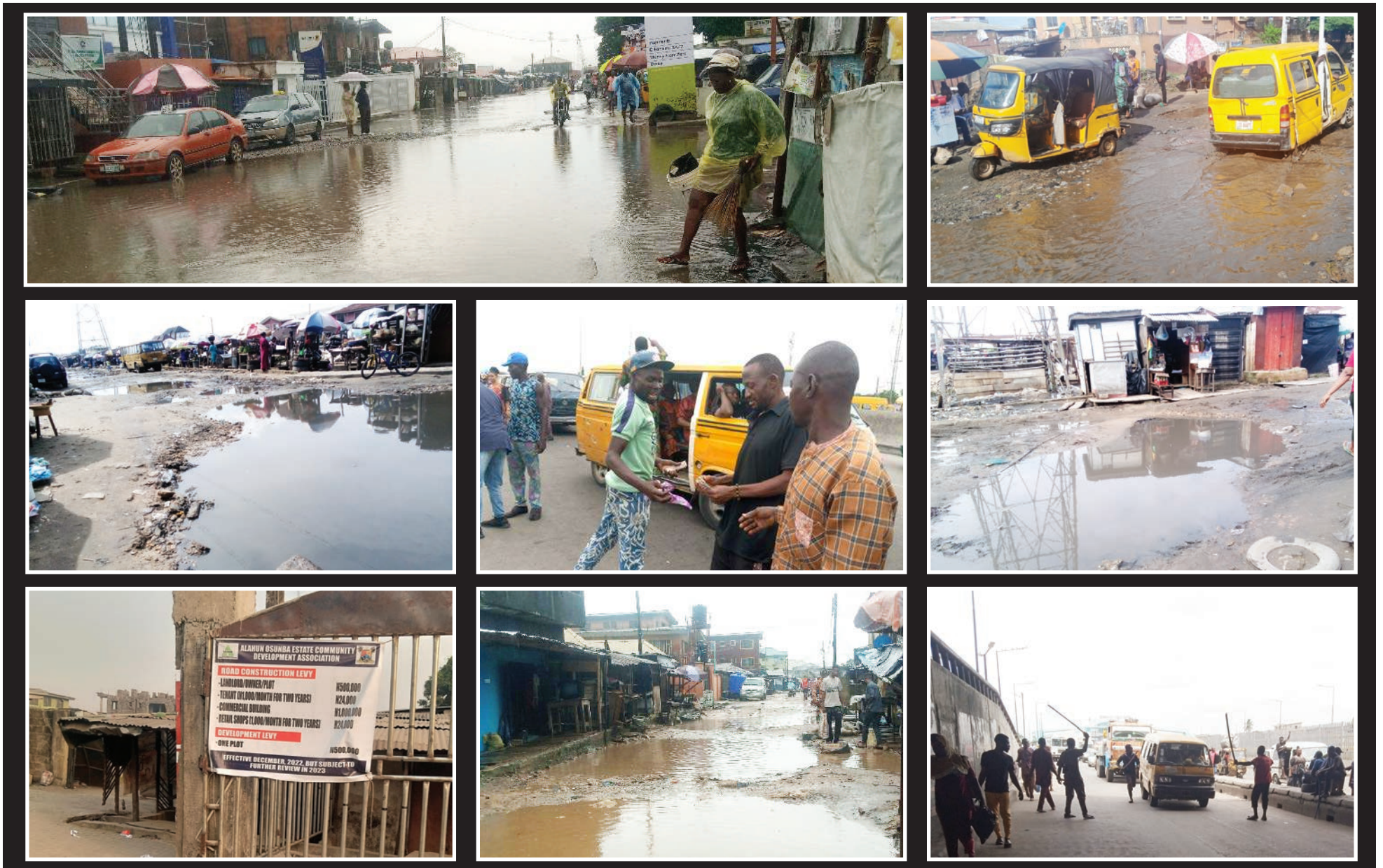


Good governance:

Despite huge revenue, Lagos local councils underperform, worsen residents' pains **BIG STORY PAGES 4 & 5**



DSS charges Emezie to court after judge issued one-week ultimatum

NEWS PAGE 3

346 persons killed, 18,751 displaced in Plateau

NEWS PAGE 29

Police nab father for selling three children N1.5m in Rivers

METRO PAGE 8

LP, INEC duel over call for dismissal, prosecution of Yakubu

NEWS PAGE 3

Labour, Atiku slam NASS' speedy approval of Tinubu's \$800m loan, N500b palliative

NEWS PAGE 6

NAHCON allays Hajj concerns as NCAA suspends Max Air's Boeing 737 aircraft

NEWS PAGE 7

Panorama

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

SPOTLIGHT

Leaders meet for U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Botswana

By **Tope Templer Olaiya**

OVER 1,000 participants from the U.S. and across the African continent, including government officials, private sector executives, investors, and multilateral stakeholders, are meeting in Gaborone, capital city of Botswana at the United States-Africa Business Summit.

It kicked off yesterday to explore investment opportunities and strengthen business relationships between Africa and the U.S.

The 15th U.S.-Africa Business Summit, hosted by the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) and the Government of Botswana, is themed 'Enhancing Africa's Value Chains.'

African Heads of Govern-

ment at the summit are Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of Botswana; Filipe Nyusi, President of Mozambique; Hage Geingob, President of Namibia; Haikande Hichilema, President of Zambia; Samuel Matekane, Prime Minister of Lesotho; and Cleopas Siphon Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Those on the U.S. delegation include: Scott Nathan, CEO, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC); Enoch Ebong, Director, U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA); Judd Dever-

mont, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs; Travis Adkins, President and CEO, U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF); Johnnie Carson, Special Presidential Representative for U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit (USALS) Implementation; and Peter Hendrick Vrooman, U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique.

"Through this annual summit, CCA seeks to strengthen connections between U.S. and Africa and to

mobilise action as we have done for 30 years. These collaborations are crucial to fostering a deeper understanding in government of private sector interests and needs and equally important to helping the private sector gain a deeper understanding of policies and expectations," said Jeffrey Sturchio, Chairman of CCA.

In the past three years, the U.S. government has closed more than 900 deals valued at \$22 billion across 47 African countries in trade and investment.

Google expands Bard AI service to 40 new languages, 59 nations

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

AMERICAN technology firm, Google has expanded Bard, its conversational AI service, to 40 new languages including Swahili - the first African language to be included and 59 new countries and territories.

The expansion, according to Google, yesterday, includes new features that allow users to better customise their experience, boost their creativity, and get more done.

With the expansion, Bard is now available in most

parts of the world, and in the most widely spoken languages, including Swahili, Chinese, German, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi, and Spanish. Users can now access Bard in their preferred language with text-to-speech also enabled in 8 languages.

Head of Communications and Public Affairs, SSA, Google, Dorothy Ooko, said: "We're excited that this is Bard's largest expansion to date - we see its global availability as a great democratizer of knowledge.

"That's why we created Bard: to help you explore

that curiosity, augment your imagination and ultimately get your ideas off the ground - not just by answering your questions, but by helping you build on them."

As part of the expansion, new updates have been introduced to make the Bard experience more interactive and user-friendly. The 'Listen to Responses' feature now provides an auditory dimension to Bard's responses, making it particularly useful for gaining accurate pronunciation or understanding a script, with just a simple click on the sound icon.

TODAY IN HISTORY

• 2019 - Nigeria

Algeria defeated Super Eagles 2-1 in semi-finals of Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt. Riyad Mahrez netted a late-minute free-kick to send Algeria into the final, their first after 29 years

• 2018 - Nigeria

All Progressives Congress candidate in Ekiti governorship poll, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, won defeating Prof. Eleka of the Peoples Democratic Party backed by Governor Ayo Fayose

• 2016 - France

A terrorist car attack in Nice France killed 86 civilians and injured over 400 others

• 2016 - Nigeria

Stakeholders at maiden edition of The Guardian's Economic Forum Series on Tax said government must tax 'untouchable businessmen,' adding it should not be business as usual for the 20% of the nation's population that control 80% of the commonwealth

• 2011 - S/Sudan

South Sudan became newest and 193rd member of United Nations, as it was welcomed into the UN amid pledges to help the planet's poorest state take its first steps.

TODAY'S QUOTE



Books and all forms of writing are terror to those who wish to suppress the truth.

WOLE SOYINKA

A story that must be told never forgives silence.

Speech is the mouth's debt to a story.

OKEY NDIBE

RANDOM FACTS

• North Korea is the only country where Marijuana is 100 per cent legal to grow, sell, possess, and use.

• 'Threads' is now the top up-and-coming app used by Twitter employees.

• Humans start lying by the age of four.

• Beauty sleep is real Scientists found that faces of well-rested people look younger and are more attractive than sleep-deprived people.

... DAY 3364
OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler



TheGuardian ON SATURDAY

Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

JULY 15, 2023

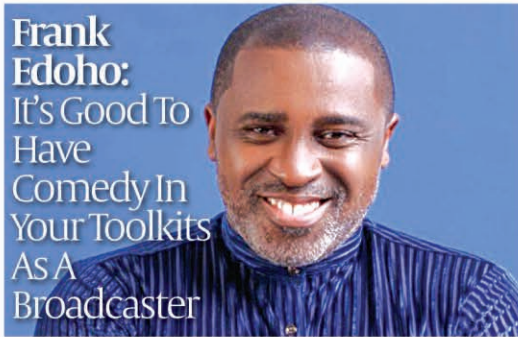
Saturday Special

Seme Border...Where Malfeasance By Security Agencies Is Harming Nation's Economy



Celebrity

Frank Edoho: It's Good To Have Comedy In Your Toolkits As A Broadcaster



Saturday Interview

Okoroafor 'Industry, Varsities Must Be Involved In Search For Solutions To Oil Sector Challenges'



Saturday Politics

Ahead 2024 Ondo Guber Poll, Akeredolu's Ill Health, Intrigues Paralyse Governance



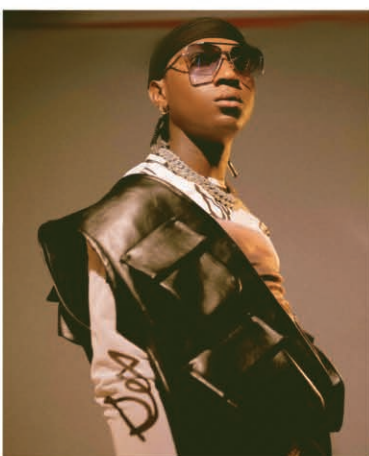
Guardian Woman



Ijeoma Jummai McDougall 'Women Should Make Life What They Want It To Be'

Moviedom

Around And About Moviedom In One Week



Bella Shmurda: Therapy With Street Pop

Youth, Fashion, Showblast, WeekendBeats, Home & Decor, Travel&Tourism and more in *The Guardian On Saturday*

Weather shocks, conflict pushing millions into hunger, UN warns

By **Chukwuma Muanya**

UNITED Nations (UN), yesterday, warned that over 122 million more people are facing hunger in the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, weather shocks and conflict, including the war in Ukraine.

This was contained in a joint report by five UN agencies: Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organisation (WHO).

Titled, 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023', the report notes that the number of people experiencing hunger worldwide reached between 690 and 783 million in 2022, a stark increase of 122 million people compared to pre-pandemic figures.

It notes that while global hunger figures stalled between 2021 and 2022, there are many places in the world facing deepening food crises.

The report notes that approximately, 2.4 billion individuals, largely women and residents of rural areas, did not have consistent access to nutritious, safe, and sufficient food in 2022.

It notes that child malnutrition is still alarmingly high. In 2021, 22.3 per cent (148.1 million) children were stunted; 6.8 per cent (45 million) were wasted and 5.6 per cent (37 million) were overweight."

According to the report, as urbanisation accelerates, there is noticeable increase in consumption of processed and convenience foods, leading to a spike in overweight and obesity rates across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.

Also, previously self-sustaining rural regions, especially in Africa and Asia, are now found to be increasingly dependent on national and global food markets.

The report projects that by 2050, 70 per cent of the global population will reside in cities.

"This significant demographic shift necessitates a reorientation of food systems to cater to these new urban populations and eradicate hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition," it states.

In an increasingly urbanised world grappling with the aftermath of global pandemic and major geopolitical conflicts, our global food systems face unprecedented challenges. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023, provides a comprehensive overview of these complexities. This report captures the state of global hunger, malnutrition, and the rapidly changing dynamics of food security.

DSS charges Emefiele to court after judge issued one-week ultimatum

From **Odita Sunday and Ameh Ochojila, Abuja**

DEPARTMENT of State Services (DSS), yesterday, said it charged former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emefiele, to court, following order by an Abuja High Court.

Spokesman for the secret police, Dr Peter Afunanya, said: "Sequel to an Abuja High Court order today (yesterday), July 13, 2023, DSS, hereby confirms that Mr. Godwin Emefiele has been charged to court, in compliance.

The statement reads further: "The public may recall that the service had, in 2022, applied for a court order to detain him, in respect of a criminal investigation. Though he obtained a restraining order from an FCT High Court, the service, however, arrested him in June 2023, on the strength of suspected fresh criminal infractions/information, one of which forms the basis for his current prosecution.

"The service assures the public of professionalism, justice and fairness in handling this

matter, and indeed the discharge of its duties within the confines of the law."

Earlier, yesterday, Justice Hamza Muazu had issued a one-week ultimatum to DSS to charge Emefiele to court or set him free.

Muazu issued the order, while delivering ruling in a fundamental human rights suit instituted against DSS and others, by Emefiele.

The judge held that, while DSS has power to carry out its constitutional duties of arrest, detention, and prevention of crime, the activities

must be done within the ambit of law. He maintained that the law stipulates conditions under which a Nigerian citizen could be held, and for how long.

Emefiele had dragged Attorney General of the Federation and the DSS Director General to court, seeking enforcement of his fundamental right to freedom of movement and dignity of human life.

In the suit, instituted on his behalf by a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Joseph Daudu, the suspended CBN Governor

prayed that his arrest and detention, since June 10, without valid order of court, be voided and set aside.

Emefiele also demanded N5 million compensation as exemplary damages for his alleged unlawful detention.

Cities in West African sub-region to benefit from flight connectivity

By **Benjamin Alade**

AIR Peace has said it is expanding regional connectivity with launch of the Lome, Togo route on July 28, 2023.

In a statement by the airline, yesterday, it also announced flights to Antigua, between August 5 and 9, 2023, in partnership with Tour Brokers International.

The airline said the Lagos-Lome-Lagos route would be operated with the 50-seater Embraer 145 jets.

"We are expanding our West African presence to connect cities in the sub-region, ease connectivity for Africans and strengthen commercial ties between countries.

"Air Peace is committed to easing the air transportation burden of Africans, and this will continue to drive our route expansion as well as fleet modernisation. We also recently received two Boeing 737-700 aircraft to further strengthen our domestic and regional operations," the airline said.

On the Antigua operation, Air Peace said it was offering deals for customers who plan to travel for the Antigua Carnival from August 5 to 9, 2023, plus hotel packages from Tour Brokers International.

Similarly, the airline hinted that plans are in top gear to resume China soon, saying more connections and routes like Congo Kinshasa and Abidjan are in the works.

With Lome operations, Air Peace's regional route will increase to eight, including Douala and Niamey, launched in 2021 and 2022.



President Bola Tinubu (middle); Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila (sixth left); All Progressives Congress (APC) National Women Leader, Betta Edu and the 36 State APC Women Leaders during their visit to the President, at the State House, Abuja...yesterday. PHOTO: PHILIP OJISUA

LP, INEC duel over call for dismissal, prosecution of Yakubu

From **John Akubo (Abuja) and Kehinde Olatunji (Lagos)**

LABOUR Party, yesterday, demanded immediate dismissal and prosecution of Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, for allegedly superintending the worst election in Nigeria's history, on February 25, 2023.

Director General of the Obi-Datti Campaign Organisation, Balogun Akin Osuntokun, disclosed this at a media briefing in Abuja.

He said: "If you go to equity, you go with a clean hand. INEC and security agencies have already taken steps to prosecute the Residential Electoral Commissioner (REC) of Adamawa.

"As far as we are concerned, what the REC did was like what Yakubu did at

the national level. So, if that is the case, we are also thinking that Yakubu should be prosecuted and even dismissed."

Reminded that Yakubu's position is protected by the constitution, and only the President, with concurrence from the National Assembly, can remove him, Osuntokun said: "So also is the position of a CBN governor; it is constitutionally guaranteed. That is why he (President) called it suspension. Ideally, somebody who has committed the abuse of office INEC Chairman committed should resign, or it means that of the CBN and EFCC is selective."

He added: "If INEC is not credible, how can we expect results emanating from that same group to be credible? At the very minimum, if Yakubu has any shame, he would have resigned. But if

the President has the political will, there are ways to go round it. He can be suspended from office just like what he did to the CBN governor."

But Chief Press Secretary to the INEC chairman, Rotimi Oyekanmi, in a statement, said: "It is not within LP's jurisdiction to demand dismissal and prosecution of the INEC Chairman over the outcome of an election in which the party fielded candidates.

"Interestingly, arising from the outcome of the same 2023 general election, LP has now produced one state governor, eight senators, 35 House of Representatives members and 38 members of state Houses of Assembly."

He added: "It is surprising and strange that a political party that is in court to challenge the outcome of

the 2023 presidential election would still go about openly advocating issues before the court at press conferences, which it knows is subjudice.

"Labour Party is one of the 18 political parties registered and regulated by INEC in Nigeria. The party will do well by restricting itself to activities permitted under rules and regulations governing the conduct of political parties."

TheGuardian
GUARDIAN PRINT
01 4489621-2
GUARDIAN COMMERCIAL
01 4489646
0802 320 4093
GUARDIAN DIGITAL
0814 380 8843
GUARDIAN LIFE
0903 060 2079

For Advert Enquiry, Call:
0803 337 1431
ABUJA OFFICE
0809 594 5917
0808 583 5661

The Big Story

Despite huge revenue, Lagos local councils

CONSTITUTIONALLY, the local councils are meant to construct and maintain roads, streets, drains, parks, open spaces, naming of roads, streets, as well as provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal.

It is also the duty of councils to establish and maintain cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute or infirm in addition to establishing, maintaining and regulating markets, motor parks and public conveniences.

Local councils are also meant to collect taxes, fees along with licensing of bicycles, trucks—other than mechanically propelled trucks—, canoes, wheelbarrows and carts. It is also within the purview of local councils to control and regulate outdoor advertising, movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, shops and kiosks, restaurants and other places for sale of food to the public, and laundries.

For many of the about 16 million Lagos residents, of the outlined constitutional duties of the councils, the state government has taken responsibility for a number of such responsibilities of the local councils. Yet, the few tasks left with the local councils to carry out, like the construction of council roads, and drainages, de-silting the drainages, establishing, maintaining and regulating markets, motor parks and public conveniences among others, the councils have not lived up to expectations.

For instance, in Oriade LCDA, virtually all the roads are in deplorable state. From Olayemi Street to Saibu, Fashiro, Moradeyo, Balogun, to Muritala streets to mention a few, residents are wondering if the local council exists.

Yet the 20 local councils recognised by the Federal Government received N401.09 billion as federal allocation between February 2020 and December 2022. Between February and December 2020, the 20 councils got N107,594,962,381.88; from January to December 2021, they got N132,575,539,174.01 while between January and December 2022, the councils got N160,928,933,449.86.

The 20 local councils are expected to share the allocations with the 37 LCDAs created out of them or execute projects and programmes within these LCDAs.

What the councils and LCDAs generated as Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) within these three years is not known, because the councils' books are not open or made public. Attempts by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to get the information are often met with resistance with no information often made available to those who made the requests.

Ironically, despite the huge federal allocations to councils in Lagos State, from Amuwo Odofin to Mushin, Alimosho or Badagry to Agege, the awful state of council roads, blocked drainages, and dirty markets, parks and roads stare one in the face. Just as vehicle owners and motorists bear the brunt of the deplorable roads because they have a telling effect on their vehicles with repeated calls at the mechanic workshops, so also are residents bearing the impact of government failure at the local level.

Surulere Local Council seems to be a shining light, with many of its roads tarred or in interlocks with streetlights and drainages. It is, however, not because the local council chairman in Surulere has been outstanding in terms of delivering the dividend of democracy to the people. The former lawmaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, who represented the council area at the ninth national assembly, was responsible for the impact felt by the residents in terms of improved infrastructure. Major roads like Anjorin and Cole streets within Surulere remain neglected.

Describing how unpalatable the situation is, a resident of Lagos, Akeem Ogunjobi, alleged that the number of roads and streetlights among other development that Gbajabiamila facilitated in Surulere Local Council in his last four years may have not been matched by the 57 local councils and LCDAs chairmen put together within same period.

It was even gathered that a road, Adedamola Ojomo Close, within Surulere Local Council, has been under construction for more than a year



Old Ojo Road, Oriade LCDA

Local councils are meant to bring good governance closer to the people at the grassroots. In Lagos, Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) were created from the local councils to better achieve that goal, but rather than the residents feeling the impact of governance at the lower level, good governance is far from the residents with many of the council roads in horrible state, despite monthly federal allocations and all manner of revenue collectors running after businesses and individuals. Gbenga Salau reports.

now. Yet, the council chairman mounted a signpost at the entrance of the road, depicting the uncompleted road in a completed state.

CDAs to the rescue

Aside from monthly allocations, these councils are very aggressive about IGR, but many residents have resorted to self-help to bridge infrastructure gaps within their domains, by executing projects individually or through Community Development Associations (CDAs).

During the yearly community day celebration in Lagos, over 80 CDAs were identified to have executed various projects, ranging from roads, electrification, drainage, water to mention a few.

From highbrow areas in Eti-osa and Ikeja to rural areas like Epe and Badagry, CDAs completed projects worth hundreds of millions of naira, many of which should have been done by the councils.

For instance, in Ikosi-Isheri LCDA, one of the CDAs, Isheri North CDA in 2020 was identified to have constructed 8km embankment, 1.5km road, installed five 500kva transformers, electrified the entire community, procured 40-armed security officers, graded roads, mounted streetlights, built CDA secretariat, constructed and renovated its drainages, as well as purchased industrial pumping machines.

In the same year, under Isolo LCDA, Greenfield CDA constructed two gatehouses and 48 interlocking roads, installed 10 500 KVA transformers, solar power streetlights and constructed a power substation. It also installed CCTV cameras, developed a well detailed area map of the CDA, dredged the canal within its vicinity, purchased and installed electrical concrete poles as well as constructed 1.3km drainage to the canal. When the state government verified the projects mentioned above, it recorded that the CDA had three other interlocking roads ongoing.

Similarly, in Ikorodu Local Council, Elepe Royal Estate CDA graded a road, installed streetlights, constructed two roads with concrete floor, energised its transformer, as well as constructed drainages and cleared its canal.

Ayobo-Ipaja LCDA was not left out, as Peace Estate CDA constructed drainages, and 21 culverts, graded 21 roads, purchased and installed two 500kva transformers, purchased and installed 100 concrete poles.

Within Eti-Osa East LCDA, Seaside Estate CDA constructed the community main entrance gate, purchased 500kva transformer, constructed 1.2km road with interlock stones, erected four boundary gates in the community, constructed drainages and fence around the transformer, purchased and installed solar street lights.

Also, in Igando-Ikotun LCDA, New Era CDA purchased aluminum conductors, graded 21 roads, purchased a 500 KVA transformer, constructed a mountain step, nine culverts, one borehole, and drainage.

In Oriade LCDA, New site Estate CDA purchased 500kVA transformer, constructed 920m drainage, graded road, cleared drainages, purchased 20LT and 15HT concrete poles, constructed culverts and purchased cable wire.

Omotoye Estate CDA in Orile-Agege LCDA also constructed 110m long and 8m wide interlock road from the entrance gate, 8m culverts with asphalt, replaced 12 wooden poles with 12 concrete poles, and constructed entrance gate.

These CDAs executed these projects without huge federal allocation. Ironically, council chairmen not only enjoy federal allocation but also generate huge revenue.

An executive of a CDA, who pleaded anonymity, for fear of victimisation by the state government, provided insight to how his CDA executed a number of projects. He revealed that the projects were done without financial support from the government.

He disclosed that his CDA was able to execute the projects through donations and levies. He, however, said that a larger part of the fund for the projects were products of generous donations from residents.

According to him, the residents resorted to self-help because the government failed to provide the appropriate infrastructure for the community.

He said that before they started executing the projects that bridged the infrastructure gap, residents had unpalatable experiences driving or walking on the community's streets, because it used to be deeply waterlogged and marshy.

He said: "Sometimes, we task ourselves for a particular project demanding that every resident contributes an amount to execute the project. It is only the security levy that is yearly and paid by all residents; landlords and tenants."

He also revealed that an element of competition was created among residents to drive development. According to him, residents on each street were told to buy the interlocking stones needed to construct their streets while the CDA provides the labour, sand and other materials needed to complete the road.

16 million residents resort to self-help

According to him, the residents resorted to self-help about six years ago when the government failed to come to the community's aid and residents were daily bearing the brunt of infrastructural gap.

"As individuals in Lagos, you are your own local council. When I bought my property, there was no access to the property. I was the first to develop his property on my street. For two years, I was parking my car in a friend's house. At one point, I built a bamboo track to link my house because of a waterlogged road. We later filled the road with rubble to be able to drive to my house."

"Yet, I pay tax to the government and now government visits to demand for Land Use Tax on my property, despite constructing and still maintaining my road and the drainage."

He revealed that the government cannot say it is not aware of the infrastructural gaps in his community because monthly, the CDAs executive attend the Community Development Community (CDC) meetings where each CDA presents the infrastructural gaps in its domain to the CDC for transmission to government but nothing has come out of the effort.

“Before they started executing the projects that bridged the infrastructure gap, residents had unpalatable experiences driving or walking on the community's streets, because it used to be deeply waterlogged and marshy. Sometimes, we task ourselves for a particular project demanding that every resident contributes an amount to execute the project. It is only the security levy that is yearly and paid by all residents; landlords and tenants.”

underperform, worsen residents' pains

He said that last year his CDA needed to buy transformers and construct drainage, each landlord was asked to contribute N350,000 towards the project.

An analysis by Dataphyte in 2019 revealed that 13 out of the 20 top federal allocations receiving local councils are from Lagos State and not less than 15 of the 25 local councils that received the most from the Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) in the last 12 years are from Lagos State.

Still, residents, traders and visitors to local councils are made to pay all forms of levies. From council parking fees, hawking fees, imported vehicles tickets, haulage and lockup stall levy are some of the taxes and levies residents and visitors pay to the councils and its representatives.

Also, gridlock is a major issue in Lagos. In the bid to contribute to easing the logjam, local councils also set up traffic taskforce and traffic units. But rather than help free points of bottlenecks of traffic, council traffic officers in Mushin, Oshodi-Isolo, Ajeromi-Ifelodun and Yaba, move about towing vehicles allegedly accused of committing traffic infractions. Residents said they are often very crude in their operation, with no rules of engagement. In most cases, alleged offenders are made to pay fines into private accounts.

For instance, along the Apapa-Oshodi expressway, between Iyana-itire and Toyota bus stops inward Oshodi, trucks often park on a column of the service lane, obstructing traffic. Rather than the council traffic officers rein in the owners of the trucks or even enforce its law, it looks away. Also, commercial tricycle operators at Iyana-itire, Ilasa, Iyana-Isolo, Five Star and Toyota bus stops inward Oshodi have turned the service lane into a garage to pick passengers, thereby obstructing traffic flow. For once, the traffic unit of the Mushin Local Council that parades the corridor in three different towing vans indiscriminately impounding private vehicles has not for once called the tricycle operators to order. Yet the tricycle operators' activities constantly contribute to the traffic snarl usually recorded on that corridor.

Across the different local councils in Lagos State, it has been observed that to generate revenue, many of the councils go into Public Private Partnership (PPP) with a huge part of the revenue going into private pockets. This is because the revenue collection process is devoid of accountability.

On many occasions, the revenue consultants print the tickets and where the council prints the tickets, the revenue collectors issue the tickets to residents randomly. It was also observed that many pay these levies without getting tickets. This is the case with transport unions that manage the parks and garages on behalf of the councils.

In spite of transport unions generating over a N100b yearly from parks and garages belonging to local councils, many of the councils cannot boast of a billion naira yearly IGR.

In addition, many hawkers, makeshift shop owners, cart pushers and petty traders operating by the roadside pay daily levies to the council through its representatives or consultants but often do not get ticketed for what is paid.

Recently, a lady-hawking groundnut around Mazamaza had a physical bout with a representative of the Oriade Local Council Development Area over daily levy.

According to an eyewitness, the lady claimed she made a payment at Mile 2, a bus stop away, despite not having made any sales, so she was not ready to part with any money at that point. The revenue collector, on the other hand, insisted on collecting the levy, maintaining he would confiscate part of the lady's groundnut, if she fails to pay the levy, which led to open confrontation between the two.

Findings revealed that sometimes within the same local councils and LCDAs, petty traders, especially hawkers and cart pushers are made to pay levy more than once contrary to the state's local council law.

And the state government through the state assembly, which should keep the councils in check often, backtracks after barking. For instance, on August 6, 2022, the Lagos State House of Assembly announced it had begun the probe of the 20 local councils and 37 LCDAs to justify accountability of public funds.

“

Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) allocations should also go directly to the local councils without passing through the state government. Bypassing the state government will highly reduce the witch-hunting situation that local councils experience. There is also the need to improve the capacity of council officials to be effective and understand how to generate substantial revenue outside of FAAC. This will allow for improved service delivery in terms of capital infrastructure and development in their communities.

”

The then Chairman House Committee on Public Accounts (Local), Mr. Mojeed Fatai noted that the probe by the Joint Committee on Public Account (Local) and Committee on Local Government Administration and Community Affairs was to ensure accountability.

Fatai said the exercise was to make sure the funds from Joint Accounts Allocation Committee (JAAC) allocated to local councils and LCDAs were expended judiciously.

Yet after announcing probe commencement, the outcome of the probe was not made public. On many occasions, it usually ended in behind the curtain discussions even when the lawmakers unearth weighty infractions.

Stakeholders express concerns

When the acting Head, Budget Tracka, Ayo Ladipo, was asked to rate the local councils, she said that the performance of local councils in relation to their core mandate is abysmal.

Ladipo said: "An example is the Ikorodu Local Council. While reviewing its 2020 and 2021 budget implementation reports, we discovered that 79 per cent of the total expenditure was for recurrent spending, and only 21 per cent went to capital expenditure, which means the focus was on administration rather than development."

She observed that overreliance on financial resources from external parties is a huge stumbling block to local councils' effectiveness, because they have become puppets of the state governments and salary-paying agencies.

"This over-reliance has made local councils have no incentive to improvise, and generate revenue to ensure development and sustainability."

On how local councils in Lagos could be made viable, Ladipo said that restructuring and capacity building are two critical steps. She added that local councils in Lagos should be restructured to have more independence over their affairs with little interference from the state government.

She further said that the state government should perform oversight functions and should not be heavily involved in funding and administration.

"Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) allocations should also go directly to the local councils without passing through the state government. Bypassing the state government will highly reduce the witch-hunting situation that local councils experience.

"There is also the need to improve the capacity of council officials to be effective and understand how to generate substantial revenue outside of FAAC. This will allow for improved service delivery in terms of capital infrastructure and development in their communities."

On if Lagos residents are doing enough to make the council chairmen accountable, Ladipo noted that residents are doing their bit, but they can do better.

She observed that many residents have overlooked the importance of local councils and focused on state and federal governments, allowing local council administrators to get away with a lot of misdemeanours.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng



Ayoni Road



Ijesha Market Road



Olayemi Street, Oriade LCDA



Olowora Street, Mafoluku Oshodi



Labour, Atiku slam NASS' speedy approval of Tinubu's \$800m loan, N500b palliative

From Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Adamu Abuh (Abuja) and Gloria Nwafor (Lagos)

ORGANISED labour, yesterday, described as laughable and economic waste, the plans by the Federal Government to transfer N8,000 to 12 million poor households in the country for six months.

In separate requests to the two chambers of the National Assembly, President Bola Tinubu had sought approval from the Senate and House of Representatives for a \$800 million loan and N500 billion palliative for the removal of petrol subsidy.

In May, former President Muhammadu Buhari had asked the Senate to approve the loan request despite the public outcry it generated.

Tinubu's letter, which was tagged 'Request for approval of additional financing of the national social safety net programme set up by the National Assembly,' stated: "The purpose of the facility is to expand coverage of shock responsive safety net support for all and vulnerable Nigerians and the cost of meeting basic needs.

"Under the conditional cash transfer window of the programme, the Federal Government will transfer the sum of N8,000 a month to 12 million poor and low income households for a period of six months with a multiplier effect on about 60 million individuals."

President Tinubu further explained that "to guarantee credibility of the process, digital transfers will be made directly to beneficiaries' accounts and mobile wallets.

"It is expected that the programme will stimulate economic activities in the informal sector and improve nutrition, health and education outcomes for beneficial households."

The Director General of the Budget Office of the Federation, Dr. Ben Akabueze, had recently criticised the continuous accumulation of public debt, saying the lean revenue does not support the move.

Speaking at the induction programme for lawmakers elected into the 10th National Assembly, Akabueze lamented: "We now have very limited borrowing space, not because our debt-to-GDP is high, but because our revenue is too small to sustain the size of our debt. That explains our high debt service ratio.

"Once a country's debt service ratio exceeds 30 per cent, that country is in trouble and we are pushing towards 100 per cent. That tells you how much trouble we are in. We have limited space to borrow. When you take how much you can generate in terms of revenue and what

- N8,000 monthly to 12 million Nigerians laughable, economic waste – Organised labour
- Tinubu's palliative of N53 per day an avenue to divert public funds, says Atiku
- President's N70b allocation to National Assembly not palliative, says Kalu
- Okon: Nigeria's data deficit will deny key beneficiaries the cash transfer
- TUC: Move will not create impact on citizens, economy

you can reasonably borrow, that establishes the size of the budget."

BUT without delay, the Senate approved Tinubu's requests - the \$800 million World Bank loan and N500 billion fuel subsidy removal palliative.

According to the Senate, the N500 billion request meant to cushion the negative effects of the removal of fuel subsidy by the executive shows that the nation has a "government that listens."

In a remark shortly after the approval was granted, President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio said: "Let me thank colleagues for today's deliberation. I must thank all of you for your show of patriotism despite the hiccups. That's the Senate for you; very matured. Your attitude today has shown your commitment and determination to ensure that the present administration succeeds."

Also yesterday, the Senate passed amendments to the N819.500 billion 2022 supplementary budget. In passing that amended supplementary budget, the Senate approved N500 billion for palliatives and other capital expenditure to cushion the effect of the recent subsidy removal policy.

N185,236,937,815 was approved for the Ministry of Works and Housing to alleviate the impact of the severe flooding experienced in the country in 2022 on road infrastructure across the six geopolitical zones.

The sum of N19,200,000,000 was approved by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to ameliorate the massive destruction to farmlands across the country during the severe flooding experienced last year.

Also, the sum of N35 billion was approved for the Na-

tional Judicial Council; N10 billion to Federal Capital Territory Administration for critical projects, while the National Assembly got N70 billion to support the working conditions of new members in the Assembly.

ARGUING against what it termed wasteful spending, the organised labour called on the government to halt the policy implementation, querying what N8,000 monthly to 12 million Nigerians could do, compared to the hyperinflation and socio-economic challenges the nation is currently battling with.

According to them, with about 133 million Nigerians that are multi-dimensionally suffering from poverty, N8,000 for six months, which translates to N48,000 in six months, will neither eradicate nor alleviate poverty in 12 million household's lives.

They maintained that what the government has done was an ambush and gone beyond what it was supposed to do, stating that it has compromised the workings of the Presidential Steering Committee it inaugurated to come up with a framework on how palliatives would be distributed to cushion the effect of subsidy removal on Nigerians.

Also, the Special Assistant on Public Communications to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Mr. Phrank Shaibu, described Tinubu's plan to hand out N8,000 to 12 million households for six months as a brazen attempt to divert public funds.

Shaibu said in a statement that Tinubu's plan to spend \$800m on palliatives under an opaque arrangement was reminiscent of former President Buhari's conditional cash transfer and COVID-19 intervention initiative, which saw politicians keep-

ing food items and provisions in their homes while the poor went hungry.

He said Buhari's interventionist programmes only ended up making Nigerians poorer as shown in reports released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Atiku's aide stated: "After announcing the removal of petrol subsidy without proper planning, Tinubu has asked for the approval of \$800m loan, which he claims will be disbursed to 12 million households for six months at N8,000 for each household per month. This is a continuation of the scam of the All Progressives Congress.

"According to statistics, a Nigerian household as at 2019 counted on an average of 5.06 members. So, with Tinubu's uninspiring plan, each individual in a household will get N1,600 per month or N53 per day. What should they do with it? Use the money to buy sachet (pure) water or a cup of boiled groundnut on a daily basis? And this is the man they claim transformed the economy of Lagos State? This must be a joke or a more sinister attempt to divert public funds."

Shaibu argued that Tinubu lacked a clear economic policy apart from taxing Nigerians. He said having deceptively attained presidential power, Tinubu has been exposed as an economic illiterate.

"His only plan is to tax Nigerians to death as he did in Lagos and that is why the people of Lagos rejected him in the last election. Tinubu promised to turn Nigeria's economy into a \$1 trillion economy but it is all a scam and can never be achieved with his brand of agberonomics."

He added: "Agriculture makes up about 30 per cent



of Nigeria's GDP. He should have invested funds in the production aspect of agriculture and other issues affecting crop yields. The rural areas, which are mostly agrarian, are in the throes of insecurity. On Tinubu's watch, over 200 people have so far been killed. However, he seems clueless on how to tackle this menace.

"The so-called palliatives that Tinubu seeks to share to the poor are just another avenue to divert public funds. For years, the Nigerian government has rejected calls to publish the list of the beneficiaries of the so-called palliatives but this has never been done because it is all a scam."

Already, Nigerians are agitated, calling for salary increases and palliatives that would benefit all, following the removal of the petrol subsidy. Chairman of the Progressives Governors' Forum (PGF) and governor of Imo State, Hope Uzodinma, at a recent meeting, said the President's decision to remove subsidy was in tandem with his campaign promises.

He expressed optimism that the new administration would come up with palliatives that would cushion the effect associated with the re-

moval of fuel subsidies.

Earlier in April, the Buhari-led administration had promised that it would pay N5,000 to 10 million households or 50 million Nigerians for six months as palliative for removing petrol subsidy after June, using the \$800 million World Bank loan to fund the project.

The then Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, said the effort was led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development. "They developed the register with the support of the World Bank. The register has about 10 million households, equivalent to 50 million Nigerians."

But the disbursement did not come to fruition until the administration left office on May 29.

Just as it kicked against the earlier decision on the spending plan of the \$800 million loan, the organised labour yesterday, kicked against this fresh proposal by the government. Labour said while it was watching the government keenly, as it doesn't want to be drawn into the argument, "the problem of Nigeria is deeper than sharing money or talking about palliatives."

President of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN), Dr. Tommy Okon, said the poverty situation in Nigeria could not be wished away by mere palliatives, adding that as far as labour is concerned, the government is paying lip service to the poverty situation in the country.

The Director-General of the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA), Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, said the government must stop using scarce resources to fix policy problems. He said it was both unrealistic and unsustainable, alleging that the



Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu (fourth right); his Deputy, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat (fifth right) and newly appointed permanent secretaries during the swearing-in of the secretaries at the Lagos House, Alausa, Ikeja...yesterday.

Aganga: Jonathan wanted what was good for Nigeria

From **Tunde Oyedoyin**, London
FORMER President Goodluck Jonathan was a thoroughbred leader, who listened to superior arguments, read all memos sent to him and sought what was best for the country.

A former Minister of Finance, Olusegun Aganga, gave the glowing commendation at the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS), Wednesday night, during the launch of his book, 'Reclaiming the African Jewel: A Blueprint for Taking Nigeria and Africa from Potential to Posterity'.

Fielding questions from journalist, Nick Kochan, who doubled as compère, the former minister was asked to share some light on his time working with the former president.

Aganga began by putting out a caveat, saying: "I was not writing about President Jonathan, but emphasising values."

He said he "met with him fairly regularly" and "some of the meetings ran late."

Aganga said: "There was never enough money to do all we wanted" but Jonathan always listened, especially if you "appealed to his reasoning."

Stakeholders decry gaps in child adoption processes in Nigeria

From **Tina Abeku**, Abuja
STAKEHOLDERS and operators of orphanages and child care homes have expressed concern over lack of due process in child adoption in the country.

National President, Association of Orphanages and Homes Operators in Nigeria (ASOHON), Rev. Dr. Gabriel Oyediji, particularly, lamented lack of post-institutional monitoring of adopted children and proper documentation before they are given out.

He made this known in Abuja, yesterday, during a two-day national conference of the association.

"There is no post-institutional monitoring of what happens to children, when they leave care homes for adoption and fostering. We don't know what happens to these children after they have been adopted, and there is no follow up on their well-being by government agencies responsible for implementing policies, until they turn 18," Oyediji said.

The president said members were being trained at the event to track children in orphanages and curb abuses and growing rate of illegal orphanages that indulge in child trafficking.

NAHCON allays *Hajj* concerns as NCAA suspends Max Air's Boeing 737 aircraft

From **Joke Falaju** (Abuja) and **Murtala Adewale** (Kano)

NIGERIAN Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has suspended operation of Boeing B737 aircraft in the fleet of Max Air Limited.

This was as National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) assured pilgrims and stakeholders that the suspension would not affect airlift of passengers returning from Saudi Arabia.

Deputy Director (Information and Publications), Mousa Ubandawaki, said: "A clarification became necessary to

calm pilgrims and relatives back at home, that the suspension order is limited to domestic air services, and does not affect international operations. The commission, therefore, wishes to assure all Nigerians and pilgrims, in particular, that the ongoing airlift of Nigerian pilgrims will continue undisturbed."

NCAA, in a statement, yesterday, said it took the action, following incidents involving the aircraft type.

They included loss of Main Landing Gear (MLG) wheel during a serious incident involving a Boeing 737-400

aircraft, with registration 5N-MBO, which occurred between take-off at Yola Airport, Adamawa State, and landing at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja, on May 7, 2023.

Others were: "Fuel contamination of the main fuel tank of B737-300 (5N-MHM), leading to Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) shutdown, at Yola Airport, on July 7, 2023.

"Aborted take-off of Boeing 737-400 (5N-MBD), which occurred at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, due to high Exhaust Gas Temperature (EGT) indi-

cation on July 11, 2023, and an air return by B737-300 (5N-MHM) to NAIA, due to duct overheat indication in the cockpit on July 11, 2023.

The statement said the authority set up a team of inspectors to conduct audit of the organisation and insisted results must be satisfactory before the airline would be allowed to further operate the aircraft type.

NCAA said it would continue to provide robust oversight for the industry, while violation of safety regulations would be viewed seriously.



Vice President Kashim Shettima (left) with First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu, at launch of the Great Green Wall Day by Shettima, at the State House Banquet Hall area, Abuja...yesterday.

PHOTO: PHILIP OJISUA

Senate confirms appointment of Chief of Defence Staff, service chiefs

From **John Akubo**, Abuja

SENATE has confirmed the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff and service chiefs nominated by President Bola Tinubu.

The confirmation came after over two hours of screening behind closed doors.

Thereafter, Senate confirmed: Maj. Gen. Christopher Musa, Chief of Defence Staff; Maj. Taoheed

Lagbaja, Chief of Army Staff; Rear Admiral Ikechukwu Ogalla, Chief of Naval Staff and AVM Hassan Abubakar, Chief of Air Staff.

The top military officers had been expected to brief the upper legislative chamber on strategies for tackling insecurity across the country.

But Senate President Godswill Akpabio, upon resumption of plenary, said the nominees answered

questions on defence-related matters and other topical issues.

Before the screening, which was done by Committee of the Whole, the chiefs, upon arrival at the Red Chamber, were given two minutes, each, to introduce themselves to the lawmakers.

The Senate had, earlier, suspended relevant rules to allow Special Adviser to the President on National

Assembly Matters (Senate), Abdullah Gumel, to lead the nominees into the chamber.

Recall that President Tinubu had, on Tuesday, this week, asked the Senate to confirm appointment of the new officials.

The request was transmitted through a letter, dated July 5, 2023, and addressed to the President of the Senate, which he (Akpabio) read on the floor, same day.

Again, court refuses Kanu's request to wear traditional attire in custody

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

THE Federal High Court sitting in Abuja has again refused the request of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), to wear Igbo traditional attire in custody.

Justice James Omotoso, while delivering judgment, yesterday, held that Kanu's application lacked merit.

He explained that the denial did not amount to violation of rights, as alleged by the applicant, adding that Kanu failed to prove why he should be granted

the relief.

Omotoso said there was nothing on record before the court, showing he was discriminated against or that other inmates enjoyed more privileges or rights than the applicant.

"The case of the applicant is based on speculation without any concrete evidence. The applicant's suit lacks merit. Consequently, the suit is, hereby, refused," Omotoso said.

In the fundamental human rights enforcement suit filed by his counsel, Maxwell

Okpara, Kanu had prayed the court for declaration that Department of State Services (DSS), while carrying out its lawful duties is bound to respect rights.

The applicant also wanted the court to declare that preventing Kanu from wearing Igbo traditional attire and other local attires, which the constitution does not forbid, is a violation of rights

The respondents, DSS Director General and Attorney General of the Federation, in their counter claims, averred that they had

not, in any way, breached Kanu's constitutional rights.

They held that Justice Binta Nyako, before whom Kanu is standing trial for treasonable felony, had barred him from wearing Igbo attire, arguing that granting the request would have amounted to promoting causes for which he was being held.

Nyako, in a suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1585/2021, had rejected similar application by Kanu to wear the attire, which depicts insignia of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra.

Diaspora APC chieftains urge Tinubu to strengthen ties among ECOWAS member states

From **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

COMMITTEE of Diaspora Chairmen (CDC) has called on President Bola Tinubu to strengthen ties among members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Led by its chairman, Tunde Doherty, the group, in a statement, expressed confidence that Tinubu will excel in his new role as ECOWAS Chairman.

The APC chieftains maintained that the prestigious position is a testament to Tinubu's remarkable leadership, unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions to regional cooperation and development.

They noted that Tinubu's visionary approach, vast experience and deep understanding of challenges facing the West African region make him eminently qualified to steer ECOWAS to greater heights.

"Under his leadership, we anticipate that ECOWAS will witness renewed vigour in advancing regional integration, fostering economic growth and strengthening political stability among member states. His relentless pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity for the people of West Africa serves as a beacon of hope for the entire region," the group said.

Why govt must focus foreign policy review on domestication, economic devt, by NIIA

By **Ngozi Eganuka**

NIGERIAN Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) has sought urgent review of the nation's foreign policy, to reflect domestication and economic development.

The institute also emphasised the need for Nigeria to adopt a sound economic strategy as prerequisite for effective foreign policy.

This was the crux during NIIA's roundtable, themed 'Charting the Way Forward: Nigeria's Foreign Policy under President Bola Tinubu', held in Lagos, yesterday.

NIIA Director General, Prof. Eghosa Osaghae, said economic condition is an intricate part of foreign policy, as citizens' satisfaction has domestic and external dimensions. He said there has to be strong nexus between domestic and external environment, and demands of policies.

"There is need to strengthen the home base, in terms of capacity, and have an effective showing in the global arena. We need economic diversification, development, and it involves everyone playing a role," he said.

TheMetroSection

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Police nab father for selling three children N1.5m in Rivers

From Obinna Nwaaku, Port Harcourt

THE police in Rivers, yesterday, said operatives attached to the Commissioner of Police (CP) Monitoring Unit on Saturday, July 8, at about 5:00p.m., arrested one Charles Michael alongside six others for selling his three children for N1.5 million.

Michael sold his five-year-old child, two-year-old, and a day-old for N700,000, N500,000, and N350,000 respectively.

The suspect, in an interview with newsmen, blamed economic hardship for his action, saying he was unable to take care of the children.

He confessed that he sold the children at intervals and used the proceeds to open a salon for his wife with hearing and speaking disabilities.

He also confessed to being intercepted by a vigilante group in Omerelu in Ikwerre Council in Rivers State.

Michael disclosed that he was handed over to Elele Police Division from where he was transferred to the CP Monitoring unit.

The states Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Grace Iringe-Koko, while parading the seven child-trafficking syndicate, said their arrest was based on the revelation of two suspects who were earlier arrested.

Arrest corporal, others for armed robbery

Iringe-Koko noted that an extended investigation into Omudiaga community in Emohua Local Council of Rivers State and Ogbaku community in Mbaitoli Local Council of Imo State led to the arrest of the duo of Ndubuisi Egbueri at Omudiaga and Ndubuisi Wosa and Chioma Anele at Ogbaku.

She also noted that they confessed to receiving one of the babies, which they later handed over to a former councillor in Emohua Local Council identified as Regina Aki at Rukpokwu in Obio/ Akpor council

of the state.

Iringe-Koko further stated that Aki was also arrested and she admitted to contacting one Favour Amaewhule at Aluu, in Ikwerre LGA where the day-old baby was sold in the presence of Michael Charles, the father of the baby.

She further explained that Favour Amaewhule was arrested and admitted to buying the baby for the sum of N700,000.00, while N350,000.00 was paid to Michael Charles, the father of the baby, and N350,000.00 was paid to Regina Aki

and partners.

However, Iringe-Koko noted that both the two-year-old and the baby bought by Amaewhule have been recovered, adding that investigation was in top gear to recover the five-year-old.

Meanwhile, the mother-in-law of Michael explained to newsmen that before the arrest, the suspect had been lying to her that her grandchildren, especially the last child, died after birth.

She said the suspect was taking advantage of her daughter's disabilities to perpetrate the act of selling children.

MEANWHILE, operatives of the Rivers State Police Command have arrested a police corporal identified as Bright Oke for alleged armed robbery and car snatching.

Iringe-Koko said the officer with three of his accomplice went to snatch a Toyota Corolla at the Gateway axis of Ada George in Obio Akpor Local Council of the state when they were intercepted by men of the C41 intelligence unit.

She said exhibits such as single-barrel guns, were recovered from the officer who has now been dismissed.

Bright, who explained his involvement in the crime, said the four-man gang went to rob at Omoku in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Councils of the state but had to first snatch a car at Ada George.

He explained that after successfully snatching the vehicle, while driving out they ran into a patrol van of the C41 unit who gave them a hot chase.

He said due to the pressure from the chase, they had an accident while trying to escape and were intercepted by the police and later transferred to the CP monitoring unit.

He said he was unaware of his dismissal and pleaded with the commission for a second chance.



Arrested traffickers



Armed robbery suspects

Suspect confesses attempt to assassinate Apostle Suleman

From Odita Sunday, Abuja

NINE months after gunmen attacked the senior pastor and General Overseer of Omega Fire Ministries Worldwide, Apostle Johnson Suleman, along the Benin-Auchi Road in Edo State, police operatives have arrested a 32-year-old man, Yusuf Isah, who claimed to be one of the attackers.

Recall that the convoy of the cleric was in October 2022, attacked by gunmen with sophisticated firearms, leading to the death of six persons, including three police officers.

Isah, a plumber from Okene, Kogi State, told newsmen that their mission was to assassinate the pastor.

The suspect confessed he joined the vicious gang in 2021 after he was freed from Olokuta Correctional Centre where he was on remand since 2019 for alleged involvement in armed robbery.

He said: "The plan of our gang on October 21, 2022, was to forcefully kidnap the Apostle and collect a huge ransom."

"We had trailed him for days and planted an informant on the Benin - Auchi express road to feed us updates on

his itinerary on the day of the attack.

"I was the one who first opened fire on the convoy upon its approach but he managed to escape the attack. The attack was actually to assassinate him, although I was not part of the meeting.



The suspect

Ilyasu and two other people were part of that meeting."

Parading the suspect in Abuja, the Force spokesperson, Muiyiwa Adejobi, said operatives of the Intelligence Rapid Team (IRT) arrested Isah following an intensive investigation.

The suspect, who lives at Agbaraoluwa Phase 2 Ijoka, Akure, Ondo State, was arrested and five Ak47 rifles, two K2 Assault rifles, 180 live ammunition and four suspected improvised explosive device (IEDs), were recovered in his apartment.

Adejobi said investigations revealed that the suspect was part of the seven-man gang responsible for the attack on the convoy of the Apostle and some of the rifles found in his possession were in fact rifles snatched from the three police officers slain during the October 21, 2022 attack.

Police said efforts are ongoing to apprehend other suspects who are still at large.

Enugu community raises concerns over fate of vigilantes allegedly attacked by soldiers

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

EKE community in Udi Local Council of Enugu State, yesterday, raised the alarm over the fate of four vigilantes recuperating in the hospital, following an alleged invasion of the hospital by soldiers, who confiscated the mobile phones of the wounded victims and demanded police report for their treatment.

The vigilantes were hospitalised two weeks ago after an attack allegedly launched on them by soldiers when they responded to a distress call that armed robbers were operating along the only road leading to Eke community to Udi Local Council.

Two persons were allegedly killed in the attack, including a member of the vigilante group, Ebuka Oke and Nkechi, the wife of Izuchukwu Udegbonam, who was still recuperating in a hospital.

Recall that the Army had earlier denied attacking and killing vigilantes in the community, but admitted engaging armed criminals in a shootout that led to the death of 'one of them' in the area.

The traditional ruler of Eke Community, His highness, Igwe Chinwendu Onuoha, who decried the development, stated that the attitude of the soldiers was creating more depression for the wounded vigilantes.

Gunmen kill police officer, steal rifle in Delta

From Chido Okafor, Warri

THERE was tragedy, yesterday, when gunmen attacked a police checkpoint along Ogor-Evwreni axis of the East West road, in Delta State, shot dead a police officer and carted away his AK-47 service rifle.

The slain police officer, identified as Jude Ukpaka, was attached to the Dragon 19 unit of the Ughelli Area Command, in Ughelli North Local Council of the state.

The Guardian learnt that the incident happened late Wednesday evening when the police officers, numbering about five, were manning a checkpoint along the route.

It was reported that the officers were suddenly taken unawares by the gunmen, who opened fire on them and Ukpaka was killed on the spot, while the other officers ran into the swamp behind their operational vehicle.

The gunmen shattered the door and glasses of the operational vehicle as they opened fire on the escaping police officers, who were later rescued from the swamp.

According to reports, the gunmen had earlier attacked travellers returning from Bayelsa in the morning of same day before the police officers were attacked in the evening at same spot.

Abduction: Police nab three suspects as Ekiti APC chair regain freedom

From Ayodele Afolabi, Ado-Ekiti

THE Police in Ekiti have arrested three suspects in connection with the abduction of the chairman, All Progressive Congress (APC), in the state, Mr. Paul Omotoso, who was recently kidnapped alongside two others.

Spokesperson for Ekiti State Police Command, Sunday Abutu, in a state-

ment, yesterday, said the suspects were arrested for their role in the abduction and are supplying useful information that could lead to the arrest of the prime suspects who are currently at large.

He also confirmed the release of Omotoso, stressing that the feat was made possible through the combined efforts of the Police, other sister agencies, the

local security outfits and the family members, as well as the Ekiti State government.

However, it was gathered that the kidnapers had contacted the family of Omotoso to demand a certain amount of money as ransom before he could be freed.

It was uncertain whether or not ransom was paid before his eventual release as

efforts to get both the family and party to comment on the matter had been unsuccessful.

However, one of the political associates of the chairman, who did not want to be named, said he was freed in the night and rejoined his family hale and hearty.

"Barrister Paul Omotoso is back home hale and hearty just now. We are happy."

LASTMA cautions motorists against contravening traffic laws on Apongbon Bridge

By **Eniola Daniel, Benjamin Alade** and **Albert Uba**

LAGOS State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), yesterday, warned motorists, particularly commercial bus operators against contravening traffic laws around the new Apongbon Bridge, CMS bridge down to Marina on Lagos Island.

The General Manager, LASTMA, Bolaji Oreagba, disclosed this, yesterday, during his working visit along

with the Enforcement and Compliance team of the Authority to Apongbon Bridge on Lagos Island.

Oreagba cautioned motorists, including commercial bus drivers to desist from parking indiscriminately on roadside, kerbs, walkways and setbacks thereby obstructing the free movement of vehicles including other road users.

"Let me send a strong signal to every motoring public, particularly commercial bus drivers to immediately

vacate from illegally loading and dropping passengers on both Apongbon and CMS bridges as anyone caught would be prosecuted at the Lagos State Mobile Court.

"The newly introduced Traffic Management Solutions (TMS) cameras would bring sanity, transparency, orderliness, civility and voluntary compliance on traffic management and control on our roads across Lagos."

Representative of the

Lagos State Parks and Garages Management, Lagos Island Branch E, Chairman, Idowu Onikoyi, said they had set-up a Task Force to dislodge errant commercial bus drivers. He also said they have em-

barked on a proper enlightenment campaign to all their members, including all traders around the entire Apongbon bridge on the need to comply with the directive of the government.

Lagos council, shop owners bicker over levies

By **Eniola Daniel**

THERE was pandemonium, yesterday, along Jakande Gate, in Ejigbo Local Council Development Area (LCDA), as officials of the council's revenue department seal shops over levies for lock of shops.

The LCDA officials said they were in the area to seal off some shops for defaulting in payment of levies.

The officials claimed that the defaulting traders and shop owners were served notices to that effect.

One of such letters from the revenue collection officer pasted on one of the shops reads: "Record at our disposal in the office indicates that your company/organisation have not fulfilled the payment/levies to Ejigbo Local Council Development Area. You are hereby advised to pay immediately."

Before yesterday's sealing, the traders said they protested severally, wrote letters to the LCDA over the continuous display of goods by street traders in front of their shops, thus preventing customers from accessing their shops.

The traders said their calls were ignored because the officials are allegedly collecting daily levies from the street traders and allows them to continue using the

space.

A trader, Ifeoma Ofurum, who spoke on behalf of shop owners said they refused to pay the council levy to protest street trading.

She said: "They should stop collecting money from the street traders because it is affecting our businesses. Some left their shops in the mall because of lack of sales, but we are still here and confronted with these challenges."

We have spoken to the LCDA several times, but nothing has been done and our refusal to pay is just a protest."

Speaking with *The Guardian*, Ejigbo LCDA revenue officer, Oyebo Shadoko, said: "They refused to pay the levy since last year. So, they are defaulters and that is why we locked their shops."

"I have advised them on where to direct their complaints to and that should not make them default. "Anyone with proof that the council is collecting money from the street traders should come forward with it. We don't collect money from the traders because the place is not a designated market area."

Rivers: Pastor pleads guilty to sexually abusing 15-year-old girl

From **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

A Resident Pastor of Glorious Covenant Church, Port Harcourt, the Rivers capital, Piller Erekwu, yesterday, pleaded guilty to abusing 15-year-old girl in Emohua Local Council of the state.

The cleric, who was arraigned before Chief Magistrate Ogeh Elkanah of Magistrate's Court 1, in Port Harcourt, pleaded guilty to a sexual abuse charge preferred against him by the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID).

Consequently, Chief Magistrate Elkanah remanded the father of six in Correctional Centre in Port Harcourt, pending his sentencing on July 19, 2023.

The charge, read to Erekwu, stated that he sexually abused a 15-year-old girl in Mgbuola village, Ndele, between December 2022 and January 2023, thereby committing an offence punishable by law of Rivers State.

Magistrate Elkanah adjourned the matter to July 19, for facts and sentencing.

Recall that Pastor Erekwu was arrested, last week Thursday, at Ndele by Rumuji Police Division and later transferred to SCIID for further investigation.

Reacting, National Coordinator of Centre for Basic Rights Protection and Accountability Campaign, Prince Wiro, commended the police for arraigning the suspect in court.

NSCDC arrests 35-year-old Okada rider for sodomising teenager

From **Adewale Momoh, Akure**

ONDO State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), yesterday, arrested a 35-year-old commercial motorcyclist, known as an Okada rider, for allegedly sodomising a 15-year-old boy in the state.

The suspect, Peter Nweke, was allegedly caught red-handed in the criminal act at his residence on Willy Bright Street, Abusoro axis, in the Akure South Local Council of the state.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the NSCDC in the state, Daniel Aidamenbor,

credited the collaborative efforts of vigilant residents in the community for the prompt arrest of Nweke.

While parading the suspect at the state headquarters of the corps, Aidamenbor said some community members had observed Nweke's suspicious activities involving the victim for some time before taking action.

Aidamenbor said: "Nweke Peter will always lure his victim from school to his house and return the victim to their house in close proximity at about 1800 hours daily."

"The neighbours noticed this trend and reported it to the landlord. The suspect was

arrested with the collective effort of the community, which observed the strange movement of the suspect around his residence on a daily basis.

"On Thursday, July 6, he was caught in the act of molesting the child, but ran away. On Tuesday, July 11, the suspect ran out of luck, and was apprehended by the victim's uncle and handed over to the Command."

"The action of the suspect contravened sections 31(1)(2) of the Ondo State Child's Right Law 2007 and section 3(1)(a)(b)(c) of the Ondo State Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law 2021."



Barr. Femi Ojumu (left); former Attorney-General of Lagos State, Mrs. Hariat Ade-Balogun and Mr. Yinka Akande, at the inauguration of Major General Abiodun Role (rtd) (inset), as the 63rd President of the Rotary Club of Lagos, recently in Lagos

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known and addressed as **ODOH JANE UKAMAKA** now wish to be known, called, and addressed as **Mrs. MAMAH JANE UKAMAKA**. All former documents remain valid. General public, please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Caveat Emptor/Caveat Venditor!
LOSS OF ORIGINAL TITLE DOCUMENTS

Notice Is hereby Given to the General Public Including Individuals, Corporate and Incorporate Bodies, Groups and Associations that the Underlisted landed properties Namely:

- 32, Moloney Street, Ebute Metta, Lagos
- 3, 5 and 7 Patey Street, Lagos Island, Lagos.
- 56 Balogun Street, Lagos Island, Lagos.
- Parcel of Land at Onigbongbo Maryland, Ikeja, Lagos.
- Akodu Street, Surulere, Lagos.
- Piece of Land at Ayobo Village, Lagos.
- 13, Ayilara Street, Surulere, Lagos.

Are all the private properties of **Joseph Okanlawon Balogun** (deceased) the deceased has only one child **Mrs. Florence Olayinka Aduke Rokosu (Nee Balogun)**.

It is further hereby NOTIFIED that **MR. JOHN ADEWALE ROKOSU** is the eldest child and the **HEAD OF THE CHILDREN OF MRS. FLORENCE OLAYINKA ADUKE ROKOSU** and according to the Yoruba inheritance Customary Law of Lagos any alienation, sale, transfer lease/sublease, assignment, mortgage, pledge or gift of any of the above properties or part thereof without his consent is null and void.

For record purposes we hereby notify that all the original title document are hereby missing in trans.

Signed
Mr. John Adewale Rokosu
For the family

The Guardian Classifieds
Change of Name
Property
Guardian Jobs
SME's/Business Page
Metro Mart

ENQUIRIES:
LAGOS OFFICE:
08077657711
08028411767


PUBLIC NOTICE
DISCLAIMER

The general public is hereby informed that **MR TOCHUKWU OGBU** whose picture appears beside is no longer a staff of **POLLYSHAGGYRUGZ**.

Any person or organisation who deals with him does so at his or her own risk.

Please take note.

SIGNED BY MANAGEMENT.



PUBLIC NOTICE
DAN HEALTH-WISE FOUNDATION

This is to inform the general public that the above-named association has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission to be registered as an Incorporated Trustees under Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To educate people on how to stay healthy.
- To prevent diseases in all its ramifications.
- To involve all stakeholders in disease prevention efforts.
- To provide healthier options to achieve disease-free communities.
- To provide quality healthcare services to those in need.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:
Dr Dan Ifeanyi Onwujekwe (Chairman)
Mrs Wnifred Eziedo Onwujekwe (Secretary)
Dr. Peter Ibeawuchi Ogodoro
Dr Udodi Ebubechukwu Ogboso

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja. within 28 days of this publication.

Mack Ogbamosa & Co (Peace Chambers)
Signed

PUBLIC NOTICE
Caveat Emptor/Caveat Venditor!
RACIFICATION OF TITLE DOCUMENTS

Notice Is hereby Given to the General Public Including Individuals, Corporate and Incorporate Bodies, Groups and Associations that the Underlisted landed properties Namely:

- 32, Moloney Street, Ebute Metta, Lagos
- 3, 5 and 7 Patey Street, Lagos Island, Lagos.

Are all the private properties of **Joseph Okanlawon Balogun** (deceased) the deceased has only one child **Mrs. Florence Olayinka Aduke Rokosu (Nee Balogun)**.

It is further hereby notified that the above named properties were used as collateral by virtue of Mortgage deeds.

It is further hereby NOTIFIED that **MR. JOHN ADEWALE ROKOSU** is the eldest child and the **HEAD OF THE CHILDREN OF MRS. FLORENCE OLAYINKA ADUKE ROKOSU** and according to the Yoruba inheritance Customary Law of Lagos.

That the family had traced, searched, find the whereabouts of the mortgagors including on social medias such as, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter all their efforts proved abortive. We hereby make this publications to notify the general public that the family will apply for ratification of the Title Documents.

Signed:
Mr. John Adewale Rokosu
For the family



ProvidusBank hosts two legends.

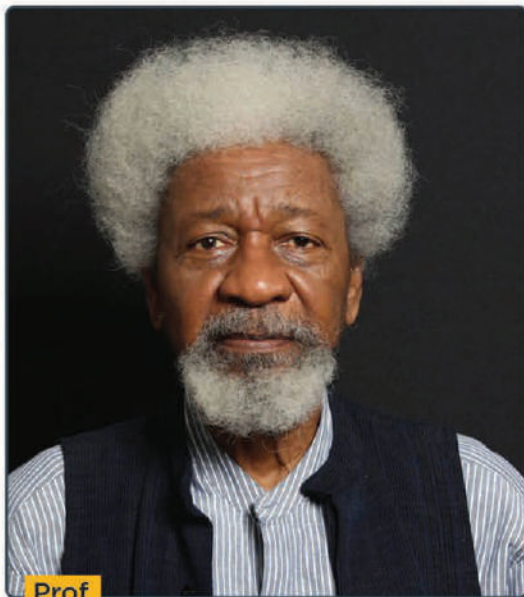
Wole Soyinka presents his latest book **SELECTED POEMS (1965-2022): A Retrospective**

The presentation will be accompanied by an exhibition of **artworks by Bruce Onobrakpeya** that featured in the book.

Date: July 16, 2023

Time: 3:00 PM

Venue: ProvidusBank Rooftop HNI Lounge, 114 Adeola Odeku Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.



Prof

WOLE SOYINKA

Playwright, Poet, Novelist, and Essayist



Dr

BRUCE ONOBRAKPEYA

Printmaker, painter and sculptor.

Strictly by invitation.

This event is put together by



BOOKCRAFT

Proudly supported by





THIS SUMMER, DESTINATIONS ARE WORLDWIDE



Available in   


The ProvidusBank Platinum Naira Mastercard assures you of limitless offers in lounges, shopping, and a truly enjoyable vacation.


Enjoy an increased international spending limit.
Make payments in foreign currencies.
Contactless payments at merchant locations including London Underground.

Request a ProvidusBank Platinum Mastercard Now

www.providusbank.com

[f](#) [t](#) [v](#) [p](#) [providusbank](#) [@providusbankig](#)

 0915 393 3333

 0700 7768 4387

Businessconciierge@providusbank.com

FOUNDER: ALEX U. IBRU (1945 – 2011)

Conscience is an open wound; only truth can heal it. Uthman dan Fodio 1754-1816

Editorial

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Ending abuse of court processes

THE trend by key players in the judiciary arm of government to sanitise the sector, and ensure adherence to court processes is commendable, just as it deserves encouragement. As a veritable third arm of government essentially charged with the dispensation of justice, the judiciary plays an indispensable pivotal role in the sustenance of democratic governance in Nigeria. Therefore, abuses of the court processes, such as filing frivolous lawsuits in court, render the judiciary impotent and constitute a significant obstacle to the administration of justice.

Therefore, the recent statement of the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, during a special session to mark the 2022/2023 legal year and the inauguration of the 62 new Senior Advocates of Nigeria, is highly instructive. The CJN blamed the pressure on the judiciary on the filing of many frivolous cases in different courts. He advised that the public should engage in less litigation and embrace Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to relieve courts from unnecessary pressure. Furthermore, the CJN stated: "In every little disagreement, we rush to court, and in every lost case, we rush to appeal, even up to the Supreme Court, no matter how trivial the issue might be. This has obviously resulted in several pending appeals in the Supreme Court."

We cannot agree more with the CJN. It is settled law that aggrieved persons should be allowed unimpeded access to law courts to seek remedies, as guaranteed in the constitution. In fact, nothing can be so loathsome as denying aggrieved persons their constitutional rights to seek remedy in law courts. However, there are many instances in which parties file frivolous lawsuits to abuse the court process or to overreach, injure, prejudice, frustrate, and work injustice against the other parties. In such instances, the abuse is evidenced by the intention of the party that initiates the court's process to annoy, harass, vex, and oppress the other party to the suit, as opposed to their purported constitutional right to seek remedy in court. It is in this light that the late Justice Niki Tobi in the Supreme Court case of *Agwasin Vs. Ojichie* (2004) was able to say, "Litigation is not a game of chess where players outsmart themselves through dexterity of purpose and tricks. On the contrary, litigation is a contest by judicial

process where the parties place on the table of justice their different positions clearly, plainly and without tricks."

However, it is gladdening that some bold judges have now resorted to imposing hefty fines on lawyers and litigants in order to prevent them from filing frivolous cases in court. For instance, on February 26, 2020, the Supreme Court fined two popular members of the Bar N10 million each for respectively bringing vexatious and frivolous cases to court. The Supreme Court Justices were so angry with the duo that they ordered each of them to pay N10 million to each of the three respondents from their own pockets. While delivering the judgment, Justice Amina Augie said: "I cannot believe, and with tears in my eyes, I say I cannot believe that in my lifetime, I will see very senior members of the Bar bring applications of this nature to this court, which are aimed at desecrating the sanctity of this court, fouling its well-known principle that the decision of this court is final and destroying the esteem in which this court is held."

In March, the Lagos High Court sitting at Yaba ordered a legal practitioner to pay a N10 million fine for encouraging his client to file a suit that had already been decided at another Lagos High Court and the Court of Appeal. On May 26, the Court of Appeal, Abuja division, imposed an even heftier fine of N40 million on a former presidential candidate for filing a frivolous appeal in court. Shortly after that, the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja wielded the big stick against a legal practitioner for filing a frivolous suit. While dismissing the suit as frivolous and premised on recklessness and a complete lack of knowledge of the elementary principles of law as they relate to the Constitution and Electoral Act, 2022, the court ordered the legal practitioner to pay a gargantuan sum of N20 million in fines. Similarly, the Federal High Court in Abuja on June 6 awarded a N10 million fine against a former Minister of State for Labour and Productivity, Mr. Festus Keyamo, SAN, for filing a frivolous suit against the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate in the last presidential election. In fact, the judge ordered Keyamo to pay N5 million each to the PDP Presidential candidate Abubakar Atiku and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

While it is not uncommon for some lawyers to file frivolous cases, it is important to note that the vast majority of lawyers strive to uphold ethical standards and ensure the cases they file have merit. However, it is obvious that some lawyers file frivolous cases on behalf of their clients in order to earn more professional fees. Some do it out of reprehensible ignorance.

Others primarily file political cases in court to gain publicity, regardless of the frivolity of the action. This is why some judges now impose sanctions on lawyers, who bring meritless claims before the court, holding them accountable for wasting the court's time and resources. This can serve as a deterrent for lawyers who might be tempted to file frivolous lawsuits.

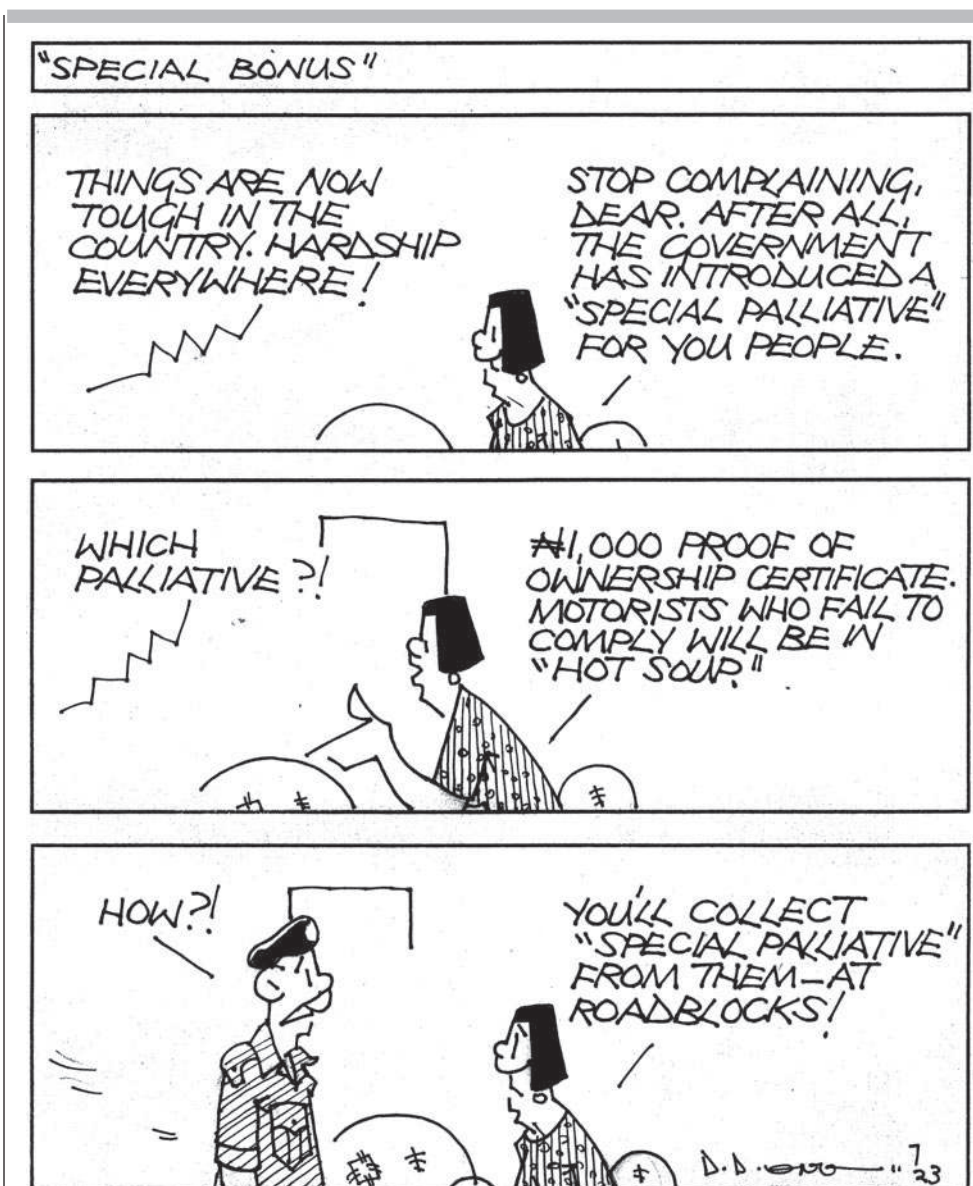
Consequently, in conformity with their professional ethics, lawyers should advise their clients against filing frivolous cases. Failure to do so should result in the courts continuing to award heavy costs against the lawyers. Lawyers should always adhere to their professional ethics. They should refrain from misguiding an aggrieved party by giving false hope that they can win their case in court. After all, the legal profession has rules and regulations that govern the conduct of lawyers, and they are expected to exercise their professional judgment when deciding to file a case. Lawyers have a duty to their clients and to the court to present legitimate legal claims and arguments in courts. Lawyers can advise their clients on the likelihood of success and the potential costs involved in pursuing a meritless claim.

Conversely, courts should encourage the use of mediation and alter-

native dispute resolution mechanisms as alternatives to litigation. These processes can help parties find mutually acceptable solutions without resorting to lawsuits, reducing the likelihood of frivolous cases being filed. Courts can implement efficient case management systems to promptly identify and dismiss frivolous cases at an early stage. This can help prevent the unnecessary burden on the court system and deter lawyers from initiating baseless litigation.

Like many other public sectors, the country's judiciary has not been spared in the crisis of integrity that has afflicted the country over the last eight years. But for an arm that is meant to be the last hope of the common man, such a crisis is embarrassing, and should not be allowed to degenerate through abuse of court processes. Preventing such an unwholesome situation calls for the active collaboration and cooperation of everyone, lawyers, judges and litigants inclusive.

It is important to strike a balance between preventing frivolous cases and ensuring access to justice. While discouraging frivolous lawsuits, it is crucial to protect individuals' legitimate constitutional rights to seek legal remedies when they have a valid claim.



Opinion

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria f GuardianNigeria 09136370421 Guardianigeria

Tunji Olaopa and his problems as an 'autobiographer'

By Tony Afejuku

LET me state urgently that I don't know Tunji Olaopa. I have never met him physically and do not believe or expect that his path ever will cross mine. But this open factual remark does not really mean that I don't know this young and youngish former federal permanent secretary who became a professor of political science at Lead City University, Ibadan after his unexpected retirement from the Federal Civil Service. Of course, his premature retirement we must blame on the vagaries of the Federal Civil Service of sometimes vicious politics, to put it mildly. In a place like the Federal Civil Service peopled by men and women and officers, senior and junior officers, of vicarious authority and existence one cannot but be surprised that a public servant of unquestionable critical insight such as Tunji Olaopa's would always be viewed and treated as an aberration to be thrown out once the slightest opportunity presented itself. Now let me re-qualify my opening remark. I know Tunji Olaopa but by reputation. I have at different times read his articles published in this newspaper and other ones. Besides, this author whose newspaper articles have made serious impression on the minds of many readers happens to be a former Higher School Certificate (HSC) student of Olivet Baptist High School (Olivet Heights), Oyo which I savoured for a term and a half long before Tunji Olaopa entered the four walls of that famous college known far and wide for its academic and soccer exploits. So I know Dr. Tunji Olaopa after all – as a far younger student who never saw or caught a glimpse of my brake light, in a manner of speaking, in school and in college.

When Tunji Olaopa's *The Unending Quest for Reform: An Intellectual Memoir* recently came out of the press in faraway Austin, Texas, USA, I became interested in it on the triple grounds briefly related above. I made the right effort to have a copy of it for my personal edification being a lover and critic of his kind of book – I mean of his "intellectual memoir" which he calls an "autobiography" as well. Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah and Professor Eghosa F. Osaghae who respectively wrote Foreword One and Foreword Two to the book equally followed his example to call *An Intellectual Memoir* an "autobiography." Do I agree with the three of them? These three minds undoubtedly have critical and creative gifts. But are they right absolutely to call the memoir autobiography? An attempt to answer this question offers me as a reader versed in autobiography the first problem in calling and interpreting Tunji Olaopa's memoir which it correctly is as an autobiography, which strictly it is not. To call the book "autobiography is misleading. Tunji Olaopa realizes this hence he tries to resolve his dilemma by giving his essentially public servant's book its correct title of *The Unending Quest for Reform*:

An Intellectual Memoir, as already indicated. It is a captivating account of his civil service record and experience. This explains Tunji Olaopa's concentration on what I will call here events which centre on his political memory.

Qua autobiographical work of art, *Memoir* as work of art cannot be interpreted as autobiography even though it rightly contains very pertinent information about his Aawe homeland origins. I am not interpreting the book, I am only trying to criticize it according to standards, in comparison to other autobiographical works of art, for instance, the Italian Michel de Montaigne's *Essays* whose "fancies" were not to "convey information about things" not squarely useful to his unique self. The chief task of the autobiographer is the presentation of himself. In other words, self-justification is the sole aim and concern of the autobiographer. An autobiography, an ideal autobiography, that is, does not, to all intents and purposes, represent the efforts of a series of men or of individuals each making what he or she could make out of series of events and or the work of his or her predecessors. This is within the orbit of a memoir.

Tunji Olaopa writes ambitiously which leads to other problems. The memoirist delves into history, into historical facts, which his present readers are not assumed to know. For example, the *operation wetie* in the Yoruba region historically called the "Wild, Wild West" on account of the violence which the political disagreement and tragic quarrel between the Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola factions of the Action Group unleashed in that part of Nigeria in the fabulous nineteen sixties. Interpretation-wise, the liquidation *operation wetie* engendered is not in any way different from the criminal and militant fire and chaos we have witnessed in different parts of Nigeria today.

Thus Tunji Olaopa's book is relevant pertinently as history – which detracts from the narrator's self. In fact, his focus on historical facts in several places in the narrative also arouses his interest in philosophy/psychology which cannot but enable one to say that the narrative is a philosophical/psychological stratification which Tunji Olaopa tends to utilize to give shape to his matter. Closely related to this is the matter of his mystical and mysterious experience at Olivet Heights and that of his Christian and spiritual advancement. His interest in *Rosicrucianism*, *ifa*, and Christianity is compelling and it enables the reader to have a thorough glimpse of his sensitive, inquisitive and penetrating mind. And his sagacity and consciousness as a bookworm that feeds on different kinds of books and the thoughts of their authors permit the reader to call him an autobiographer – as Bishop Kukah and Professor Osaghae have done!

Am I at last guilty of the sin of contradiction engendered by our narrator's confusion? Clearly not must be and is my answer. The problem is not this reviewer. The problem is the memoirist who

also wants to double as an "autobiographer" as I have tried to argue. As a matter of fact, he also reveals himself as an essayist as witnessed in several paragraphs in the chapters. What everything I have said so far indicates is that Professor Tunji Olaopa is a victim of autobiography because of its protean, chameleonic nature. Roy Pascal makes this plain in *Design and Truth in Autobiography*. Georg Misch also seemingly makes this plainer in *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*.

My prime concern in this short enterprise is with the interpretation and shape rather than with the subject of *The Unending Quest for Reform: An Intellectual Memoir*. One reason for this is that I personally have slim hope for the bureaucratic leadership in present day Nigeria. The reforms Tunji Olaopa proposes will not be allowed to flourish in this country – his country your country my country our country. The Simeon Adebode model in the Western Region and the Allison Ayida example in the Federal Civil Service have since ceased to be because of who we are. Whatever brilliant ideas patriots such as Tunji Olaopa may have will never grow, or, be allowed to see the light of day by those who will hijack them to suit their nefarious, malicious and anti-Nigerian intentions and purposes. By the way, what has become of TETFUND that the Academic Staff Union of Universities caused our federal government to establish long ago? ASUU's brilliant ideas that gave birth to TETFUND were swallowed by would-be killers of Nigeria and of our public universities. Tunji Olaopa's will be put through the mill by envious, jealous, lazy, dull and unpatriotic bureaucratic colleagues and leaders who have been misleading our politicians and political leaders.

A crucial statement on Tunji Olaopa's book under review: Every lover of Nigeria should read it. It is a priceless memoir-cum-autobiography as well as "autobiography-cum-memoir written and designed to call our attention to the service and labours of Nigeria. In any case, I have not deliberately set out to promise, promote or recommend it. It recommends itself even though the numerous pictures that adorn the pages give the wrong impression that the book is a run of the mill portrait. It is not and it is not even a variety of it – although readers and critics may debate the importance of the pictures in the book that Tunji Olaopa wants us to accept as a portrait of the "autobiographer." The pictures of himself and other persons of high society cogently show the narrator's preference of mind as plainly as an intimate memoir could do. For it is not in our memoirs but in our autobiographies that we record ourselves, our true, genuine selves. In this lies the essence and true nature of the art of autobiography. But this is debatable, I must admit.

My final statement is this reiteration: Every lover of Nigeria should read *The Unending Quest for Reform: An Intellectual Memoir*. A great deal of the Nigerian problem is revealed in it. *Afejuku can be reached via +2348055213059.*

Advisers and political advising (2)

By John A.A. Ayoade

Continued from yesterday

TROUBLESHOOTING is an experimental process of thinking outside the box to ascertain what can work as well as what the prospective end-users think. It is an embedded consultative system of sampling people's opinion. A more explicit method is conducting focus group discussions as a form of opinion sampling and the creation of policy ownership through informal consultation. The two methods of troubleshooting and focus group discussion are aimed at the saturation of critical constituencies. After producing a policy, it must be monitored and managed to conclusion.

The monitoring and management of policies can start with a test run which is usually a small scale experimentation. The system seeks to discover the strengths and weaknesses of a policy in actual operation. The test run provides a final opportunity to put the policy to test in action before its public launching. It also affords the policy Adviser the opportunity to correct errors and weaknesses that manifest in the trial operationalisation of the policy. All the above steps are necessary and should be painstakingly taken because a public policy error is very expensive to an elected political regime. In fact, it may be very critical to the electoral survival of the regime.

One of the weaknesses of the policy advisory system is the fact that the Advisers hardly coordinate their activities or see the need for cooperation. It is very important that the policies

of a regime should be synchronised for effect. Advisers must cooperate to align policies for synergy because the policies of a regime must not work at cross-purposes. Advisers must work together as a team because administrative departmentalization is merely for convenience rather than for functionality. It is in fact advisable that a regular meeting of Advisers be convened for experience sharing and general policy coordination. Advisers must come to the understanding that they serve the same principal. Their meetings should address the inevitable process of policy interaction which they can manage through the process of policy triangulation. This will lead to proper policy integration issuing from the same government. The advisory system in Nigeria at the federal and State level lacks coordination. There is no meeting point for the Advisers to the President with the Advisers to the various Ministers. This has a tendency to occasion leakage of funds, policy overlaps or duplication and gross under-capacity utilisation. These issues call for attention.

How Advisers are as critical as their offices. Advisers when carefully selected are essential for an effective government. However, there are many socio-political constraints in the recruitment of competent Advisers. Some constraints are inherent in the personality of the principals while others are systemic, statutory or constitutional. A principal who is not given to standards is likely to opt for mediocrity either by being nepotistic or clannish. Incompetent principals cannot recruit competent officers. What determines the quality of recruitment by a principal comes under the minimax rubric, namely that the principal who makes his own level of efficiency and

competence the minimum requirement for recruitment of Advisers will recruit excellent people. On the other hand, a principal who makes his own level of efficiency and competence the maximum requirement will invariably recruit mediocrities and sycophants. Such a principal is comfortable with such officers because they meet his mark. In such cases where the criterion of recruitment is not competence, it is illogical to expect competent performance.

The recruitment of Advisers is also affected or even dictated by systemic factors. In a plural society, members feel that their protection, welfare and share of public amenities is a function of their representation in government. This attitudinal disposition is a product of ethnic mutual distrust that no ethnic unit can be an honest trustee of another ethnic group. The result is that the government is divided for the people by the people such that the people think that the interest of each ethnic group can only be protected by members of that group. Sometimes this feeling is so deeply ingrained that it is written into the statute books and even into the constitution. That is the case of Nigeria. In local parlance, Nigerians want it implemented by demanding government presence in their localities. In Nigeria, therefore, the people perceive the Federal Government as the product of what the relevant invisible mental ethnic slice represents. In this sense, therefore, the Federal Government is local. While the abstract division of government along ethnic lines ostensibly sets out to ensure social equity and determines the location of the individual in the polity, it is responsible for the sub-optimal performance of government. Every appointment is located in

the mental construct of the ethnic slice of the federation.

The above constraints notwithstanding, the principal still has to recruit personnel into these and other positions. As President Tinubu is now poised to recruit personnel into offices, he must carry out the functions to the best of his ability in the best interest of the country and mindful of the fact that he is not immune from blame.

The late Timi of Ede, HRH Tijani Oyedokun, Agbonran II summarised Palace 101 to me in one sentence: "The Palace is a refuse dump". All and sundry, rich and poor, young and old throw, and are entitled to throw refuse there. That is also a defining right of democracy. What reduces the dumping of refuse is to continue to do what is right rather than what is good. Right and good have their appropriate occasions. Another antidote and consolation is that: "Abuses do not break bones". The Principal must therefore not be tempted or driven to the other extreme which my first year Political Science teacher, Prof James O'Connell summarised in another sentence: "Once a king receives the staff of office, he no longer gets good advice". Good or bad, everybody praises the king's actions. Unfortunately, when the King falls, everybody says "We warned him!!" It is only power that makes people powerful. The Principal must always remember that it is the Adviser that is rich in options, adds value and honestly speaks truth to power, that is the sincere, competent and loyal Adviser.

Concluded
Prof. Ayoade, mni, is Emeritus Professor of Political Science, University of Ibadan.

Opinion

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

Clout chasing is destroying Nigerian movie industry

By Emunotor Efetobore

IN recent years, the Nigerian movie industry, popularly known as Nollywood, has experienced a surge in popularity both locally and internationally. With this increased attention, many actors and actresses have turned to social media to gain more exposure and build their personal brands. This has led to an increase in clout chasing within the industry.

Clout chasing is a term used to describe the act of seeking attention, fame, or popularity through various means, often by generating controversy or engaging in attention-grabbing behavior. This can include activities such as posting provocative content on social media, engaging in public feuds with other celebrities, or participating in stunts or challenges that are designed to go viral. While some people may engage in clout chasing as a means of building their personal brand or gaining more followers, others may do so in an attempt to stay relevant in a highly competitive industry, such as the entertainment or fashion industries. However, clout chasing can also have negative consequences, such as damaging one's reputation or credibility, or leading to legal issues or personal safety concerns.

Clout chasing in the Nigerian movie industry can take many forms. Some actors and actresses may post provocative or controversial content on their social media accounts to gain more followers and attention. Others may engage in public feuds or controversies with other actors or industry professionals to generate buzz and attract more attention.

There have been a number of controversies between actors in Nigeria over the years, but one recent example is the feud between actresses Toyin Abraham and Lizzy Anjorin.

The two actresses have been involved in a public feud for several months, with each of them making a number of accusations and counter-accusations against the other. The feud began when Anjorin accused Abraham of trolling her on social media, and it quickly escalated from there.

Both actresses have accused the other of spreading false rumors and engaging in unethical behavior, and the feud has become a major topic of discussion on social media and in the Nigerian entertainment industry. Some fans have taken sides in the dispute, while others have criticized both actresses for engaging in public drama and for failing to resolve their issues in private.

The feud has highlighted some of the challenges facing actors in Nigeria, including the pressure to maintain a public image and the difficulty of navigating relationships in a highly com-

petitive and often cutthroat industry. While the two actresses have not yet resolved their differences, it's possible that they will eventually be able to put the feud behind them and move on.

The Destiny Etiko feud is an example of clout chasing in the Nigerian movie industry. In late 2020, Nollywood actress Destiny Etiko posted a photo on her Instagram account of herself posing with a new Toyota Land Cruiser SUV. The photo quickly went viral, with many fans congratulating her on her new car. However, the photo also attracted criticism from some social media users, who accused Etiko of being involved in shady deals to afford such an expensive car.

In response to the criticism, Etiko posted a video on her Instagram account in which she denied any wrongdoing and explained that the car was a gift from a friend. However, the controversy continued to escalate, with many social media users calling for Etiko to reveal the identity of the friend who gave her the car.

The controversy eventually led to a feud between Etiko and fellow Nollywood actress, Ruth Kadiri. Kadiri accused Etiko of clout chasing and using the controversy to gain more attention and followers on social media. Etiko responded by accusing Kadiri of being jealous of her success and trying to bring her down.

The feud between Etiko and Kadiri highlights the growing trend of clout chasing in the Nigerian movie industry. Many actors and actresses are using social media to gain more exposure and build their personal brands, often at the expense of their colleagues. While this may lead to short-term gains in followers and attention, it can also lead to long-term damage to their reputations and relationships within the industry.

Regina Daniels is a popular Nigerian actress who has been accused of engaging in clout chasing in the movie industry. Some fans and critics have argued that she uses social media and other platforms to generate buzz and stay relevant, rather than focusing solely on her acting career.

For example, Daniels has been involved in a number of public controversies over the years, including a rumored romantic relationship with a Nigerian politician who is over 40 years older than her. She has also been criticized for her fashion choices and for engaging in public feuds with other celebrities.

While some fans have defended Daniels and argued that she is simply trying to build her personal brand and stay relevant in a highly competitive industry, others have criticized her behavior as attention-seeking and inauthentic. Many argue that her focus on generating buzz and controversy detracts from her acting talent and undermines her credibility as an artist.

While there may be some potential benefits to clout chasing, such as increased visibility, attention, and social media followers, it is important to consider the potential risks and downsides as well. Additionally, it is important to note that there are other ways to build a successful career in the entertainment industry that do not involve clout chasing or generating controversy. For example, focusing on developing one's craft, building relationships with industry professionals, and working hard to create high-quality content can all be effective strategies for success.

There are several potential dangers associated with clout chasing, including:

Loss of authenticity: When someone engages in clout chasing, they may be seen as inauthentic or fake, which can damage their reputation and credibility.

Negative public perception: If someone is seen as constantly seeking attention or trying to generate controversy, they may be viewed negatively by the public, which can harm their career prospects.

Legal issues: In some cases, clout chasing can lead to legal issues, such as defamation, harassment, or invasion of privacy. This can result in lawsuits, fines, or other legal consequences.

Personal safety: If someone is constantly seeking attention or generating controversy, they may become a target of harassment or threats, which can put their personal safety at risk.

Damage to mental health: Clout chasing can be a stressful and emotionally draining pursuit, which can lead to anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues over time.

While clout chasing may be tempting for those seeking fame or attention, it is important to consider the potential risks and consequences before engaging in this behavior.

However, it's important to remember that clout chasing is not the only way to succeed in the Nigerian movie industry. Many actors and actresses have found success by focusing on their craft and building their reputations through hard work and dedication. By delivering strong performances and building relationships with directors, producers, and other industry professionals, actors and actresses can build long-lasting careers in Nollywood.

In conclusion, while clout chasing is a growing trend in the Nigerian movie industry, it's important to remember that it's not the only path to success. By focusing on their craft and building their reputations through hard work and dedication, actors and actresses can build successful careers in Nollywood.

Efetobore is a student in the Faculty of Law, Delta State University. She's also a songwriter/poet, singer and entertainment gist lover.

'Go to court': Any remedy for Nigeria's ailing justice system?

By Chidi Anselm Odinkalu

Continued from yesterday

GO to Court can also be hubris of judicial capture and corruption. As I have said elsewhere: "Nigeria's judiciary appears deep in the throes of being reshaped as an estate defined by filial and genital relations to facilitate transactions for political power. This is called judicial capture. As judges now have the casting vote in Nigeria's elections, ambitious politicians have decided they must own the judges. Judicial capture occurs through both decisions and omissions by and beyond the judiciary." The point about judicial capture is that it does not pretend to put the institutions of the judiciary to any transcendental or societal goals. The entire goal of the office of the judge is creating and sustaining an incest of power. This is why leading politicians and judicial figures will insist on making their spouses, mistresses, children or family members' judges. This is also why state governors will ensure that all judges who serve in their territories are given choice properties and other dispositions which they do not habitually declare.

The underlying narrative of judicial capture, as I have also suggested, is that "in Nigeria judicial skill and temperament naturally resides mostly in the bedrooms of politicians (and their judicial allies)." Quite clearly, this does not stand up to scrutiny, but that has not stopped an incest of senior lawyers, judges, and politicians at the highest levels in Nigeria from pro-

moting it.

To be sure, the erosion of the credibility of Nigeria's legal profession and judiciary may have plumbed new depths in recent times but the crisis of confidence arising from perceptions of judicial partisanship, especially in the political context of election disputes, has a much longer history. In its 1986 report, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of the then Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) between 1979-1983, which was chaired by former Supreme Court Justice, Bolarinwa Babalakin, noted with reference to election petitions that followed the 1983 general elections that:

As the verdicts began to be pronounced, the general public often expressed shock and dismay. Some commentators in the nation's newspapers took the view that the verdicts in a number of instances constituted a rape of democracy perpetrated through the law courts.

Allegations of corruption in high places were freely made.

Following the 2003 and 2007 elections, Professor Obi Nwabueze, SAN, accused the Supreme Court, no less, of playing a "discreditable part" in manufacturing a jurisprudence of electoral impunity for the country. In particular, he laments the failure by "the Supreme Court to appreciate that the question of who should rule Nigeria is not one to be decided by a perverse and narrow legalism, by the technicalities of the rules of evidence, practice and procedure and by considerations of expedi-

ency."

This jurisprudence of electoral impunity has created a system of mutual benefit between judges and politicians to the exclusion of voters. Under Nigeria's constitution, According to S.14(2)(a) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, "sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority." Article 21(3)26 Id27 Federal Republic of Nigeria,

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." Similarly, Article 13(1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights declares: "Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives."

Yet, in Nigeria, the real deciders of who gets to win or lose an election is no longer the voter but the judge. This judicial expropriation under cover of the law of rule (not rule of law) of a right that only belongs to the voter, ensures that the politicians no longer focus on persuading the voter through campaigns and manifestoes. Instead, they target the judges through focused campaigns of corruption and capture, which are profitable for the judge who in turn use their office to en-

sure the politicians of their choice get the spoils of office. When the politician gets into office, he has an incentive to ensure that only persons beholden to him get into high judicial office.

Profitable as adjudicating on elections and politics has become for him or her, the average Nigerian judge no longer has any incentive to sit on regular casework. The current reality is not merely that the Nigerian judiciary binges on party political cases, it is also that they assign priority to politicians over ordinary citizens, in so doing, encouraging the idea of a hierarchy of citizenship.³⁰ If you are involved in a political case but not as a benefactor or client of the judge, you stand no chance of getting a fair shake. If your case is not political, you stand no chance of even being heard. Either way, "Go to Court" has become a short hand for telling the court user that they are involved in a futile pursuit. Meanwhile, these political cases have become chronic sites of execrable transactions in buying and selling judicial decisions. In 2020, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), reported that "lawyers were mostly responsible for offering bribes for favourable judgments mostly in electoral and political matters." According to the Commission, between 2018 and 2020, "11 out of the 123 judges surveyed, reported "Nigeria's courts of unequal injustice and curious appointments", experiencing offers or payment of N3.307 billion and N392.3 million as a bribe", indicating that buying and selling judicial decisions is a highly profitable enterprise.

To be continued on Monday.

Fire on the mountain

ANY close observer of goings-on in the South East cannot but be alarmed at the hellish situation and the rest of us are looking away. Our gaze and exertions are concentrated on politics when gloom overcasts the land. Listening to politicians and outspoken members of the elite clubs, you have the wrong impression that all is well. Yet reports and videos say otherwise. Not even the proactive NGOs have drawn attention to the nation's hara-kiri. When any part of the body is ill it is the whole of it that is ill and will know pains. As it is with the body so is it with a nation: When any component part of it is unsettled and in grievous harm's way or is already entrapped in it, it is the entire country that suffers. It is existential conundrum to which we have not paid thoughtful attention. The posture of Buhari was that it is strong-arm tactics that would teach the agitators in the South East the lessons of their lives. He was unable to distinguish between agitators for freedom and agitators to enslave and dispossess—the bandits and kidnapers. Those pressing for freedom are the “Biafrans.” For most of the eight years that Buhari was the Sheriff we witnessed violent, murderous campaigns waged by the agitators. And he thought he should pay them back in kind with firmness that may include military operations, which I consider problem of poor human management.

In my intervention in the matter at a time, I recommended that Buhari should consider an exploratory meeting with three or so representatives of the agitators led by Nnamdi Kanu. He should get Dr. Christopher Kolade assisted by his right-hand man Professor Pat Utomi he esteems highly and trusts to go to the East and fetch Nnamdi Kanu who would be accompanied by Prof. Ben Nwabueze, SAN, for whom Nnamdi Kanu had tremendous respect and could hardly look in the face and perhaps joined by Senator Ababribe who was already in Abuja in the Senate at the time or even Prof. Charles Soludo. Kolade was going to fetch Nnamdi Kanu armed with his disarming sense of humour that can melt a heart of stone; Utomi was to provide the intellectual powerhouse.

When all are seated in the appropriate conference room, Buhari would emerge from his office accompanied by Boss Mustapha (SGF), Chief of Staff Abba Kyari, and Femi Adesina, with his two fists already hitting the air. In a display of mock pugilism, as his guests rise to pay customary homage, he blurts out, inviting Nnamdi Kanu forward for a duel: “Who amongst you here is Nnamdi Kanu? You want to fight; I hear you want to fight; come out, let us fight.” He cuts the image of Mohammed Alli at that moment. The guests; everyone, surprised would say, “Your Excellency, Sir, don't do that. No, don't do that, Sir!” It was all going to be a joke to relax everyone, and everyone would laugh heartily and say to one another: “So, this man is a human being after all! It is from a far that we see him as stiff, rigid and unsmiling; so he is this approachable.” After banter, Buhari would say to Nnamdi: “Young man, what's your problem? I want to listen to you.” Dr. Kolade would then take the floor and give reasons he had gone to fetch Nnamdi Kanu. After discussions that would last no more than 45 minutes in such a relaxed and cordial atmosphere, Buhari would then say: “All right, you know what? Young man Kanu, go and give me a paper on your vision of Nigeria. Do we then say we meet again in three weeks time or is it a month? The choice is yours. When you are ready, Dr. Kolade will keep me posted.” He brings the meeting to a close; there is laughter; there is shaking of hands. He asks Boss Mustapha to collect Nnamdi Kanu's number. With that encounter, Buhari would have made a lasting impression on Kanu and his colleagues. Tension would have gone down. We would have been on the way to resolving the conundrum and preventing the escalation in violence. It would be seen, indeed proven that to jaw jaw is infinitely better than to war, war, as they say. My suggestion certainly fell on deaf ears and the situation was mishandled. Uncertainties have persist-



Sit-at-home in South East

ed since then.

I have just seen two most troubling videos. In one, IPOB enforcers of “Stay-at-home” order went from community to community and to a school where they flogged pupils because their parents did not keep them at home which was a violation of the order. In another community, they threw away goods, scattered farm produce such as maize and many other wares on display in a village market. They were going from one end of the market to kick and upturn containers of poor market women, spilling the contents on the ground. Another video showed Aba market in a desolate state. Aba is the industrial hub in the South-East. Most places were thrown into Thomas Hobbes' famous world of uncertainty which he described as life outside normal society—solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. IPOB pressing for excision of five states of Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, and Abia from Nigeria gave themselves the right to impose severe punishment on anyone who ignored the order of staying at home; no one should be seen outside his abode, an adaptation of Mahatma Gandhi's Civil Disobedience. While that of Gandhi was Nonviolent Resistance to get the British out of India, the IPOB's is violent campaign. India eventually got its independence on August 15, 1947.

It became frightening when the Biafran agitation deteriorated into locking down towns and villages on May 30 of every year in commemoration of the declaration of the independence of the Republic of Biafra by Odumegwu Ojukwu. IPOB followed the compulsory marking of the anniversary with Monday restrictions. What is in force today is “Stay-at-home” order for the first week of every month. The IPOB high command believes this is not enough. It has issued a circular with effect that from August 5 the restrictions will be extended to two weeks.

Today, life in the South East is more nightmarish for indigenes and other residents of the five states of Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Abia states than those who live outside the Zone can imagine. The governors of the five states met in Abuja during the week and resolved to table their grave concerns before President Tinubu. These states are now probably no better than prison enclaves in which two governments contest for power. One government is official, deriving its authority from Nigeria and from the Nigerian citizens. The other government is illegal under the Nigerian law, but it is, nevertheless, obeyed and as effective, and may be considered even more effective than the official government in place, run armed with constitutional instrument, the grundnorm. This unofficial government has been nick-

named UNGUN Known Men, deriving the nickname from the corruption of Unknown Gunmen which the police are wont to blame for mayhem anywhere in Nigeria there is an incident by trigger-happy and fleeing hoodlums.

From the relatively peaceful states of the South-West and South-South, and from the states of the North-West, North-East and North-Central, grappling with kidnapping, banditry and terrorism, it is as though the South Eastern states zone is a huge movie screen where the scenes are constantly changing from melodramatic to everyday tragedy. The nation has lived with the “Sit at home on Monday” order of the guerilla fighters for the Republic of Biafra for a while. The residents live in fear of them and obey them. Federal soldiers and police brought in to overpower them have been unable to record much success. They are handcuffed by history. That history is the Nigerian Civil war (1967-1970) in which the Igbos suffered horrendous human and material devastation.

Running over the South East again to forcibly quell yet another Biafran secessionist movement 56 years after the first one, the wound of which has not completely healed, would almost amount to genocide on the part of Nigeria. Every Igbo man and woman would naturally rise in defence of their land and the result would be more catastrophic than the carnage of the Biafran war of 1967-1970. We may not rule out many donning the toga of Professor Wole Soyinka and wearing

the boot of Dr. Tai Solarin joining them. While Soyinka was kept away in solitary cell, Tai Solarin was going in and out of jail house. He was visiting Nzegwu's mother at Okpanam in today's Delta to check on her wellbeing.

Now, the guerilla fighters have gone one more step forward to claim authority in the South Eastern states. As said earlier, they have extended their Sit-at-home directive to one week and from next month to two weeks. Trade, business, industry and social lives have been damaged under the Monday hammer. Many sick prevented from accessing hospitals and clinics for health remedies and healing have died at home.

In consequence of fear for their lives, many Igbos are migrating to comfort zone states. Cross River, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Delta and South-West states, especially Lagos and Ibadan, are their goals. This is creating immigrant pressure and population swells on the budgets of these states, with resultant tension. Igboland has a huge population crisis caused by many factors one of which is the landmass. The landmass is small and has not, even if it can, ably supported the ever growing population. Another factor is ancestral land holding culture which is not keeping pace with modern land demand and land use dynamics. Thus, there is the natural trigger instinct in the average South-Easterner,



man and woman, to immigrate to other parts of Nigeria and overseas where unrestrained, can spread his or her unfettered wings and find life's fulfillment.

The unknown gunmen question does not appear to have anything to do with business, commerce and industry. It is a pressure for inclusion in federal architecture. What is worrying about the new development in the South East, however, is that the five governors seem helpless and appear to have no authority over freedom fighters in their respective states. One governor came out to say he would revoke the licences of companies which obeyed the freedom fighters. It can be assumed the companies included banks, petrol filling stations, and retail markets and more. Imagine the emergent Nnewi industrial centre and Aba, the well known hub of industry and commerce, shutting down! Soon after the governor said this, the freedom fighters went to a public school which opened, got the poor children and teachers to lie on the ground and flogged them before sending them home. In a retail market, they opened gunfire for several minutes. The traders fled without their cash takings or wares. The message is clear: Will the traders like to remain in the state where they cannot eke out a living? Which parent will send a child to school when the unknown gunmen have decreed they should not come to school? Who will be so foolhardy to disobey them? The decision to comply with the order will be based on the natural philosophy that the end of obedience is protection and protection is the assurance of obedience. Who does not obey armed robbers tearing into the house he or she built from his or her sweat when there is no state presence to protect him or her from the invaders? In this scenario, the South East may lapse deeper into newer levels of Biafra agitation which may find sympathy in other regions! This points in one direction only and that is Fire on the Mountain—on the Nigerian roof if we are not careful! What is President Bola Tinubu to do in the circumstance?

What is the way forward? First of all, we must recognise the purpose of life on earth and the unwavering principles governing life. They are the perfect Laws of Creation. In the enlightenment of these times, we learn how important these Laws are in our lives—for peace and harmony, and joyful collaborative swinging. The greatest of what undergirds the principles is love. They encapsulate the Love of the Most High. Is it not an age-long saying that it is love that makes the world go round? In The Light of Truth beaming its rays on the eternal principles, the Laws of Creation, says: “The spirit of earthman must now become alive and strong in the Will of God, to serve which he is allowed to dwell in this Creation. The time has come! No longer are any enslaved spirits tolerated by God! And man's self-will shall be broken unless he is prepared to adjust himself to the primordial Laws of God which He placed into Creation. To these also belongs the Law of Movement, which demands unhampered progress in development. The extension of knowledge remains connected with this! The knowledge of Creation, spiritual knowledge, is the real purport of life!”

Can we be so bereft of love and humanity that we are unperturbed looking away in a situation a section of our society is under siege of terror? If we want progress, before we have a national crisis on our hands, the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, and the President may wish to do a little review of this IPOB problem and give it a simple but effective solution. Full discourse of the subject next week.

“Can we be so bereft of love and humanity that we are unperturbed looking away in a situation a section of our society is under siege of terror? If we want progress, before we have a national crisis on our hands, the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, and the President may wish to do a little review of this IPOB problem and give it a simple but effective solution”



INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROJECT
BORNO STATE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
No 1 Airport Road, Maiduguri
Tel: +2348063056261, 8033307085
bornoisip@gmail.com



PUBLICATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR GOODS INFORMATION NOTICE

Publication date: 14TH JULY 2023

Country: NIGERIA

Executing Agency: BORNO STATE IBSIP

Name of Project: INCLUSIVE BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT INTEGRATED PROGRAMME

Loan/Grant Number: ADF-2100150036593

Name of Tender: SUPPLY OF SEED MEDICINES FOR 5 PHCS

Lot Number & Name: N/A

Procurement mode: NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Domestic preference (Yes or No): NO

Regional preference (Yes or No): NO

Borrower's Tender Number: BO/IBSIP/2022/GOODS/07

Date of receipt by the Bank of the draft Tender document: 04TH NOVEMBER 2022

Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender Document: 16TH NOVEMBER 2022

Tender issuing date: 14TH FEBRUARY 2023

Closing date of the Tender: 14TH MARCH 2023

Date of Tender opening: 14TH MARCH 2023

Date of receipt by the Bank of the Tender evaluation report: 01ST JULY 2023

Date of approval by the Bank of the Tender evaluation: 12TH JULY

Name of the winning Bidder: Messrs. HALIL MAIMAGANI PHARMACY LIMITED

Nationality: NIGERIAN

Address: NO.10 OPEN AIR THEATER, BESIDE ZOO, DAMBOA ROAD, MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE.

Contract Award Price: ₦80,280,633.51

Contract Start date: 25TH JULY 2023

Contract Duration: FOUR (4) MONTHS

Summary of Scope of Contract Awarded: SUPPLY OF SEED MEDICINES.

Total Number of Bidders: ONE (1)

For each Bidder:

Name: Messrs. HALIL MAIMAGANI PHARMACY LIMITED

Nationality: NIGERIAN

Address: NO.10 OPEN AIR THEATER, BESIDE ZOO, DAMBOA ROAD, MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE

Bid Price as Read-out: ₦80,280,633.51

Evaluated Price: ₦80,280,633.51

Bid Accepted / Rejected: ACCEPTED

N.B.: any bidder who wishes to ascertain the grounds, on which its proposal was not selected, should request an explanation from the Executing Agency. In any event, the Bank reserves the right to review any complaint of a bidder at any time following the award.

Engr. Dr. Mohammed Musa Aliyu.

Programme Manager.

Borno State IBSIP.



LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY

LAGOS-BADAGRY EXPRESSWAY, P.M.B. 0001, LASU POST OFFICE, OJO, LAGOS.

Website: www.lasu.edu.ng Email: vc@lasu.edu.ng, registrar@lasu.edu.ng

INVITES YOU TO HER

89th

INAUGURAL LECTURE

titled:

MATHEMATICS EDUCATION OF ± KNOTS IN HUMAN CONNECTS: WHAT TYPES OF KNOTS ARE YOU TO OTHERS IN LIFE?

to be delivered by:

PROF. ADETUNJI ABIOLA OLAOYE

Professor of Mathematics Education
Department of Science & Technology
Education, Faculty of Education

DATE: Tuesday, 18th July 2023. TIME: 3:00p.m.

VENUE: Buba Marwa Auditorium,
Main Campus, Ojo, Lagos.

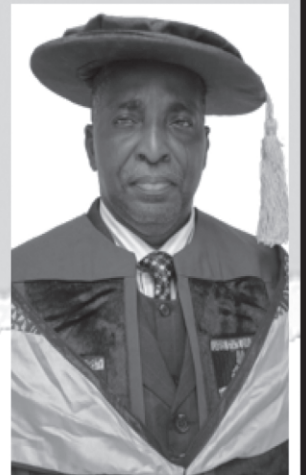
CHAIRMAN

Professor Ibiyemi I. Olatunji-Bello, mni, NPOM
Vice Chancellor, Lagos State University

SIGNED:

Emmanuel A. FANU

Registrar AND Secretary to Council



IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION HOLDEN AT LAGOS

PETITION NO: FHC/L/CP/1211/23

IN THE MATTER OF NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION ACT, 2023

IN THE MATTER OF WINDING UP PETITION BROUGHT BY THE NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION.

BETWEEN

NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION - PETITIONER
(PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR OF OROS CAPITAL MICROFINANCE BANK LIMITED)

AND

OROS CAPITAL MICROFINANCE BANK LIMITED - RESPONDENT
(IN LIQUIDATION)

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a petition for the winding up of **OROS CAPITAL MICROFINANCE BANK LIMITED** by the Court holden at the Federal High Court, Lagos, was on the 6th day of July, 2023 presented to the said Court by the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, and that the said Petition is directed to be advertised and set down for Mention before the Court sitting at the Federal High Court, Lagos on the 29th day of September 2023; and any Creditor or Contributory of the said Bank desirous to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing in person or by his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any Creditor or Contributory of the said Bank requiring such copy on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

Subject to the supervision of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation of Plot 447/448, Constitution Avenue, Central Business District, Garki, Abuja.

Note:- Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named, notice in writing of his intention so to do. The notice must state the name and address of the person or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their solicitor (if any), and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named not later than 48 working hours before the date the Petition is for mention in Court.



Kelchi Obi
KELECHI OBI, SAN
MCPHERSON BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS
PETITIONER'S SOLICITORS
22A RASHEED ALABA WILLIAMS STREET
LEKKI PHASE 1, LAGOS.

NOTICE OF LOSS

THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORMED that the **Deed of Assignment** belonging to **People's Press and Publishing Limited** and registered as No. 40 on page 40 in Volume 1653 which is the title document over the property known as **30/32 Akinwunmi Street, Papa Ajao, Mushin, Lagos IS LOST.**

Anybody with information on the whereabouts of the Title Documents should contact the solicitors to Peoples Press And Publishing Limited at Tokunbo Olugbenga & Co, Wing C4, 14th Floor, Western House, 8-10 Broad Street, Lagos.

**TOKUNBO OLUGBENGA
TOKUNBO OLUGBENGA & CO
WING C4, 14th FLOOR,
WESTERN HOUSE,
8-10 BROAD STREET, LAGOS.
+2348033241712
tokunbo.olugbengaandco@yahoo.com**

STATEMENT TO THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE AND SHAREHOLDERS ON THE UNAUDITED RESULTS AS AT JUNE 30, 2023

Consolidated & Separate Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the period ended 30th June 2023	Group		Company	
	30 June 2023	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	30 June 2022
	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000
Gross Earnings	11,014,419	9,110,441	1,805,268	1,557,861
Investment income	4,962,573	3,990,059	720,761	255,819
Fee and commission income	3,672,553	3,862,909	606,443	1,244,276
Net trading income	622,599	262,024	-	(63,839)
Net operating income	9,257,725	8,114,991	1,327,204	1,436,256
Other income	1,128,910	745,561	202,079	5,938
Net gains/(loss) on financial assets fair valued through profit or loss	627,784	249,889	275,985	115,667
Total Revenue	11,014,419	9,110,441	1,805,268	1,557,861
Personnel expenses	(1,357,678)	(1,109,578)	(428,508)	(221,525)
Other operating expenses	(3,032,809)	(1,794,235)	(491,248)	(394,464)
Depreciation of properties and equipment	(96,971)	(98,749)	(77,385)	(82,685)
Amortisation of intangible & right of use assets	(63,289)	(51,389)	(61,698)	(49,326)
Impairment writeback/(charge) for credit losses	(1,194,795)	(1,007,209)	(66,035)	(254,118)
Total Expenses	(5,745,542)	(4,061,161)	(1,124,875)	(1,002,118)
Operating profit before income tax	5,268,878	5,049,280	680,393	555,743
Share of accumulated (loss)/profit of associates	274,535	194,316	-	-
Profit before income tax	5,543,412	5,243,596	680,393	555,743
Income tax expense	(854,160)	(807,845)	(108,863)	(88,919)
PROFIT FOR THE PERIOD	4,689,251	4,435,751	571,530	466,824
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Fair value gain on investments in equity instruments measured at FVTOCI	19,166,711	(174,448)	3,930,257	176,502
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Fair value (loss)/gain on investments in debt instruments measured at FVTOCI	692,375	717,892	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the period, net of taxes	19,859,087	543,444	3,930,257	176,502
Total comprehensive income for the period	24,548,338	4,979,196	4,501,787	643,326
Profit for the year attributable to: Equity holders of the Company	4,689,251	4,435,751	571,530	466,824
Total comprehensive income attributable to: Equity holders of the Company	24,548,338	4,979,196	4,501,787	643,326
Earnings per share-basic (kobo)	156	148	19	16

Consolidated & Separate Statement of Financial Position As at 30th June 2023	Group		Company	
	30 June 2023	31 December 2022	30 June 2023	31 December 2022
	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000	'=N=' 000
ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	214,731,604	149,867,038	71,554,834	22,907,336
Investment securities	527,202,356	386,544,095	65,598,930	85,387,058
Trade and other receivables	57,021,786	58,943,090	46,542,836	47,812,682
Dividend receivable from subsidiaries	-	-	-	7,218,000
Right of use assets	106,992	141,944	106,992	141,944
Intangible assets	158,504	179,301	150,410	169,617
Investments in subsidiaries	-	-	901,000	901,000
Investments in Associates	4,889,229	4,614,694	4,500,000	4,500,000
Property and equipment	422,414	386,555	325,040	343,876
Deferred tax assets	1,238,493	1,238,493	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	805,771,377	601,915,211	189,680,042	169,381,513
LIABILITIES				
Managed funds	478,640,498	413,698,697	-	-
Borrowed funds	120,526,233	100,454,344	120,132,614	100,849,650
Other liabilities	153,363,771	48,649,198	53,076,550	47,671,636
Current tax liabilities	3,872,213	5,292,648	2,010,922	1,902,059
Deferred tax liabilities	833,034	833,034	787,448	787,448
TOTAL LIABILITIES	757,235,749	568,927,921	176,007,534	151,210,793
SHAREHOLDERS FUND				
Share capital	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Share Premium	683,611	683,611	683,611	683,611
Retained earnings	25,002,814	29,313,563	4,877,472	13,305,941
Other reserves	19,849,203	(9,884)	5,111,425	1,181,169
TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS FUND	48,535,628	32,987,290	13,672,509	18,170,721
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS FUND	805,771,377	601,915,211	189,680,042	169,381,513

The Board of Directors are confident that United Capital Plc's positive performance will continue to improve barring unforeseen circumstances in the future.



Chika Mordi
Chairman
FRC/2014/IODN/0000000667



Peter Ashade
Group Chief Executive Officer
FRC/2013/ICAN/0000000219



Shedrack Onokpoma
Group Chief Finance Officer
FRC/2013/ICAN/0000001643

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE Brent crude: \$75.571 | WTI crude: \$71.871 **FOREX MARKET UPDATE** NAFEX rate: N786.03 | Parallel rate: N821

Downplay import substitution, get on global market, Adesina charges Nigeria

By Geoff Iyatse

REELING out data from across the world on how export has changed the fate of economies, President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, urged Nigeria to dump the lay-back economic models and survival mode while joining the Asian countries to compete for the huge export market.

In his tradition, the former Nigeria's minister of agriculture, yesterday in Lagos, spoke excitedly about the huge potential of the economy but warned that the import substitution policy option would continue to mask the opportunities to transform the country to the real "lion king" and increase the economic growth substantially.

At 2.31 year-on-year (Y/Y) growth in quarter one, Adesina, who spoke at BusinessDay CEO Forum 2023, said the country is developing too slowly and well below its potential, charging "the lion king in the making" to learn how to roar.

"The key to unleashing

Country's export revenue at level Malaysia was in 1990

Nigeria's lionhood is engineering an industrial revolution, the likes of which we have not seen before. It must be deliberate and intentional," the AfDB boss noted.

Part of the engineering, he said, would require de-emphasizing the historical focus on the restrictive import substitution model and taking the path of the Asian countries in exploring the unlimited opportunities in export. He regretted that Nigeria's manufacturing sector represents only three per cent of the total revenue from exports whereas it accounts for 50 per cent of the country's imports.

"Import substitution, while important, is a very restrictive vision. It is focused primarily on survival, instead of looking to create wealth through greater export markets and value diversification. The result is a manufacturing sector that cannot even develop to reach its full potential nor compete globally. Rather, it is limited to a 'survival mode',

and not a 'global manufacturing growth mode'.

"Nigeria should have greater ambition for its manufacturing sector, by shifting toward being integrated into and moving up global and regional value chains, in areas of comparative advantage, specialisation and competitiveness. A well-developed and policy-enabled manufacturing sector, with export orientation, will spur greater innovation, accelerate business and investment-friendly industrial policies to drive export market development and structural transformations of the economy," he said.

The success stories of Singapore, Malaysia, India and China, he said, are practical examples of how the country could jumpstart high growth with manufacturing.

As far back as 1990. He recalled Malaysia's exports totaled \$32.8 billion, about the same figure Nigeria is doing three decades after, suggesting there much work to do in unlocking the export potential of the country.

He asked: "What is the take-home message here? While Nigeria's export basket has hardly changed, Malaysia and Vietnam have used aggressive horizontal and vertical industrial manufacturing diversification to move from low-value products to high-value market products. The result is seen in the comparative wealth of the three countries. While export value per capita is \$7,100 for Malaysia and \$3,600 for Vietnam, it is only \$160 for Nigeria."

An undoing and ironical character of the economy is Nigeria's export of raw materials such as crude while relying on other economies for the byproducts of the resource. With the right policies, including focusing on export-market-driven industrial manufacturing that is integrated into global production and logistics value chain, he noted, the country's export revenue could grow by over 10 times and "unleash a new wave of wealth".

NCC unveils guidelines for promos, lists process of denial

By Adeyemi Adepetun

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has unveiled guidelines for the conduct of promotional activities, especially by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in the industry.

NCC, which referenced the powers conferred upon it by Section 70 of the Nigerian Communications Act, 2003 to regulate this, said the Guidelines are developed to set minimum requirements and standards for promotional advertisements by licensed communications operators in Nigeria.

According to NCC, 'Advertisement' means any message, the content of which is controlled directly or indirectly by the advertiser, expressed in any language and communicated in any medium with the intent to influence consumers' choice, opinion or behavior.

In the 15-page document by the regulator released, yesterday, NCC said the Licensee shall submit to the Commission a written request for the approval of any promotional advertisements for goods and services. The request shall be

submitted at least 30 working days before the proposed or planned publication, and the licensee shall ensure that the application meets minimum standards and requirements.

NCC informed that all approvals granted shall be registered with the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) within three days of the launch of the promotions.

Some of the requirements are the licensee shall attach a detailed report of the advertisement specifying the goods and/or services and the target consumers; the licensee shall, if the goods and services on which an advertised claim or representation depends can be tested by survey or data, provide such data, which shall be reasonably competent and reliable, reflecting the true and accepted principles of such research; the licensee shall adhere to set standards for quality and grade of service set by the Commission; the licensee shall adhere to the set standards on communications products and equipment that are manufactured, imported or sold in Nigeria.



President, African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina (left); Jigawa State Governor, Umar Namadi; Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, and his wife, Betsy, at the BusinessDay CEO Forum 2023, in Lagos yesterday

MOFI eyes \$10b revenue from portfolio investments in 10 years

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

THE Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) targets \$10 billion from its portfolio investment in the next 10 years.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), MOFI, Armstrong Katang, stated this in Abuja, yesterday, at the Public Private Partnership Consultative Forum (3PUCF) meeting, adding that 50,000 new jobs are equally expected to be created by 2028.

"Increase the economic impact of MOFI's portfolio companies by generating a minimum of \$10 billion in additional GDP by 2033, through strategic investments and partnerships that drive innovation, productivity, and competitiveness. We are hop-

ing to also facilitate the creation of 50,000 new jobs across priority sectors of the Nigerian economy within the next five years through MOFI's catalytic investments and support for entrepreneurship," he explained.

He hinted that MOFI was working towards increasing its contribution to funding the Federal Government budget to 10 per cent by 2033 by identifying and investing in high-yield assets that generate significant returns.

According to him, MOFI will establish at least five new sector-focused growth funds within the next five years, to catalyse growth in priority sectors and support the development of high-potential businesses.

The number of companies under MOFI's portfolio is expected to increase by 15 per cent within the next five years by identifying and acquiring companies with significant potential for growth and profitability.

He noted that the organisation plan to develop and implement a comprehensive professionalization programme for all state-owned entities under MOFI's management within the next four years to improve their operational efficiency and financial performance.

He added: "MOFI's focus on professionalising state ownership is aimed at ensuring that all state-owned entities are effectively and efficiently managed to achieve greater economic impact.

"Professionalising state ownership involves providing state-owned entities with the necessary support to become more efficient, effective, and profitable in their operations. This support includes providing access to training, technology, and other resources necessary to improve their operations and financial performance. The goal is to enhance the competitiveness of state-owned entities and make them more attractive to potential investors."

He insisted that MOFI is a significant financial driver of the Nigerian economy, saying with over 52 companies under its portfolio and an estimated value of holdings at ₦18 trillion, MOFI has a crucial role in financing economic growth in Nigeria.

Nigerian, Benin customs to address issues of smuggling, insecurity

By Adaku Onyenuchey

THE Acting Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Adewale Adeniyi, said he would begin a discussion with the Republic of Benin Customs Administration to address the issues of border security, importation across the border, and deployment of technological solutions to address complex border problems.

Adeniyi stated this during a private visit to congratulate President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on his appointment as the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on Tuesday.

Adeniyi expressed optimism that Tinubu's chairmanship of ECOWAS would promote regional integration, cooperation, border security and coordinated monetary frameworks.

According to him, part of the discussions with the President was to actively engage customs administrations across the region and collaborate to achieve common objectives of border security and regional integration.

"The President is a very good listener. We had discussions regarding what customs can bring to the table in terms of actualising the vision of renewed hope for Nigeria, bridging the gaps in revenue generation, enforcement strategies, and, most importantly, promoting port efficiency and competitiveness," he said.

The Acting Comptroller-General also assured of a pragmatic move towards decongestion of the country's ports to enhance revenue generation, facilitation of legitimate trade and anti-smuggling war.

Addressing the rumour of integrating government agencies, Adeniyi said he was not privy to any information about that yet while explaining further that, although, there is a common base among revenue-generating agencies.

"There are some areas where we overlap and some can complement one another but in terms of bringing the agencies together under one organisation, we are yet to get details of that and we will be waiting to get the details and see how that pans out," he noted.

'Human capital most valuable resource in the digital economy'

By Ngozi Egenuka

DIRECTOR General (DG) of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Kashifu Abdullahi, said human capital is the most valuable resource in building a non-dependent digital economy while stressing the need for digital literacy and skills.

He said Nigeria needs to be a digital sovereign state and build its indigenous digital content.

He said this during a courtesy visit to Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) / Digital Transformation Centre (DTC) Nigeria office in Lagos yesterday.

He stated that the agency was taking steps to implement its strategic roadmap and action plan through developmental regulation,

which involves creating an enabling environment for startups and micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSME).

"Regulation is not to stifle innovation but to influence the business, market and societal behaviour. Any regulation we implement has to create a market, enable innovation to protect consumers as well as improve service delivery," he said.

He said digital transformation is a knowledge-based economy as one's company or country is as good as its next product.

"We need to train our people and harness our talent to build our digital offerings in-country because technology hardly lasts more than a year. If you develop a system you have to update it within a year, therefore no country would survive on another country to provide its digital services," he said.

FMN establishes strong financial position through high credit rating

FLOUR Mill of Nigeria Plc (FMN) has established a strong financial position through excellent credit ratings and records.

The group tapped into the market for its Series 3 Commercial Paper to raise funds to meet its working capital requirements in June 2023.

The Series 3 was launched on June 23, 2023 to resounding feedback from the investing public.

The Order book recorded N144.37 billion in bids, which represents 262 per cent oversubscription.

All investor classes were well represented on the order book with strong showings from Banks (39.8 per cent) and Pension Fund Administrators (40.8 per cent).

The Group also took N55 billion at 239 days maturity in

this first tranche and is looking at launching a second tranche to sequence the repayment patterns.

The Director of Group Treasury and Investor Relations, FMN, Titus Owoeye, said the group has been driving local content development and investing significantly across its value chain for the past six decades.

He said the revenue generated by the group in 2022, came in at over N1 trillion, joining a select group of Nigerian companies with such a feat.

According to him, FMN has a good credit history and rating as well as a strong brand value with a loyal customer base.

Owoeye said with the highly experienced and very competent board and management teams, as demonstrated over the years, the group is a key player in the Nigerian FMCG and agribusiness sector.

NERC to collaborate with stakeholders on power supply

By Waliat Musa

COMMISSIONER in charge of Legal, Licensing and Compliance, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Dafe Akpeneye, said the commission is ready to partner state governments and other stakeholders in line with the new act to ensure uninterrupted power supply.

He made this known at the NERC stakeholder's workshop in Lagos, noting that Nigeria is yet to meet adequate supply.

"There is a cost to electricity, and we have not yet made the commensurate investment in the sector to give us ade-

quate supply, NERC's principle has always been that we will partner with any State or anybody that achieves the common goal of ensuring that the lights stay on," he said.

The 2023 Electricity Act empowers NERC to have a continuing responsibility to monitor the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) regarding its potential for additional competition.

According to the Act, NERC must ensure the prevention or mitigation of abuses of market power, which includes market concentration.

The commission said there is no intention to 'central con-

trol' everything, noting that the regulator is aware of what the new Act entails, adding that it is geared towards improving service to the consumers and increasing investment.

Victor Yaw Asante, Chairman/Commissioner of Market, Competition and Rates, NERC Musiliu Oseni, said only 53 per cent of available electricity capacity is utilised in the country due to challenges with the gas supply, transmission and distribution constraints and commercial challenges.

"Power is the engine to growth everywhere but there must be orderliness, we can work with states within exist-

ing legal frameworks and even if they set up additional legislation," he said.

The commission stressed that after reviewing the cost implication, states will decide how they want to work together, noting that it will not be a one shoe size fits all approach, but based on what they can sustain.

Reacting to the collaboration, Principal Action Coordinator, Joint Action Platform for Electricity Consumers Rights, Ayodele Olawoye, told *The Guardian* that state monopoly of the electricity power sector should not be allowed to avoid being in the present situation.



Interim Director, African School of Regulation, Prof. Ignacio Pérez-Arriaga (left); Team Lead, ESRM and Sustainability, United Bank for Africa Plc, Dr Chidozie Ezike; Partner and West Africa ICP, Deloitte, Dr Bola Adigun; European University Institute and University of Edinburgh, Prof. Kenneth Amaeshi; President, European University Institute, Prof. Renaud Dehousse and Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, FBNBank Ghana, Victor Yaw Asante, at the climate finance conference in Ghana.

Bank commits to reducing financial inclusion gap

By Benjamin Alade

A payment service bank, Hope Bank, has reiterated its commitment to the financial inclusion agenda of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Managing Director of the bank, Ogechi Altraide, stated this in Lagos, during the kickoff of the second edition of the bank's wallet promo 2.0, with its first draw of the season.

Altraide said the campaign

focused on driving financial inclusion, ensuring that more Nigerians can access and participate in banking services.

According to her, the initiative from the bank is also an avenue to appreciate customers who have demonstrated confidence and loyalty, by committing their hard-earned funds and transacting with the bank.

While encouraging Nigerians to take advantage of the ongoing promo, she said that a

total of N24 million cash reward is up for grabs for lucky Nigerians, who will participate in the promo through weekly draws.

Besides, 40 customers jointly won a total sum of two million naira at the draw. The promo is expected to run till September 2023 and will see customers cart away the total sum of N24 million in cash prizes.

Elaborating on how to participate in the promo, Group

Head Operations, Hope Bank, Sunday Abah, said the scheme is open to both existing and new customers of the bank. All that is required is for customers to carry out weekly transactions worth N10,000 to qualify for the weekly draws.

He added that over 500 customers of the bank qualified for this week's draw alone and encouraged customers and non-customers to join the promo so they can also win.

How broken foreign exchange market impoverishes Nigeria

By Muiywa Opeyemi

IN the past month, there have been sweeping changes in the foreign exchange markets in Nigeria. The most important of these changes is the decision to introduce a single, market-determined exchange rate for all transactions, which is at odds with the policies of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) since 2015.

The government had a separate exchange rate; the airlines had theirs; small businesses and manufacturers used a different rate; and individuals could access FX at different rates based on the purpose. Even worse, those who had the capacity to buy the FX

they needed could not due to rationing. Those who had the FX to sell were not allowed to do business at their preferred rate. It was an absurd arrangement.

Unlike the apathy that greeted the prior stance of the CBN, the ongoing reform has been cheered by both foreign and domestic investors. In fact, Nigerian stocks and eurobonds have recorded significant gains due to a boost to investor confidence. There is also a further expectation that the creditworthiness and investment profile of the country will improve.

All it took was a simple declaration that end-users should do business at the same exchange rate and FX dealers

are free to negotiate deals without restrictions.

While investors have benefited from these changes, everyday Nigerians are yet to recover from the economic damage wrought by the old order. Nigeria's per capita income, an imperfect but the most popular measure of economic well-being, declined by 31.8% from \$3,201 in 2014 to \$2,184 in 2022. This is a significant dent on economic performance that has condemned 20m+ more Nigerians to poverty.

The FX framework of old prevented both foreign and domestic investors from investing to develop Nigeria. Uncertainty around FX is a big limitation in doing busi-

ness. As Nigeria is faced with a chronic lack of resources needed for the economy, this imposed heavy costs. It meant that investors who were looking to put boots on the ground either stayed on the sidelines or invested in other markets. It meant that those who needed FX for projects had to delay or cancel projects. It meant that those looking for foreign partners suffered as Nigeria became less attractive as an investment destination. For everyday people, it meant that the jobs that should have been created were not available and the hospitals to access care were not built.

In the stock market, a vehicle for wealth creation for house-

holds, the participation of foreign investors dropped to less than 20% in 2020 from more than 50% in the preceding years. This meant that investors in the market missed out on opportunities for growth as the demand for stocks from the foreign investor segment thinned out.

The old order also disrupted the efficient allocation of resources in the economy. With the CBN deliberately picking winners and losers, and allocating FX based on its own whims, the economy has missed out on many growth opportunities. After all, economists, for all of their brilliance, cannot predict the future. In a market system

that gives economic agents equal opportunity to participate in the FX market, the businesses which will create the most value would naturally emerge.

Instead, corruption and racketeering were rampant. The wide spread between the official and parallel market rate at a record high of N290/\$1 incentivised corruption as there was a 63% profit to be made through arbitrage. The staff in the banking system who were in charge of FX allocations were feted. After all, economic agents needed to appeal to them to get FX. For such rare access, many palms were reportedly greased.

Opeyemi is a financial analyst

Nigeria Air: How to float national carrier without rancour, borrowed planes

The recent unveiling of Riyadh Air in Saudi Arabia offers Nigeria vital lessons on how to roll out a national carrier – if it must be done at all, JOKE FALAJU reports.

ON March 12, 2023, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, officially announced the establishment of Riyadh Air, the second national flag bearer of the country.

The airline is planning to be the largest in the Middle East in terms of revenue. It will operate domestic and international scheduled flights to over 100 different destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and North America.

Two days after the announcement, it was revealed that the airline had ordered 39 Boeing 787-9 aircraft, with options for 33 more aircraft.

Unlike Nigeria Air – unveiled in 2016 at the London Air show by the immediate past Minister of Aviation Hadi Sirika amidst backlash from Nigerians over lack of consultation as many citizens got to know about the project when it was unveiled in London – Riyadh Air was launched amidst global cheers at the just-concluded Paris Air Show on the June 4, 2023 and with immediate footprints in international aviation.

The same day, Riyadh Air unveiled its first livery Boeing 787-9 aircraft, it received its airline designator code "RX" from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) at the World Air Transport Summit, which took place in Istanbul.

On June 12, 2023, the first aircraft was delivered to the airline's fleet by Boeing and on June 14, 2023, the airline was granted the Passenger Air Transport Economic License by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), which is necessary for the airline to begin commercial operations.

Still on June 12, at the Paris Air Show, Riyadh Air signed an agreement for 90 GE Aerospace's GENx-1B engines to power its future fleet of 39 Boeing 787-9 aircraft.

According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), Riyadh Air will be a company owned by the country's Public Investment Fund (PIF), with Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the governor of PIF, serving as its chairman.

Tony Douglas has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He previously served as the CEO of UAE-based airline Etihad Airways from January 2018 until October 2022.

Riyadh Air is set to be a 'world-class airline', and is expected to add \$20 billion to non-oil GDP growth and create more than 200,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Nigeria Air project, on the other hand, has been a suspect. Recall that the project is a Public Private Partnership agreement orchestrated by the former Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, wherein Ethiopian Airlines owns 49 per cent, MRS owns 31 per cent, SAHCO owns 15 per cent while the Federal Government owns five per cent equity.

But the arrangement has not gone down well with many stakeholders, especially airline operators.

The AON protested that the new carrier's strategic partnership with Ethiopian Airlines gave it an unfair advantage that would stifle the growth of domestic airlines by monopolising domestic, regional and international routes.



There are no disputes about the numerous advantages of having a national carrier, but aviation experts think that the deal is not in the interest of Nigeria, Nigerian aviation or passengers.

However, some experts in their arguments in favour of the Nigeria Air project, said Riyadh Air aircraft also used for the unveiling is registered in the U.S. under a Boeing registration number: N8572CT, saying that was the same as the Nigeria Air unveiling with ET registered aircraft but Nigeria Air livery.

An aviation expert, Captain John Ojikutu noted that Nigeria does not need a national carrier but a flag bearer. He said: "A country like Nigeria should not be talking about National Carrier but a flag carrier. What we need to have is an airline designated for inter-continental route and two carriers for regional and continental operations."

"We have wasted too much time and money on the national carrier. Since 1993, they wanted to kill Nigeria Airways, and then they came up with Virgin Nigeria, but they still failed.

He said what needs to be done by the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) is to come up with a commercial or economic report of airlines that are operating now, saying two of the airlines are good to go.

He said if AMCON and the Federal Ministry did not mess up Arik and Aero contractors the two airlines would have been used to set up flag carriers.

"Most countries that had a National Carrier during the same period of Nigeria Airways have closed down. Even America does not have a national carrier; what they have is flag carriers, even British Airways is a flag carrier."

He said: "The former Minister of Aviation messed the whole process up. He is the only one running up and down. What about the remaining 95 per cent shareholders? If you are having an airline like that, you should allow the people with 95 per cent stake to control the whole process, and then

come in when they are ready. It is only the government that is spending money, what about others?"

Ojikutu added that before designating an airline as a flag carrier, the government must ensure that 20-30 per cent of the shares are owned by the Nigerian public.

He said, if the government must go into partnership with an airline, it must not be competitors on the BASA route. They can go to Europe or Asia to get partners, but not with a competitor on the BASA route.

"We have done it before; we have partnered KLM and South African Airways. It did not work, so we should forget about it," Ojikutu said.

An Aviation commentator, Olumide Ohunayo, also submitted that "National carriers are usually owned and funded by the government. Most times, you see the government establish a national carrier where the market is closed. The dominant carriers are the ones owned by the government or the Middle East countries with excess funds.

"But in our case, we don't have that excessive fund, with our multidimensional poverty rate, which is more important to get out of than running a national carrier."

He added: "With the domestic carrier that we have, we can build a strong flag carrier because we have the market. Government can provide the necessary support that will attract partners to them. That is why we should be looking at how to build a flag carrier from the present crop of carriers that we have. This is doable and that is what we should focus on.

"Sirika has his agenda, dream and purpose, which was higher than national interest, which is why everything he did ended up in litigation, protest and condemnation. The new minister, when coming in, needs to investigate all the projects by the former minister so that we don't have partially functional projects," Ohunayo said.

Aviation roundtable seeks roadmap, support for local airlines

By Wole Oyeade

•How former ministers decline fortunes of air transport, by Adede

AVIATION professionals have called for an overhaul of the current aviation development plan to accommodate and revolve growth around local airlines.

The stakeholders, who met at a Business Meeting of the Aviation Safety Round Table Initiative (ASRTI), in Lagos, said aviation growth is sustainable when anchored on local content, coupled with a comprehensive and implementable roadmap.

Chairman of the event, Senator Musa Adede, said a

genuine roadmap begins with the government supporting Nigerian airlines as flag carriers, to reciprocate the Bilateral Air Service Agreements (BASAs).

Adede, who is the Chief Executive Officer of King Airlines, a charter and tour aviation company, regretted that while the local airlines are all operating in silos, the last two administrations also failed to show genuine leadership to blossom the fortunes of local air transport.

He said: "As it is, there is no unity among the airline operators either scheduled, charter, or helicopters. They are all working in isolation. The aviation ministry too is not helping the industry to grow. Our airports are very dirty.

"The former ministers in the sector, especially Oduah, and Sirika, who claimed to be captain, have killed the sector. Our ministers have sold out in drafting the agreements with foreign airlines and govern-

ments."

Adede added that the industry, however, needs fresh ideas on how to rally the players to join forces and compete favourably in the international segment.

"What we are looking for is flag carriers (not national carrier); hence, the need to support your own. Why do you have foreign airlines fly into Nigeria and you cannot find groundnuts onboard? They give you peanuts. You cannot find one Nigeria cabin crew on board. Why is

our own different? Because our ministers have sold out!" Adede said.

President of ASRTI, Dr. Gbenga Olowo, reckoned with Adede, as he called for cooperation, collaboration, and merger of indigenous airlines to compete with foreign carriers.

He said this would help to address the exorbitant airfares by foreign airlines and reduce trapped funds among others.

"Foreign airlines must be restricted to a single point of entry into Nigeria and that is the way to go so that we can rescue the market

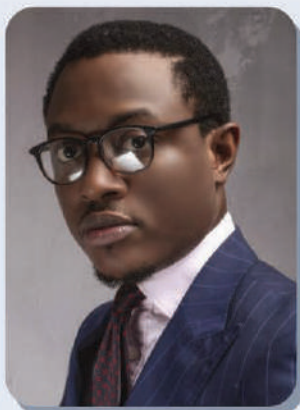
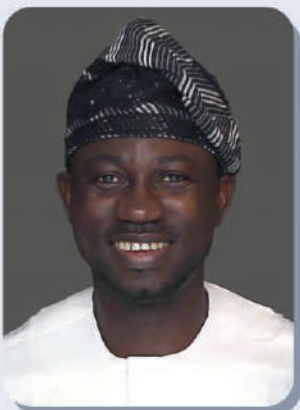
from foreign powers. We need to fly our own."

Vice President of the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON), Allen Onyema, harped on passenger education to understand the operations of the airlines and stop the upsurge in condemnation due to delays and cancellation of flights.

He said urgent attention must be given to infrastructure development and the regulatory agency; the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) must be allowed to be truly autonomous by the supervisory ministry.

PR POWER LIST 2023

The definitive list celebrating the top 50 PR and communication professionals in Nigeria.



The PR Power List is a groundbreaking initiative in collaboration with The Guardian to commend and recognise exceptional PR professionals in Nigeria, coinciding with the annual celebration of World PR Day on July 16. This year's list showcases some familiar faces from last year as well as new entrants who have distinguished themselves in the last 12 months:

ICONS: These individuals have not only made remarkable contributions to the public relations industry but have also established solid foundations for their peers, ultimately reshaping the PR landscape in Nigeria and Africa at Large. For 2023, we have a PR Icon with over 30 years of expertise with an immense impact that can be seen through his pioneering efforts.

CHANGEMAKERS: Experts, agency founders, c-suite executives, and leaders who have earned recognition as some of the most influential figures within the Nigerian PR industry. Their expertise and influence have propelled them forward.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Acknowledging those dedicated to creating platforms or communities that foster growth in PR and communication fields. These builders establish nerve centres where industry professionals can enhance their skills and inspire others.

RISING VOICES: These are young industry leaders with formidable talents within the realm of PR. Through resilience and innovation, they defy all odds while transforming brands with unparalleled creativity.

MEDIA IMPACT: We cannot overlook the integral role of the media platforms, without which our perception of PR would remain incomplete. The contributions from these industry media houses play a pivotal role in amplifying our work..

Omasumi Opbe,

Managing Partner, GLG Communications.

ICON

1. Yomi Badejo-Okusanya — Group Managing Director at CMC Connect (Perception Managers).

CHANGEMAKERS

2. Adetokunbo Modupe (CEO of TPT International Ltd.)
3. Adewunmi Desalu (BUA Foods-Director, Marketing, and Corporate Communications)
4. Amaechi Michael Okobi (Group Head, Corporate Communications, Access Bank Plc)

5. Anthony Chiejina (Group Head, Corporate Communications, Dangote Group).
6. Anurika Azubuike (Consultant, Africa Regional Communications, International Finance Corporation (IFC).
7. Ayeni Adekunle (Founder/CEO at BHM)
8. Bola Balogun (Founder and CEO of The Glam Brand Agency)
9. Bukola Sawyerr Izeogu (Founder & CEO, BukiHQ Media)
10. Chinma Banksharon-Nwaneri (Senior Marketing Manager, Tecno Telecoms Nigeria.)
11. Comfort Obot Nwankwo (Chairman, Lagos NIPR)
12. Efosa Aiyebomwan (PR & Publicity Manager, Sub-Saharan Africa, Netflix)
13. Elizabeth Oputa (Senior Brand Manager Amazon Prime Video.
14. Elizabeth Osho (Co-Founder & Lead Strategist, So.Me Solutions)
15. Emeka Oparah (Vice President Corporate Communications & CSR, Airtel Africa)
16. Femi Falodun (Executive Director, BHM Holdings)
17. Francesca Uriri (Global Internal and Executive Communications Lead of Diversity and Inclusion at Meta)
18. Funso Aina (Senior Manager, External Relations at MTN Nigeria Plc)
19. Ijeoma Balogun (CEO, Redrick Public Relations)
20. Itiola Omobolaji Ikudinakin (Director of Marketing and Communications, Opay).
21. Jide Sipe (Head, Marketing and Corporate Communication at Ecobank Nigeria)
22. Laolu Thomas (Senior Public Relations Manager - DSTV)
23. Mabel (Aladenusi) Adeteye (Head, Brand & Marketing Communications, Wema Bank.)
24. Michelle Atagana (Head of Communications and Public Relations, Africa at Spotify)
25. Niyi Aderibigbe (Head, Marketing and Corporate Communications, Transcorp Hotels Plc.)
26. Ngozi Emeagi (Director, Communications - Data and Analytics at London Stock Exchange Group, UK.
27. Oluwasola Obagbemi (Corporate Communications Manager, Anglophone West Africa at Meta)
28. Omasan Ogisi (General Manager, External Communications, MTN)
29. Orimolade Oluwamuyemi (Senior Business Program Manager, MarComms at Microsoft, ADC West Africa)
30. Otega Ogra (Director & Group Head, Corporate Communications, BUA Group)
31. Rafiat Gawat (Head, of Corporate Communication at TGI Group)
32. Taiwo Kola-Ogunlade (Communications & Public Affairs Manager, West Africa, Google)
33. Taiwo Ogunwumi (Executive Director, Brooks + Blake)
34. Temitope Oguntokun (Corporate Affairs and Legal Director, International Breweries Plc (AB InBev)
35. Tomilayo Aluko (Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing at CSCS).
36. Tomi Ogunlesi (Group Head, Brands, Communications & Corporate Responsibility, Interswitch Group).
37. Vanessa Amadi (Founder at VAIPR Publicity)
38. Victoria Uwadoka (Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Manager, Nestle)
39. Victor Oladokun (Senior Adviser to the President (Communication and Stakeholder Engagement), African Development Bank Group)

COMMUNITY IMPACT

40. Adedoyin Jaiyesimi (Co-Founder, The Comms Avenue)
41. Eniola Harrison (Director IE Africa Center & Co-Founder of Africa Communications Week)
42. Peter Ukhurebor (Founder & MD, Black at Cannes)
43. Tolulope Olorundero (Principal Consultant at Mosron Communications & Founder, Nigerian Women In PR)

RISING VOICES

44. Blessing Abeng (Co-Founder & Director of Communications, Ingressive for Good)
45. Enitan Kehinde (Lead Consultant and General Manager, BHM UK.
46. Nowe Isibor (PR & Communications Manager, Filmhouse Group)
47. Oluwayemisi Ode (Integrated Marketing Communications & Public Relations Manager, Infinix Nigeria)

MEDIA IMPACT

49. John Ajayi (Editor in Chief & Publisher, Marketing Edge Magazine)
50. Joshua Ajayi (Publisher, Brand Communicator)

PRESENTED BY:



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



@glgcomms

When students' body fetes TETFund over interventions in higher institutions

THE joy of the leadership of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), knew no bound last Monday, when it was presented with a brand new 30-seater Toyota Coaster bus by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund.)

The official handover ceremony was conducted by the Executive Secretary of the Fund, Sonny Echono. He made it known that the bus was to make movements and activities of the body easy and more efficient.

Aside the bus, the Executive Secretary (ES), also spoke about other areas of interventions that the Fund is currently looking into to ensure maximum comfort of students on campuses across the country. Some of these areas include hostel accommodation and effective transportation structures within campuses.

Addressing the students' body, Echono stated that the meeting was in continuation of the regular interface with stakeholders in the nation's education sector.

He said: "I want to tell us that this is the continuation of our constant dialogue with stakeholders. Just as President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has been preaching, students are at the centre of any policy on education because education is all about students. It is not about those that teach but basically the students. So, every policy around education should be centred around students and how to equip them with the right skills and knowledge to enable them contribute meaningfully to the society when they graduate.

"It is in the same line that TETFund is consulting with them to find out their needs, their expectations and their aspiration in order to guide our recommendations to the Board of Trustees and to Mr. President to make the right interventions."

On the issue of hostel accommodation, the ES admitted that the quality of accommodation in different campuses of public tertiary institutions is not something to be proud of. He therefore assured students that efforts are being made towards addressing the situation.

He said: "At the last engagement, there were requests bordering on students' accommodation because we all know that the quality of spaces where our students stay are not things that we should be proud of. We at TETFund are already designing interventions along those lines to ensure that we increase the stock of students' hostels, some directly and others through PPP arrangements because we also believe that we can leverage on our funds to attract investors to our campuses but we can do some of them



The Executive Secretary, TETFund, Sonny Echono, (fourth left) and the leadership of NANS.

directly through our own projects", he said.

On the issue of transportation within campuses, Echono did not want to preempt Mr. President. He only assured his guests that the issue was receiving desired attention.

He said: "We also talked about the issue of transportation within campuses. I don't want to preempt Mr. President but we are already looking into those two major requests of theirs and they shall yield results."

Before handing over the car documents and the key of the bus to the students, the ES charged them with the responsibility of monitoring intervention projects on campuses. This development, he believed, will put contractors on their toes, not just for timely completion of projects but also, to ensure good quality job.

"Another engagement we are having with the students is the fact that we want them to be our eyes in their respective institutions. TETFund interventions translate to execution of projects and implementation of different intervention lines, and these all happen on campuses. So, we want a situation where, when something is going wrong with projects on our campuses, we have multiple ways of being able to get information, and one of those ways is through the students who are the beneficiaries of those interventions.

"So, by our programme, we want to be able to identify on each campus, a contact person that would be able to liaise with our monitoring teams and be able to engage with the contractors. Sometimes, they may be required to visit a particular site, confirm whether work is going on there or not, look at the quality of work and see whether the contractors are on site or not so that we can have a first-hand information; not a situation where we wait for a school to apply for a particular tranche, then, we send our team there only to discover that everything has already gone wrong.

"We are doing similar

engagements with other stakeholders. In fact, the staff unions are also helping us to carry out monitoring of projects. So, we feel that going forward, this will help us to make our monitoring process more transparent and more engaging. Also, when people know that students who are constantly there are watching out, and can let TETFund know whether they are working well or not, I am sure that those working on those projects will sit up and ensure that they do good quality work."

The ES however informed them that the template for the monitoring would be worked out in consultation with the students to state how the Fund wants to structure it.

"As I said, they will give us a full representation in each of the almost 250 beneficiary institutions across the country. And with this, the Fund will officially commission the students' body to be part of the monitoring teams for intervention projects across the campuses.

Having said that, the ES went on to perform the symbolic transfer of the coaster bus to the students amidst cheers and encomium on the Fund and its leadership.

In his response, the President, NANS, Usman Barambu, who came with some of the executive members and former President, pledged to be ambassadors of TETFund.

He said that the student's body had earlier met with President Tinubu and tabled some of their requests, which include provision of hostel accommodation on campuses as well as provision of means of transportation on campuses.

"But the important thing we mentioned was the recommendation of TETFund. We called on him to do more for TETFund. We told him that 90 per cent or more of the support for tertiary institutions came from TETFund.

"Without TETFund, our institutions would have died. We are proud to say it because if you go to our campuses, you



NANS President, Usman Barambu, taking possession of the coaster bus.

will witness the activities of TETFund. We are proud of that and we keep thanking Arc Echono and promise to contribute our own quota to support TETFund.

"As I have always said to our people, whenever we request for something from TETFund, they usually surprise us. Now, we are talking about the gift of a new bus and the ES has introduced the issue of monitoring. We have our independent monitoring group but not approved by him. According to his remarks, we are now empowered to monitor projects in our schools. I want to assure him that we will do our best to see that the contractors do the right thing because we have students that can work from morning till night, monitoring them."

The President of the students' body however tasked the ES to ensure that sanctions are meted to erring contractors to serve as deterrent.

"There should be disciplinary measures against any defaulting contractor so that students doing the monitoring and bringing reports to you would be encouraged to do more. We would be proud to do that. We will forward the names and contacts of the monitoring group to TETFund."

Adding: "The presence of TETFund is glaring in majority of our tertiary institutions. Like I said earlier, we have our independent monitoring committee that goes round, and we realised that part of the education stakeholders that is doing perfectly well is TETFund and we commend them for that."

He said that the bus will help the students' body in carrying out its activities and make it more efficient in its mandates.

Also, to further enhance standard of education in Nigeria, Barambu said that there was need for TETFund

to do more interventions, especially in the area of sponsoring lecturers for further studies by way of expanding the number of opportunities granted unto them so that they would be better equipped to impact knowledge.

Balancing TETFund's interventions with demands by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for better funding of education in the country, NANS' President said that there had been an interface between the body and President Tinubu, and that the students have explained the need for government to increase funding opportunities for TETFund to enable it expand its interventions.

"If you visit any public tertiary institution, remove TETFund project and see what would be left. Yet, while we thank TETFund for all that it is doing, we still need more. That is what we told Mr. President. Yes, TETFund is doing so well but government should support it to do more."

To TETFund, NANS expressed its gratitude for the support. The body however urged ASUU and the Federal Government to be mutually respectful to their agreements.

"There are things that require political solution. Even though it is their right, ASUU still needs to shift ground for national peace", NANS held.

“At the last engagement, there were requests bordering on students' accommodation because we all know that the quality of spaces where our students stay are not things that we should be proud of. We at TETFund are already designing interventions along those lines to ensure that we increase the stock of students' hostels, some directly and others through PPP arrangements because we also believe that we can leverage on our funds to attract investors to our campuses but we can do some of them directly through our own projects”



LAFIYA (UK Support for Health in Nigeria) Programme

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Palladium is a global leader in the design, development and delivery of Positive Impact – the intentional creation of enduring social and economic value. We work with governments, businesses, and investors to solve the world's most pressing challenges. With a team of more than 3,000 employees operating in 90 plus countries and a global network of over 35,000 experts, we help improve economies, societies and, most importantly, people's lives.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion - Palladium is committed to embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion into everything we do. We welcome applications from all sections of society and actively encourage diversity to drive innovation, creativity, success and good practice. We positively welcome and seek to ensure we achieve diversity in our workforce; and that all job applicants and employees receive equal and fair treatment regardless of their background or personal characteristics. These include: (but are not limited to) socio-economic background, age, race, gender identity and expression, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, veteran, marital or Indigenous status. Should you require any adjustments or accommodations to be made due to a disability or you are a neurodivergent individual or for any other circumstance, please email our team at accessibility@thepalladiumgroup.com and we will be in touch to discuss.

Safeguarding - We define Safeguarding as "the preventative action taken by Palladium to protect our people, clients and the communities we work with from harm". We are committed to ensuring that all children and adults who come into contact with Palladium are treated with respect and are free from abuse. All successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced selection process including safeguarding-focused interviews and a rigorous due diligence process.

The UK Support to Health transformation in Nigeria through the Lafiya Programme is a flexible, demand-led strategic partnership with the Nigerian Federal and targeted State governments designed to address equity, improve and sustain health outcomes for the most vulnerable States with the worst health statistics. The programme operated at the Federal level; and geographically in five states of - Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano and Yobe.

The desired objectives of the programme included fostering an enabling environment for UHC policy reform and implementation, institutional management capacity building and health system strengthening.

We offer;

- A friendly and team-based working environment
- Opportunity to work with national and international colleagues
- Vital contribution to improving maternal and newborn services in Northern Nigeria
- The opportunity to truly "make a difference"
- A competitive salary with benefits

POSITION: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA) FACILITATOR
LOCATIONS: BORNO (1), JIGAWA (1), KANO (3)

Purpose of the Position:

The LGA Facilitators will coordinate all LGA level program implementation including advocacy to stakeholders, training, monitoring, and supervision of all Lafiya supported activities.

Full details about this role are available at the following links:

Borno: <https://palladium.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/2/home/requisition/19887?c=palladium>
 Jigawa: <https://palladium.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/2/home/requisition/19888?c=palladium>
 Kano: <https://palladium.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/2/home/requisition/19886?c=palladium>

Qualifications & Experience

- First degree (or HND) in a relevant field
- Relevant post-graduation experience
- Work-related experience in a health/public health organization.
- Previous working experience with the FCDO funded programme is an added advantage.
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office.
- Previous training on the use of mobile technology for health development
- Previous experience working with State Ministry of Health, LGA and Lafiya program.
- A proven ability to work as part of a team and independently.
- Ability to work under stressful conditions, flexible and calm under pressure.
- Training and supervision skills are required.
- Fluency in local language is required.
- Previous experience in the use of electronic data monitoring systems is an advantage.

POSITION: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT (OCA) CONSULTANT (1)
LOCATION: KANO

Purpose of the Position:

Lafiya programme being a catalytic technical assistance programme supports the LGAs Primary Health Care (PHC) Departments to better coordinate the delivery of PHC services in the LGAs. To facilitate an efficient coordination, a number of structures that include Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent and Elderly Health Plus Nutrition (RMNCAEH+N), Logistics Management Coordination Unit (LMCU), LERRIC, LGA PHC Advisory Committee, LGA Emergency Preparedness & response (EPR) committees among others are aligned to the Primary Health Care Under One Roof (PHCUOR) initiative, National Action Plan for Health Security and other national health reforms initiatives. With the successful establishment of these structures, it's important to enable their functionality and coordination role amongst others through an annual conduct of self-assessing their capacities using an organizational capacity assessment tool (OCAT).

Full details about this role are available at the following link:

<https://palladium.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/2/home/requisition/19929?c=palladium>

Qualifications & Experience

- Master's Degree or higher in Public Health, Policy and Governance, Health Economics, or another relevant field required.
- Previous experience of providing support for the design, capacity strengthening and roll-out of Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA).
- Must be an experienced professional in the field of health systems strengthening.
- Demonstrable capacity to facilitate, network and negotiate with key stakeholders across different sectors in support of health.
- Experience with technical assistance for programs funded by FCDO and/or other donor programs in developing countries, with significant Northern Nigeria experience.
- Experience in coordination and collaboration of stakeholders including Government agencies, host country governments and counterparts, and international donor agencies.
- Strong interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills in English required.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English.

Please apply on the Palladium jobs portal via the links above. **The closing date for applications is July 21st, 2023.** Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

N8,000 monthly to 12 million Nigerians laughable, economic waste – Organised labour

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

subsidy regime is a scam and has not in any way benefitted the so-called 'vulnerable' citizens.

He said it makes no economic sense to inject cash in the form of palliatives into an economy that is already beset with unending inflationary pressures.

"It is worthy of note that previous palliatives had proved not to palliate the economic woes of the citizens. In reality and within the context of our current economic situation, the majority of Nigerians are vulnerable, especially organised businesses."

National President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Festus Osifo, who kicked against the move, said any palliative payment by the Federal Government must be in line with the agreement reached with labour in line with the technical committee meeting.

The TUC Deputy President, Dr. Tommy Okon, also queried how the government would determine those who are to benefit from the data deficit in Nigeria.

He said it was proper for the government to allow the presidential committee on

the removal of oil subsidy to conclude its report and arrive at a collective agreement with the organised labour before embarking on any palliative care distribution.

If done otherwise, he said it would amount to doing exactly what the previous administration did that yielded no positive impact on the environment and economy.

A top official of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), who does not want his name in print, said there is a question of integrity for the presidential steering committee, stating that ab-initio, it means that the committee is compromised at the sub-committees and presidential level.

"On the \$800 million loan, our position remains that N8,000 to 12 million poor Nigerians is laughable. What will it do? N48,000 for 12 million Nigerians to alleviate poverty and you impose a life of long suffering on the people."

"Will N48,000 take care of a person for one month let alone six months? It shows they are not serious. Why do you want to implement it when the committees have not met? Government must be patient and work through the process. They must trust

and be confident in the process it has initiated but what they have done is shunned the gun, improvising the work of the committee. It means you do not have trust in your ability to govern.

"What the government has done is an ambush and gone beyond what it is supposed to be and probably decided on what to do. Who told them that that is the amount required to fund the recommendation of the committee?"

"So if they have a budget already, it means that they have activities and if they do, who generated them? It means that the committees are not relevant and means the government is not confident and does not trust in the process which they have already initiated," he said.

A public affairs analyst, Jide Ojo, said the World Bank loan should have been earmarked for the improvement of infrastructure across 768 LGAs and six Area Councils of the FCT with an implementation committee to do need community assessment to improve dilapidated schools, roads or Primary Health Care (PHC) centres.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION HOLDEN AT LAGOS

PETITION NO: FHC/L/CP/1212/23

IN THE MATTER OF NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION ACT, 2023

IN THE MATTER OF WINDING UP PETITION BROUGHT BY THE NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION.

BETWEEN
NIGERIA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION - PETITIONER
(PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR OF VERDANT MICROFINANCE BANK LIMITED)

AND
VERDANT MICROFINANCE BANK LIMITED - RESPONDENT
(IN LIQUIDATION)

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a petition for the winding up of **VERDANT MICROFINANCE BANK LIMITED** by the Court holden at the Federal High Court, Lagos, was on the 6th day of July, 2023 presented to the said Court by the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, and that the said Petition is directed to be advertised and set down for Mention before the Court sitting at the Federal High Court, Lagos on the 29th day of September 2023; and any Creditor or Contributory of the said Bank desirous to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing in person or by his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any Creditor or Contributory of the said Bank requiring such copy on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

Subject to the supervision of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation of Plot 447/448, Constitution Avenue, Central Business District, Garki, Abuja.

Note:- Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named, notice in writing of his intention so to do. The notice must state the name and address of the person or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their solicitor (if any), and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named not later than 48 working hours before the date the Petition is for mention in Court.



Kelechi Obi

KELECHI OBI, SAN
MCPHERSON BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS
PETITIONER'S SOLICITORS
22A RASHEED ALABA WILLIAMS STREET
LEKKI PHASE 1, LAGOS.

Intrigues, issues ahead of Imo governorship election

Major political parties in Imo State are battling internal crises, with uncertainties as November 11 governorship election draws nearer.

From Lawrence Njoku, Southeast Bureau Chief

PART of the hurdles appearing in the way of political parties and candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC); the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and the Labour Party (LP) in the November 11 governorship election in Imo State, include the insecurity ravaging the state, crisis within the parties, as well as challenges surrounding political campaigns.

So far, all the political parties interested in the election have concluded their primaries and have continued to advance their engagements to deepen their acceptance and shore up their support base.

While all eyes are on the election to achieve transparency and deepen democratic tenets, the aforementioned issues among others, appear to be unsettling the parties and digging deep holes on their chances and participation in the election.

Last week, LP raised serious doubts over the sanctity of the election following rising insecurity in the state. National Vice Chairman of the party in the southeast, Chief Innocent Okeke, who expressed worries that insecurity had dislocated several residents, stated that unless something drastic was done to build confidence, many residents would not participate in the exercise.

He specifically cited some local governments in the state such as Oru East, Oru West, Oguta, Orlu, Okigwe, Orsu and Njaba, saying that they have become “ghost towns” following incessant attacks created by state and non-state actors. He explained that the insecurity would go a long way to chart the path of the election.

Okeke, who insisted that the insecurity may be utilised to the advantage of the party in power in the state, requested a deliberate action to solve the issue before the election.

Credence was lent to his position when the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state raised similar sentiments, alleging that, “half of Imo territory is under the occupation of bandits and kidnappers among other state actors who levy death upon the people”. PDP added that most farmers have abandoned their farmlands, explaining that the development was increasing poverty, starvation and crimes in the state.

It was apparently against these worries that a two-day stakeholders meeting that was held in the state recently advised the residents to embrace and encourage efforts that would guarantee credible and peaceful conduct of the November 11 election in the state.

The meeting organised by the Kukah Centre in partnership with Imo State Independent State-based Peace Architecture (ISPA) had canvassed active participation in the election and advised citizens to eschew sentiment and resist attempt that would jeopardise efforts for continued peace and unity of the state, as well as ensure that credible leaders govern the state.

But while it is acceptable that insecurity ravages the southeast states and that Imo state is not insulated from it, perhaps, LP is also bored by the governorship primary that has enthroned two persons for the sole ticket of the party. Former Senator Athan Achonu and Chief Joseph Ikechukwu Ukaegbu are locked in contention over the governorship ticket of the party.

Achonu, who represented Imo North Senatorial District, had emerged from the April 15 governorship primary conducted by Abia governor, Alex Otti, after beating the likes of Lincoln Ogunewe, Martin Agbaso, Basil Maduka, Ibe Ike, Sam Amadi, David Mbamara, Kelechi Nwagwu, Charles Agomuo and Ndidi Anike.

A day after his emergence, a faction of the party held another primary superintended by Mohammed Alkali where Chief Joseph Ukaegbu emerged. His emergence however, did not deter the Independent National



Uzodimma

Electoral Commission (INEC) to continue to relate with Achonu, on the ground that his (Achon) emergence followed due process.

Ukaegbu was said to have gone to court. Last week, his petition in court made headlines and threw more confusion in the party following a ruling by the federal high court sitting in Bayelsa State that allegedly held that he is the authentic governorship candidate of the party. The ruling was said to have invalidated Achonu's election.

The Court was said to be responding to similar cases filed by contestants from Bayelsa and Kogi states in the primaries conducted by the national leadership of Julius Abure while he was on suspension from office. The Judge was reportedly said to have faulted and nullified the primaries he conducted while upholding that of the Lamidi Apapa-led faction of the party. While Ukaegbu had gone to town with the claim of being the “authentic” governorship candidate of the party, his supporters had threatened Achonu with jail terms should he continue to campaign anywhere in the state.

But the Abure-led national executive in his response to the alleged ruling warned members of the public to be wary of the activities of those he described as “political and judicial pranksters.”

A statement by the Acting National Publicity Secretary, Obioralfoh likened the judgment to what transpired in Kano State where they procured against the LP and Abia State then governor-elect, Alex Otti, adding that the group has not relented on their evil mission hence the purported judgment.

“The judgment did not give any order to INEC or any other institution, affects the candidacy of Senator Athan Achonu; mention Senator Athan Achonu as he was not even a party in the matter, affirm Ukaegbu as the candidate or change any status quo already existing before the judgment.

“In law when a court says it has no jurisdiction and dismisses a matter as this one has been, it



Anyanwu

means the matter is dead in the water”, Ifoh stated. It also dismissed threats against Achonu's campaigns in the state

While the LP battles with her internal issues, the political quagmire in the PDP in the state has continued to increase since the National Secretary of the party, Samuel Anyanwu clinched the governorship ticket of the party to contest in the election.

The squabbles in the party got to its head in the morning of June 18, when seven members of the state working committee announced their resignation from their positions, as well as withdrawal of their membership from the party, accusing Anyanwu of not working in the interest of the party in the state.

Addressing a press conference at the party's secretariat in Owerri, the state capital, Collins Oporozor, who until then the state Publicity Secretary of party stated that the candidate of the party for the November 11 governorship election in the state, Samuel Anyanwu, did not have what it takes to govern the state.

He said himself, the secretary of party Ray Emeana, the youth leader, Greg Nwadike; the deputy state chairman, Martin Ejiogu; the woman leader, Maria Mbakwe; Treasurer, Josiah Eze; and Vice Chairman, Orlu Zone, Chibuisi Obidohave resigned from their positions and equally dumped the party.

Oporozor had said during the press conference attended by all those that resigned: “Since 2020 when this Working Committee took over the administrative cockpit of the PDP in Imo State, we have evolved a tradition of being upfront with you as members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm about all issues that trouble our dear state. We have, through such interactions, inspired faith in a better Imo realised through good governance and democratic norms.

“It is necessary we remind you that in the last three years, this Working Committee has built a very strong, formidable and enviable PDP in Imo State. To enable the party to realise its promise of being a truly democratic entity, we envisioned the need to expand the internal democratic space by forming nearly five thousand chapters across all the polling units in the state. We took the party to the people, and that made us the darling of Imo people. We accomplished this task despite our lean resources as an opposition. No other political party has attained this feat in Nigeria.

“More so, we institutionalised the culture of accountability in party administration, and demonstrated a readiness to govern and reform Imo.

“But, since Senator Anyanwu became the National Secretary of the party, he has never relented in deploying the powers of his office to fight members of this Working Committee and intimidate even ordinary members of the



Achon

party. Endless strife, mindless wars and erosion of all democratic values and principles have now defined and defiled Imo PDP”, he said.

These members have since joined APC, even as they stated that the floodgate of decampment had been opened and would soon “get to a stage where only Senator Anyanwu will be left with the PDP in Imo State.”

Anyanwu has however remained upbeat, insisting that their exit was part of the ploy to undermine the party in the state and plunge it into crisis to pave way for the APC. He has insisted that there was no going back on recovering the state for the PDP using the coming election.

PDP returned to power in the state using the 2019 general elections with the election of Emekalhedioha; but the pronouncement of the Supreme Court a year after rubbed it of the opportunity with the incumbent governor, Hope Uzodimma of the APC as the beneficiary. Ihedioha is considered a strong force in the party. As of the moment, it is still unclear the role he is playing, especially with the defeat of AtikuAbubakar in the presidential election of the country.

Nonetheless, even with their power of incumbency and allegation that it is poised to reap from the festering insecurity, all seems not to be well with the APC. Part of the challenge the party and its candidate, Uzodimma are faced in the election is the near loss of confidence by the people, which was blamed for insecurity and poor performance in the state.

The Guardian gathered that following the ravaging insecurity in the state with the attendant implication on the economy, living conditions are becoming unbearable for the people, thereby raising so much opposition to the re-election of the governor as many believe that if re-elected as governor would further emasculate the state. They have blamed the administration for the many killings, destruction and violence in the state, attributing it to part of effort to subdue opposition and opponents.

Sources stated that the party had capitalised on the insecurity to win all the seats in the state Assembly during the 2023 general elections. The development, it was learnt had however sparked off reactions from contestants from other political parties, who hinged their failure on the fact that their supporters were not allowed to participate in the electoral process due to the activities of armed men on the day of the election and wondered where those elected from APC got their figures.

This is the issue the candidates and their parties have presented at the tribunal in the state and are seeking to overturn the election. However, following an alleged series of threats of attack to the tribunal members by unknown gunmen, the tribunal sitting in the state was relocated to Nasarawa State.

“While all eyes are on the election to achieve transparency and deepen democratic tenets, the aforementioned issues among others, appear to be unsettling the parties and digging deep holes on their chances and participation in the election.”

Friday Worship

www.guardian.ng

Guardian Nigeria GuardianNigeria 08136370421 Guardiannigeria

By Afis A. Oladosu

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Whoever performs the Hajj for the pleasure of Almighty, and utters no evil words and commits no evil deeds in the process, shall return from Makkah free from sins like the day in which his mother gave birth to him." Prophet Muhammad.

HOW does the servant who just completed the rites of Hajj and has thus become an Hajji maintain his newly-found spiritual capital and identity in the maze of iniquities and unbelief? How does an Hajji go about retaining the catholic men and ambience that the whole hajj exercise hitherto made possible once he arrives in the homeland where profanity and obscenities have become familiar while piety and decency have become unfamiliar? How might the Hajji maintain the spirit of the pilgrimage in a community and amidst groups of people who are constantly on their journey to the cathedral of the faithless?

In other words, if indeed there are questions that those who have just completed the rites of pilgrimage in Makkah on Friday, June 30, 2023, would constantly have to ponder and answer such might include some of the above. It might include the whole challenge of staying the course when temptations to throw the spiritual patrimony away are seemingly irresistible.

Yes. We are now in the post-hajj season. Pilgrims are returning to their homeland - some into communities where they are minorities and others into spaces where they are minorities of the minorities. Yet others are back to distant lands where they are in the majority - in Asia, in northern parts of

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

"Surely, the religion with Allah is ISLAM, complete submission" ... Qur'an 3:19

From Hajj back to temptations (I)

Africa, in Nigeria.

No matter where they may find themselves after the season of pilgrimage, the challenges pilgrims to the Holy lands of Makkah and Madinah would face are likely to be similar. They shall be confronted with the reality that they are no more within the vicinity of the Kaaba- the epicentre of Islamic socio-spiritual reality. The reality shall dawn on them that they have left Madinah; that Arafah has been left behind, that Muzdalifah is now a very distant landscape. Pilgrims to the Holy lands of Makkah and Madinah would face the reality that, unlike their brief sojourn in Makkah and Madinah where attendance of congregation prayers was imbued with the uncommon spirit of humanity, of universality and communality, they shall now source inspiration to excel from within themselves, not from the other. They shall discover that they are no more in 'Saudia' but in Nigeria. They shall be welcomed back to the bubbling cities of Lagos and Lahore, to the rumbling cosmopolitan metropolises in Cairo and Kandaha where materialism and spiritualism compete with equal measure and candour for the attention of humans without prejudice to their gender and status. The moment he arrives back in that city of

'wonder', the new Hajja would be reminded that she is back in the capital of the modern world where heterosexuality is in the contest with homosexuality, where secularity is taking over the hitherto hallowed spaces of religious orthodoxy. She would begin to see images of women in nudity, of men who are on their way to becoming women- men wearing earrings, men learning how to walk and sound like women.

Thus the real pilgrimage, I would argue, does not begin and end in the brief sojourn the pilgrimage enjoys in those hallowed spaces in Makkah and Madinah. The real hajj, if you ask me, actually continues for the pilgrim on his or her return to her or his homeland. The return from hajj, for discerning pilgrims, should actually mean the departure for another 'hajj' in the insuperable landscape of the new Makkahs of today- the Makkahs that our cities have become- spaces of disbelief and unbelief, locales of iniquity and immorality.

Thus how might the pilgrim continue on this important journey in search of certainty; the journey for the pursuit of the eternal, not the ephemeral and the chimerical? Perhaps one way to do this is to understand the differences in-between the space you have left behind in Makkah and the new one

that is constituted by your homeland. The difference, I would argue, lies in the opportunity that to be outside the Muslims' spiritual homeland affords the discerning Muslims to recreate another homeland closer to home. Mustafa Tahan says if you desire to live in Wonderland, you must begin by creating one in your heart!

In other words, while it is true that your sojourn in Makkah and Madinah was actually a spiritual boon, one of the greatest opportunities life could offer the individual, it should however solace you and me that to be outside Makkah and Madinah, far away from Muzdalifah, is to enjoy yet another opportunity- that of manifesting your consciousness of the constant presence of the Almighty. To be outside Makkah is to live outside paradise preparatory to your return to the other paradise. It is to recognize that it is not the intention of the Almighty that you live in the manner of the angels- sinless and perfect. No. One of the lessons pilgrimage teaches the believer is to constantly seek a return to his origin, his Creator. The Hajji therefore knows that while it is true that he might have completed the rites of hajj, he has not by that singular endeavour attained perfection. He knows that attainment of perfection on this path of rectitude is a never-ending exercise. We have to be in His service, seeking His pleasure, until the moment the beat stops for and in us.

NASFAT honours Aminat Yusuf

Stories by Shakirah Adunola

IN line with its uniqueness and pace-setting drive, the leadership of Nasrul lahil fatih Society NASFAT, celebrated and honoured the best-graduating student and record-breaking Muslimah in the Department of Law at the Lagos State University for the year 2023, Aminat Yussuf at its Asalatu ground, Alausa Ikeja.

In his speech at the brief ceremony witnessed by the stakeholders of the Society, NASFAT President Alh Niyi Yussuf remarked that by her outstanding academic performance, Aminat Yussuf has apparently further changed the percep-

tion that Muslims were not academically inclined and that most of them usually end up in menial jobs. Alhaji Yussuf added that NASFAT is about excellence and Aminat Yussuf epitomizes excellence which is why the Society has deemed it fit to honour her for her brilliant academic record.

The highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of a #500,000 cheque by NASFAT President, Niyi Yussuf to Aminat who was accompanied by her mother. In addition to the cash gift, NASFAT leadership offered Aminat mentorship and coaching in her career path.

Aminat Yussuf, her parents and the nation were thereafter offered prayers by the Chief Missioner of NASFAT Imam Mahroof Abdulazeez ONIKE who was performing his first official duty after his 2023 Hajj rites.

In her response, Aminat Yussuf said she was highly motivated by the exceptional gesture and generosity of NASFAT. She, therefore, thanked the leadership of NASFAT and prayed for the growth and development of Society. She however attributed her excellence to Allah's mercy and grace for which reason she thanked Allah for crowning her efforts with success.

MICA advises Muslims to put trust only in Allah

MOVEMENT for Islamic Culture and Awareness (MICA), Alimosho Usrah, has tasked Muslims to rely on Allah (SWT) alone as He is capable and sufficient for the believers.

This advice was given during the group's family get-together held at the Rafiu Jafajo Lagos State Government Park, Shasha, Lagos.

The early downpour later turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the programme attracted large numbers of participants comprising fun seekers, the young and the old, men and women, parents, families and friends.

The guest speaker who is a former coordinator, MICA Alimosho Usrah, Qazem Afunku, stated that with the current economic realities in the country, Muslims must look up to God, continue to pray and make adjustments to their lifestyles. He advised them to be realistic and look for other means of augmenting their source of income such as undertaking investment in halal ventures.

Welcoming the attendees, Taofeek Junaid, stated the importance of such a gathering, adding that it would foster healthy relationships and family bonding. He urged the participants to interact, network, have fun, exchange gifts and make themselves comfortable.

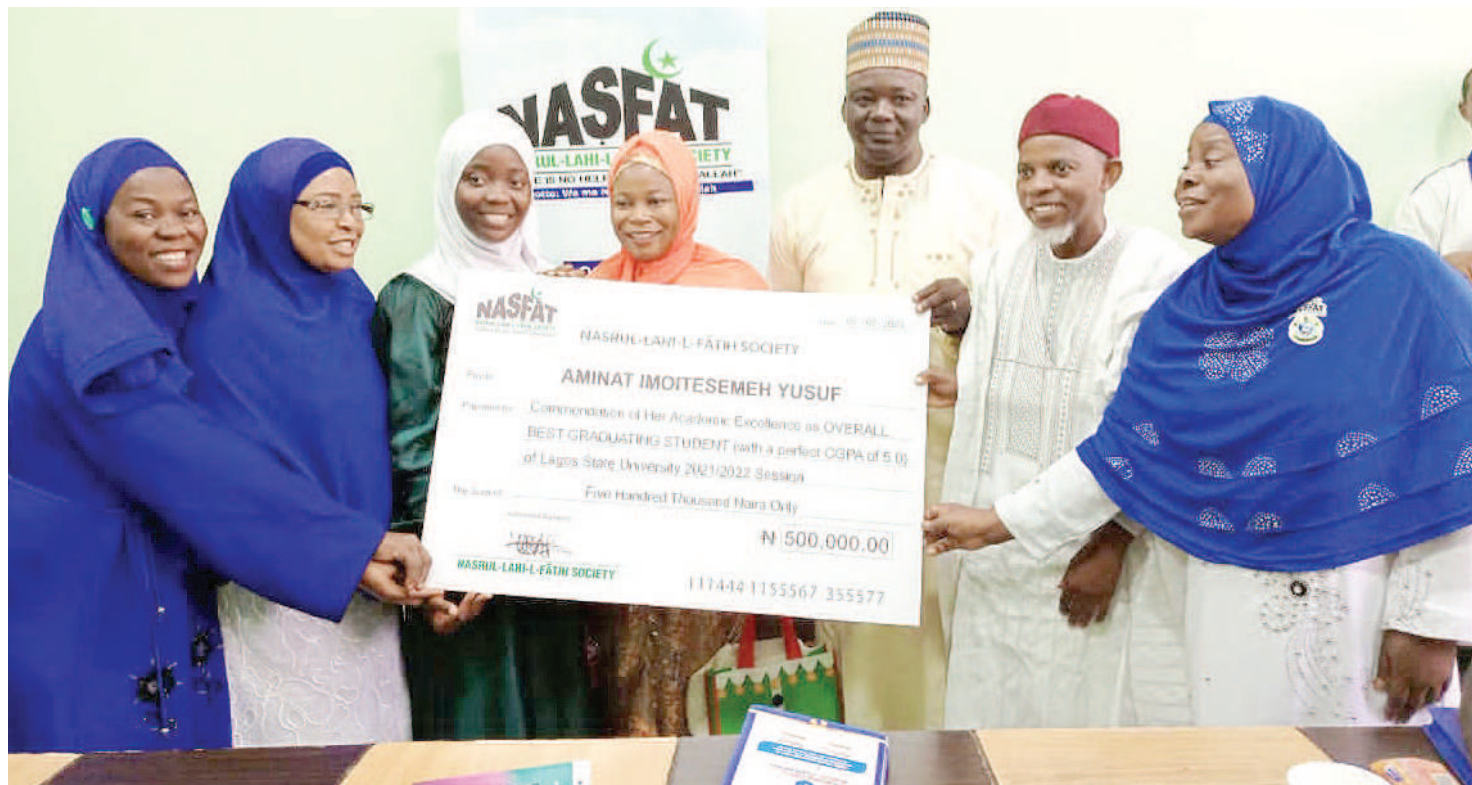
He appreciated those who made it to the venue and prayed they would witness more Sallah celebrations. He declared the event open, afterwards.

On the sideline, the adults were engaged in fruitful discussions on life, its challenges and global trends.

The event had the kids enjoying some of the facilities; a bouncing castle, a train ride and others, while others played football.

There was light music, Nasheed for the pleasure of all. Families came with a variety of food as well as soft drinks, too, which they shared with others.

Highpoint of the event was the grouping of the young ones within the age bracket of 15-25 years with a special task. They were admonished on what was expected of them as they are young and vibrant.



The leadership of Nasrul lahil fatih Society (NASFAT) presented #500,000 cheque to the best-graduating student and record-breaking Muslimah in the Department of Law at the Lagos State University for the year 2023, Aminat Yussuf

Adams lauds Abiodun, Ogun Assembly over declaration of *Ise* Day

From **Bukola Olajide**, Abeokuta

THE Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Iba Gani Adams, has commended Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, and the state House of Assembly for declaring August 20 as the yearly "Ise Cultural Day" and also a work-free day.

He said the development would bring about needed progress and development in the state.

In a statement by his Special Assistant on Media, Kehinde Aderemi, the Aare Ona Kakanfo also said the lawmakers' resolution was aimed at propagating the rich culture and tradition of Yoruba race.

Adams, who expressed his commitment to cultural rejuvenation, said the state had shown understanding that the country is secular.

"Ogun State has distinguished itself as a state that respects Yoruba culture and traditions. By this resolution, the state has identified with Yoruba cultural values and heritage.

"Nigeria is a secular state and we have two prominent religions that spread across socio-political divide.

"It is about our culture and tradition. It is about our identity as a people, and it goes on to underscore the essence of religious tolerance among the three prominent religions in the country," he said.

He appealed to other states in South-West to take a cue from the landslide resolution made by the state House of Assembly.

Uber adds more features in App to enhance driver, passenger safety

By **Silver Nwokoro**

AN American vehicle-for-hire and delivery firm, Uber, yesterday, said it had included audio recording and emergency response button feature in its App.

It said drivers and riders deserved safety to keep raising the bar on safety by engaging technology.

Its Country Manager, Tope Akinwumi, said the firm had partnered with Sety, a technology company providing emergency management services on the emergency button feature.

He said the in-drive features would provide emergency assistance to drivers and riders on the app, saying that the feature, when used, alerts Sety, which in turn dispatches emergency responders to the location within minutes.

Akinwumi, who noted that the emergency button would address cases of attacks, broken or damaged glasses, phone snatching, accidents and other health emergencies, said the feature would also help to reduce unruly behaviours by drivers or riders.

Olubadan-in-Council berates Ladoja over suit

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE Olubadan-in-Council has chided former Oyo State Governor, Rashidi Ladoja, for dragging it and Governor Seyi Makinde to court over the elevation of high chiefs as kings.

The Council described Ladoja's allegation that the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Lekan Balogun, Alli Okunmade II, was plotting to prevent him from becoming Olubadan, as unfounded and erroneous.

At the emergency meeting of the Olubadan Advisory Council, presided over by Balogun, and which had in

attendance all the newly-crowned royal majesties except two, Otun Balogun, Oba Tajudeen Ajibola, and Ashipa Olubadan, Oba Biodun Kola-Daisi, Ladoja was chided for making the claim described as futuristic and lies.

In a statement by Personal Assistant (Media) to Olubadan, Oladele Ogunsola, the new Obas, tutored the Otun Olubadan that nobody becomes Olubadan without nomination by the Ibadan kingmakers, consisting members of the Advisory Council from *Ekerin* upward.

They said that ascending the throne of Olubadan, as simple as it looks, is not automatic, adding: "Even if it becomes his turn, the kingmakers reserve the right either to nominate him or not. If he is not nominated, nobody can make him the Olubadan.

"To now accuse the revered father of plotting against the future is baseless.

"Assuming God decrees him to become Olubadan as he hopes and desires, where will the current Olubadan being alleged to be plotting against him be? Rather than looking for a scapegoat, he

should check himself, as there's no way just one person can stand against 10 others. We shall meet in court as he has already initiated."

The new Obas, who expressed gratitude to Olubadan for the feat described as historical, equally gave kudos to Makinde for making it possible, stressing that his name would go into records as a reformer.

They said it would be out of place to think or assume that all of them currently constituting the Olubadan Advisory Council would become Olubadan.



Great grandson of the deceased and Chairman, Alli-Balogun Descendants Union, Otunba Adeyinka Ojora-Adejiyan (left); grand-daughter of the deceased, Alhaja Jemilat Oladepe Akingbade; representative of Etse Nupe/Oba Tapa of Lagos, Alhaji Jubril Magaji; former Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Justice Wonuola Folami and great grandson of the deceased/Vice-Chairman, Alli-Balogun Descendants Union, Dr. Gbolahan Alli-Balogun, during the 90th special anniversary prayers and launch of Alli-Balogun Memorial Foundation held at Yoruba Tennis Club, Onikan, Lagos... yesterday.

Tinubu greets Folu Adeboye at 75, extols Soyinka at 89

From **Terhamba Daka**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has praised wife of General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Folu Adeboye, for her Christian virtues, devotion to her husband, the church and family values on the anniversary of her birthday.

Adeboye, who is reputed for her evangelical work with children, young people and the downtrodden, yesterday turned 75.

Tinubu, in a statement signed by his Special Adviser,

Says Nobel laureate comrade in struggle for democracy

Special Duties, Communications and Strategy, Dele Alake, noted with admiration many of the outreach programmes of the RCCG targeted at rehabilitating drug addicts and the poor, spearheaded by Mrs. Adeboye.

"I celebrate this godly woman, Pastor Folu Adeboye, on the occasion of her 75th birthday. We are inspired by her devotion to the work of God, family values and the downtrodden among us. Mrs. Adeboye's

generosity of spirit and unflinching commitment to seeing that young people live value-guided life will continue to be a guide and beacon to many.

SIMILARLY, Tinubu showed encomiums on Nobel Laureate and elder statesman, Prof. Wole Soyinka, on his 89th birthday, describing him as a veritable source of support, inspiration and encouragement.

The President, who described Soyinka as a brother and comrade in the struggle for

restoration and entrenchment of democracy and good governance in Nigeria, commended him for his immense contributions to the nation's development.

He said: "Today, I celebrate Nobel Laureate, elder statesman and pro-democracy activist, Prof. Wole Soyinka, on his attainment of 89 years.

"In the literary world, he remains a giant, an Iroko. His contributions to the struggle for restoration and institutionalisation of democracy and good governance in Nigeria are indelible."

Adeleke seeks synergy with NASENI on job creation, others in Osun

OSUN State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, has sought support from the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) for massive job creation.

He reiterated citizens' interest to participate in the ongoing skills acquisition training and youth empowerment programme organised by the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI).

Adeleke also requested the agency's support to fast-track the take-off of the proposed Agricultural Machinery and

Equipment Development Institute (AMEDI) approved to be sited in Osun State by the Federal Government.

The governor stated this, yesterday, during his courtesy visit to the office of Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NASENI, Bashir Gwandu, in Abuja.

He said: "We are ready for action, not only on the establishment of AMEDI, but also the setting up of a technology industrial park in Osun State.

"We will also welcome NASENI's services and prod-

ucts in our state. My requests are many, so, I recommend that NASENI and Osun State work out a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)."

RESPONDING, Gwandu said his vision for NASENI was to introduce new strategies for how the agency would work or to see its products in the market competing in Nigeria and with technology products from other countries worldwide.

He thanked the governor for finding time to visit NASENI, saying that he (Adeleke) was the first State Chief Executive Officer to visit him since he

resumed office as in May 2023.

He also commended him for the allocation of land and issuance of Certificate of Occupancy for NASENI's institute in the state free of charge.

Gwandu added that NASENI as an agency has a lot to offer to the country; hence the reason it became necessary as Chief Executive Officer of the agency to tour the institute to see for himself and find out where there is need to change how things were done in the past.

Expert urges inclusive education for students with special needs

From **Moyosore Salami**, Ibadan

AN expert in the field of special education has canvassed inclusive education for students with disabilities.

Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, David Adejo, who spoke at the 17th convocation of the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, advocated equal access and inclusive learning environment to high quality education within the general education system that fosters diversity, provides tailored support and offers life-long learning opportunities.

He said: "In a population of over 6,000 students, you have more than 600 with special needs being trained as teachers that deserve special attention."

"I call on the state government under the leadership of Governor Seyi Makinde, as well as other government and non-governmental agencies, to support college in providing better opportunities and socio-economic relevance to children with disabilities."

He urged government at all levels to actively promote policies that would embrace inclusive education and also ensure that necessary support systems are put in place.

The permanent secretary, noted that the current administration is poised to revamp Nigeria's education

Lagos Assembly receives Sanwo-Olu's nominee for Auditor-General

Sets up committee over flooding, traffic congestion in Ikoyi

By **Shakirah Adunola**

LAGOS State House of Assembly, yesterday, received a letter from Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu nominating Adewuyi Moshood Adewale for the position of Auditor-General of the State.

The letter was read by Clerk of the House, Olalekan Onafeko, during the plenary presided over by the Speaker, Mudashiru Obasa.

In the letter, Sanwo-Olu said the nomination was in line with the dictates of the constitution, urging the House to screen and confirm the nominee.

Meanwhile, the House has set up an ad-hoc committee to look into the flooding and traffic congestion around Park View Estate in Ikoyi, due to on-going land reclamation exercise.

A member of the House, Gbolahan Yishawu, who represents Eti-Osa Constituency II and chairman of the committee, raised the issue under 'Matters of Urgent Public Importance.'

Yishawu said his constituents complained that vehicular traffic in and out of the Park View Estate had become a major challenge.

We are under siege, Anambra community cries out, begs IG, Soludo to intervene

From **Sodiq Omolayo**, Abuja

RESIDENTS of Isuaniocha Community, Awka North, Anambra State, have appealed to the acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), Olukayode Egbetokun, and Governor Charles Soludo to intervene in the widespread insecurity, terror and human rights violations going on in the community.

Executive Director of Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre (RULAAC), Okechukwu Nwanguma, made the appeal on behalf of the people at a press briefing, yesterday, in Abuja.

Nwanguma accused one Inspector Matthew Abu Michael, of the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Abuja, of doing the biddings of a deposed community leader, Anthony Onyeagolu.

He alleged that Onyeagolu is standing trial for murder, while Michael is frustrating the legal process by masterminding attacks on witnesses after being compromised.

Media, judicial experts task Tinubu on funding institutions

By **Yetunde Ayobami Ojo**

MEDIA and judicial experts have urged President Bola Tinubu to build strong institutions that are well funded rather than strong men, as Nigeria's democracy depends on them.

A former editor of *The Nations Newspaper*, Lekan Otunfodunrin, and retired Federal High Court Justice, Taiwo Taiwo, and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Adetunji Oyeyipo, among others, made the call, yesterday, at the 2023 yearly lecture of the National Association of Judicial Correspondents (NAJUC), held at the Muson Centre, Lagos.

Speaking on the theme, 'Birthing a new Nigeria: Role of the Judiciary, Security Agencies and the Media in a Democratic Society,' the guest speaker, Olatunji, emphasised importance of the judiciary in a democracy, identifying fundamental issues the government must resolve for the judiciary to become strong and independent.

He said: "The financial autonomy of the judiciary must be sustained by the executive. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (fifth alteration) Act (No 6) 2023, provides for the financial independence of the state Assembly and state judiciary. It is expedient that only a financially independent judiciary can dispense justice without fear or favour, ensuring our democracy is not truncated."



Enugu State Governor, Peter Mbah (left), addressing members of the state Council of Traditional Rulers on security measures put in place by the state government in Enugu...yesterday.

Furore as Enugu tribunal orders Labour Party to inspect BVAS

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

CONTROVERSY has erupted in Enugu State, following the Governorship Election Tribunal's order authorising the Labour Party (LP) to inspect the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) used for voter accreditation in the March 18 governorship election.

The order followed an application by LP's governorship candidate in the election, Chijioko Edeoga, to the tribunal to be allowed access to the facility to enable him prosecute his petition against the declaration of Peter Mbah of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as winner of the election.

The exercise, which was to be

held at the Independent National electoral Commission (INEC) headquarters, in Enugu, was thwarted midway, following disagreement between LP members, officials of the commission and some chairmen of other political parties in the state over modalities.

Briefing journalists after the botched exercise, the LP accused the commission of deliberately refusing it to carry out the tribunal's order, while the commission and members of other political parties, on hand, accused the LP team of attempting to "tamper" with the BVAS machines.

The LP members, led by its deputy governorship candi-

date, Dr. John Nwokoabia, said they arrived at the premises of the commission by 9:00 a.m. with their forensic expert, but were allegedly told not undertake the exercise without agreeing with PDP.

Addressing journalists, the spokesman of the Edeoga Campaign Organisation, George Ugwu, accused INEC of partisanship in an exercise where it was supposed to be the umpire, calling on well-meaning Nigerians to advise the electoral body to toe the path of honour by respecting the court order.

Ugwu said: "We do not understand what these people are doing. As you can see, we arrived here expecting to

inspect the BVAS machines. How INEC invited the PDP and insisted they would have to agree before we carry out the inspection is what we don't understand. This is the height of impunity, and we want Nigerians to bear witness that the commission is not only showing unhindered partisanship, but also disobeying an order of the tribunal to frustrate our search for justice."

But, chairmen of other political parties, who also briefed journalists, insisted that the exercise was aborted because the LP team attempted to tamper with the BVAS machines, warning that such "rascally behaviours" could set the state on fire.

We've put security agencies on red alert, Mbah assures residents

From **Lawrence Njoku**, Enugu

GOVERNOR Peter Mbah of Enugu State has assured residents and visitors in the state of their safety, stressing that his administration had placed security agencies on red alert to forestall security breaches to safeguard life and property.

The governor, who further enjoined them to ignore everything about sit-at-home in the state, said the state government was doing everything necessary to liaise with

neighbouring states to dislodge criminals from their hideouts.

Mbah gave these assurances, yesterday, in Enugu, at a meeting with the Presidents General of autonomous communities in the state. The traditional rulers expressed support for the governor on his decision to end the illegal sit-at-home order, being enforced by hoodlums, to make the state attractive to investors.

He bemoaned the devastating impact of the sit-at-home

practice, saying that his administration would deal ruthlessly with criminal elements disturbing peace of the state.

Mbah pointed out that there is a connection between sit-at-home and poverty among the people, warning that security operatives would continue to strike hooligans, who are victimising the public over a wrong and unjustifiable cause.

He wondered why some people, sitting in the comfort of

their homes somewhere overseas, would be hurting innocent people in a sponsored bid to destabilise the region. The governor added that it's only those living in delusion that would hide under the guise of fighting for Nnamdi Kanu's release to commit atrocities.

Mbah reiterated his resolve to make the state attractive to private investors, create jobs, train youths on digital transformation and restore lost glory.

I don't use security vote in Imo, says Uzodimma

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

IMO State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, yesterday, revealed that he does not use 'security vote,' but has made a case for governors to be given more latitude and headroom to tackle security challenges at the sub-national level.

Uzodimma disclosed this after meeting with President Bola Tinubu to secure an appointment for South East leaders and Ohanaeze

Advocates more powers for govts to tackle insecurity

Ndigo to meet with the President over unrelenting insecurity in the region.

While stressing that he has no security vote to draw from as the chief security officer of the state, the governor said he manages to adopt both kinetic and non-kinetic strategies to deal with security challenges as much as the law permits him.

He stressed the need for

governors to be given more latitude to perform their functions effectively.

The governor pointed out that the people of the South East, like other regions, deserve the Federal Government's support to enable them live their daily lives and go about their businesses.

He, however, did not give details of what the South East

leaders would be demanding from the President when the meeting holds, but lamented that non-state actors have utilised fear, indiscriminate killing and brigandage to enforce an illegal sit-at-home in the region.

According to him, it has become an issue of "perception management," pointing out that international diplomacy, which is also part of the solution, is beyond the purview of governors.

NITP urges Abia gov't to fund physical planning, domesticate building code

By **Victor Gbonegun**

NIGERIAN Institute of Town Planners (NITP), Abia State Chapter, has appealed to the state government to improve funding of physical and urban development planning activities, as well as agencies saddled with the responsibility to bequeath a liveable environment for the people.

The institute also urged the state government to rally support for domestication of the national building code, which, it noted, would help the state in tackling a lot of issues bedevilling the building sector.

National President of the institute, Nathaniel Atebije, made the appeal during a visit by the state chapter of NITP to the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Kenneth Kalu.

Atebije, who was represented by the First National Vice President of the institute, Chime Ogbonna, said the state government has the responsibility to make the domestication of the 1992 Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law meaningful.

According to him, without setting up relevant institutions that would make the law operational, the domestication would remain irrelevant to the people.

Workers decry neglect of Abia newspapers as new management lauds move for revitalisation

From **Gordil Udeajah**, Umuahia

WORKERS of Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, the publisher of *The National Ambassador*, have decried its neglect by past state administrations, pledging to work with the new management to reposition the newspaper, transforming it into a national daily.

They also lauded the move by Governor Alex Otti to revitalise the state owned newspaper, which was established by the first elected civilian governor of the state, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, in 1991.

Otti had, a few days ago, approved the appointment of a veteran journalist, Jones Nnanna Ike, as the General Manager of the print media house.

The newspaper had, over the years, been published irregularly, and not widely circulated in the country.

At a maiden meeting he held with workers, yesterday, Ike charged them to demonstrate professionalism to compete with other national dailies.

He said: "We must imbibe and propagate ideals of journalism, and justify the state government's objective of establishing it in line with the governor's commitment to clear all the mess, which the state was plunged into by past administrations."

Itsekiri leaders task Olu of Warri on tradition, unity

From **Azimazi Momoh Jimoh**, Abuja

WORRIED by perceived threats to unity in Delta State, some leaders have called on the Olu Of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, and Itsekiri elders to make efforts to restore trust in the area.

The leaders, including Warri indigenes of Itsekiri extraction, also known as Iwere Consultative Forum, made the appeal in an open letter addressed to the monarch, which was made available to journalists in Abuja.

Areas of concerns to the leaders include recent installation and suspension of some chiefs in Warri.

Atuwatse III, last April, installed Chief Oma Eyewuoma as the new Ologbotsere of Warri, while Chief Ayiri Emami was still in court challenging his suspension as Ologbotsere.

Emami was suspended as Ologbotsere of Warri and Chairman of Olu Advisory Council, following the crisis that followed the selection of the sitting Olu of Warri, Tsola Emiko, as Olu designate.

Also recently, there was a face-off between a prince of Warri, Prince Yemi Emiko, and a prominent elder, Mene Brown, over the latter's comment that princes have no say in running the affairs at the Olu palace and the Itsekiri Kingdom.

Discharge justice with integrity, Oborevwoi charges judges

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

DELTA State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwoi, yesterday, called on judges in the country to be guided by the doctrine of fair hearing, equity and good conscience in the discharge of their duties.

Oborevwoi urged the judges to guarantee justice for all by maintaining a high level of personal probity, devoid of greed and ensuring that the guilty are punished according to the provisions of the law.

He gave the charge at the swearing-in of Justice Catherine Ojughana-Orishedere as President, Customary Court of Appeal, and seven judges of the state judiciary, yesterday, in Asaba.

Those sworn in as judges of High Court are Aforkeya Obomejoro; Okeleke Ifeanyi Samuel; Umuko Aboyowa Godwin; Ossai Ngozi Rita; and Adolor Onorieukuhakpo Sunny; while Gbakeji Emakpor Michael and Uraih Ifeanyi Tracy Patricia were sworn in as judges of the Customary Court of Appeal.

Oborevwoi said Justice Ojughana-Orishedere's recommendation by the National Judicial Council, appointment, and subsequent confirmation by the state House of Assembly testified to her capacity, competence, and fitness for the office.

APC faults new transport scheme in Rivers, says buses purchased by Amaechi

From **Ann Godwin**, Port Harcourt

SUBSIDY palliative transport scheme, flagged off by Rivers State government, on Tuesday, has triggered controversies.

The state Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, while launching 17 coastal buses, said the scheme was part of his administration's interventions to cushion the high cost of living caused by fuel subsidy removal.

But the opposition political party in the state, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has dismissed the fanfare at the ceremony as mere jam-

boree.

The party claimed that the buses were purchased by former Governor Chibuike Amaechi in 2011 when the state hosted the National Sports Festival, adding that the vehicles were later used to transport civil servants to and from work.

Amaechi's ally and erstwhile National Publicity Secretary of the defunct New People's Democratic Party (NPDP), Chief Chukwuemeka Eze, made the claim in a statement made available to newsmen, yesterday, in Port Harcourt

Meanwhile, further findings by *The Guardian* showed that some of the buses were sighted at the motor park of the main gate of Government House in Port Harcourt, but were recently moved out and refurbished at the park of the defunct Rivers Transport Company (RTC) located at waterlines in Port Harcourt City Council of the state.

During a visit to the area, some eyewitnesses told *The Guardian* that they saw when the buses were being refurbished at the RTC mechanic park.

Also, *The Guardian* learnt that some of the buses broke down on the road two days after they were flagged off due to mechanical faults.

One of the residents, John Amah, said: "The vehicles used to be parked at Government House motor park; later, we saw them at RTC mechanic park where they were being refurbished"

Similarly, Eze in the statement claimed that the buses laid idle all through the administration of Nyesom Wike, but were revived in 2022 for his presidential interest, which was aborted.



Member, House of Representatives Ad-hoc Committee on International Boundary Disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon, Awaji-Inombek Abiante (left); Chairman of the committee, Beni Lar; other members of the committee: Victor Abang; Chris Nkwonta and Abdulmalik Abdulrahim, during a press briefing in Abuja... yesterday.

PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Reps panel seeks action to avert loss of land, citizens to Cameroun

From **Adamu Abuh**, Abuja

AD HOC committee of the House of Representatives has expressed concern over another likely loss of land and Nigerian citizens to the Cameroun Republic.

The Chairman of the committee, Mrs Benny Lar, expressed the concern, yesterday.

The committee, which is probing land encroachment by the Camerounian

Government, said efforts must be made to prevent reoccurrence of the loss of Bakassi Peninsula.

The Plateau State-born lawmaker spoke during the committee's proceedings, underscoring the urgent need to determine the border between the two countries.

"Swift resolution is imperative to prevent history from repeating itself and to protect the rights and interests

of Nigerians living in the affected areas," she noted.

She contended that constructive dialogue, negotiation and cooperation are essential to reaching a fair and just solution that respects historical, cultural, and social ties while protecting the rights of Nigerian citizens.

The committee also called on Nigerian citizens, civil society organisations and stakeholders to remain calm,

patient, trusting the efforts of those charged legally to protect the Nigerian territory.

She solicited the support of the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, in providing strategic guidance and intelligence to enable the committee arrived at informed decision-making and the need to take proactive measures to protect Nigeria's territorial integrity.

Flood displaces Delta citizens, destroys multi-million property

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

PROPERTIES worth millions of naira have been lost as flood displaced residents in various communities in Delta State.

The Guardian gathered that no life, was, however, lost to the

flooding, but those displaced have moved upland to seek refuge.

Communities mostly affected by the flood are Burutu, Bomadi, Patani, parts of Ughelli metropolis, Ote-Owelle, Agidiase quarters in

Ogwashi Uku and parts of Asaba, the state capital.

Residents of Ote-Owelle, Agidiase quarters in Ogwashi-Uku community had raised the alarm rainy season set in, considering the dangers posed by shallow burrow pit

dug to contain flood in the area.

Speaking on the development, the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Festus Ahon, said government has advised residents in flood prone areas to move upland for safety.

HURIWA petitions world leaders over FG's failure to arrest Asari-Dokubo

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

HUMAN Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), yesterday, petitioned world leaders over failure by the Federal Government to arrest erstwhile Niger Delta militant leader and former agitator, Mujahid Asari-Dokubo, despite alleged threat to the

Nigerian state and people.

HURIWA, in a statement by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Onwubiko, warned that the President Bola Tinubu government is creating a monster out of Asari-Dokubo, who dared the military to arrest him and threatened that he would reduce Nigeria's oil production to zero

The petition was addressed to the European Union (EU), President of the United States of America, the French President, the British Prime Minister, the German Chancellor and other world leaders.

HURIWA, in the petition, called for their urgent high level intervention in getting President Tinubu to order

the arrest of Asari-Dokubo for alleged dangerous hate speech and threat to the Igbo ethnic tribe of Nigeria.

The group accused the administration of President Bola Tinubu of being afraid of Asari-Dokubo and failing to arrest him despite the agitator's threat to destroy the country if arrested for unlawful possession of

Obaseki takes over supervision of revenue generation, showcases investment opportunities

From **Michael Egbejule**, Benin City

EDO State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, yesterday, directed that all revenue collection functions of the state Government would be directly supervised by the Governor's Office.

This is contained in a statement signed by Special Adviser, Media Projects to Edo State Governor, Mr. Crusoe Osagie, and made available to newsmen in Benin City.

The statement reads: "At the end of the month of June, 2023, the Governor's Office reviewed the year-to-date revenue status of the government, showing that earnings fell under the N30 billion target.

"On account of that, the governor has queried all Permanent Secretaries and Heads of revenue generating agencies within government, including council areas, who have not met their mid-year target.

"He has ordered that they are now to come under the direct supervision of the Governor's Office to ensure the attainment of the N62 billion target at the end of the year."

Obaseki also, yesterday, at the *BusinessDay* CEO Forum, showcased investment opportunities in Edo and the impacts of the public-private partnerships on various sectors of the state's economy, including education, agriculture, healthcare, public service, security and infrastructure, among others.

Speaking at the event in Lagos with the theme, "Charting a Course to Growth and Development," Obaseki said reforms and projects by the government over the past six years have transformed the state into Nigeria's emerging industrial, commercial, and investment hub.

According to him, Edo State is an exemplar for Nigeria an emerging industrial, commercial and investment hub of Nigeria.

He said: "We have laid our policies on investment growth and industrialisation on a few key pillars. First, we are ensuring we focus on the engine of government, the bureaucracy, because if the government doesn't work, the economy will not work."

assault rifles and threat to lives and property of the Igbo people in the country.

Recall that HURIWA previously issued a 72-hour ultimatum to the Federal Government to arrest Asari-Dokubo over his suspected link to violent 'unknown gunmen' in the South East or risk unprecedented protests in the country.

Senator leads Kogi East opposition party members to APC

• Says ethnic agenda won't fly

From Ibrahim Obansa, Lokoja

AHEAD of the November 11 governorship election in Kogi State, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has continued to gain significant support from politicians, with the defection of opposition politicians to its fold.

Governor Yahaya Bello, yesterday, received PDP members from Olamaboro Local Council, led by Senator Atai Aidoko Usman, into APC.

Bello, who commended the defectors for their courageous decision to join the ruling party and contribute to the state's development, reiterated his commitment to inclusive government, in which both longstanding and new APC members are afforded equal opportunities to work towards the overall welfare of the people.

The governor emphasised the significance of unity among ethnic groups within the state.

Acknowledging the division that existed along ethnic lines when he assumed office, Bello expressed satisfaction that his administration successfully united the people towards a common goal, considering the achievement as a lasting legacy.

EFCC arrests 13 Chinese over illegal mining in Kwara

From Odun Edward, Ilorin

OFFICERS of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have arrested 13 Chinese nationals over offences bordering on illegal mining activities in Ilorin, Kwara State.

The offence is contrary to, and punishable under Section 1(8) (b) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act Cap M17, 1983.

A female and 12 male Chinese were arrested on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at Government Reserved Area (G.R.A.), Ilorin, following credible intelligence about their activities, including illegal mining and non-payment of royalties to the Federal Government as required by law.

The suspects are identified as Guo Ya Wang (36), Lizli Hui (42), Guo Jian Rong (36), Lish Shen Xianian (37), Lishow Wu (26), Guo Pan (38), Lia Meiyu (53), Guo Kai Quan (36) and Lin Pan (50).

Others are Ma Jan (38), Wendy Wei Suqin (31), Li Zhinguo Wei (29) and Xie Zhinguo (53).

Prior to their arrest, investigations on illegal miners in Kwara revealed that the operators had different illegal mining sites in almost all the 16 local councils of the state.

Upon interrogation, the suspects confessed to be workers of a Chinese Company in Ifelodun Local Council. It was gathered that the company was producing marble and selling within Nigeria.

346 persons killed, 18,751 displaced in Plateau

From Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja), Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi (Jos) and Njadvara Musa (Maiduguri)

ABOUT 346 persons have reportedly been killed within three months in eight local councils of Plateau State, Gideon & Para-Mallam Peace Foundation has said.

According to the organisation, out of this number, over 200 were lost to sustained violent attacks in Mangu Local Council alone as of July 8, 2023.

Founder and Executive Director of the foundation, Dr. Gideon Para-Mallam, who gave the figure in a statement, yesterday, said aside the killings between April 17 and July 10, 2023, "about 18,751 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are housed in 14 camps in Plateau."

Reeling out the figures, the reverend disclosed that 17 peo-

- Troops neutralise three bandits in Mangu
- OPHK vows to restore peace in N'East

ple were killed in Bokkos, 234 in Mangu, 39 in Barkin Ladi, 36 in Riyom, five each in Jos North and Mikang, and one in Bassa.

According to him, 14 IDPs camps are hosted by the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Local Church Councils (LCCs), adding that the IDPs comprise 2,081 widows and 6,066 under-five orphans.

He disclosed that the aged accounted for 1,057 while teenagers and adult orphans are 828.

A total of 6,603 households are affected by the deadly attacks, he asserted.

NO fewer than three bandits, believed to be

among the miscreants fomenting trouble in Mangu Local Council of Plateau State, were, yesterday, neutralised along Mangu-Pushit road by a Combat Team from Operation Safe Haven (OPSH). Others escaped with gunshot wounds.

The troops, after ambushing and neutralising the bandits, reportedly recovered three AK-47 rifles, 14 rounds of 7.62 special ammunition, one motorcycle and a constabulary police identity card.

A statement by the Media Information Officer (MIO), Capt. Oya James, noted that the

OPSH Commander/General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3

Armoured Division, Maxwell Khobe Cantonment Jos, Maj-Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, had earlier relocated the command headquarters temporarily to Mangu and reiterated that the Army remains resolute in the discharge of its mandate within the ambit of the law and would continue to be firm, bold, decisive and just.

NEW Theatre Commander, Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), Maj-Gen. Gold Chibuisi, has said his troops will put in their best to conclude the ongoing counter-insurgency operations in the North East.

According to him, Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorists have been disseminated in the Sambisa Forest and Lake Chad region.



Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu (right); Chief Whip, Usman Kumo; Minority Leader, Kingsley Chinda and member, Abubakar Kabir during a press briefing on the approval of N500 billion requested by President Bola Tinubu to cushion the effect of fuel subsidy removal, at the National Assembly... yesterday.

PHOTO LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

Kano govt lampoons Ganduje's free education policy

From Murtala Adewale, Kano

KANO State government has described the free education policy of immediate past administration of Abdullahi Ganduje as monumental failure.

Ganduje's administration declared free and compulsory education in basic and secondary education in the state, as part of measures to reduce out-of-school children.

However, the new

Commissioner for Education, Umar Doguwa, insisted that the mere fact that many primary and secondary schools under the previous government lacked basic amenities, including furniture, Ganduje's free education system was defective.

Doguwa, who spoke at Government Girls Secondary School (GGSS), Tumfafi, Dawakin Tofa Local Council, was worried that Ganduje's administration left public

schools in a shambles.

The commissioner said: "In GGSS, students packed in the classes were sitting on bare floor. Nine of the 16 classes had no furniture at all, while the rest had only a few chairs and desks."

"The school has 1,808 students with 21 teachers. A block of classrooms, initiated in the school by Tumfafi community, was abandoned, a project which the former commissioner promised to complete. That

would have helped in decongesting some classes."

At Government Technical College, Dambatta, Doguwa, who interacted freely with the students, expressed dissatisfaction that for nearly five years, the past administration failed to renovate the college's four destroyed hostels, thereby forcing the 530 students to reside in two stuffy hostels, while begging for reconstruction of their damaged facilities.

ASUU faults FG's 'biased' payment of members' salary arrears

From Rauf Oyewole, Bauchi

ACADEMIC Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi chapter, has faulted the Federal Government's mode of paying its members' backlog of salaries for the 2022 eight months industrial action.

It described it as "discriminatory."

Speaking with newsmen in Bauchi, yesterday, ATBU-ASUU Chairman, Dr. Ibrahim Inuwa Ibrahim, chided the

former Minister of Labour and Productivity, Dr. Chris Ngige, for allegedly misinforming Nigerians on his colleagues at ATBU's College of Medical Sciences (CMS).

Ibrahim said: "To convince Nigerians, Dr. Ngige claimed that lecturers under the umbrella of the Medical and Dental Consultants' Association of Nigeria (MDCAN) wrote to him through the University Vice Chancellor, dissociating themselves from the ASUU national strike. As a ploy, Ngige presented MDCAN as

a purely academic union. He hid from the public the fact that not all medical and dental consultants operating in the teaching hospitals are core staff of the academic unit that forms the CMS.

"Under this guise, Ngige made a case to the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF) for some lecturers in the CMS of the university to be paid. If it were true that lecturers in the CMS were working during strike, this would have given the medical students an edge over their mates

from other faculties. Unfortunately, this is not the case, because our members in all the academic units of the university were on strike," he said.

The lectures said it became necessary for the union to call the attention of the Nigerian state on Ngige's ploy to divide and break the resoluteness of union members during the 2022 national strike that lasted almost eight months.

Read the remaining part of this story on www.guardian.ng

MinDiver begins third training on jewellery

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

MINISTRY of Mines and Steel Development, yesterday, began the third round of skills acquisition training on jewellery and gemstone sub-sector of the mineral and metals industry.

The training, funded by the World Bank through the Mineral Sector Support for Economic Diversification Project (MinDiver), has admitted 22 trainees from across the country.

Addressing the trainees in Abuja, Project Coordinator for MinDiver, Sallim Salaam, said the trainees should consider themselves fortunate to have been selected for the programme, as the selection process was highly competitive.

He encouraged the trainees to take the programme seriously, as the knowledge they be valuable for a lifetime.

"The training, the first of its kind in Nigeria, was explicitly designed to equip graduates with the necessary skills to compete globally. It was launched in November 2021 as part of the ministry's efforts to develop the downstream sector, create employment, empower young people, alleviate poverty and create wealth," he said.

Initiative offers N100m to 15 distressed children

From Tina Abeku, Abuja

GLOBAL Initiative for Peace, Love and Care (GIPCL) has offered financial aid worth N100 million to 15 children with various critical health challenges to assist them foot surgery bills.

Director General and National Coordinator of GIPCL, Nuhu Kwajafa, while disbursing the funds, yesterday, in Abuja, said the initiative is for the poor and vulnerable in the society, who are unable to access healthcare due to financial incapacitation.

He said an equivalent of \$160,000 was raised during a birthday/charity dinner in Paris, France, for GIPCL Grand Patron, Igho Charles-Sanomi, recently, which added up to the sum disbursed.

"If every Nigerian should do the right thing, this will go a long way. So many Nigerian children are dying every day.

"My driving force is the smile on the faces of recipients, their saying 'thank you' or seeing their faces after a successful surgery. Just like today, the beneficiaries, who had previously benefitted and are doing well, is motivation for me," he said.

Kwajafa said, though some donor agencies support vulnerable children in various ways, they rarely take the responsibility of medical bills for ailing children with critical health conditions.

Ahead U.S., Canada, Mexico 2026 FIFA World Cup

Nigeria draws Rohr's Benin Republic, South Africa, Zimbabwe

By Christian Okpara

AFTER failing to qualify for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, Nigeria were given another tough route to the 2026 edition of the competition at the draws held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, yesterday.

Nigeria lost the Qatar 2022 ticket to Ghana, whose Black Stars edged out the Super Eagles on the away goal rule following a goalless draw in Cape Coast and a 1-1 stalemate in Abuja.

To qualify for the 2026 World Cup, Nigeria must win a group that comprises South Africa, Benin Republic, now coached by the last man to take the Super Eagles to the *Copa du Mundo*, Gernot Rohr, as well as Lesotho, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

The winners of each group secure automatic qualification for the World Cup, while the four best group runners-up will go into a play-off stage to determine who, among them, will represent Africa in an inter-confederation tournament in March 2026.

Niger United, Safety Babes lead as Ardova Handball League opening phase ends

By Alex Monye

NIGER United and Safety Babes have emerged leaders as the first phase of Ardova Handball Premier League ended in Benin on Wednesday.

In the final day, Niger United defeated Correction Boys 33-22, leaving the Correction Boys to rue missed chances.

Coach Yekini Adebayo commended his players for their performance in the first place, noting, however, that they must do better to actualise their dream of winning the league in Lagos.

He said: "It has been a difficult campaign. We lost and drew a game, which we could have won, but at the end of it, we were able to come out tops in the first phase."

"The league is just starting and we have a lot of work to do in the second phase. There are no easy teams and we will always give our best," he added.

Safety Babes beat Rima Queens 33-22 to win all their nine games in Benin. They controlled the game against Rima Queens, making use of the chances that came their way.

Rwanda, Lesotho also in Eagles' Group C

The first round of fixtures for African qualifiers will hold in November.

Morocco, semifinalists at the previous World Cup, are drawn in Group E with Zambia, Congo Brazzaville, Tanzania, Niger, and Eritrea. Egypt are in Group A and will face Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, while Senegal are in Group B alongside the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Togo, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Group D comprises Cameroon, Cape Verde, Angola, Libya, Eswatini and Mauri-

tius, while Group F has Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Gambia, Burundi and Seychelles.

Algeria, Guinea, Uganda, Mozambique, Botswana, Somalia are in Group G; Group H has Tunisia, Equatorial Guinea, Namibia, Malawi, Liberia and Sao Tome and Principe, while in Group I are Mali, Ghana, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Comoros and Chad.

The draw was conducted in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, after the Confederation of African Football's (CAF) general assembly.

South Africa is a regular cus-

tom to Nigeria with the Super Eagles always having the upper hand in competitive games. South Africa, however, tried to change the order in 2019 when the Bafana Bafana came to Uyo in 2017 to beat the Super Eagles 2-0 in a 2019 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier.

Benin Republic have also not fared well against Nigeria, but with Rohr, who knows the Super Eagles inside out, having coached the team for six years, the side now known as Cheetahs (formerly Squirrels), will fancy their chances of upsetting their more illustrious neighbours.

AFN sure of relay tickets, as Ghana, Benin battle at Deji Tibubu/Lagos Series

By Gown Akpodonor

THE Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) has expressed confidence that Team Nigeria will secure the three remaining relay tickets to Budapest 2023 World Championships at the Lagos Series, which holds today. Team Nigeria is still searching for qualification marks in three relay events, the men's 4x100m, 4x400m and women's 4x400m. The teams narrowly failed to secure the tickets at the African Region 2 Relay events held in Lome, Togo, last weekend.

Nigeria and two West African countries, Benin Republic and Ghana, will today battle for qualification marks at the Lagos Series event, which will hold at Yaba College of Technology.

AFN Technical Director, Samuel Onikeku, told *The Guardian*, yesterday, that the

athletes are in high spirit, just as he revealed that the Ghanaians, who arrived in the early hours of yesterday, are equally eager to use the event to secure their passage to Budapest.

"Our athletes are ready for the Deji Tinubu/Lagos Series and I am optimistic we will get the qualification marks this time. The Ghanaians are in the same hotel with us, and they want to use the Lagos Series to secure their passage to Budapest. Benin Republic are on their way to Lagos," Onikeku stated.

Team Nigeria has already secured the women's 4x100m and mixed relay tickets. In the Nigerian squad camp for the relays are Godson Brume, who joined the team on Tuesday morning from the United States, new sprint king, Usheoritse Itsekiri, Seye Ogunlewe, Alaba Akintola and Favor Ashe.

U.S.-based speedstar, Udodi Onwuzurike, has since returned to his base after the African Region 2 event in Lome, Togo.

BFN sets tune for 'biggest, best' Lagos International Badminton Classics

LIKE a melodious tune from La mass orchestra, the Badminton Federation of Nigeria (BFN) at their Shuttle Symphony at the Civic Centre, Victoria Island, modulated a new music, setting the tune for next month's Lagos International Badminton Classics.

Francis Orbih was the choir-master, as Alhaji Abubakar Ibn Umar Suleiman, Mai Bade, Emir of Gashua, gave royal colouration at the event attended by corporate badminton friendly organisations.

ValueJet in the aviation industry lifted the occasion with gift items for the attendees. Obi Asika, a creative industry entrepreneur and familiar face in the popular family television programme, 'Nigerian Idol,' added colour, as the crowd was enthralled with the tale of success of badminton in Nigeria.

Africa number one men's player, Anuoluwapo Opeyori, was the face of success that the BFN had recorded. He captivated the jammed hall with his grass-to-grace story.

"In deed, the graph is looking upward," BFN board member and the 2019 Africa Woman in Badminton award winner, Obiageli Solaja, said.

It was a gathering of best of the best among the backers of the sport. It was a successful meeting of corporate bodies, as they strive to further promote badminton in Nigeria.



South Africa defeated Nigeria 2-0 in Uyo the last time the Super Eagles hosted the Bafana Bafana

Tunisian clubs get highest share from Qatar 2022 FIFA Club Benefit programme

By Christian Okpara

TUNISIAN clubs, which provided the highest number of players from Africa at the Qatar 2022 World Cup, will receive the highest share of the proceeds from the FIFA Club Benefit programme.

Represented by Esperance, Club Africain and Etoile du Sahel at last year's World Cup, the Tunisian clubs will share \$1,494,734 from the \$4,569,981 that accrued to African clubs with players at the *Copa du Mundo*.

Moroccan clubs will get \$1,437,244, while Egypt, which did not feature at the World Cup, but had players from Tunisia that participated in the competition, are due \$650,000.

Ghanaian clubs will receive \$565,772 from the FIFA

largesse, just as Camerounian teams are due \$401,515.

The breakdown of money by clubs show that Al Ahly and Zamalek of Egypt will get \$420,679 and \$229,959 respectively, while Cameroun's Coton Sport, Colon Sportive, Apejes de Mfou will receive \$219,008, \$109,504 and \$73,002 in that order.

Generation Foot of Senegal are due \$20,075, Tunisia's Esperance, Club Africain, Etoile, CS Sfaxien and US Monastir would be paid \$525,620, \$312,087, \$262,810, \$197,107 and \$197,107 respectively, just as Ghana's Hearts of Oak, Asante Koto, Steadfast FC, Dream FC and King Faisal will get \$219,008, \$200,757, \$109,504, \$18,250 and \$18,250 in that order.

Morocco's Wydad

Casablanca and Raja Club Athletic are expecting \$1,405,305 and \$31,938 respectively by the world football governing body.

A total of 440 clubs from 51

member associations across all confederations will receive over \$200m from the benefits distributed to those whose players featured at the World Cup.

Super Falcons' Plumtre leaves Leicester women

LEICESTER City Women, yesterday, confirmed that Super Falcons' star, Ashleigh Plumtre, has left the club following the expiration of her contract at King Power Stadium.

The 25-year-old, who made 23 appearances in all competitions for Leicester City in 2022/23, joined the club in 2020 from the University of Southern California's USC Trojans following the completion of her Human Biology degree.

She was part of the team,

who lifted the Barclays Women's Championship title in 2021 and subsequently played a key role in the club's two maiden seasons in the women's top flight.

The defender leaves Belvoir Drive having made 79 appearances in Leicester City blue. In a statement yesterday, the clubs said, "LCFC Women would like to thank Ashleigh for her contribution during the last four seasons and wish her well in the next phase of her career."



Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria

An **i**CON GOES HOME

With gratitude to God for a life well spent,
the **Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria**
announces the call to glory of our Past President

**PROF. (CHIEF)
JOSEPH OGBONNAYA
IRUKWU** FCII, FIIN, SAN, OON, CFR.

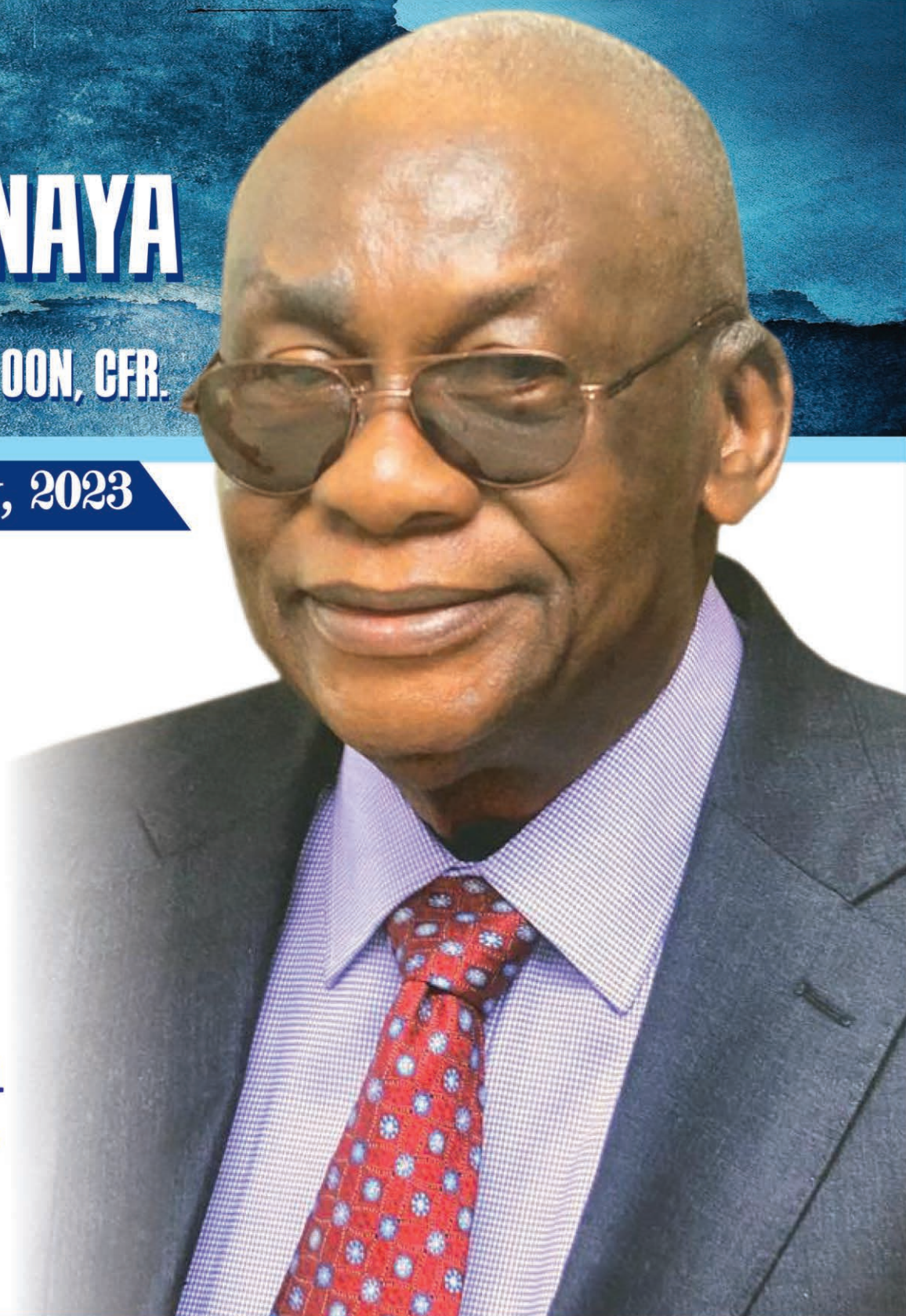
20th July, 1933 - 7th July, 2023

89 Years.

Survived By:

Children and Grand-Children.

**FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL
BE ANNOUNCED BY THE FAMILY.**



MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

Dan Agbese

SMS only: 08055001912;
email: ochima495@gmail.com



Nigeria draws Rohr's Benin Republic, South Africa, Zimbabwe 30



APC and the challenges of managing victory

OUR political parties have poor records of appreciating the architects of their electoral fortunes. It is part of the tragedy that has led to the lack of culture and tradition in our political parties as necessary institutional pillars of democracy. Here are some pieces of evidence.

The late Chief Solomon Lar, first national chairman of PDP, led the party to victory in the critical transitional general elections of 1999. The presidential election produced Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who made history as the first military ruler in the country to return as a faux democrat and a civilian president. The greatest beneficiary of that election did not thank Lar for his leadership. In gratitude, Obasanjo made Lar's tenure history.

The president then picked Chief Barnabas Gemade but dropped him before the 2003 general elections. Chief Audu Ogbah succeeded Gemade and led the party to victory with Obasanjo's re-election in the 2003 general elections. In gratitude, Obasanjo gave Ogbah the same treatment he meted to Lar.

Chief John Oyegun was the first national chairman of APC. Under his leadership, the party won the general elections of 2015. Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, the man with the longest quest for political power in our country so far, got what he wanted and became president. He did what Obasanjo did - a former military dictator turned a faux democrat. But whatever Oyegun did to put the retired general where he had always wanted to be, did not save him. Buhari muscled him out as national chairman of the party in the firm tradition of political ingratitude.

Adams Oshiomhole, the former labour leader, and two-term Governor of Edo State, succeeded Oyegun as national chairman of the party in 2018. He too led the party to victory and Buhari was re-elected for a second and final term in the 2019 general elections. And then his battle for survival began. He fought the governors but by 2020, he knew that the game was up. At the instance of Buhari, ostensibly acting to save the party that had already begun to haemorrhage, the national executive committee of the party gave him the red card. He stepped down as national chairman.

The Governor of Yobe State, Mai Mala Buni, was appointed interim leader of the party and head of something called Caretaker/Extraordinary Convention Planning Committee. He was given a six-month mandate to put the house of the party in order. It proved a difficult task for him because the party at all levels was torn by internal crises and lack of internal democracy, the bane of our political parties in general. The party faced the increasingly dark prospects of the sun setting on it at noon. Buni was taking the party down the slope of irrelevance.

The party leaders stepped in. On September 14, 2022, it constituted a nine-member national reconciliation committee to patch up things and save the party from the clear danger of a short shelf life. Senator Abdullahi Adamu, a



Tinubu

Adamu

ranking senator, was appointed chairman of the committee. The party leadership charged his committee with three assignments, the most critical to the party being to "conduct appropriate engagement between identified groups in each state where there are disputes with a view to bringing about genuine reconciliation and establishing lasting peace and unity in the party."

An onerous task, given the state of the party at the state level.

Buni swore in the committee on October 14, and it set to work. The committee found that matters were much worse for the party at the state level than its leaders appreciated. It had been polarised into irreconcilable warring factions - a clear and obvious danger to it retaining its place in Aso Rock in the 2023 general elections.

As I pointed here in an earlier column, "Adamu is a savvy politician with the unusual gift of quickly seeing and appreciating political problems. He has a demonstrated knack for throwing himself into assignments, heart and soul, because it is always important for him to leave his size 11 shoe size footprints along whatever path he passes through in his political career." He needed no one to tell him that the fate of the party would be determined by the work of his committee.

With his single-minded commitment, he pulled the chestnuts from the fire. He did what other party leaders feared would never happen,

i.e., make APC one cohesive political family again, given the deep fissures and the frayed nerves among the leaders and the frustrated members of the party. The party had begun to bleed badly. He reconciled the warring factions to prepare the party for this year's transitional general elections.

This knack propelled Adamu forward and upward. Buhari and the party leaders decided he was the right man to implement the findings and the recommendations of his reconciliation committee. He was elected national chairman of the party on March 26 last year. Some element of poetic justice was at play here. Adamu, never afraid of taking on tough tasks, left the Senate to take on the more challenging

task of saving his party. He staked his integrity on doing almost the impossible - leading APC to victory in the 2023 general elections.

He was true to himself and to his party and, as the common saying goes, he delivered against certain odds in the nomination process that produced Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the party's presidential candidate on June 8 last year. Jagaban went on to win the presidential election last February. Adamu pulled the party from the jaws of certain defeat that stared it in the face. Given the record of Buhari's non-stellar performance in office, APC stood on shaky moral grounds to ask the electorate to retain it in power in the 2023 general elections. Those who predicted its defeat were not being mischievous. But the rest is now history.

The party has now entered a new phase of challenges as critical, if not more so, than its winning the elections. I suppose this is the time for the leaders of the party, including the president, to begin the task of managing their victory. Winning is a difficult task but sustaining victory is even more complex than that.

The atmosphere is being polluted by the lethal combination of weaponised fake news, conspiracy theories, ignorance, and the sheer inclination by the online and social media to mislead, misinform and miseducate the public. We are in danger of being swamped by the combination of these blights that have distorted the noble mission of the mass media as a critical and important national institution. No one should think this is a child's play.

The talks about the president's alleged frosty relationship with Adamu are, of course, lies. But lies, once sold to the public takes on lives of their own. The liar has a purpose in suggesting that there is a frosty relationship between Adamu continuing in his current position in the party. It is an unholy attempt to drive a wedge between him and the president. There is always a purpose to all madness.

Tinubu is not Obasanjo, and he is certainly not Buhari. He should not invite himself to walk along their path. His administration has much to gain from a stable, cohesive, and united APC. He would be unfair to himself were he, through acts of insouciance, allow the party to regress to what it was before Adamu and his committee responded to the challenges of saving it from itself. A crisis fomented at this time in the life of the Tinubu administration would also affect the president's capacity to chart a new path for the nation. He cannot afford to be distracted from the path he has mapped out for himself as president. Our faith in his avowal to renew the nation is hinged on his capacity to think differently and act differently.

This is not about saving Adamu's job. It is about stability in the ruling party and what the nation stands to gain from the president and the party managing their victory so the country could renew its faith in itself. A stable APC will discharge its duty as the custodian of the governments elected on its platform. It will police how its servants in government fulfil its manifesto, being its contract with the people.

“The party has now entered a new phase of challenges as critical, if not more so, than its winning the elections. I suppose this is the time for the leaders of the party, including the president, to begin the task of managing their victory. Winning is a difficult task but sustaining victory is even more complex than that.”

Published by The Guardian Group, Rutam House, Isolo, Lagos Tel: 01-4489600
Abuja Office: Plot 415 Olu Awotesu Street, Off Idris Ibrahim Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Jabi District, Abuja. Tel: 08163413350, 08095945917
Advert Hotlines: 01-4489619, 08033371431 08131036456, advert@guardian.ng; Circulation Hotline: 09093977291
All correspondence to Guardian Newspapers Limited, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.
E-mail: Letters@guardian.ng; www.guardian.ng
Acting Editor: **WOLE OYEBADE** ABC (ISSN NO 0189-5125)

What The Guardian stands for

- The Guardian is an independent newspaper, established for the purpose of presenting balanced coverage of events, and of promoting the best interests of Nigeria. It owes allegiance to no political party, ethnic, community, religious or other interest groups. Its primary commitment is to the integrity and sovereignty of the Federation of Nigeria, and beyond that, to the unity and sovereignty of Africa.
- The Guardian will at all times uphold the need for justice, probity in public life, equal access to the nation's resources and equal protection under the law of Nigeria for all citizens.
- The Guardian journalist must wholeheartedly subscribe to the 1979 Code of Conduct for Nigerian journalists as amended in 1998.
- The Guardian believes, therefore, that it is the moral duty of every journalist to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth and to the best of his knowledge.
- It is the duty of The Guardian journalist to resist and refrain from earning other than his just salary or allowances from his employers: not to demand, and to refuse any reward if offered in cash or kind for publishing news or comments.
- The motto of The Guardian is Conscience Nurtured by Truth.

Please report any of our erring journalists to these dedicated telephone numbers: 014489600, 07098147948, 07098147951 Or our e-mail: Complaints@guardian.ng