innovation without compromising compliance and investor protection."

Group chairman of NGX Group, Alhaji Umaru Kwairanga stated that "the supportive regulatory environment has provided a solid foundation that enabled the swift delivery of the platform. This reflects our mutual commitment to market development and will undoubtedly contribute to boosting the participation of retail investors in the capital market.

"As we strive for the market to play a larger role in Nigeria's economic development, the integration of technology, strong partnerships, and collaboration, alongside a positive policy environment, will be essential."

Group managing director/chief executive officer of NGX Group, Temi Popoola, expressed enthusiasm for the new platform, noting its significance in NGX Group's digital transformation journey and ability to enhance market access and foster economic growth.

Popoola emphasised that NGX Invest is designed to significantly enhance the efficiency of public offering subscriptions and rights issue processes, streamlining operational workflows to better support issuers' capital-raising efforts.

CEO of NGX, Jude Chiemeka, underscored the platform's transformative potential, saying, "NGX Invest addresses the demand for a more efficient and transparent process in managing public offers and rights issues.

"It will expedite reconciliation and allotment processes, reduce unclaimed dividends, and boost investor confidence. All stakeholders, including investors, registrars, issuing houses, brokers, banks, and regulators stand to benefit significantly from this innovation."



Alhaji Umaru Kwairanga

TEMITOPE ADEABYO

Tinubu appoints new leadership for Nigerian Ports Authority

In a decisive move to enhance the efficiency of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), President Bola Tinubu has appointed Dr Abubakar Dantsoho as Managing Director and Senator Adedayo Adeyeye as Chairman of the Board.

This development was contained in a statement by the Special Adviser to the President (Media & Publicity), Chief Ajuri Ngelale, and was obtained by Saturday Times on Friday.

Dr Dantsoho, an expert in maritime technology with a Doctorate from Liverpool John Moores University and a Master's from Cardiff University, brings a wealth of experience from his previous roles within the NPA, including Assistant General Manager and Port Manager at Onne Port.

Senator Adeyeye, a distinguished lawyer, journalist, and politician, has served as Minister of State for Works and represented Ekiti South Senatorial District. His extensive background in governance is expected to contribute significantly to the strategic oversight of the NPA.

To this end, President Tinubu anticipates that the new leadership will drive excellence in port services, leading to improved industry outcomes and greater operational efficiency.



Bola Tinubu

Shell invigorates skill acquisition programme to universities in Nigeria

The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) Joint Venture has significantly invigorated and also expanded its educational initiatives by inducting 27 Nigerian academics and research interns.

This year's programme, a 35 per cent increase from the previous year, welcomed eight professors, four senior lecturers, and 15 other participants.

Held at the company's headquarters in Port Harcourt, the induction ceremony marked the beginning of a one-year programme focused on knowledge exchange and skill development.

Drawn from 13 Nigerian universities, these participants will gain valuable industry experience in fields like biodiversity, petroleum engineering, and environmental impact assessment.

"The research and internship programmes are central to our commitment to supporting higher education in Nigeria," explained Shell Nigeria's Head of Corporate Relations, and SPDC Director, Mr. Igo Weli.

He described the programme as mutually beneficial nature by offering Shell access to specialised expertise from professors and lecturers, who in turn acquire practical industry knowledge and exposure to cutting-edge technologies.

Despite operational challenges, Mr. Weli reaffirmed Shell's position as the industry leader in fostering a positive learning environment and empowering people.

Representing the NNPC Upstream Investment Management Services, Mrs. Bunmi Edith Lawson echoed Mr. Weli's sentiments by further highlighting the programme's significance in scientific exploration, environmental stewardship, and knowledge advancement.

This is an investment in the next generation of innovators and a way for us to give back to our stakeholders,' he stated.

The 2024 programme includes participants from a diverse range of universities across Nigeria, including the University of Benin, Rivers State University, University of Ibadan, Niger Delta University, and Ahmadu Bello University.

Others are Bingham University Karu, Federal University Wukari, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo State, Covenant University, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, University of Uyo, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture.



Mr. Igo Weli.

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KIDS SOCCER LEAGUE
... Live your dreams

Kids Soccer League Abuja (KSL 2024 Season)

Special Invitation, Kids Soccer League, Abuja Closing Ceremony and Award Presentation

The management of the Kids Soccer League (K.S.L) having identified your passion and efforts towards the development of football especially grassroots, we humbly invite you as our Special guest of honour to the grand finale, closing ceremony and award presentation of the 3rd edition of the Kids Soccer League Abuja. (K.S.L 2024 season) scheduled for Saturday 20th of July 2024

Time : 3 to 6pm

Venue : HOKF Park and Garden Wuye Abuja

The Kids Soccer League is a competition for kids under the following categories U9, U11 and U14. It is a project programme to identify and promote talent from the foundation and to encourage kids active participation in Football and consequently to discourage age discrepancy which is aimed to enable rapid development of football in the FCT and by implication in Nigeria.

We are using this medium to commend your immense contribution towards the rapid growth of football and grassroots development in the FCT and Nigeria at large.

We want to say thank you in anticipation of a favourable response to our invite, as we look forward to seeing you.

Sportingly yours,

Femi Ajilore O.L.Y (Former Super Eagles and Nigeria international).

For K.S.L (LOC).













July 13, 2024

LG Autonomy: S'Court ruling relief for us –NGF

OKEY OSIEGBU & STEPHEN GBADA–MOSI

Contrary to insinuations in several quarters that the ruling of the Supreme Court which granted financial autonomy to LGA chairmen in the 774 local councils will anger the 36 state governors, the chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum, NGF has called it a great relief for the governors.

The chairman of the forum who is also the governor of Kwara State, Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq said this at the State House Abuja on Friday in the company of his Bauchi and Imo State counterparts, Bala Mohammed and Hope Uzodimma respectively.

According to him, "We welcome the ruling of the Supreme Court. Compliance is a given and our attorney generals have applied for the enrollment order which we'll study carefully. But by and large, governors are happy with the devolution of power with respect to local government autonomy.

"It relieves the burden on governors. Our people really don't know how much states expend in bailing out local governments, and that's the issue there."

Governor Abdul Razak said the Nigeria Governors' Forum will meet next Wednesday to come up with a resolution about the matter. He said contrary to speculations, governors have "never tampered with local government funds".

"It's not going to affect the states," the NGF chief said, and believes that with the autonomy granted to local governments, the third tier of government can better manage their affairs.

"As you're aware the tripartite committee has met and submitted its report. Yes, a movement of figures is the prerogative of the president which he will also transmit to the National Assembly for robust debate before it's adopted," the governor said.

That judgement has since triggered an outpour of commendations from stakeholders including President Tinubu, governors, political leaders, and lawmakers among others.

Meanwhile a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and former chairman of Oluyole Local Government Area of Oyo State, Alhaji Kehinde Olaoseebikan, has said that with the Supreme Court judgment on local government autonomy, President Bola Tinubu will lead Nigeria to greatness.

Olaosebikan, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Midas Communications Limited, made this assertion on the heels of the judgement which gave local government financial autonomy.

"It is just one of the great things that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu would do for the country. He has already made history with this laudable epochal judgment. He will do much more.

"He is capable, strategic and with a strong political will. These are the qualities that the president is deploying in governance, and it is becoming clear that Nigerians are in for a better time.

"When I spoke recently that Nigerians would yearn for the president to continue in office in 2027, many people criticised me for being too optimistic about the Tinubu government.

"A notable person in the society described my submission to the government then as 'morally repulsive.' I didn't fight him, as I just told him that it was my own position, not his.

"The same man called me last night and simply said 'the president means business,' and I said, yes. I told him that it was time for all of us to give him our support, believe in his leadership and be more patriotic. He agreed," he said.

The public relations expert also appealed too the labour unions to rest assured that President Tinubu would give them an acceptable minimum wage.

"Before I dwell on the significance of the Supreme Court's judgment that has emancipated the grassroots from the enemies of progress, I want to make another postulation that the president would satisfy the labour and Nigerians on the minimum wage issue.

"The president's final decision would be a pleasant surprise to all. He cares and is determined to write his name in gold.

In governance as it applies to all forms of administration and control, leadership is very key. "Leadership determines the height to which a government or an organisation could attain and also the depth it could sink into. That is why it is absolutely important to have strong, capable and competent persons in leadership.

"In the case of Nigeria today, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has gone beyond the display of the three Cs of Competence, Capacity and Care recommended for successful governance and leadership by a former Minister of Education, Dr. Oby Ezekwezili, at the first National Summit, launching the All Progressives Congress on 15th March, 2014 at the Congress Hall of Transcorp Hilton Hotel. "Tinubu has added strategic governance and political will to the three Cs for outstanding leadership. Ezekwezili spoke as the Keynote Speaker at the summit.

"The battle for the autonomy of the 774 local government councils from the greed of the governors began in 2000 or thereabout, with the successive leaders pursuing a mono line of the National Assembly to accomplish the liberation. "From the era of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to Umaru Yar'Adua to Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari, spanning over 20 years, none was able to actualise the much-desired autonomy for the local governments.

"With a precise appointment of one of the best, progressive-minded giants in the legal profession in the country, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, as the Attorney-General and Justice Minister of the Federation, Tinubu achieved what four former presidents could not achieve for over 20 years in less than 45 days.

"The suit craving autonomy for the local governments was filed on the 27th May, 2024 and judgment delivered on the 11th July.

"With an effective strategy and will power, President Tinubu, through his attorney-general, took a new route of the court and got the local governments liberated swiftly. This is a great accomplishment that should be commended by all.

Pro-Wike Lawmakers Write Fubara, List His Constitutional Breaches

The Rivers State House of Assembly led by Martins Amaewhule has written the state Governor, Sir Siminialayi Fubara, detailing the governor's actions that breached the provisions of the 1999 Constitution as amended.

The House in a letter dated July 8 and signed by its Speaker, Martins Amaewhule, addressed to Fubara shortly after rising from its plenary on Monday noted shortfalls by the governor as regards keeping to the oath of office.

In the document titled, "Resolutions reached at the First Legislative Day of the Second Session of the 10th Rivers State House of Assembly, the House drew the governor's attention to the 2024 Appropriation Bill saying he was yet to present it before the lawmakers.

The House insisted that the governor had yet to present the bill to a duly constituted Rivers State House of Assembly under the speakership of Amaewhule in line with Section 122 of the Constitution.

Addressing Fubara, the House said: "You are yet to present the Rivers State Appropriation Bill, 2024 in line with Section 121(1) of the 1999 Constitution as altered and in compliance with the judgement delivered on the 22nd day of January 2024 by Honourable Justice J.K Omotosho of the Federal High Court of Nigeria.

"The Rivers State Government under your watch is now barred from spending funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of tbe state. The House hereby gives you the opportunity to present same within seven days from the date of this resolution."

The Rivers Assembly also drew the governor's attention to his breach of 192(2) of the Constitution accusing him of inaugurating purported members of the Rivers State Executive Council as commissioners.

The lawmakers told the governor that he also breached Section 7(1) of the Constitution and the Rivers State Local Government (amendment) Law 2023 for swearing-in certain unelected individuals to manage the affairs of the 23 local government councils in the state in flagrant disobedience to the judgement delivered by Justice Omotosho.

"The learned Judge restrained you from dealing with the three suspended who with your connivance are parading themselves as Rivers House of Assembly in total disobedience to the order of the learned Judge", the House told the governor.

The assembly said the governor in total disregard to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution as amended and the judgement delivered by the Court of Appeal, has continued to transact with the three suspended members in contempt of the orders of the court.

The House said the governor refused to direct all impostors in his government to stop parading in their purported positions.

The letter said: "These infractions by you on the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as altered, other extant laws and judicial pronouncements constitute gross misconduct ans abuse of office on your part. We call on you to do the needful and act lawfully without further delay and please accept the assurances of our high regards."

Nigerians React As Bauchi-Governor Declares Monday Work-Free Day To Honor Islamic New-Year

Nigerians React As Bauchi-Governor Declares Monday Work-Free Day To Honor Islamic New-Year (Text)

Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, has announced that Monday, July 8, 2024, will be a work-free day to commemorate Al-Muharram, the first day of the Islamic Calendar.

This declaration acknowledges the significance of the Islamic calendar and the beginning of a new year.

In a statement released on Sunday, July 7, Mukhtar Gidado, the special adviser to the governor on media affairs, said: "The gesture underscores the administration's respect for the religious and cultural values of our Muslim community, offering an opportunity for reflection, prayer, and celebration."

Governor Mohammed has also pledged to address the infrastructure deficit in Bauchi, highlighting his commitment to the state's development. Other recent news includes the case of a 67-year-old who defiled two siblings in Bauchi and a deadly rivalry over a girlfriend that resulted in two deaths.

Gidado continued, "The government acknowledges the significance of Al-Muharram as a time of renewal and spiritual growth for our Muslim brothers and sisters. Bala Mohammed extends his best wishes to all citizens observing this important day, encouraging everyone to engage in activities that promote peace, unity, and understanding within our diverse society."

He further stated that government offices, schools, and banks will observe the work-free day, with normal activities resuming the following day.



Jubilation As President Tinubu Announces Fresh Allowee Package For Corps Members

Management has observed with dismay, the misrepresentation of facts by some Members of the press during the visit of NYSC Director General, Brigadier General YD Ahmed to Ogun State Orientation Camp in Sagamu, yesterday.

For clarity sake, General Ahmed while addressing Corps Members said it is expected that they would benefit from the minimum wage when it is approved, he did not say the President has approved any increment in Corps Members' allowance.

Meanwhile, as part of his oversight functions during Orientation periods, the Director General advised the Corps Members on different issues relating to patriotism, entrepreneurship, security consciousness, community development among other issues of youth development for leadership roles.

Members of the press are advised to be factual in their reportage of NYSC activities, so as not to incite unnecessary apprehension among the Scheme's stakeholders.



NFF calls for applications for position of Supersand Eagles' Coach

The Nigeria Football Federation has requested for applications from suitably qualified candidates for the vacant position of the Coach of Beach Soccer National Team, otherwise known as Supersand Eagles.

The public notice, which is on the Federation's website (https://thenff.com/?post_type=jobpost&p=16146&preview=true), has specified for candidates to have attended at least one beach soccer refresher course organized by the NFF, be conversant with, and abreast of, the ever-changing rules and dynamics of the game and possess at least CAF C Coaching License.

A candidate must also have been involved in beach soccer activities in the last three years to be considered, while playing experience locally and internationally could prove to be an added advantage.

Applications will close at midnight of Friday, 12th July 2024, with a successful candidate to be named in a matter of days, as the Supersand Eagles get set for a two-leg Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations qualifying fixture against their counterparts from Mauritania.

Absence of Nigerian referees from major tourneys will soon be in the past – Tangawarima

Former FIFA referee, and now FIFA senior technical instructor Felix Tangawarima, has expressed confidence that if Nigeria's next generation referees receive the necessary support and encouragement from the NFF, the absence of Nigerian referees from major international tournaments will soon be a thing of the past.

Tangawarima, who is at the head of the FIFA team that superintended a five-day training programme for the country's Young Talents (40 young arbiters) and which is presently concluding a similar programme for elite referees, spoke during a courtesy call on President of NFF, Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau at the NFF Secretariat, Abuja on Wednesday.

"We have seen so much promise and potential from the Young Talents, and as I said last week, there are exceptional talents in there who can easily step up to the plate to replace some of the elite referees that we believe are no longer good enough. It is now our responsibility, and that of the NFF, to keep inspiring, supporting and encouraging those young blood to fulfill their potentials and reach the apogee.

"It is no longer tenable that major tournaments come and go without Nigerian referees. Something must be done and I can tell you that now, we are on to a good thing. I am happy about the new direction that the NFF is taking in the area of refereeing development, the commitment of the leadership to motivating the referees and the personal interest of the NFF President in changing the narrative."

While commending the excellent work of the NFF Referees Sub-Committee, Tangawarima, who was in company with FIFA Fitness Instructor Mark Mzengo from Malawi, appealed to the NFF President to find the enablement for Nigerian international referee instructors to periodically engage upcoming instructors at the zones with a view to enhancing their capacity.

Responding, Gusau stated that he is always most pained any time there is a report of misdemeanour by a Nigerian referee or a list of referees for major tourneys is released without a single Nigerian referee.

"Personally, I find it unacceptable. At every opportunity, I tell the referees that we will continue to assist those who deliberately step out of line, to stay away permanently. It is a vocation that requires the highest level of integrity, discipline, dedication, diligence and moral rectitude.

"We are delighted at the good recommendation you have given our next generation of referees. We will work assiduously to see that they fulfill their potential."

The NFF President also used the occasion to announce that the Federation has already procured new gadgets for Nigerian referees to enhance their work on the field of play.

NFF set to organize CAF C coaching course for women

...Precious Dede, Vera Okolo, Joy Jegede headline program



All is set for the first-ever CAF C Coaching Course organized by the Nigeria Football Federation exclusively for women, with the first module to run 15th – 25th July at the NFF/FIFA Technical Centre, inside the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

NFF Technical Director, Coach Augustine Eguavoen told thenff.com on Thursday that the program is in three modules, with the first 15th – 25th July, to be followed by a two-week internship for the participants between 27th July – 7th August. The participants will return to Abuja for the second module that is scheduled for 12th – 20th August, after which they will go on another two-week internship, 23rd August – 4th September.

The third module, which comes with examinations for the participants, will take place 9th – 19th September.

For the first module starting on Monday, theory and practical sessions will run daily 8am-6pm, with intermittent breaks of two hours for tea and lunch breaks.

A total of 30 coaches are expected, with preference having been given to retired football players and women who are currently in the coaching business but do not possess coaching licenses.

A clutch of former Super Falcons' stars, including goalkeeper Precious Dede, defender Joy Jegede and pacy forward Vera Okolo are among the 30 women registered for the maiden program.

There are also former Super Falcons' forwards Maureen Eke and Esther Michael, former midfielder Cecilia Nku and former U20 girls' captain Gloria Ofoegbu.

Super Falcons to have full camp by Friday afternoon



The arrivals of forwards Uchenna Kanu and Chinwendu Ihezuo at the Super Falcons' camp in Sevilla, Spain on Thursday afternoon brought the number of players in camp to 20, with only defender Oluwatosin Demehin and forward Chinonyerem Macleans still expected as the nine-time African champions intensify preparations for their return to the Women's Olympic Football Tournament.

Both players are scheduled to arrive at the team's Hotel Barceló Montecastillo Golf and Resort on Friday afternoon.

A full camp by Friday means Coach Randy Waldrum and his assistants will have five whole days to work with the entire playing body, as well as the alternates, ahead of Wednesday's training match with reigning Olympic champions Canada.

Team captain Rasheedat Ajibade was among the first arrivals, alongside goalkeepers Chiamaka Nnadozie and Tochukwu Oluehi, defenders Chidinma Okeke and Nicole Payne, midfielders Christy Ucheibe, Toni Payne, Deborah Abiodun and Jennifer Echegini, and forward Esther Okoronkwo. Two alternates – goalkeeper Morufa Ademola and forward Gift Monday were also early arrivals.

The Super Falcons will fly into France on Thursday, 18th July – exactly a week to their tournament opening match against illustrious opponents Brazil at the Stade Bordeaux. Their two other games in the group phase, against Spain and Japan in that order, will take place at the Stade de la Beaujoire in Nantes.

Djokovic sets up Alcaraz rematch in Wimbledon final



Novak Djokovic outclassed Italian underdog Lorenzo Musetti to reach the Wimbledon final and set up a showdown with reigning champion Carlos Alcaraz in a repeat of last year's final.

The 37-year-old impressed as he stayed on course for a record-equalling eighth men's singles title at Wimbledon with a 6-4 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 victory on Centre Court.

Musetti, 22, had one chance to get the break back in the final set but sent a forehand into the net and crouched down with his head in his hands, knowing the end was near.

Djokovic made sure his opponent did not get another opportunity.

Under pressure, Musetti sent a shot long before Djokovic walked to the net, knowing he had reached his 37th Grand Slam final and 10th at Wimbledon.

The Serb then moved his racquet over his shoulder and imitated playing a violin, in a gesture aimed at his six-year-old daughter Tara, with television cameras showing her grinning along.

Some fans, however, started booing, thinking Djokovic, who produced the same celebration following his win over Holger Rune in the last 16, was being disrespectful.

Alcaraz beat Djokovic in last year's showpiece, winning 1-6 7-6 (8-6) 6-1 3-6 6-4 in a five-set epic, which lasted four hours 42 minutes and is regarded one of the best matches in the tournament's history.

The pair meet again on Sunday in what could be another amazing chapter in Wimbledon folklore.

Asked about Spaniard Alcaraz, Djokovic said: "He's a great example of a player that has an all-round balance, he has a great team around him, great values, a lot of charisma and carries himself superbly - that's one of the reasons why is so popular.

"He's one of the greatest 21-year-olds we've ever seen and we're going to see a lot of him in the future, no doubt. He's going to win many Grand Slams, but hopefully not in two days. He can do it when I retire."

Djokovic, 16 years older than Alcaraz, added: "He already beat me here in a Wimbledon final in a five-set thriller so I don't expect anything less than a huge battle.

"He is as complete a player as they come, so it's going to take the best of my ability to beat him."

Musetti, who had won a five-set quarter-final against 13th seed Taylor Fritz, had produced his best run in a Slam and gave everything against Djokovic, who gained the first key break in the sixth game.

Unlike against Rune, Djokovic largely did not get involved in the crowd, although Musetti gained an instant break in the second set - a leaping, spinning overhead smash also brought sporting applause from Djokovic.

The same happened following a glorious cross-court Musetti winner, but once the Serb won the tie-break, there looked no way back for his opponent.

So it proved, with Djokovic breaking early in the third set on his way to yet another final as Musetti was unable to follow in the footsteps of fellow Italian Jasmine Paolini, who plays Barbora Krejcikova in Saturday's women's final.

"Nole played a really incredible match," said Musetti. "He showed he's in great shape - not only in tennis. His tennis fits very well on this surface, it was a joke at the end how he was returning."

England reaching Euros final feels 'normal' - Southgate

Gareth Southgate says England felt "perhaps less satisfaction" at reaching the Euro 2024 final compared to their Euro 2020 experience.

The Three Lions' 2-1 victory against the Netherlands on Wednesday set them up for a second consecutive European Championship final.

England finished runners-up at the delayed Euros in 2021, losing 3-2 to Italy in a penalty shootout at Wembley following a 1-1 draw.

That was the men's first final appearance since the 1966 World Cup, and now another awaits them on Sunday when Spain will provide the opposition.

Southgate has guided England to the semi-finals or further in three of his four major tournaments in charge - World Cups and Euros - without yet winning a trophy.



Including fixtures decided on penalty shootouts, Southgate's England have won nine knockout games and lost three, also losing a third-place game.

"There's a different feel [than 2021]. We're now in a different moment as a team, two tournaments on and a lot more big match experience," Southgate told BBC Sport.

"I guess there was less of a celebration, perhaps less satisfaction at reaching a final.

"I wouldn't say it becomes run of the mill but it's a little bit more normal for us. That statement in itself is probably a bit ridiculous given our history."

After being named the Football Association's head of elite development in 2012, Southgate was appointed England's Under-21 manager a year later.

He replaced Sam Allardyce as manager of the senior team in 2016.

"What that journey's taught me is what it means to English football really to have credibility on the European and world stage," said Southgate.

"I know what it means to people working at every level from youth development all the way through to senior football."

Southgate's England deal, which he extended in November 2021, is due to expire in December.

The three-way international tussle for Lamine Yamal

Lamine Yamal's peformance at the ongoing European Championships is set to boost football in Equatorial Guinea, says the country's football federation.

The 16-year-old, who has stunned the world with his displays in Germany, plays for Spain despite having an Equatoguinean mother and a Moroccan father.

He was born in Barcelona, where he grew up and is coming through La Masia academy for the five-time European champions, with whom he recently concluded his first season of action.

"Even though Lamine is not playing for Equatorial Guinea, we hold him very close in our hearts and think he is going to do many things for Equatoguinean football," Venancio Tomas Ndong Micha, the country's football federation president, told BBC Sport Africa.

"We are enjoying his extraordinary performances at the Euros, on top of the great season with FC Barcelona. "He has our roots, and this shows that we are a country of good footballers," added Ndong Micha.

Entrusted with dead-ball situations for a major European football nation despite his tender age, Yamal has shown his all-around ability with his stunning goal against France and assists in the games against Croatia, Georgia and Germany.

He is set to play the final against England on Sunday, a day after he turns 17, making him the youngest player to contest a final at either the Euros or World Cup.

Pele is the youngest to play in a World Cup Final. He was 17 years 249 days when he played in Brazil's 5-2 triumph over Sweden in the 1958 final, when he scored twice.

Yamal's record as the youngest goal scorer at a Euros (aged 16 years 361 days) will be very hard to beat. As will his feats at Barcelona – for whom he is the youngest player to start a league game (16 years and 38 days) – and in La Liga, where he is the youngest scorer in history (16 years and 87 days).

Equatorial Guinea is a country split into two parts, with the capital Malabo located on one of its island areas while the largest city on its African mainland section is Bata, where Yamal's mother was born.

She eventually found her way to Spain where she was working as a waitress when she met his father, from whom she has since separated.

While his mother and grandmother live in Barcelona, the rest of Yamal's maternal family are still in Equatorial Guinea, a country which has reached the knock-out stages at the last two Africa Cup of Nations despite its small stature.

Three years ago, Equatorial Guinea's football federation (Feguifoot) tried to secure the winger's services for the team currently ranked 89th by Fifa, only to discover they were far behind Spain, who play England in Sunday's European Championship final.

"We contacted the family in 2021 but the advances with the Spanish football federation had gone very deep," Ndong Micha explained.

"But we did try, because I am a good friend of the family by chance – particularly the grandfather – and all the family used to talk about the kid.

"Then, there were also the Moroccans who went after him... but the Spanish beat us."

Faouzi Lekjaa, the president of Morocco's football federation, has explained how their attempts to secure Yamal last year ended in defeat, given the teenager's firm desire to play for Spain.

Nonetheless, both African countries remain close to Yamal's heart – as can be seen by the presence of their respective national flags on the football boots his feet dazzle in.

"This shows that even though he is playing for Spain, he is not forgetting his Equatoguinean roots," added Ndong Micha.



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NFF set to organize CAF C coaching course for women

EFCC Peace Walk Was An Option For Advocacy















Corruption has remained a bane in the existence of greater nations like Nigeria, it has remain a norm in our existence till date.

Our nation has a method of copying from others and replicating it locally to a level that we rather prefer to live with it than supporting the anti- graft institutions to arrest those involve for prosecution that may place it under control over time.

Criminalities exist as part of the society, but in same manner that the same society relates with its constitutes authorities to curb same crime at the nick of execution.

The road walk marking the Africa Anti-corruption day was another milestone event of the EFCC.

My take was to celebrate this crusader of conscience in the giant stride of the EFCC led by its Chairman in the person of Pastor Olanikpekun Olukayode the Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, in his crusade to accomplish his mandate to :bring about Collective responsibility, greater emphases on preventive frame works against graft and premium attention on transactional credit in his tenue as the man in charge of the commission with his team.

I stand to be corrected if either of the past leadership of the Commission has been celebrated which is an irony of the typicality of the Nigeria perspective.

Not until those who have sacrificed their time and service at the risk of their lives is protected from been insulted and ridiculed, they will not give their all in prosecuting those who have pilfered the common wealth of Nigeria. Looting Nigeria as if they are harvesting crops in their farms.

The EFCC Chairman during the road walk called for enhanced and consistent commitment to whistle blowing by Nigerians from all works of life to tackle the menace of economic and financial crime including other acts of corruption.

We must change the norm where our youths now see corruption as a way of life.

In same manner, this sort of event should be replicated in other commands and zones of the EFCC simultaneously with massive media converge through extensive collaborations with the media from the print, electronics and social media to achieve a global coverage to defeat the menace that has crippled our economy over the years. It was a successful road match that withnessed the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress Comrade Joe Ajaero with his consenting voice to the crusade like others.

Governance is an ongoing process but creating a template that will out live us is what matters despite the internal sabotage of leakages that exist as allege within those credible commissions withing the anti graft and security agencies in the recent past.

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