

PILLOT

NIGERIAN

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NEWSPAPER WITH CONSCIENCE



Labour calls for restraint over plan to sack 17,000 civil servants ▶▶ 7

Over 2,000 patients to benefit from Afikpo medical outreach ▶▶ 9



Enugu Guber: Tribunal ignored the facts!

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- Barr Chukwudi Igwe reacts, says judges ignored facts of the matter
- That the entire judgment was founded in error of law and facts
- Insists judges were wrong in area of competence of subpoenaed witnesses
- Declares that forgery of NYSC Certificate was proved by subpoenaed witnesses



Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Sen. Abubakar Bagudu (M); Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Nebeolisa Anako (7th R); Convener, Civil Society Leaders Forum on Social Protection, Dr Otive Igbuzor (7th L), and others during their advocacy visit to the Minister in Abuja yesterday. Photo: Ajibola Abioye

Kwankwaso will remain serial election loser, says Ganduje

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Air Force bombs IPOB's hideouts in Anambra, Imo States

UNICEF, Bayelsa take exclusive breastfeeding sensitisation to LGAs



Ebonyi Guber: Tribunal affirms APC's Nwifuru's victory

Northern Elders partner FG on making FCT safer



Ilaje people protest plot to impeach their son, Deputy Governor

Manufacturers lament N272bn unsold goods in Q1

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Pilot Personality



IDRIS MUSA

DG, NATIONAL OIL SPILL DETECTION AND RESPONSE AGENCY, NOSDRA

Mr Idris Olubola Musa was first appointed on April 1, 2019, for an initial tenure of four years, to elapse in 2023, however following an excellent performance in four years of the last administration, former President Muhammadu Buhari approved his reappointment as the Director General of the National Oil Spills Detection and Response Agency, NOSDRA in March 2023.

According to the Presidency at the time, prominent amongst some of his track records was the digitalisation of the agency's records, review of various forms for oil spills management processes, and the review of environmental sensitivity index map.

The index map is used in the oil-producing regions to protect the vulnerable, sensitive and fragile ecosystem of the Niger Delta region.

Musa carried out many awareness campaigns on the dangers of vandalism of oil facilities. He also revolutionised online and real-time processing of environmental compliance documents and management as well as the National Gas Flare Tracker and Oil Spill Monitor. These are part of efforts to showcase transparency in environmental management in the

oil and gas industry.

Mr Idris Olubola Musa was born on September 17, 1957 in Yagba East Local Government Area of Kogi State of Nigeria. He holds a Bachelor of Science, B.Sc. in Geography from the Prestigious University of Ibadan. He also holds two Masters Degrees in Business Administration, MBA as well as Urban and Regional Planning, M.URP from the University of Ilorin and University of Ibadan respectively, as well as several Professional Certifications and Memberships locally and internationally.

He has about 40 years experience in different capacities in both the private and public sectors. He started his career in 1980 as Executive Director, Operations and Accounts in Oluyori Bottling Industry Nigeria Ltd., Isanlu where he later moved to Virgven Nigeria Ltd., Ilorin as Executive Director, Management Consultancy in 1989.

In 1996, he joined the public service as Environmental Scientist in the defunct Federal Environmental Protection Agency, FEPA and later to Federal Ministry of Environment where he was deployed in 2004 as one of the pioneer staff to head the Oil Spill Detection and Response,

OSDR Department of the then newly established National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, NOSDRA. He was promoted to the level of Director in 2008 in NOSDRA and Director Oil Field Assessment in 2011 following departmental restructuring in NOSDRA.

Mr. Musa retired from this position in NOSDRA in September, 2017. Being a vibrant and energetic personality, he was appointed as Head of Operations of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), Port Harcourt in the same year. He was appointed Director General/Chief Executive of the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) in March, 2019 by the President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR).

He served in several committees amongst which is the Committee that worked on the preparation of documents leading to the establishment of NOSDRA. Mr Musa has an uncommon wealth of experience in oil spill management.

He also worked on several projects and researches leading to several developmental achievements in Nigeria which are quite numerous to mention here. He has attended several international trainings, seminars and

workshops. He represents Nigeria on the Ten-Man Board of Pollution Crime Working Group of the International Police, INTERPOL.

Idris Olubola Musa is happily married with children.

As DG, Mr Musa said "I will prioritise underground water pollution, and ensure timely, effective and appropriate response to oil spills".

National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, NOSDRA is an agency under the Federal Ministry of Environment. It was instituted by the National Assembly act of 2006 with the core mandate to oversee the implementation of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, NOSCP which also incorporates the National Oil Spill Contingency System, NOSCS for Nigeria.

Since its establishment, the Agency has been ensuring compliance with environmental legislation in the Nigerian Petroleum Sector. The agency has focused on building conformance with environment legislation in the Nigerian petroleum sector from inception.

NOSDRA is the lead agency for other oil spill contingency plans in Nigeria, including the ports and industries.

EDITORIAL



TINUBU AND SOLID MINERAL THEFT IN AFRICA

The questions begging for answers are that: do other African leaders who are fingered in this unholy alliances with the Western agents in our continent give him full support in this fight? Will the West ever ready and willing to stop this barefaced stealing of African resources?

Since pre-colonial and post colonial history, Africa remains a plundering field for the insanely avaricious West that has continued to engage in illegal excavation and smuggling of cheap solid mineral resources to service their industries and markets.

The raw materials are converted to finished products and they are sent back to African market at exploitative prices.

Many African countries are plagued by civil wars and political crises today as a result of the Western incursion into our resource bases. Thanks to the gullibility of some of our greedy, selfish and collaborative leaders and citizens who have consistently failed to develop their God-given resources.

This has remained one of the biggest issues in Africa and global arena today. However, there was a new twist to this very important matter.

Last week Wednesday, President Bola Tinubu met the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, at his UN Headquarters Office in New York City, on the sideline of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and one of the issues he raised with the

SG was on the need for the world body to get serious and support the campaign to stop the smuggling and stealing of solid mineral resources in Africa by the West.

According to the president, “We are facing the great challenge of scavengers ravaging our lands and oppressing our people in illegal mines—taking our gold and mineral wealth back to developed economies by stealth and violence against Nigerians.

“Where one’s human rights end, the rights of another begin. Most especially for self-protection. If we fight, they say ‘human rights,’ but we will now be aggressive and we will question motives. We will stop what is happening in our land. We require your effective collaboration,” the President stated.

We believe strongly that Mr. President has made a very big point and so we agree with him totally. However, the questions begging for answers are that, do other African leaders who are fingered in this unholy alliances with the Western agents in our continent give him full support in this fight? Will the West ever ready and willing to stop this barefaced stealing of African resources?

NIGERIAN PILOT

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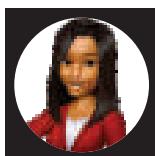
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News

Ebonyi Guber: Tribunal dismisses APGA's petition, seeking to sack Gov Nwifuru

By Kenneth Atavti

The Ebonyi State Election Petition tribunal sitting in Abuja, on Wednesday delivered its judgement on Petition No EPT/EB/GOV/01/2023 [BENARD ODO & APGA Vs INEC, FRANCIS OGBONNA NWIFURU & APC) in favour of Governor Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru of Ebonyi State.

The Tribunal held that the petition bordered on a pre-election matter over which it lacked jurisdiction to determine.

It proceeded nevertheless to determine the petition on merit and dismissed the same for lacking in merit.

The Tribunal also held that it is not within the contemplation of the Constitution that the failure of the 2nd Respondent to vacate his seat as Speaker of Ebonyi State House of Assembly after defecting from the PDP to the APC should operate as a bar to his contesting election on the APC platform for the governorship of Ebonyi State.

According to the tribunal, the petitioners failed to prove that the 2nd Respondent was at the time of the election not qualified to contest the Governorship Election, hence there is substantial material evidence before the Tribunal, which shows that the 2nd Respondent duly resigned his membership of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The summary of the Court ruling indicated that "The petitioners failed to approach the proper court to entertain the issue of membership of a political party.

"Notwithstanding, the Tribunal has no power to entertain an issue which took place before the election. However, apart from an aspirant who participated in the primaries of the 3rd Respondent, no other person has the right to challenge the membership of the 2nd Respondent.

"No court has the power to dabble or poke into the internal domestic affairs of a political party. (No PDP membership Register of Enyanwuigwe ward was tendered before the Tribunal to substantiate that the 2nd Respondent is a member of PDP).

"The claim of the petitioners that the 2nd Respondent's APC Form is forgery holds no water as same was not supported by any evidence from the petitioners.

"Where a party forwarded name of a candidate to INEC it means that such a candidate is a fully-fledged member of such a political party. Exhibit R5 which is the votes and proceedings of Ebonyi State House of Assembly clearly disclosed the date the 2nd Respondent defected PDP to APC.

"It is not for the Tribunal to invoke section 109 of the 1999 constitution as amended against the 2nd Respondent, But that of the members of Ebonyi State House of Assembly.

Insecurity won't stop Imo, Kogi governorship elections – INEC

By Athan Agbakwuru, Owerri

The Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, has assured that the governorship elections scheduled to hold in Imo and Kogi states on November 11, 2023 will take place as planned despite perceived insecurity in the two states.

National Commissioner and Member, Information and Voter Education Committee, IVEC, of the Commission, Malam Mohammed Kudu Haruna, gave the assurance Wednesday in address he delivered at a one-day Meeting with Media Executives organized by INEC, Imo State, at Newton Hotels, Owerri, the state capital.

Haruna who declared the meeting open had expressed concern about the fledgling security situation in Imo and Kogi but stated that INEC has been working assiduously to ensure effective security coverage in the two states as well as Bayelsa before, during and after the off-cycle elections.

He hinted that the Commission is in partnership with the military, Police, paramilitary agencies, the media and other critical stakeholders like candidates and their political parties to ensure a hitch-free and credible poll in the affected states.

"I can assure you we cannot fail to hold elections on the scheduled date because of insecurity. We are preparing

to take charge of the situation and ensure a successful poll as planned," he assured.

The National Commissioner supervising Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa states and the FCT, assured that the coming polls will be credible as there would be no technical hitches arising from the use of BVAS as was the case in the presidential election of February 25.

"The glitch suffered in the presidential election was not malicious or intended. It happened because we (INEC) had not tested the BVAS beyond governorship elections. This time, it will work. We have an obligation to ensure the glitch does not happen again especially in the coming elections in Imo, Kogi and

Bayelsa," he remarked.

Haruna used the occasion to appreciate the media for their role in promoting the activities of the Commission and solicited for greater cooperation for the success of the November gubernatorial poll in Imo.

His words, "This strategic engagement with this calibre of Media personnel is very apt coming ahead of the scheduled 11th November Governorship election in the state. The Commission has a long-standing partnership with the media in the country which is being consolidated with an engagement such as this.



A cross-section of the Participants during the first National conference on equal opportunity on access to higher education in Nigeria organized by Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in Abuja.

Northern elders partner FG on making FCT safer

By Our Correspondent

Concerned about the state of security in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, occasioned by bastardization of the master plan, elders in Northern Nigeria have expressed their determination to partner with the FCT administration towards addressing the issue.

The elders under the aegis of North-East Consolidated Peoples Forum (NCPF) are

made up of respected statesmen and elders in the region but residents in Abuja made the above statement during its meeting in Abuja yesterday.

The group whose members are patriotic Nigerians who pursue entrenchment of justice, peace, equity and unity in a democratic Nigeria, commended the efforts of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, towards making Abuja safer for residents.

The spokesperson of the elders, Alhaji Mohammed Abba Liman, stated that "as elders and senior citizens who have contributed to the growth and development of Nigeria, and as critical stakeholders in the development of the FCT, we have full confidence in the Minister's patriotic zeal towards restoring the lost glory of the FCT", he said.

The group lamented that it has witnessed with sadness and helplessness the "unbridled

and unfortunate bastardization of the Master Plan of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja over the years, which has equally given birth to serious security concerns", Liman, the spokesperson of the group said.

"However, we have noticed seriousness and proactiveness in the present Federal Capital Territory administration under the leadership of the Honourable Minister, Chief Nyesom Wike, who has received full support of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Strengthen data collection mechanisms, education on migration, UMEG tells

By Ngozi Nwankwo

Universal Migration Enlightenment Centre, UMEC, has said the Nigerian government should invest in strengthening data collection mechanisms and encourage research institutions to contribute towards a robust knowledge base on migration.

UMEC, in partnership with the Global Migration Research Institute, GMRI, USA gave this advice at one-day National Workshop on Migration issues

in Abuja on Tuesday.

Speaking at the workshop, the President of UMEC, Dr. Williams Ijoma said migration remains a pressing concern in Nigeria that requires intensified efforts to address it

While emphasising on the need for comprehensive data collection and analysis, Dr. Ijoma explained that, "Accurate and up-to-date data is essential to understand the patterns, causes, and consequences of migration. It will enable us

to develop evidence-based policies and programs that can effectively manage migration flows, protect vulnerable individuals, and allocate resources appropriately."

The President also stressed the need to prioritise implementation and enforcement of existing policies.

"We ought to prioritize the implementation and enforcement of existing policies and laws.

"While the Nigerian

government has formulated several policies related to migration, their effectiveness relies heavily on their implementation. Concrete steps need to be taken to ensure that these policies are effectively enforced at all levels, leaving no room for gaps or weaknesses. This includes collaborating with relevant agencies to combat human trafficking and irregular migration while providing support and protection to victims," he said.

Air Force bombs IPOB hideouts in Anambra, Imo

By Agency report

Nigerian Air Force fighter jets under the air component of Operation Udo Ka II, have bombed the armouries and camps of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Anambra and neighbouring Imo state.

The fighter jets according to a statement by NAF spokesman, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, carried out several airstrikes on the IPOB fighters hideouts in Mother Valley Orsumughu in Nnewi South Local Government Area of Anambra State and at Aku Ihube in Okigwe LGA of Imo State.

Gabkwet noted in the statement that the air operations were conducted following credible intelligence report that the fighters had finalised plans to unleash mayhem on the residents and other states in the region.

He, however, said that some of the bombed locations were fingered to be the armouries of the separatist movement.

Part of the statement reads, "Aircraft under the Air Component of Operation Udo Ka II, on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, carried out several strikes on IPOB/ESN locations at Mother Valley Orsumughu in Nnewi South Local Government Area of Anambra State and at Aku Ihube in Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State. The strikes at both locations achieved their intended outcome and were deemed effective.

"Acting on credible intelligence that IPOB/ESN terrorists had perfected plans to disrupt civic activities lined up in the coming days in Anambra State and other states in Southeast Nigeria from their concealed bunkers/hideouts at Mother Valley Orsumughu, air strikes were authorised in conjunction with ground troops and other security agencies on the location believed to also house some of their weapons and ammunitions. The strikes hit the target and were deemed successful following the ball of fire, fleeing terrorists at the location as well as feedback received."

Manufacturers seeks end to multiple taxation

By Kayode Abdulazeez, Ilorin

Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) Kwara/Kogi States branch yesterday tasked both federal and state governments to harmonize the taxation system which often causes conflicts between its members and agencies of the governments.

The Association made this call during its 9th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the group secretariat in Ilorin, Kwara State Capital.

Unveiling the theme of the meeting, "Nigerian Tax Albatross: Solutions and Reforms" the branch Chairman, Pharmacist Rahaman Jimoh Bioku said the theme was specifically chosen to conduct a long overdue assessment of the disharmony, the disarray, the controversies, the confusion, and the increasing conflicts which have unfortunately characterized the public tax regime in Nigeria.

"These conflicts have set a number of Manufacturing Companies up against the Government because we have had to confront several maladies in the tax space such as multiple and double taxation, illegal taxation, over-taxation, and all sorts of irregularities therein.

"For us as an Association of registered, licensed, and duly certified manufacturers in Nigeria, we strongly believe that a platform such as this AGM can afford us some opportunity to commence and continue sincere deliberations on these issues.

"We are very hopeful that from the discussions, a strategic and proactive action from Government and Stakeholders in the Industry can be marshaled to ensure that all these anomalies are rectified so that things will be done right in the Nigerian tax space.

"We also want to use this opportunity to call on the Kwara state government to accelerate the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) on landed property once the criteria have been met by the owner because this is also affecting our members who want to use such properties to access a loan in financial agencies," Bioku said.

Addressing the theme of the meeting, the Guest Speaker, Mr. Omotunde Lanre, member of staff, Federal Inland Revenue Services, took participants through the intricacies of tax administration and urged them to be updated on the activities of the FIRS.

Labour calls for restraints over plan to 'sack' 17,000 civil servants

By Michael Oche

The Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) has urged the federal government to exercise restraint over its purported plan to delist 17,000 workers from the core civil service.

The ASCSN urged the government to extend the window and allow those genuine workers who have done their verification online to complete their capture so that they won't be removed from the government payroll.

National President of the ASCSN, Comrade Tommy Etim Okon, who briefed journalists

in Abuja, said there has been an ongoing verification exercise of civil servants since 2015.

He however said the government came up with a list of 17,000 workers, claiming that they did not participate in the verification exercise and labeled them as ghost workers.

He however, said the Association has discovered that names of some civil servants who took part in the verification process appeared on the list of 17,000.

He said, "We called your attention to what we heard or information at our disposal just a few days ago, we received information that over 17,000

workers in the core civil service did not carry out the online verification which was done by the office of the Head of Service of the Federation."

"Quickly we swung into action to interface with the government through the HoSF and by that singular act, there was need for us to talk to our members and that informed the reasons, because we have seen a lot of apprehensions from our members, receiving several phone calls, then we also looked at the timing because of the social economic challenges.

"We went deep into the document where we also realised that even in some government agencies, we realised that names of

PAs, SAs and some Ministers were included in the IPPIS portal, whereas those people were political office holders in their own rights in various regimes", he said.

Speaking further on the life line available to the affected workers, he said a committee has already been constituted in the office of the HOSF to handle such cases, while calling on those with genuine complaints, who had initially done the online verification on the portal of the IPPIS to submit a scanned copy of their document to the email that has been provided.



Police arrest suspect linked to killing of Rivers DPO

Police arrest suspect linked to killing of Rivers DPO

By Agency report

Police operatives in Rivers State have arrested one of the suspects linked to the killing of Mr Bako Angbashim.

Angbashim, Superintendent of Police, had led his men to raid criminal hideouts in the Odemude community in Ahoada West Local Government Area of the state on September 8, when a dreaded cult group led by Okpara ambushed them, opened fire and eventually captured Angbashim, decapitated his body and filmed their action.

Since the incident, the State Police Command under Commissioner of Police, Emeka Nwonyi, has

been on the hunt for the miscreants.

The Public Relations Officer of the Command, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the arrest of one of the suspects in a statement on Wednesday.

She said the suspect was about to be lynched by the youths before police operatives came to the rescue.

"The Rivers State Police operatives on Monday, 25/09/2023 at about 19:43hrs acting on actionable information received that in Edoaha Community in Ahoada East, one of the suspects who brutally killed SP Bako Angbashim was about to be lynched to death by an

angry mob," she stated.

"Subsequently, a team of policemen swung into action to rescue the suspect who was about to be burnt with a tyre on his neck. He was rescued and brought to the station where he made a useful statement.

"He was later transferred to SCID for discreet investigation with a view to apprehend the fleeing kingpin, his gang members, and to recover their operational weapons."

The suspect whose name is not mentioned is said to be part of the gang who brutally murdered a DPO, SP Bako Angbashim earlier this month.

His killing attracted nationwide condemnation

with the police high command, the Federal and the Rivers State Government ordering an investigation and immediate arrest of the suspects.

Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara also placed a bounty of one hundred million naira on the kingpin, Gift David Okpara Okpolowu and his criminal gang.

Days after the suspects were declared wanted, a video they purposefully filmed surfaced on the internet, showing them celebrating and hailing themselves as victors.

The video, however, exposed and revealed the identities of more members of the group, including the arrested suspect.

500 Bayelsa people trained in Agriculture products

By Eunice Nnachi, Yenagoa

Over five hundred Bayelsa indigents have been trained in Agriculture and its extension in the last three years, the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Daniel Alabrah has said

Alabrah also said, they were empowered to setup their own businesses and farms across the length and

breathe of Bayelsa state.

Speaking during an interactive session with members of the Federated Correspondent's Chapel of the "NUJ" under the "Correspondent's Forum," he said even Governor Douye Diri have a farm.

He said, "The state government have 38 hectares of land for rice farming at Otuasega in Ogbia local

area of the state, while they have another 60 hectares at Amassoma in Southern Ijaw local government areas and the smallest one at School to Land, Iminrigi road in Yenagoa."

"In 2021, we produced 1000 bags of BAYELSA rice. But in 2022 the devastating flood destroyed the entire farm and we couldn't produce anything. This year

Bayelsa rice will flood the market. We have Rice mill at Niger Delta University Amassoma and another one at Otuoke.

"Governor Douye Diri has its own farm, some of the commissioners have their farms, I have my own farm in my Community and even the Director General New Media, Kola Oredipe also has a farm", he said.

Election Tribunal sacks Ondo lawmaker

By Folorunso Ojo, Akure

An Election Petitions Tribunal sitting in Akure the Ondo state capital has nullified the election of a member of the Ondo State House of Assembly representing Ileoluji/Okeigbo Constituency, Hon. Nelson Akinsuroju of the All Progressives Congress, APC.

The Tribunal subsequently ordered rerun election in six, out of the 27 polling units being challenged by the PDP candidate of the entire 191 polling units in the Constituency, declaring that the March 18 2023 Ile-Oluji/Okeigbo Constituency election inconclusive.

The Tribunal ruled on a petition filed by the People's Democratic Party, PDP, Candidate, Babatunde Fadare against the election of Akinsuroju, which has created a state of uncertainty in the camp of the sacked lawmaker.

The lawmaker was announced winner by INEC, after polling a total number of 10,207 votes, to beat the PDP candidate who polled 9,287 votes.

The petitioner urged the court to declare the election inconclusive and order INEC to conduct supplementary election in the 6 affected units where election was disrupted.

The petitioner also joined INEC and APC as respondents in the petition.

The three-man panel led by the Chairman, Rose Soji, has ordered for a rerun in 6 affected polling units in Ile-Oluji/Okeigbo local government area of Ondo State.

Reacting, counsel to Akinsuroju, Remi Olatubora, SAN, represented by Barrister Olumide Ogidan alleged that the judgement was one sided as it was based on morality of the case and not competence of the results, saying the decision would be challenge at the appeal court.

Eid-el-Maulud: Reps celebrates with Moslems

By Disun Amosun

As Moslems the world over celebrate Eid-el-Maulud, the House of Representatives in celebrating with the faithfuls admonished them to be constantly guided by the Holy Prophet Muhammad's - Peace Be Unto Him - lasting legacies of Compassion, Sacrifice and Faithfulness in their dealings.

The House in a congratulation message to Moslems, signed the Deputy Chairman Committee on Media and Public Affairs Rep Philip Agbese them to remain a source of inspiration to national development and be a guiding light for all Moslems globally.

The House in felicitating with the Muslim constituents across the country urged them to use this opportunity to further reflect on the life and legacy of the beloved Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) and draw lessons to be applied in national cohesion and peaceful co-existence among Nigerians as a whole.

The House wished all Nigerian Muslims a happy Eid-El Maulud celebration, and prayed that the occasion blesses the nation with renewed grace to confront its challenges.

North West Development Commission bill passes first reading in Senate

By Okechukwu Jombo

A bill seeking the establishment of the North West Development Commission (NWDC), sponsored by the Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Barau Jibrin has passed its first reading at the Senate.

Titled, North West Development Commission (Establishment) Bill, 2023, the bill passed through first reading during Tuesday's plenary session of the Senate presided over by the President

of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio.

The Clerk to the Senate, Barrister Chinedu Akubueze, read the short title of the bill during the plenary session.

A statement from the Media Office of the Deputy President of the Senate said the Commission when established would accelerate the development of the commercial and industrial potentials of the North West geopolitical zone, comprising

seven states; Kano, Kaduna, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Sokoto and Zamfara.

Also, the NWDC when established will receive and manage funds for the agricultural and industrial development of the North West geopolitical zone.

In the last 10 years, states in the North West geopolitical zone especially Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara have been battling with security challenges, thereby

retarding their development.

Specifically, the Commission when established will formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the North West in the areas of roads, education, health, employment, industrialization, agriculture, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity, and commerce.

The bill would soon be listed for a second reading for deliberation on its general merits and principles.



Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Sen. Abubakar Bagudu (middle); Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Nebeolisa Anako (7th R); Convener, Civil Society Leaders Forum on Social Protection, Dr Otiye Igbuzor (7th L), and others during their advocacy visit to the Minister in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO: AJIBOLA ABIOYE

Flood destroys crops, farmlands in Ebonyi community

By Victor Nwegede, Abakaliki

Following the destruction of crops and farmlands by a heavy flood that lasted for more than seven days, the affected Ebonyi community people burst into tears, while calling for an urgent intervention by relevant authorities.

Nigerian Pilot gathered that rice, cassava, and yam farms amounting to millions of naira were seriously damaged by the flood in Azuoto village in Okpuitumo Community in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The ugly development has subjected the people to untold hardship thereby causing perpetual hunger among the villagers as there is neither way

to access their farmlands nor any available food to eat.

It was also gathered that the Azuoto village was surrounded by Ebonyi and Oto Rivers which water usually overflow and cover farmland areas, leading to the endless destruction of crops.

The village always witnessed flooding two to three times in between June and October annually but this year's experience appeared to be worse coupled with the present economic hardship facing the nation.

One of the victims, Chief Alfred Agbo told journalists that presently, there is no accessible road to the community, as a result of the flood disaster.

He said the flood-affected

community people now follow Ndi-nwogba Amachi village in Amachi Community as the only alternative way to enter their village which cost them a lot. He recalled that several efforts had been made by the Okpuitumo community to construct a bridge across the Oto River over 10 years ago proved abortive.

Agbo who described the situation as very worrisome, noted that this year's flood was the heaviest the village ever had, saying that his farm including rice, cassava and yam was destroyed by the flood disaster.

Other victims including Mrs. Falcia Akpa, Mr. Sunday Agbo, Mr. Simon Nwogha, Mr. Godwin Ogbonna, and Mr.

Joseph Ota among others hinted that they labored in vain every year in the village as a result of the excessive flood.

According to them, the development has badly affected the sponsorship of their children in the school; hence farming remains their only source of income.

The victims further called on the Federal and State governments alongside well-spirited individuals and organisations to come to their aid to alleviate their sufferings.

They also called on Governor Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru of Ebonyi State to assist them by constructing the Oto River Bridge to ease their means of livelihood in the area.

UNICEF, Bayelsa takes exclusive breastfeeding sensitization to LGAs

By Eunice Nnachi, Yenagoa

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Bayelsa state Ministry of Health, through the Primary Healthcare Board carried out a community sensitization on the need for exclusive Breastfeeding.

The sensitization which took place at Angjama and Oporoma the headquarters of Southern Ijaw local government area of the state witnessed a large turnout from both Communities.

Addressing the importance of exclusive Breastfeeding, the state Nutrition Officer, Bayelsa Primary HealthCare Board, Mr. Ebi Wilson said, Southern Ijaw

is at zero percent in terms of exclusive Breastfeeding while Bayelsa as a state is 26%

He said the first 1000 days in a child's life is very important because it determine the rapid growth of the child. Saying the only thing that can make a child developed and grow well is exclusive Breastfeeding.

"We are here because of exclusive Breastfeeding. 1.3% of children in southern Ijaw is malnourished and if it's not properly checked will cause stunted growth. Breast milk contains all the soldiers that will fight against any sicknesses in an early life of a child.

"A child that breastfeeds

well will not suffer diarrhea and breastfeeding helps in brain development. The first milk from a mother that just delivered plays a very significant role in the life and health of a child.

"Mothers should stop giving their new born babies animal milk. Animal milk is for animals", she said.

According to Wilson, exclusive Breastfeeding is not only important to a child but also to the mother because it reduces the chances of the woman in having breast cancer and cervical cancer. "And for men, exclusive Breastfeeding saves cost".

In her contribution, the

Breastfeeding Initiative Coordinator Bayelsa Primary HealthCare Board, Mrs. Rose Okparan, laid emphasis on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding.

She said exclusive breastfeeding avert infant death, saying immediately after one hour of giving birth, a child should be breastfed.

"The first six months is exclusively for Breastfeeding. No water or any artificial food. We want the women to begin to imbibe the culture of exclusive Breastfeeding as the way to go. Breastfeeding in Southern Ijaw is very poor. Breastfeeding is zero percent.

NEWS

Enugu Guber Tribunal: Facts were ignored!

Barr Chukwudi Igwe reacts, says judges ignored facts of the matter

That the entire judgment was founded in error of law and facts

Insists judges were wrong in area of competence of subpoenaed witnesses

Declares that forgery of NYSC Certificate was proved by subpoenaed witnesses

By Our Correspondent

As condemnations continue to trail the decision of the Enugu state Governorship Election Tribunal to affirm the election of Mr. Peter Mbah as the duly elected governor of the state, Barrister Chukwudi Igwe has insisted that facts of the matter were ignored by the judges who handled the case.

In a statement issued on Wednesday titled "Review of the judgement in Edeoga Chijioke Jonathan Vs INEC & 2 others, Barrister Igwe said the judges were wrong in the area of competence of the subpoenaed witnesses.

He said the Tribunal was wrong in holding that the evidence of the PW 1, PW 2, PW3 & PW 30 were incompetent on the ground that they were testimonies of subpoenaed witnesses who did not file their witness statements on oath alongside the petition and that the Tribunal relied basically on Paragraph 4 (5) of the 1st Schedule to the Evidence Act and the case of Obi vs APC & 2 Ors in invalidating the testimonies of the said witnesses.

According to him, the said paragraph 4 (5) provides, "The Election petition shall be accompanied by- a) a list of the witnesses that the petitioner intends to call in proof of the petition; b) written statement of oath of the witnesses and c) copies or list of every document to be relied on at the hearing of the petition".

"It is important to note that this Paragraph 4 (5) of the 1st Schedule to the Evidence Act is basically drawn from Order 3 Rule 3 (1) of the Civil Procedure Rules of the Federal High Court.

"It is instructive to note that the Electoral Act specifically provided in Paragraph 54 of the 1st Schedule to the Electoral Act thus, "Subject to the express provisions of this Act, the practice and procedure of the Tribunal or the court in relation to an election petition shall be as nearly as possible, similar to practice and procedure of the Federal High Court in the exercise of its civil jurisdiction, and the Civil Procedure Rules shall apply with such modifications as may be necessary to render them applicable having regard to the provisions of this Act, as if the petitioner and respondent were respectively the plaintiff and defendant in an ordinary civil action.

"Order 3 Rule 3 (1) of the Civil Procedure Rules of the Federal High Court and Paragraph 4 (5) of the 1st Schedule to the Evidence Act are in all fours to serve the same purpose. Paragraph 4 (5) of the 1st Schedule to the Evidence Act relied by the Tribunal did not contain the provision in Order 3 Rule 3 (2) of the Civil Procedure Rules of

the Federal High Court. The said proviso in Order 3 Rule 3 (2) of the Civil Procedure Rules of the Federal High Court reads, "Where a statement on oath of the witness requires a subpoena from the court, it need not be filed at the commencement of the suit.

"The Order 3 Rule 3 (2) of the Civil Procedure Rules of the Federal High Court identifies the impossibility of filing a statement on oath of a subpoenaed witness as at the time of filing the suit. My lordships that handed us the Federal High Court Civil Procedure Rules, in their wisdom are also aware of the impossibility of directing that subpoena witnesses should file their statement on oath alongside the suit. See the case of Abba Kabir Yusuf vs APC 72 Ors-Appeal No CA/KN/GOV/KAN/O5/2023 where the Court of Appeal held that it will be impossible for a party to file a written Statement on Oath of a subpoenaed witness as at the time of filing the petition. The said decision of the court gives credence to the wisdom in Order 3 Rule 3 (2) of the Civil Procedure Rules of the Federal High Court.

"It is my view that the witness statement of a subpoenaed witness filed after the suit has been filed, which facts are in line with the pleadings does not amount to amendment or invitation of new issues and therefore competent. The Tribunal, in the petition under review relied on the case of Obi & Anor vs APC & 2 Ors to nullify the evidence of the subpoenaed witnesses of the petitioners.

"It is instructive to note that the Presidential Petition Tribunal in Obi & Anor vs APC & 2 Ors nullified the testimony of the subpoenaed witnesses on the ground that the said witnesses were served the subpoena personally and that their reports were ready before the petition was filed hence they were members of the Labour Party who ought to have filed their statement on oath within time-See pages 80-97 of the said judgment.

"The subpoenaed witnesses of the Petitioners in the case under review were witnesses which the petitioners cannot ordinarily summon to testify in court hence the need to file a subpoena after the filing of the suit.

"No government official or a person working under an authority would reasonably be expected to appear in court to divulge sensitive information to the court without being compelled to do so by the court.

"The only effective way to compel a government official or private employee to give vital information to the court in order to meet the justice of a case is to have such official subpoenaed by the court and this can only be done when the suit has already been filed.

"A party who intends to call an unwilling person

that he has no control over to testify in court cannot be expected to forcefully drag him to court to file witness statement except with the order of the court through subpoena. The law does not command the impossibility.

"The Supreme Court case of Oke v Mimiko relied on by the Presidential Petition Tribunal in the case of Obi vs APC 7 Ors has nothing to do with subpoenaed witness statement on oath filed after the filing of the petition. The said case primarily dealt with the issue of filing motion for leave to file additional witness statement on oath out of time. The Supreme Court held in that case that such leave to file additional witness statement on oath out of time will delay the course of justice since the petition is expected to be concluded within 180 days.

"In the case under review, the Petitioners made it clear that they will call witnesses by subpoena. It did not take the Respondents by surprise and was not intended to waste the time of the court.

"It is therefore my opinion that the subpoenaed witnesses and their testimonies in the case under review are valid which the court should have acted upon", he said.

On the issue of qualification of the second respondent to contest for the election he said the Tribunal, in holding that the 2nd Respondent is not disqualified to contest the election relied on the issue that the issue of forgery was not proved hence the evidence of PW 1, PW 2, PW 3 and PW 20 who were subpoenaed witnesses were discountenanced.

"That NYSC Certificate of the 2nd Respondent was merely attached to Form EC 9 without making reference of same in the affidavit and also not submitted to aid of his qualification.

"It is my view that the forgery of the NYSC Certificate was proved by the said subpoenaed witnesses and who are, in my view competent witnesses.

"The forged NYSC Certificate of the 2nd Respondent was submitted to INEC in clear violation of section 182(1)(j) of the 1999 constitution hence the 2nd Respondent stands not qualified to contest the said election.

"The Tribunal was wrong when it held that section 177 and 182 of the constitution shall be read together.

"It is a fact that the case of the Petitioners is on the non-qualification of the 2nd Respondent, having submitted forged certificate to INEC.

"The Evidence Act in Section 134 (3) also makes it a separate ground to disqualify a candidate of an election on the ground of submission of forged certificate. The said section provides, "With respect to subsection (1) (a), a person is deemed to be

qualified for an elective office and his election shall not be questioned on grounds of qualification if, with respect to the particular election in question, he meets the applicable requirements of sections 65, 106, 131 or 177 of the constitution and he is not, as may be applicable, in breach of section 66, 107, 137 or 182 of the constitution.

"Flowing from the above section of the Electoral Act, it is obvious that the said section 182 of the constitution shall be treated separately from section 177 of said constitution.

"The Tribunal also held that NYSC Certificate is not a requirement for qualification under the section 177 and 318 of the constitution therefore the 2nd Respondent cannot be disqualified having gone above the threshold of academic qualification. The Tribunal held that the mandatory academic qualification is school certificate hence the 2nd Respondent did not submit the said certificate in issue to aid his qualification.

"It is my view that the 2nd Respondent submitted the said NYSC Certificate for INEC and the General Public to act on it. INEC is not a dumping ground where NYSC Certificates are dumped for pleasure. The provision of section 182 of the constitution is clear- Any person who submits a forged certificate shall be disqualified. It is in evidence that the 2nd Respondent submitted a forged certificate to INEC. It does not matter if the said certificate is school certificate or not.

"The Court of Appeal in the case of Isa Mohammed Wabu & Anor vs Hon. Mohammed Garba Gololo in 2019 disqualified a candidate to an election on the ground of forgery of B. Sc Certificate, Masters Certificate and NYSC Certificate.

"The court did not consider that the said certificates do not fall within the qualification threshold in sections 177 and 318 of the constitution which is school certificate. The said B. Sc Certificate, Masters Certificate and NYSC Certificate upon which the Court of Appeal disqualified the candidate is not school certificate as defined in section 318 of the constitution.

"It is on our judicial record that the court of Appeal has before now disqualified a candidate on the ground of forgery of NYSC Certificate. See the case cited above.

"It is my view that the 2nd Respondent stands disqualified for the said election under review", he stated.

Speaking on the nullification of the election in affected polling units where over voting occurred, Barrister Igwe said "it is my view that the court was in error when it discountenanced the evidence of the witnesses who testified on over voting in Nkanu East and Igbo Eze North LGA."

"The Tribunal, in discountenancing the evidence relied on the fact that the witnesses were not INEC Accredited Agents of the Petitioners hence did not sign the Result sheets.

"It is in evidence that the said witnesses were at the affected polling units during the election. It is also in evidence that they tendered BVAS Reports and Result sheets showing over voting. The Tribunal acted in error when it refused to act of the evidence on the reason that the said witnesses did not sign the result sheets.

"Section 137 of the Electoral Act provides, "It shall not be necessary for a party who alleges non-compliance with the provisions of this Act for the conduct of the elections to call oral evidence if originals or certified true copies manifestly disclose the non-compliance alleged".

"It is worthy of note that the Petitioners relied on the Results and the CTC of the BVAS Reports of the affected polling units while proving over voting. Going by the provision of the said section 137 of the Electoral Act, the Petitioners proved over voting by the instrumentality of the CTC of the result and the BVAS Report tendered at the Tribunal by competent witnesses who were eye witnesses to the non-compliance.

"There is no law in our legal jurisprudence that says that it is only accredited agents that are credible witnesses in an election. A voter of member of a political party present in a certain polling unit and competently testify and tender documents as to what he saw on ground.

"You don't need to be appointed by INEC to act as an agent. Political parties are at liberty to remove or replace any agent at will even on the Election Day. The appointment and replacement of agents are at the discretion of the political party concerned.

"The entire judgment was founded in error of law and facts", he declared.

NDDC board: ONELGA stakeholders reject composition, petition Tinubu

By Philip Ezuma, Port Harcourt

The board of the Niger Delta Development Commission NDDC, has suffered a major setback, as people of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, have petitioned the President federal government of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, rejecting the composition.

The host community of ONELGA has urged him to review the composition of the Niger Delta Development Commission NDDC, to accommodate their interest, as the largest and major stakeholders.

In the open letter signed by the leadership of the area, comprising traditional rulers, chiefs, Community Development Committees youth leaders and women's group, professionals, they asked for a fair deal, as they are the major producers of oil and gas in the state and country by extension.

"We want the appointment be revisited to accommodate ONELGA (Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA) indigene, as we have a pool of qualified

experienced persons that can effectively and efficiently perform outstandingly in any port folio assigned. We therefore humbly pray you to weigh into this situation as a justice crusader, who hates injustice; come to our urgent aid, before we become outcasts in our own land and resources", it said.

In the strongly worded open letter, they wrote thus: "It is with a bleeding heart that we the ONELGA Host Communities, Stakeholders Forum (Traditional Rulers, chiefs, CDC & Youth Bodies) Oil and Gas Host Communities write to you, to respond to our reaction and review the appointment, of the commission's board, and accommodate our interest.

"The Nigerian Oil and Gas sector cannot be over emphasized also. the first oil well that brought glory to NAOC Ltd was discovered in Mgbede Community in ONELGA, Rivers State, christened Mgbede Location 1,(one) in the year 1955. Additionally, there are numerous natural resources being explored from ONELGA as a Local Government Area, and as a host to NAOC Ltd, Total Energy, NNPC E&P Limited, Antan

Producing Limited, Seplat Petroleum Development Company, NLNG, Indorama and SPDC, we are the Nigeria's richest Oil & Gas haven "Ogba/Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State is Nigeria's most endowed and the richest on-shore petroleum resources enclave. It's the highest producer of crude oil and gas in Nigeria from its monthly 507 oil and gas wells on unit basis. NNPCCL monthly, quarterly and annual statistical Information bulletins, the three largest acreage holders of Oil Mining Leases (OMLs) operators of: Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC), whose OMLs 20; 21 & 60, spread across Ndoni, Egbema West, Ogba communities stretching from Okansu,Uju,Egbada,Elieta, Osiakpu, Ikiri, Elehia, Ohiaugah, Akabta, Obiozimini, to Itu, are in the LGA.

They insist that as the largest producer of oil and gas in the state and country, by extension, their indigene should have a position therein, regretting that, for the eight years former President Muhammadu Buhari was on seat, they (the goose that lays the golden egg) were relegated to the background. The host community vowed that only a review of the composition of the NDDC, and their inclusion can mean justice to them.

News

NBM of Africa donates educational materials to FCT School

By Ngozi Nwankwo

NBM of Africa Abuja Zone, a Non Governmental Organization, has donated educational materials such as books, reading desk and cash donation to Junior Secondary School, Passo in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, for educational development of the community.

The representative of the Abuja zone in Gwagwalada, Mr Alex Nonso, said the donation was a way to give back to the society in an attempt to cushion the present economic situation of the grassroots people.

Mr Chukwudi Godian the Group's president of Abuja zone represented by Mr. Jamil Maina the Sub zonal Coordinator said education is the bedrock of any society, saying that it is their way of giving back and supporting the pupils to become better leaders tomorrow.

According to him, the group has an unwavering passion to improve the quality of lives of children and the less privileged living in vulnerable conditions in the country.

He said the commitment had brought hope, happiness and light to thousands of Nigerians through programmes which focused on education, empowerment, capacity building and psychosocial development, among other interventions.

However, he maintained that one of the major drivers of sound and quality education in every society is conducive environment for learning and good educational materials.

"This donation is geared towards aiding learning as well as to equip the students compete favourably in our digitally advancing world.

"All things being equal we could provide more and we have a couple of things we can do to support the schools because we have been doing a lot of interventions in schools," he said.

Maulid: Gov AbdulRazaq urges sense of community, fairness to all

By Kayode Abdulazeze, Ilorin

Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq on Wednesday joined the 2023 public commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in Ilorin, the state capital.

The governor called on the faithful to imbibe "his time-tested values for sincerity of purpose, fairness, compassion to all, constant remembrance of God, and a strong sense of community built on the fear of God and collective good".

"I join the entire Muslim community and people of Kwara State as a whole to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Prophet Muhammad. May the peace and blessings of Allah be on the Prophet, his households, his companions, and all of us.

"There is no limitation to how far we can go if we always act as a community of people united by common humanity and interdependence. I urge us to work together as one people joined by one destiny and exemplary values.

"Esteemed brothers and sisters, and our leaders, I assure you that our administration will continue to do its best within available resources to serve you in fairness. We will always act in good faith.

"Once again, I congratulate the Muslim community on the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet."

"We thank His Excellency for his generosity and humility and for always standing by us. We pray Allah to bless and honour you," chairman of the Kwara State Muslim Council retired Grand Kadi Justice Soliu Mohammed said, congratulating the entire community on the occasion of Maulid", the governor said.

The Grand Kadi Justice Abdullateef Kamaldeen, who keyed the event, said the Maulid offers a ground for introspection for the Muslims, especially the people of Ilorin.

"Let us be complete Muslims, in action and utterances, and not follow the path of Satan. The recent event in Ilorin is a lesson to all and a call for us to look inward," the Justice said.

DSS establishes Directorate of Public Relations, Strategic Communications

By Kenneth Atavti

The Department of State Services (DSS), has appointed Dr. Peter Afunanya, erstwhile Public Relations Officer of the service to head a new directorate of public relations, strategic communications; as the supervising Director and also be in charge of the Service's public communications.

A statement on Wednesday by Directorate of Public Relations and Strategic Communications (DPRSC) said the service as part of efforts in sustaining its engagement with citizens and the public at large as well as deepening democratic governance, transparency and accountability,

has established a new Directorate of Public Relations and Strategic Communications (DPRSC).

"Consequently, it has appointed Peter Nnochirionye Afunanya, the erstwhile Public Relations Officer, to head the Directorate as the supervising Director and also be in charge of the Service's Public Communications.

"The appointment took effect from 26th September, 2023. The Service has commended its Director General, Alhaji Yusuf Magaji Bichi for the initiative to undertake the expansion and particularly appointing Afunanya to pilot the Directorate" the statement said.

Afunanya comes to his new role with over 20 years vast and

rich experience in Intelligence speaking, stakeholder analysis, threat assessment, security administration, VIP protection/detailing, investigation, counterterrorism, open source intelligence management, background checks and security vetting, surveillance, security sector/intelligence governance, democratic accountability in law enforcement, educational research, peace advocacy, alternative dispute resolution, development communication, interagency cooperation/liaison, joint operations, teaching, public and media relations, reputation management, strategic communication, protocol and diplomatic affairs, writing, public

engagement among others. A Ph.D holder in Security and Strategic Studies which he bagged in 2019 from the Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Afunanya also possesses a Master's degree in Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Kwara State from where he graduated in 2011. Similarly, he obtained a Master of Arts degree in English Language from the University of Uyo in 2009.

Earlier, Afunanya graduated from Abia State University, Uturu, in 1997 with a Second Class Upper Division in English Language.



L-R: Registrar, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Is-haq Oloyede; representative of the Chairman, Senate committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFUND, Sen. Dandutse Mohammed; Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Mr David Adejo; and Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mammam; during the first National conference on equal opportunity on access to higher education in Nigeria.

2 killed, 3 injured during gun battle between kidnapers, vigilantes in

By Kayode Abdulazeze, Ilorin

Two persons have been reportedly killed while three others sustained varying degrees of injuries during a gun shot on Tuesday night when a gang of gunmen stormed Alalubosa community, Oko Olowo in the Asa local government area of Kwara state.

It was gathered that the hoodlums entered the community, shooting sporadically, while pandemonium ensued making residents to run helter skelter.

According to sources in the

area, the gunmen stormed the community at about 10:00pm when the residents were enjoying cool weather outside their houses, adding that the residents ran for their lives when the attackers decided to attack the houses one after another.

"One girl, Semiat Mukaila, was shot on the arm, while Abdullahi Awe's leg was broken with gun butt. They are both receiving treatment at hospital now. The hoodlums also shot Isiaq Abdullahi on the arm.

"After they shot another resident, AbdulRasheed Alafara, on the leg and he tried to escape from the scene, the attackers pursued him and gave him machete cuts until he died.

"The members of the vigilante team also succeeded in killing one of the suspected kidnapers", he said.

Reports also had it that the gunmen, numbering six, rained bullets for more than 30 minutes when they entered into the community, and that members of the local vigilante

team were able to gun down one of the hoodlums while others ran away.

The source in the area gave kudos for bravery of the men of the local vigilante team, appealing to concerned authorities to provide them with adequate ammunition to combat insurgents.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Okasanmi Ajayi, who confirmed the report, said that the police command had drafted its men to the scene since 1:00 am when it got the report.

Over 2,000 to benefit from Afikpo medical doctors' free medical outreach

By Victor Nwegede, Abakaliki

The Conference of Afikpo Medical and Dental Doctors (CAMD), Wednesday kicked off its 4-day medical outreach in Afikpo and disclosed its target to treat at least 2,000 patients for free during the programme.

The free medical outreach held at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Afikpo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State was packaged by CAMD to provide health education, screening, consultation, and surgeries among other medical interventions.

The CAMD Chairman, Dr Uduma Victor Uduma, who

stated this in an interview with journalists, said, the body would provide a free eye surgical intervention, distribute over 500 reading glasses, and conduct some general surgeries including gynecological surgeries during the health outreach.

His words: "We bring this intervention to the Afikpo community, and looking at the crowd here, you can see that we have a lot of diseases that submerge this community. But with intervention like this, people will easily come for health treatment assistance. The most important objective of this health outreach is, to provide medical consultation, to at least

more than 2,000 persons. We want to provide free eye surgical intervention including cataract surgery.

"We want to see whether we can distribute more than 500 reading glasses which are already available with us here. And also do some general surgeries like the removal of lumps, and hernia fluid and other surgeries including gynecological surgeries."

Uduma further explained that the outreach was carried out by the CAMD members to impact their community positively; noting that in the course of preparation for the event, some persons and groups encouraged the organisation, financially,

morally and even spiritually.

"We have been running outreaches, but this is the first edition of the large-scale outreach, which was solely organised by the Conference of Afikpo Medical and Dental Doctors, and largely sponsored by the members with the sponsorship of other partners and illustrious sons of Afikpo, like Afikpo USA organisation. We have carried out a similar free medical outreach to Amasiri, Akpoha, Ozizza and other parts of Afikpo. Sometime, this year, we do glaucoma training, in collaboration with Dr Ginger Eke, and also do other forms of health interventions," he added.

Politics



Sanwo-Olu: It's too early to condemn, accept tribunal judgment – Ananaba

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NEWS INTERVIEWS COMMENTARIES ANALYSES FEATURES

Ganduje bombs Kwakwanso, says he'll remain serial loser in elections

By Lanre Oloyede

National chairman of the governing All Progressives Congress, APC, Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje, Wednesday took a swipe at his political rival from Kano State and former presidential candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party, NNPP, Rabiu Kwankwaso saying he would remain a serial loser at presidential elections.

Ganduje made this statement while hosting the Bauchi state NNPP governorship candidate in the 2023 election, Haliru Dauda Jika, who formally returned back the APC at the national secretariat of the party in Abuja.

The immediate past Kano State governor said that the pursuit of selfish interest as against national interest would continue to hinder the realisation of Kwankwaso's presidential ambition.

He also blamed Kwankwaso's inability to maintain a principled stand in party politics over the years as another factor that made the former minister of defence a perpetual loser.

The APC chairman, who hailed and described the decision of Jika to return back to the ruling party as a step in the right direction, noted that the former NNPP flag bearer in Bauchi state by now must have realised that the 'Kwankwasiyya backed' NNPP as "deceitful and exploitative."

Receiving Jika with the entire NNPP structure in Bauchi state, Ganduje said: "When I got the news that you were coming to see me in my house

to discuss the way forward, I knew I was meeting a very formidable politician in the person of Senator Jika who is a household name in Bauchi state.

"He is returning to a party that is very progressive and focused when we look at where he was coming from. He is coming from a party that used to be a decent party and highly respected but was later hijacked and polluted by the kwankwasiya group.

"We are happy that the original NNPP is taking back its proper position and leaving the kwankwasiya group deserted and thrown out completely.

"The Kwankwasiyya group headed by the former Kano state governor was forced to go into a sabbatical leave for eight years before it found its way back to Government House in Kano.

"The Kwankwasiya head who wears a red cap is the person who prefers to be a king in hell than be a servant in paradise. He specializes in deceiving people. He was first in PDP, came back to APC when it was formed. That was when the nPDP merged with the legacy parties to form the APC.

"Instead of staying in APC because of his ambition, he decided to leave APC after failing to pick the presidential ticket to go back to the PDP. He could not stay there again when he failed to pick the



Ganduje

ticket.

"He still went on his own to contest the presidential poll and was defeated twice. He is a professional contestant for presidential elections and would remain a professional failure. He loves himself so much. I am happy you have dumped the red cap. It is a very sensible action that you have taken."

The chairman then promised the returnees of inclusiveness in the running of the party in the state as part of ongoing effort to reposition the party ahead of the 2027

poll, stressing that the party regretted its performance at the just concluded general elections in the state.

The national chairman then carried out a symbolic change by removing the red cap, usual worn by the Kwankwasiya group and replaced it with the 'broken shackle' insignia cap of President Bola Tinubu to receive Jika and his group to APC fold.

Addressing newsmen after the ceremony, the former NNPP candidate said his decision to return to APC was informed by the wishes of his

teeming supporters in Bauchi state.

He said: "My dumping NNPP for APC has nothing to do with the presidential candidate of NNPP. I have no issue with Kwankwaso. The interest of Bauchi State informed my returning back to APC."

Admitting that Vice President Kashim Shettima and the First Lady, Remi Tinubu also influenced his decision to return to the APC fold, the 9th Assembly senator pledged to remain loyal to APC and to ensure its victory

Nigeria becoming ungovernable, poverty growing, Afenifere tells Tinubu

By Lanre Oloyede

Pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, has decried the never-ending insecurity in Nigeria, noting that the country was becoming ungovernable.

The Afenifere stated this after its meeting at Isanya Ogbo, Ogun State.

It lamented the growing harsh economic realities Nigerians were facing owing to the removal of the subsidy

on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), commonly known as fuel.

The group also called on President Bola Tinubu to trim down the size of his cabinet in order to manage the limited resources in the country.

A statement issued by its National Leader and Secretary, Chief Ayo Adebajo and Chief Olusola Ebiseni, respectively, read: "The people of Nigeria are alarmed by the spate of insecurity in

the country, where Nigerians are now mindlessly not sparing security agents in their numbers, with rescuing military aircraft brought down with impunity in Niger State, scores of university students abducted in Zamfara and are still with their abductors and fate unknown.

"Military officers were mowed down shamefully in Imo State. With hunger in their belly, Nigerians cannot

sleep with the two eyes closed. Nigeria is becoming increasingly ungovernable and ungoverned, despite pretences.

"Since the removal of oil subsidy and other economic policies hastily pronounced without planning for the collateral effects, the Nigerian masses have been abysmally pauperised.

"Afenifere restates its commitment to welfare economics as opposed to

the neo-liberal economic policies currently being pushed.

"The Federal Government needs to open up to Nigerians and those in power to come down from their ostentatious lifestyles.

"From the humongous number of 50 Ministers with an intractable number of aides, it is unacceptable that the people are being called upon to make further sacrifices."

Group berates Yahaya Bello over failure to appoint new Maigari of Lokoja

By Our Correspondent

The Lokoja Forum of Patriots has berated Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello over his failure to appoint a new Maigari of Lokoja one year after the demise of late monarch of the state capital, Alhaji (Dr) Muhammadu Kabir III.

Nigerian Pilot recalled that the former Maigari of Lokoja died on

September 28, 2022.

The Forum made its feelings known in a statement signed by its chairman, Alhaji Idris Babaango, and Secretary, Alhaji Ali Danlami Ibrahim, respectively.

The statement explained that, despite the Lokoja Traditional Council completing the process for the appointment of a new monarch in line with the extant

laws guiding the selection and appointment of a new Maigari, the government is yet to take any action on the matter.

Parts of the statement said, "This development is very strange to the culture of the people of Lokoja.

The tradition and culture of Lokoja abhors vacuum, and this is happening for the first time in the

history of the town.

"For the Throne to continue to remain vacant is not in the best interest of Lokoja and her indigenes, Kogi State and Nigeria as a whole.

"Apart from being the capital of Kogi State and an ancient town which once served as the capital of the defunct Northern Protectorate until the amalgamation of 1914,

Lokoja should be accorded its due rights by having a traditional ruler approved for it without further delay by Your Excellency Sir.

"Sir, Lokoja, the Kogi State capital and her indigenes have been like a flock without a Shepherd since the transition of the late Maigari, we are appealing that you do the needful by approving a new Maigari for us.

Sanwo-Olu: It's too early to condemn, accept tribunal judgment – Ananaba

By Our Correspondent

Legal expert, Professor Paul Ananaba, has cautioned against any hasty conclusion in condemning or accepting the Lagos State Election Petition Tribunal judgment which upheld the election of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

The legal luminary and an Adjunct Professor at the Adventist University of Africa Kenya School of Post Graduate said judgement of any kind is reached based on the available facts and evidences before the judges, however, noting that he hadn't seen the copy of the judgement to make a final submission on that.

"Cases are decided based on the evidence before the court but I think the window is now opened to Rhodes Vivour to go to the appellate court if he is not satisfied.

"Tribunals are either right or wrong in their judgements but I have not seen the Certified True Copy of the judgement so I cannot say categorically whether they are right or wrong.

"But it will be risky to jump into conclusion to

say they are wrong or right because certain interpretations in law may not exactly be as they are in the layman's eyes so if the candidate of the Labour Party is not satisfied with the judgement, he should approach the court; it is fully within his right to do so," he said.

It would be recalled that the Lagos State Governorship Election Tribunal struck out the Labour Party and its candidate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, from the petition of his Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) counterpart, Olajide Adediran popularly known as Jandor, against the recent governorship election.

Jandor is challenging the return of Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Obafemi Hamzat in the March 18 governorship election in Lagos State.

Shortly after the announcement of appearances by all lawyers and parties in the case at Monday's proceeding, chairman of the tribunal, Justice Arum Ashom, announced that the court would first deliver judgment in the case of the PDP & its candidate before giving its judgment in the petition of the governorship candidate of the Labour Party, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour.



Ananaba

Eid-el-Maulud: APC National Chairman felicitates with Muslims, Nigerians, urges support for Tinubu

By Lanre Oloyede

Former Kano State governor and National Chairman of the governing All Progressives Congress, APC, Dr Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, has felicitated with the Muslim Ummah, teeming supporters of the party and all Nigerians on the occasion of this

year's Eid-el-Maulud celebration.

Dr. Ganduje in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Edwin Olofu, called on Nigerians irrespective of their religions and political leanings to remain tolerant, and imbibe the culture of peaceful coexistence required for the unity and progress of the country.

The former Kano State governor used the occasion to appeal to all Nigerians to continue to support and pray for President Bola Tinubu as he tackles the economic and security challenges besetting the country.

He noted: "Warmest wishes to you and your loved ones on this day. May Allah fill your heart

with lots of joy, peace, and good health.

"Let us also use the occasion to pray for our country and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as he takes very bold steps to reposition the country on the path of growth and prosperity.

"The APC-led administration needs your support,

understanding and indeed sacrifice to end the present economic downturn. This will engender our path to economic revival and rejuvenation of the well-being of all citizens.

"May Allah's blessings light up the path that leads to happiness, peace, and success for you and your household. Happy Eid-El-Maulud."

Jandor gives Sanwo-Olu three conditions to accept sit-down with Lagos Governor

By Agency Report

Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, governorship candidate in the 2023 election, Olajide Adediran, popularly known as Jandor, has given conditions that must be met to have a sit-down with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State.

Nigerian Pilot recalls that the Lagos State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal had on Monday affirmed the election of Sanwo-Olu as the duly elected governor of Lagos State, dismissing petitions filed by Jandor and the candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Gbadebo

Rhodes-Vivour.

Reacting to the judgment through his Chief Press Secretary, Gboyega Akosile, Sanwo-Olu called on Adediran and Rhodes-Vivour to collaborate with him to serve the people of the state.

The governor disclosed that he was ready to sit down with the duo and have conversations about their ideas on the development of the state.

But reacting to Sanwo-Olu's offer, Jandor stated that he is ready to honour the request if the governor meets certain conditions.

According to the PDP

governorship candidate, Sanwo-Olu must make public his 1981 original WAEC certificate, make a state-wide broadcast to Lagosians explaining the discrepancies in names on his WAEC result, and explain the reason he asked his lawyers to oppose the application seeking a forensic audit of the WAEC result.

"I just read now that Governor Sanwoolu, in a statement after yesterday's judgement that gave him yet another temporary victory, is calling for a sit down with me so as to move Lagos forward.

"I welcome this call, and I am ready to honour it upon Mr. Sanwoolu's demonstration of honour and respect for the citizens of Lagos by doing the following:

"(1) Make public his 1981 Original WAEC Certificate since he deposited under oath in his INEC form EC9 that he sat for GCE O level in that year

"(2) He must, in a state-wide broadcast, tell Lagosians why the discrepancies in names on WAEC result he presented to INEC and the ones that appear on same 1981 Master list that WAEC tendered at the tribunal,

despite same exam number, exam year, exam centres, but different names

"(3) Explain why you asked your lawyers to oppose our application to do a forensic audit of the WAEC back-end server for further verification.

"I am positive that these are easily doable and won't take any time at all to effect," Adediran said via his X handle @officialjandor.

"We must uphold the core tenets of integrity and accountability, especially as people sworn to the service of the public," he added.

Jandor gives Sanwo-Olu three conditions to accept sit-down with Lagos Governor

By Agency Report

National President of the Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees, Ambali Olatunji, has chided President Bola Tinubu for his economic policy, which he said, is hurting the masses.

Olatunji, who spoke in Benin City, Edo State, during the opening

session of a two-day National Youth Conference organised by the union, also berated Tinubu for running an over-bloated cabinet comprising ministers and a retinue of aides.

Noting that Tinubu needs to understand the plight of the people, Olatunji said that 45 ministers and a horde of aides are a huge burden

on a fragile economy.

He also condemned the removal of fuel subsidy without a mitigation plan and stated that the current economic policy of the administration is hurting the poor and vulnerable most.

He said, "We should be talking of cutting down on the cost of governance at a time like this rather

than doing things that exacerbate the already bad situation. About 26 ministers and a few aides would have sufficed considering what the country is currently undergoing.

"The president also hurriedly removed the fuel subsidy without putting in place measures to cushion the effect and that is why we are at this

abysmal level. Hopefully, he will retrace his steps and the country can move in the right direction.

"You cannot say Nigerians should adjust their standard of living while you live an extravagant life. Nigerians are going through harrowing experiences. People are frustrated but we should not lose hope," he added.

Politics

Tunji Bello felicitates Remi Tinubu on 63rd birthday

By Lanre Oloyede

All Progressives Congress, APC, chieftain, Olatunji Bello, has expressed hearty felicitation with Nigeria's First Lady, Pastor Oluremi Tinubu, on the occasion of her 63rd birthday anniversary.

Bello described the First Lady as a quintessential pillar, who is not only a loving wife, but also a caring mother to her husband, President Bola Tinubu.

"Apart from the Almighty Allah above, Senator Remi Tinubu, a pious disciple of Christ, and devoted woman of prayer, could truly be described as the driving force behind the strings of spectacular accomplishments of her husband in all facets of endeavours, ranging from the corporate arena to the turbulent and exacting world of politics," said the former Lagos State Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources.

"The spirited vigor and unalloyed devotion she



Bello

brought to bear in support of her darling husband during the NADECO struggle against the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, both in Nigeria and the later turn in exile, will forever linger in memory," said the veteran journalist, lawyer and reputable environmental czar.

Noting that Remi Tinubu was naturally a shy woman, who cherished the privacy of the home forte, and abhorred the public glare of politics and politicians, Bello remarked that her ability to sacrifice her cherished old nature, of a pathologically shy and private

person, for politics, coupled with her remarkable ability to master the ropes during her eventful phase of stewardship in elective politics, stood as an apt indication of her unusual mark of genius.

"From a common housewife and mother, which she had so much treasured and would have liked to be and remain just at that, to the First Lady in Lagos State, as well as an elected senator and now the nation's First Lady, Yeye as she is popularly known through her honorific traditional chieftaincy, has indeed come a long way as an encyclopedic store of vast experience, that will not only add value to the incumbent progressive administration of her husband, but is certain to project our great nation to hitherto unattained heights that will make it a force to reckon with in the comity of global nations."

In another vein, he called on Nigerians to lend their whole-hearted support to the incumbent APC-led administration of Asiwaju Bola

Tinubu, which according to him, has started on the right footing.

He added that Tinubu will surely re-enact the success streak that was the hallmarks of his memorable era as governor of Lagos State to bear in lifting the nation to impressively enviable heights.

Noting that the Asiwajuled administration has inherited an insurmountable burden of debts accruing from the Jonathan and Buhari administration, he urged Nigerians to exercise patience as it takes more than a superhuman effort to tackle the problems in their gargantuan proportion.

"This is why we should all count ourselves lucky for having a man like Tinubu at the saddle of presidency at this particularly crucial and critical period, because it takes only a man endowed with his managerial genius not only to cope with the daunting odds, but turning around the situation for good," Bello affirmed.

Osun SA on Environment warns residents against indiscriminate dumping of refuse in waterways

By Richard Akintade, Osogbo

Special Adviser to Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State on Environment and Sanitation, Hon Babatunde Adeniyi Balogun, yesterday warned residents of the state against indiscriminate dumping of refuse in drainages and waterways in order to prevent flooding.

The Special Adviser who gave this warning while having an exclusive interview with newsmen at Orisunmibare market in Osogbo shortly after the evacuation of the refuses

dumped in the waterways called for attitudinal change among the residents to waste disposal and management, adding that the government was committed to continually ensuring a flood-free state.

Hon Balogun who admonished Orisunmibare market traders to collaborate with Governor Adeleke in creating a conducive and hygienic environment, said the incumbent administration of Governor Adeleke had come up with a sustainable way of

managing rivers, streams, and waterways to forestall possible flood incidence in the state.

"I'm appealing to all market men and women of Orisunmibare market that you should all stop dumping refuse into drainage in order to avert flooding. We can all see all the refuses we evacuated from your drainages here in the market alone today" he said.

According to Hon Balogun, the government would not relent in its efforts to continue to open

up its rivers and channelise its waterways and streams to ensure the free flow of water across the nooks and crannies of Osun.

His words, "apart from the fact that some states were warned on the possible flooding in some parts of the country recently, our administration has been proactive in its efforts to ensure proper control of flood in the state in order to ensure that we do not experience flooding in our state.

"Ordinarily, dredging has

become a routine exercise that we do on a regular basis. We dredge our streams, waterways and carnal in anticipation of the flood."

Hon Balogun extolled Governor Adeleke for taking the lives and property of the citizens of the state as a priority.

The Special Adviser, enjoined entire residents of the state to adhere to the personal and basic hygienic tips designed to prevent a flood, warning them against unlawful disposal

Lagos gov'ship poll: Rhodes-Vivour discloses next move after court affirms Sanwo-Olu's victory

By Agency Report

Governorship candidate of the Labour Party, LP, in Lagos, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour has announced his intention to appeal the verdict of the Lagos State Governorship Election Petitions Tribunal.

Rhodes-Vivour stated this in a press statement while

sharing his stance on the judgement.

He insisted that the essence of democracy not only lies in one's ability to vote but also the capacity to defend the votes.

"The essence of democracy lies not only in our ability to vote but also in our capacity to defend the integrity of that

vote.

"Consequently, our laws allow Governorship candidates to challenge the decisions of the electoral tribunals at the Court of Appeal, and up to the Supreme Court. In light of this, my lawyers have been instructed to appeal this judgment, as we remain confident of getting substantial

justice at the appellate courts," he said.

While urging his supporters and Lagosians in general to remain calm, peaceful, and law-abiding, Rhodes-Vivour expressed the hope of getting substantial justice at the appellate courts.

"In these trying times, your unwavering support means the

world to us, we must remain united, vigilant, and hopeful.

"The ultimate victory may take time to come our way, but it is, we strongly believe inevitable as we have come to understand that the wheels or justice may sometimes grind slowly but it definitely grinds to a sure end," the LP candidate added.

WACSOF gets new General Secretary

By Okechukwu Jombo

Executive Committee of the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) has approved the appointment of Mr. Kop'ep Dabugat as the forum's new General Secretary.

Mr. Kop'ep, a Nigerian citizen, holds a Bachelor's degree in International Studies from the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and a Master's degree

in International Relations and Strategic Studies from the University of Jos, Nigeria. He also holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Governance, Democratization and Public Policy from the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands. He has trained on several topics with relevance to advocacy around issues of regional integration

and development as well as multi-stakeholder constructive engagement around social justice and development issues.

An expert of the Civil Society/Non-State Actors engagement, Kop'ep has supported the work of different civil society organizations in different capacities cutting across all levels of the African society - sub-national, national,

regional and continental. He has had considerable experience in the design and deployment of frameworks and mechanisms for Civil Society coordination and constructive engagement with governments, international organizations, and sub-regional, regional and continental institutions in Africa.

The WACSOF new Secretary

General has represented Civil Society in several global and Africa-level committees, including the Leadership Council of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) from 2017 to 2019 and the Steering Committee of the Partnership for Aflatoxins Control in Africa (PACA) currently housed by the African Union from 2017 onwards.

Ondo: Ilaje people protest against plot to impeach their son, Dep Gov Aiyedatiwa

By Our Correspondent

Plot to impeach the Deputy Governor of Ondo State; Mr Lucky Aiyedatiwa took an ethnic colouration on Tuesday, as hundreds of indigenes of Ilaje community in the Ilaje Local Government Area of the state stormed Akure, the state capital, to protest against the ongoing impeachment process.

Nigerian Pilot reports that Aiyedatiwa, an Ilaje man, had been served the impeachment notice by the state House of Assembly and was expected to respond to all the allegations in the notice.

He, however claimed he had not been served, and secured a temporal relief on Tuesday when an Abuja court gave an

interim injunction against the state House of Assembly.

The protesters, who gathered in front of the entrance of the Assembly gate with leaves in their hands, chanted various solidarity songs to express their support for the embattled deputy governor.

Some of them carried placards with inscriptions such as "Justice for Lucky, Lucky is innocent"; "Stop accusing him wrongly"; "Ilaje Nation stands with Aiyedatiwa"; "Aketi, Lucky is not your enemy," and "Let Lucky finish his term," among several others.

They also alleged that the impeachment proceedings were a plot to take Aiyedatiwa out of the race of the 2024 governorship election in the state.

A leader of the protesters and founder of Ilaje World Congress, Mr Ola Juda,



Aiyedatiwa

while speaking on the development, declared that the indigenes of Ilaje would not tolerate the impeachment move against Aiyedatiwa.

He said: "This gathering is the gathering of sons

and daughters of Ilaje land; not only Ilaje, but we also have other sympathisers from Akure and Ese-Odo Idanre axis that have come together to protest against injustice and the battle that is going

to erupt in Ondo State. The peace of Ondo State is being threatened by the actions of the Ondo State House of Assembly.

"For the past decades, an Ilaje man has never been a deputy governor but for the first time, we have a deputy governor, and yet powers that be have vowed that he will not finish his tenure. Aketi/Lucky mandate was given to both of them and if Aketi is still the governor of Ondo State, our mandate as the deputy governor remains."

Although no member of the House came out to address the protesters, the Akure Area Commander of the Ondo State Police Command, Mr Nzota Chidi, who addressed the protesters, advised them to be peaceful in order not to be infiltrated by miscreants.

I'll resist political interference in CBN- Cardoso

By Lanre Oloyede

Newly confirmed governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Dr. Yemi Cardoso, has assured that he and his team will not be hijacked by politicians as they discharge their duties at the apex bank.

The CBN boss said this while appearing before the Senate during the screening of his appointment on the floor of the Red Chamber in Abuja, on Tuesday.

The Senate unanimously confirmed his appointment after being screened by the law makers.

The Senate also confirmed

the nomination of four deputy governors of the apex bank, including Dr. Bala Bello, Mrs. Emem Nnan Usoro, Muhammad Sani Abdullahi and Mr. Philip Ikeazor.

Senate President Godswill Akpabio had asked Cardoso if he would be influenced and hijacked by politicians when he assumed office.

Responding, the CBN governor said, "It is important that we, who are considered for this position today, understand that this is a position of trust.

"With that comes a huge responsibility to meet up with that trust. I know that a lot of time and effort has gone into choosing the people who are standing here for nomination

today.

"As far as I am concerned, under my leadership, we will not be hijacked by anybody. The idea is to ensure that we do what is right, when it is right, and how it is right. We've seen what the effect of not doing right has been, and we do not intend for that to be repeated."

2027: Olawepo-Hashim canvasses new reforms on INEC, election petition

By Agency Report

Former Presidential Candidate and a Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Mr. Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, has canvassed a further reform of the Electoral Act that will address the recruitment of the leadership of the nation's electoral umpire, the Independent Electoral Commission, INEC and make it truly "independent" of "external control and influence" before the 2027 election.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established by the 1999 Constitution of the

Federal Republic of Nigeria to among other things organize elections into various political offices in the country.

The functions of INEC as contained in Section 15, Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (As Amended) and Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended)

Speaking to newsmen in Abuja on Monday, Olawepo-Hashim recommended that the position of the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and National Commissioners should be advertised and not appointed by the President.

He also stressed the fact that the Electoral Act should put the

onus of proof of the conduct of credible election on INEC and not on the petitioner.

He revealed that during the military regimes, he and other activists fought for a truly independent INEC, the positions should be advertised, while the National Judicial Service Commission (NJSC) should be the collation agency, independent of the Executive.

According to him, "In 1999, we won the election on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). But who were those that asked for an independent electoral commission? We were the ones. We were not behaving like people who were sure they were going to get power, because

we were believers in democracy.

"So, Nigerians need believers in democracy across parties to survive, not APC and PDP. This is beyond APC, PDP. If we don't 'sort out' the electoral system right now, and not six months to election, or one year, the 2027 election is going to be war. Nobody will be going to court. So, we don't want that now.

"Nigeria needs statesmen not politicians. We don't need politicians in the driver's seats of the reform of our state institutions. We need statesmen to speak up.

Olawepo-Hashim maintained that the "issue of electoral reform is not the business for the opposition alone. It is the

business for everyone who loves Nigeria because if we don't reform the process, and election can't be delivered credibly, 2027 will be war."

He added: "We have to rescue the democratic process because it is becoming meaningless. Why are we having coup d'etat all over Africa? It is because people did not see any content in what we call democracy."

According to Olawepo-Hashim "I know that people have their expectations in the judiciary but judges adjudicate based on law and evidence and the truth of the matter is that the Electoral Act has skewed the balance in favour of the winner of the election and the man who organized the election."

2027: Olawepo-Hashim canvasses new reforms on INEC, election petition

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Life

Twitter's rebrand: Why 'x' could be the most powerful letter in English



As letters of the alphabet go, there is one that punches well above its weight. Out of a total of 308,000 entries in the Oxford English Dictionary, just 366 words begin with the letter "x", and very few of those make it into most people's vocabulary. Yet despite this aloofness – or perhaps because of it – x is perhaps the most powerful and alluring letter we have.

X-Files, X-Factor, X-Men, Generation X, X-rays, X-rated, Planet X... the letter is embraced in popular culture and by brands as shorthand for something unknown, futuristic or provocative. Its shape can signify everything from love (the kisses we use to sign off our emails and texts), to absence, prohibition and even death (as with the skull and crossbone). It's impressive for a letter that Dr Samuel Johnson described in 1755's Dictionary of the English Language as: "a letter which though found in Saxon words, begins no word in the English language."

This week, the 24th letter of the alphabet was thrust into the spotlight once again, as Elon Musk announced an abrupt rebrand of Twitter – the social media company he bought in October 2022 for \$44bn. The site's iconic blue bird logo is no more, replaced by a black letter X, part of Musk's long-term plan to be a "platform that can deliver, well... everything."

Musk says he chose x because it "embod[ies] the imperfections in us all that make us unique". His fascination with it dates back over two decades, first evident in 1999 when he named his online banking service X.com, before it later evolved into PayPal. He bought the web domain back in 2017, claiming it had "great sentimental value." He named an early Tesla car Model X, and his space exploration programme SpaceX. In 2020, Musk had a son with the musician Grimes, and the couple named him X Æ A-12 Musk.

The tech industry seems to have a particular fondness for the letter. Besides

Musk's X, there's Microsoft's gaming console Xbox, Sony's Xperia smartphone, Apple's iPhone X and operating system OS X. In 2010, Google chose the letter for the name of its secret idea-testing laboratory, first known as Google X and now simply X – its self-described "moonshot factory" for technologies that it claims will "improve the lives of million, even billions, of people". There are reports that Meta – the Mark Zuckerberg-controlled parent company of Facebook, Instagram and Threads – has already trademarked an X logo for social media use, meaning there could be a trademark war ahead.

So why are the tech titans tussling it out for this one single letter, when there are 25 others they could draw on instead? Tony Thorne, Director of the Slang and New Language Archive at King's College, London, sees it as an attempt to appear enigmatic, by invoking various vague scientific terms like exponential, experiential and experimental. "X is the only letter of the alphabet to not feature in many everyday words, but to also appear in multiple mathematical and technical contexts which baffle and intrigue most of us techno-illiterates," he tells BBC Culture. There's the implication of something important, unknowable and exciting – a symbol of possibility. For Thorne, though, its overuse is beginning to backfire. "Now it's approaching a cliché."

Part of the power of x is that it isn't just a letter, it's a symbol: one that humans have been making for millennia. "It's such a primal designation act, x," says Drucker. "In the earliest sign systems that humans make, crosses and circles are so fundamental because they're so easy to make. We've got stones from France from 20,000 years ago that have crosses and circles on them." From the Middle Ages, those who were illiterate used X as a signature.

The letter X has had a somewhat muddled history, perhaps contributing to its malleable meanings. It originally

derives from a Phoenician letter called samekh, meaning fish, which was used to represent the sound "s". "The Greeks borrowed it, called it 'Chi', used it for the 'kh' sound and wrote it as a diagonal cross," explains Thorne. The Romans later adopted the x sound from the Chalcidian alphabet, a Western variant of the Greek alphabet, and combined it with the Chi (x) symbol and x as we know it today was born. It's also one of seven letters used in the Roman numerical system.

The letter's air of mystery came relatively late. "Part of the mystique of x comes from algebra, where it stands for the unknown that has to be solved," says Drucker. "That comes with the whole rational, mathematical enlightenment." In the 17th Century, Descartes designated the letters x, y and z to represent unknowns (with a, b and c as knowns). Out of these three letters, it is x that has emerged as the dominant symbol of mystery, conjuring the strange, the alien, the exotic.

When German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen discovered a new kind of radiation in 1895, he called it an X-ray because its nature was unknown. To have the X-factor is to possess some intangible star quality. In sci-fi, x comes to represent something otherworldly, extraterrestrial. This ambiguity isn't always positive. Think pieces on Generation X – those born between 1965 and 1980 – often described them as a lost, aimless generation.

The letter can also signify an absence or an erasure. The X in civil rights activist Malcolm X's name stood for his unknown African name, taken from his ancestors during slavery. The Straight Edge punk movement – who abstain from alcohol, tobacco and drugs – use X as their identifier. Yet, at other times x symbolises a presence – x marks the spot; the x used to mark our choice on a ballot paper. It is a letter full of contradictions.

It also has a whiff of sexual danger. John Singer Sargent's provocative painting Madame X, depicting an American woman known for her extra-marital

affairs, scandalised late 19th-Century Paris. In 1951, the British Board of Film Censors introduced the X certificate to indicate a film was "extremely graphic." Though this originally referred to violence and bad language as well as sex, "X-rated" was co-opted by the porn industry and is now shorthand for sexually explicit material.

Its association with the extreme seems apt for Elon Musk who, when he first bought Twitter, asked staff to commit to an "extremely hardcore" working culture.

The letter x doesn't just have multiple meanings, but multiple pronunciations too – not ideal when you make it the centrepiece of your huge global brand. There's confusion on what it might be called in Japan, where the term X Japan is already trademarked by a rock band.

It's assumed Musk wants his X to be something akin to China's WeChat, an app where users can communicate, consume news, make purchases, pay bills and even order a taxi. For an app that will offer such disparate services, it perhaps makes sense to use a symbol with so many meanings.

But the rebrand has got off to a bumpy and confusing start. Police arrived midway through the removal of the twitter sign from the company's San Francisco headquarters, putting a halt to the "unauthorised work" and leaving just "er" hanging on the building. There is uncertainty about how we will talk about X, too. Will tweets now be Xs? The word "tweet" made it into the dictionary as a verb – what will the equivalent be?

"Because of its multiple potential, sometimes contradictory meanings, the X symbol at first sight will certainly strike many as mysterious, puzzling, perhaps intriguing, but should a brand be provoking uncertainty or confusion?" asks Thorne. The future of Musk's X project is yet to be seen – but harnessing the power of this most beguiling and shape-shifting of letters might prove too much, even for the world's richest man.

SPORTS



Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania to host AFCON 2027

Independence Golf Tournament: Golfers from Nigeria, Ghana, others jostle for Car Star Prize

Sports

SWAN President lauds Delta Government for sports development

By Anastacia Eluwa, Asaba

President of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria, SWAN, Comrade Isaiah Benjamin has applauded the Delta State Government for its commitment to Sports development.

The President accompanied by members of the National Executive Council said Delta State had shown that it was the leader in Nigerian sports saying with the hosting of the 7th edition of the National Youth Games the State had taken the Youth Games a notch higher.

According to Comrade Benjamin the State had become a haven for sportsmen and women saying the ongoing National Youth Games had raised the stakes saying it is now on record as the most attended Youth Games by journalists from within and outside the State.

He also commended the Executive Chairman of the Delta State Sports Commission, Chief Tonobok Okowa for his adroitness and commitment to grassroots sports development, saying his time at the helm of Delta State Sports Commission had made the state the dominant force in the Nigerian Sports sector.

Comrade Benjamin however urged journalists covering the games to give it adequate reportage as the games was an avenue for national integration and unity as well as a platform for the discovery of future talents for the country.

In his speech, the Chairman of the State Sports Commission Chief Tonobok Okowa assured that he would continue to grow the grassroots sports sector saying sports was a passion and way of life.

Chief Okowa thanked the SWAN President and members of NEC as well as journalists covering the games for the quality reportage and urged them to shun divisive tendencies that would undermine the positives of the games.

He said the National Youth Games was

key to placing Nigeria on the right pedestal for international greatness.

Okowa who is also the President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria urged the various participating teams to compete clean and fair and warned those seeking to win at all cost by fielding over aged athletes to desist as that would be counter productive for the athlete.

The highlight of the visit was the presentation of Certificate and a plaque in recognition of Chief Okowa's performance in the Nigerian sports space since taking the reins at the State Sports Commission and the Athletics Federation of Nigeria AFN.



NFF appoints Chris Danjuma as Falcons' Head Coach

By Asuelimen Osasuyi

Christopher Musa Danjuma has returned to his job as Head Coach of the U20 Women National Team, Falcons, following a screening and interview process by the NFF Technical Committee. The committee submitted its recommendation and the same has been approved by the NFF Executive Committee.

The process began with a one-week public notice which requested for applications from suitably qualified persons, after which short-listed candidates were contacted and interviewed by a panel of the Technical Committee.

Danjuma, who has taken temporary charge of the Senior Women National Team, Super Falcons, on a couple of occasions, led the Falcons to the quarter-finals of last year's FIFA U20 Women's World Cup finals in Costa Rica.

The experienced gaffer will be assisted by former U20 and

U17 girls' assistant coach Mansur Abdullahi, and former Super Falcons' midfielder Effioanwan Ekpo.

Ekpo, who represented Nigeria for 10 years between 2000 and 2010, featured at the 2003 and 2007 FIFA World Cup finals in USA and China respectively, at the 2004 and 2008 Women Olympic Football Tournaments in Athens and Beijing respectively, and was a Women Africa Cup of Nations gold medallist on three occasions. She also featured at the 2007 All-Africa Games in Algiers.

Yahaya Audu, who has been goalkeeper trainer of the team, also returns to his position.

The Falcons will commence their 2024 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup qualifying campaign with a second round, first leg encounter against their counterparts from Mauritius in Saint Pierre on Sunday, 8th October, with the return leg scheduled for the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abuja on Saturday, 14th October 2023.

Colombia will stage the 2024 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup finals.



Kenya, Uganda to host AFCO

By Asuelimen Osasuyi

Confederation of African Football, CAF, Wednesday awarded the rights to host the African Cup of Nations, AFCON 2027 to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

No reason has been given why Nigeria's bid to co-host the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations with Benin

Republic was rejected.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) made the announcement at the end of its executive committee meeting on Wednesday.

Nigeria last hosted Africa's largest football competition in 1980 and 2000.

The country co-hosted the competition alongside Ghana.

The updates coming from Cairo, Egypt

Independence Golf Tournament: others jostle for Car Star Prize

The 63rd Independence Golf Tournament tees off Wednesday at the IBB Golf Club, Abuja with 500 golfers from Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Cameroon and Uganda.

Out of the 500 registered golfers only Handicap 0-18 professionals are eligible to slug it out for the Car Star prize which was proudly sponsored by PAN Nigeria. Other golfers are to compete for other prizes.

The 2023 Independence Golf Tournament is scheduled to come to an end on 1st October where the overall winner will cruise home with a brand new car.

This year's tournament will feature a challenging course that will test the skills and strategies of every golfer. With pristine fairways and meticulously maintained greens, the IBB Golf Club provides the perfect backdrop for an

unforgettable week of golf.

IBB Golf Captain, Dr. Banjo Obaleye said, "We are thrilled to host the Independence Golf Tournament once again, and we wanted to make this year's event extra special."

"We are also using the platform and wonderful game of golf to highlight the business opportunities in Nigeria and promote vibrant trade between African countries. This year's event will include a business dinner with delegates from the other African countries."

"The tournament will also offer opportunities for networking, socializing, and enjoying the camaraderie of fellow golf enthusiasts."

This event is a celebration of our nation's independence and a testament to the passion and dedication that golfers bring to the sport.

The Chairman of the Independence Cup Organising Committee, and the Club's Vice Captain, Ibrahim Babayo assured the golfers, the media and the public a show stopper event."

Sports



da, Tanzania N 2027

Osimhen to quit Napoli in January, yet to renew contract

By Afolabi Johnson

It appears that the relationship between Victor Osimhen and his Italian club, Napoli, has taken a significant hit following controversial posts on the club's official TikTok account that targeted the Nigerian striker.

The Nigerian international has finally made up his mind to quit Naples at the next transfer window in January with less than two years remaining on his contract.

According to Osimhen's agent Omo Akatugba the prolific striker has refused to extend the contract despite pressure from Napoli's management at the end of last season.

The 24-year-old striker, has had a tumultuous time last weekend after their goalless outing with Bologna where he missed a penalty.

He found himself in a heated argument with his manager after being substituted during the club's goalless draw.

In an attempt to make amends, Victor offered an apology to his manager, and teammates explaining his frustration with the situation.

Just when it seemed like things might settle down, Napoli's official TikTok account posted two derogatory videos about Victor Osimhen. These posts quickly ignited a firestorm on social media, with many fans accusing the club of racism.

The fallout from these posts has strained the already fragile relationship between Osimhen and Napoli to the point where the player removed all Napoli-related content from his Instagram account.

In response to the controversy, Osimhen's agent, Roberto Calenda, issued a statement in which he threatened legal action against Napoli.

Calenda stated, "What happened today

on Napoli's official profile on the TikTok platform is not acceptable. A video mocking Victor was first made public and then, but now belatedly, deleted.

"This is a serious matter that has caused significant harm to the player, adding to the challenges he has faced recently, including media scrutiny and fake news. We reserve the right to take legal action and any necessary steps to protect Victor."



Amusan battles Brume, Oshoala, Osimhen for Africa Prize award

By Afolabi Johnson

World 100m hurdles record holder and three-time Diamond League champion, Tobi Amusan tops the list of six athletes who will battle for the the Future Awards Africa Prize for Sports.

The award which comes up later in the year at a prestigious ceremony at yet to named venue celebrates remarkable achievements and outstanding talent in the world of sports and recognizes athletes who have distinguished themselves through exceptional skills, determination, and perseverance, overcoming obstacles and inspiring others.

Amusan will battle fellow track and field athlete, long jumper Ese Brume, two Falcons players, Asisat Oshoala and Michelle Alozie; Super Eagles forward Victor Osimhen and professional squash player,

Mary Busayo Olatunji.

Amusan battled through the emotional trauma of a provisional suspension following the Athletics Integrity Unit's charge for three whereabouts failures, an anti-doping rule violations to win a hat-trick of Diamond League 100m hurdles title in Oregon, USA two weeks ago.

The 26 year old's main competitor would be Asisat Oshoala who made history as the first Nigerian woman to be nominated for the ballon d'or award and Osimhen who led Napoli to a first Serie A title in 33 years.

The 24 year old Osimhen also made history as the first African to finish a Serie A season as top scorer as well as the top scoring African of all-time in the competition and the highest scoring African in a single season.

the headquarters of the Confederation of African Football, CAF, indicated that Morocco has been given the nod to stage the 2025 African Cup of Nations.

The coast becomes clearer for the North African country on Tuesday when their closest challenger Algeria withdrew from the bidding process.

Nigeria and Benin also tendered their withdrawal letter in the early hours

of Wednesday as the Executive Committee meeting of the football was about to start. The late withdrawal was Zambia from the 2025 edition left Morocco as the only candidate bidding to host the competition and they were unanimously awarded the hosting right. Morocco last hosted the biennial competition in 1988.

Golfers from Nigeria, Ghana,



Sports



Wilfred Ndidi attracts Barcelona's interest

FC Barcelona are reportedly planning to sign Nigerian midfielder, Wilfred Ndidi on a free transfer when his current contract with Leicester City expires on June 30, 2024.

A report by Spanish newspaper Barca Universal claimed that Wilfred Ndidi is available for free transfer to LaLiga winners Barcelona, who significantly rely on free-agent players due to their financial situation.

Inigo Martinez from Athletic Bilbao, Ikey Gündoan from Manchester City, and the

Portuguese combo of Joao Cancelo and Joao Felix on loans from Atletico Madrid and Manchester City, respectively, were all added to Barcelona's roster this season.

The La Liga champions will once again be searching for free agents to enhance their lineup due to the club's less-than-ideal financial status.

Ahead of next summer's transfer window, the team has already identified a few players with expiring contracts as prospective targets.

Ndidi, whose contract with the Foxes expires in the summer of 2024, is reportedly FC Barcelona's target.

Barça are keeping a close eye on his status as they consider approaching him about signing a Bosman contract.

Ndidi is reportedly ready to make the move next summer as far as FC Barcelona make an offer.

Some seasons ago, FC Barcelona tried to sign the 26-year-old Nigerian midfielder but were discouraged by Leicester City's €70 million asking price.

Russia to compete in European U17 Championships- UEFA

For the first time since its invasion of Ukraine 19 months ago, Russia will be allowed to compete in the European U17 championships.

UEFA banned any Russian teams from taking part in any European football competitions after Russia started its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Additionally, it cancelled the sponsorship agreement with Russian energy firm Gazprom, and revoked the hosting rights for the 2022 Champions League final and 2023 Super Cup, which were scheduled to be held in Saint Petersburg and Kazan, respectively.

However, UEFA is making room for Russian male and female teams to reenter Under-17 events even if they have started already.

Additionally, it was said that neither team would be allowed to hoist their flag, sing their national anthem, and play European games in Russia.

In 2024, Cyprus is slated to host the finals of the forthcoming Under-17 male

European Championship. The women's equivalent will be held in Sweden in May of 2024. Based on the new development, Russian under-17 teams are likely to participate in those events.

The other Russian teams are still suspended, according to UEFA, which has reiterated its condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Uefa's continuing suspension against Russian adult teams reflects its commitment to take a stand against violence and aggression. Uefa is determined that this position will continue until the war is over and peace restored," UEFA's president Aleksander Ceferin said.

"But by banning children from our competitions, we do not only fail to recognize and uphold a fundamental right for their holistic development but we directly discriminate against them.

"By providing opportunities to play and compete with their peers from all over Europe, we are investing in what we hope will be a brighter and more capable future generation and a better tomorrow."



2023 NYG: Benue defeats Lagos State, edge closer to medal bout in Taekwondo

By Anastacia Eluwa, Asaba

Emmanuel Abba of Benue State has defeated David Fatoye of Lagos state in Taekwondo to edge closer to medal bout.

The Benue boy won the fight in two straight rounds with the score screen reading nine – six in the first round and fourteen – nine in the second in favour of Abba who was fighting from the red corner.

In his next fight Emmanuel Abba will take on Festus Goodluck of Edo state who beat Ezra Tomo from Kebbi state in their battle.

In Chess, Serenity Iorember is a medal hopeful for team Benue after racking in six out of eight points to place third on table four with competition set to be concluded in Chess Wednesday.

Benue athletes are still involved in competitions at various stages of different sports including Athletics, Chess, and Tennis with karate contest scheduled for Thursday.

Ollie Watkins close to new Villa deal

Ollie Watkins is on the brink of penning a new contract with Aston Villa.

The striker's current agreement expires in the summer of 2025.

In recent months, Watkins has been linked with clubs such as Bayern Munich, Manchester United, Arsenal and Tottenham.

Now talkSPORT states that Watkins is ready to sign a new, long-term contract.

The parties have been negotiating since the end of last season and there is a strong desire from both sides to reach an agreement.



Arsenal ponder swap bid for Brentford striker Toney

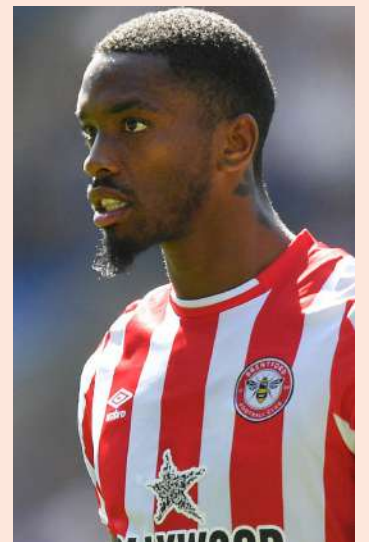
Arsenal considering a swap offer for Brentford striker Ivan Toney.

Currently serving a betting ban to January, Toney has changed agents and informed manager Thomas Frank he wishes to leave in the New Year.

Arsenal are among suitors and they could propose a swap, says the Mirror.

The Gunners are considering including Eddie Nketiah in their offer to encourage the Bees to part with Toney.

For his part, Toney is open to moving to Arsenal in January.



Liverpool pushes to land Amrabat

Premier League giants Liverpool could have stolen a march on Manchester United in the transfer market.

The Reds were hours away from signing Sofyan Amrabat this summer from Fiorentina.

The Moroccan midfielder, who eventually ended up at United on loan on deadline day, could have been playing in Merseyside instead.

Per The Mail, Amrabat did hold talks with Liverpool, but was always more eager to join United.

The veteran's reluctance to agree terms led to Liverpool moving for Ryan Gravenberch instead.

United were then able to secure a deal for Amrabat, which had to be a loan due to their financial issues.



Real Madrid adds De Zerbi to shortlist

Brighton boss Roberto de Zerbi is on the radar of Real Madrid president Florentino Perez.

Real coach Carlo Ancelotti's contract runs to the end of the season and he is expected to leave - no matter how the season concludes - for the Brazil job.

Radio Marca says Real Madrid are focusing on Xabi Alonso, of Bayer Leverkusen, for next

season.

But Cadena SER now states that while Alonso is a hot candidate, De Zerbi is also on Real Madrid's wish list.

The Italian coach has Brighton inside the top four and competing in the Europa League for the first time.

De Zerbi has a contract until the summer of 2026.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

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Adelabu proffers solutions to prepaid metering challenges in electricity market ▶▶ 20

Manufacturers lament N272bn unsold goods in Q1

By Kehinde Ibrahim, Lagos

CONSUMERS' low purchasing power occasioned by the surging inflation rate in Nigeria is making many products unaffordable as manufacturers' inventory of unsold finished goods rose by 45.4 per cent in one year, according to the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN).

Inventory of unsold products in the manufacturing sector rose to N272 billion in the first half of 2023 from N187.1 billion in the same period of last year, MAN's latest half-yearly review report released shows.

"This indicates a substantial rise of N84.9 billion or 45.4 per cent over this timeframe. However, there was an N11.6 billion or 4.1 per cent decline when compared with the inventory value of N283.6 billion recorded in H2 2022," the report said.

However, the manufacturing sector factory output value increased to N4.10 trillion in the same period.

It stated that the manufacturing sector factory output value rose to N4.10 trillion from N3.99 trillion recorded in the corresponding half of 2022, indicating 2.8 per cent increase over the period. It also increased by 52.8 per cent when compared with N2.68 trillion recorded in the preceding half.

The MAN report attributed the increase in inventory to a weakened purchasing power of the consumers, brought about by diminishing real household income resulting from the ongoing escalation of inflationary pressures, compounded by the scarcity of naira in Q1 and the aftermath of the subsidy removal.

When President Bola Tinubu announced the removal of the petrol subsidy on May 29, pump prices surged to as high as N617 per litre from N184, while the value of the naira has plunged following the floating of the currency.

The floating of the currency has increased the official rate from N463.38/\$ to N773.25/\$ as at Monday. The gap between the official and black market expanded to N227.

The high cost of dollars and the implementation of a 7.5 per cent value added tax on diesel imports have pushed its pump price to as high as N1,200 per litre.

According to MAN, the 2.8 per cent increase in the monetary value (not real output) of manufacturing sector production over the period of one year when inflation is at 24.08 per cent at the same period indicates a struggling sector.

"The manufacturing sector faced myriads of challenges in the first half of 2023. The residual effect of naira redesign and the removal of fuel subsidy towards the end of the period under review triggers inflationary pressure, cost of transportation,

cost of production and other macroeconomics imbalances, thereby worsening the purchasing power of the households.

"Key sectors like manufacturing and agriculture, which play a vital role in Nigeria's economy, suffer as higher fuel costs drive up expenses related to machinery, irrigation, and transportation.

"These led to increase in the prices of food and other products, impacting both productivity and social stability. The uncertainty stemming from this policy change has undermined investor confidence, hampering both domestic and foreign investments that are crucial for economic growth and job creation," MAN pointed out.

Meanwhile, capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector in the period under review, declined by 1.4 per cent year-on-year to 56.5 per cent from 57.9 per cent recorded in the corresponding half of 2022.

The director-general of MAN, Segun Ajayi-Kadir said that 2023 started with uncertainty in the economy as a result of Naira redesign policy of the Central Bank that led to naira crunch and the usual dormant economic activities prior to general election.

He noted that the re-infusion of the old currency notes which was initially moved out of circulation brought a promising outlook to the economy. Consequently, a short-lived uptick in economic activities, especially in the informal sector was experienced.

In restoring economy growth trajectory, Ajayi-Kadir stated that the government should engage in constructive dialogue with the stakeholders in the private sector; provide clear and consistent policies to provide certainty for businesses; conduct a comprehensive economic impact assessment of the fuel subsidy removal, exchange rate changes, and other policy measures; ensure effective implementation of the plans to support the manufacturing sector and MSMEs; infrastructure development; transparent and efficient implementation; regulatory reforms; among others.

He added that the government should prioritise forex intervention for raw materials and machinery for industries; improve forex allocation to the industrial sector; develop a roadmap for improved power supply, including off-grid solutions and private sector-driven independent power projects; resuscitate national refineries for local fuel production; review domestic gas pricing among others.

Last month, the country's inflation rate rose to an 18-year high of 25.80 percent from 24.08 percent in July, according to the National Bureau Statistics (NBS).

Data from the latest Purchasing Managers' Index, by Stanbic IBTC Bank, shows that high inflationary pressures dropped business activities for the third straight month to 50.2 in August, the lowest in five months from 51.7 in July.

The latest aggregate Manufacturers CEO's Confidence Index (MCCI) of MAN also shows that manufacturers' confidence in the economy dropped to the lowest in nearly two years Q2.

The index declined for the third straight quarter to 52.7 points in Q2 from 54.1 points in the previous quarter.

The challenging macroeconomic issues impacted on the manufacturing sector as its growth rate slowed to the lowest in three years.

Data from the NBS shows that the real GDP growth of the sector stood at 2.2 per cent in Q2, the lowest since Q2 2020.

The subsidy removal and exchange rate unification policy towards the end of the first half left the economy uncertain, causing a ripple effect that further eroded investors' confidence, according to manufacturers.

"As a result, businesses and foreign investors are increasingly wary of committing capital, thereby hindering economic growth and prospects for recovery," they said.

The MAN report also revealed that a total of 3,567 jobs were lost in H1, indicating 1,855 more job lost when compared with the 1,709 jobs lost in corresponding half of 2022 and 850 more jobs lost when compared with 2708 jobs lost in the last half of last year.

"The decline in the number of jobs created in the sector during the period further highlighted the unfriendly business environment resulting from the hasty policies and residual effect of the currency redesign policy that led to naira crunch," it said.

According to the association, capacity utilisation declined to 56.5 per cent from 57.9 per cent recorded in the corresponding half of 2022 and cost of funds for manufacturers rose to 24 per cent from 22.0 per cent in H2 last year.

"The continuous upward adjustments significantly influence the lending rates offered by commercial banks to industries in the Monetary Policy Rate," MAN said.

The association recommends that the challenges in the manufacturing sector should be promptly and effectively addressed.



CBN Gov, Cardoso to discontinue Emeifele's policies ▶▶ 22

THE TEAM

- Onu Okorie - Business Editor
- Kehinde Ibrahim - Money&Capital Market
- Palma Ileye - Tourism

Business

Adelabu proffers solutions to prepaid metering challenges in electricity market

By Onu Okorie

The Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu has offered some tangible solutions being considered by the Ministry to addressing prepaid metering challenges and closing the gap to move the sector forward.

Adelabu made this known in his remark during the meeting

with the Association of Meter Manufacturers of Nigeria AMMON yesterday in Abuja.

He informed the Association that he is presently on a bilateral engagement with all stakeholders, in his bid to further understand the challenges of each player in the power sector.

Adelabu further charged

AMMON to submit their observation of the industry issues based on their perspective with a view to harmonising all strategies that will make the system work.

Earlier in his remark, Engr. Agoro stated that AMMON is offering the Minister the needed support for a fact-finding meeting that will culminate into a strategy for the revamp of the power sector.

He said, "Chief Adelabu demonstrated knowledge

of the sector and potential solutions to the issues facing local manufacturers of meters.

"As a body, we are pleased that we have a minister who is patriotic, ready to work hard, understand sectoral issues and deliver performance while using both his professional and business acumen to reposition the sector," AMMON President said.

The Association pledged to support the Minister of Power in his efforts to address issues with

the power sector and achieve the universal metering of households in Nigeria with total commitment and patriotism.

Agoro therefore seeks the support of all power sector stakeholders to work with the Minister for Nigeria to have an efficient power sector that addresses the demands of all Nigerians.

According to him, the Minister had barely spent four weeks in office and met lots of challenges in the power sector.

Stanbic IBTC Bank celebrates outstanding achievements at global awards

By Kehinde Ibrahim, Lagos

STANBIC IBTC Bank, a leading financial services provider, has announced its recent recognition at the prestigious Global Transaction Banking Innovation Awards. The award, presented during a gala event held on Thursday, 21 September 2023, acknowledges Stanbic IBTC's exceptional contributions and innovation in the field of Transaction Banking.

Stanbic IBTC won in four categories including: Best Bank for Trade Finance in Nigeria, Best Custodian Bank in Nigeria, Outstanding Digital Transformation by a Transaction or Wholesale Bank in COVID-19 and Best ERP Integration Initiative.

This coveted award underscores our unwavering commitment to facilitating global trade, fostering economic growth, and providing invaluable support to businesses. With a track record of excellence and a dedication to innovation, Stanbic IBTC has proven itself as a leader in the industry.

Our commitment to excellence is reflected in cutting-edge solutions, which have empowered businesses of all sizes to navigate the complex world of international trade with ease. From tailored financing solutions to advanced risk management strategies, Stanbic IBTC has been a trusted partner to countless companies seeking to expand their global reach.

Receiving this award is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and expertise of the Transactional Products and Services team members. Their relentless pursuit of excellence has enabled Stanbic IBTC to stand out in a highly competitive field and deliver superior value to clients and partners alike.

"We are deeply honored to receive this prestigious award," said Jesuseun Fatoyinbo, Head, Transactional Products and Services. "This award is not just a recognition of our past achievements, but also a call to

action for the future. It serves as a reminder that we must continue to innovate and adapt to the ever-changing economic landscape. We are grateful for the trust our clients and partners have placed in us, and we look forward to continuing to innovate and make a positive impact on the global trade landscape."

The Digital Banker's Global Transaction Banking Innovation Awards is a prestigious one, and Stanbic IBTC is proud to join the ranks of past winners who have demonstrated excellence, innovation, and exceptional service in trade finance.

As we continue to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of the global marketplace, this award serves as a motivation to redouble its efforts to provide world-class trade finance and cash management solutions that drive growth and success for businesses around the world.



Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu

Big Banks' earn N750.25bn from Treasury - Bills

Agency Report

Big banks who loaded on treasury-bills to lock in on juicy yields have been rewarded with huge gains which helped propel earnings, which underpins the argument that lenders are beneficiary of monetary policies.

The largest lenders or the big five - Zenith Bank, Guaranty Trust Holdings Company (GTCO), FBN Holdings, United Bank for Africa (UBA), and Access Bank, collectively realised N750.25 billion from income from investment securities in the first six months of the year, and that represents a 108.09 percent surge from 2022's N360.54 billion.

"It's in line with what's happening globally as higher yields means more income lenders. We have seen yields spike in these periods," said Ayodele Akinwumi of the corporate banking division of FSDH Merchant Limited.

Of course, both short term and long term Nigeria debt yields have been rising since the start mid 2021 as central banks across the globe embarked on tightening cycle to tame inflation spurred by brought by pent up demand in the aftermath relaxation of social distancing to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in eastern Europe which has been sending energy and grain prices upwards.

A breakdown of the figures shows Zenith Bank's income from treasury-bills spiked by 87.59 percent to N139.93 billion as at June 2023 from N74.45 billion the previous year.

First Bank Holdings Plc income from investment income surged 158.33 percent to N110.96 billion in June 2023 from N48.76 billion the previous year.

United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc income from treasury-bills and bonds rose by 73.96 percent to N183.53 billion as at

June 2023.

Access Bank Plc income from investment securities surged by 171.96 percent to N248.63 billion in June 2023 from N91.48 billion as at June 2022.

GTCO made N67.18 billion income from treasury bills as at June 2023, which represents a 66.36 percent increase from 2020's N40.38 billion.

Nigeria 10 year bond yield was 14.62 percent on Monday September 25, according to over-the-counter interbank yield quotes for this government bond maturity.

That compares with a yield of 4.972 percent on November 2, 2020 and 8.602 percent on March 2, 2022.

The monetary policy committee of the central bank hiked interest rate to 18.75 percent.

Nigeria's inflation surged to 25.80 percent in the month of August 2023, 1.72 percent points higher than the 24.08

percent recorded in the previous month, according to a recent data from the bureau of statistics.

There are concerns that banks could book huge unrealized losses on their investment in the balance sheet if yields continue to rise to the detriment of equity.

"With our expectation that the MPC is at the end of its monetary policy tightening cycle, risk appetite for mid to long-dated bonds is likely to improve. Nonetheless, we maintain our expectations that yields in the fixed-income market are still bound to rise further from current levels," said analysts at Cordros Research

"Our prognosis is hinged on our expectation of a sustained imbalance in the supply and demand dynamics, more so that the FGN's 2023FY borrowing needs remain high," said summed the analysts. Source: MoneyCentra

OPGAN to partner C'River for Africa's largest oil palm project

By Emeka Samuel

The Oil Palm Growers Association of Nigeria, OPGAN has said it would collaborate with the Cross River State Government to create the largest sustainable small holder oil palm economy in Africa.

This is even as the state government in a deliberate and strategic move to fulfill and implement its agricultural vision, has accepted to adopt the proposal of OPGAN as an immediate initiative to boost agriculture in the state.

National President of OPGAN, Chief Joe Onyiuke who made this known at the flag off of a Town Hall event in Calabar yesterday said the partnership would create an Oil Palm revolution across the entire value chain and would involve the establishment and management of nurseries, plantations, logistics, processing/milling, storage.

According to Onyiuke at the event which attracted national officers and coordinators from across the 18 Local Councils

of the state, the collaboration would also include refining, manufacturing, sales/distribution and access to local and international markets to be jointly executed with the Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR)

"It is important to note that Nigeria is the world's fifth-largest Oil Palm producer but is a net importer of the commodity as it has huge local demand gulping about 500 million dollars annually according to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

"The Nigerian palm oil industry is very fragmented and dominated by numerous small-scale farmers, who account for 80 percent of local production and most of these farmers do not have access to improved seedlings/inputs and are not attuned to modern farming practices, meaning their yields and outputs are lower than it could otherwise be.

"Cross River State has always been a fertile environment for oil palm development and it is time for Cross River State to build

coherent oil palm programs to regain its pre-eminent position as the number one oil palm state in the country.

"There are numerous activities in oil palm value chain and its socio-economic impact is so huge that we must harness the abundant human resources in the state especially women and youths to key into this oil palm revolution

"Together, these activities build and strengthen the component parts as well as the whole value chain which is an important aspect of the livelihood of the rural farmers and the state GDP thereby promoting community stability and reduction in rural urban migration." The President explained.

He lauded Otu's partnership with the association and NIFOR to establish nurseries across the state as a testimony of the Governor's deep understanding of the plight of oil palm farmers in the state adding that the move would trigger an oil palm model other that would be the envy of other states.

"This gesture of Governor Otu is a national duty that will see Nigeria gain back her lost position in the global index because Cross River state have the best ecological advantage than other states." Onyiuke said.

He told OPGAN members that the state has the capacity to fill the gap created by \$500M spent annually to import crude palm oil into the country and also be a net exporter.

"The surplus availability of fresh fruit bunches is the only thing that can put the state back on the national and global map. Investors and industries go where the base raw materials needed for their production are found in commercial quantity.

"We therefore cannot thank his excellency, Sen. Prince Bassey Otu enough for his deep love for his people. We in turn have been greatly encouraged and will not let him down as all possible risks of failure have been duly mitigated.

"NIFOR will set up a permanent base in Cross River State so we are together for the long haul.

The permanent presence of NIFOR in the state simply makes it easier for training/building the much needed local capacity that will ensure sustainability.

"The members shall be helped to cluster themselves into Cooperatives after profiling and mapping through the different departments of Extension and Mapping in NIFOR institute as they have enormous human resources to help us achieve the above.

"OPGAN members here will work hard to promote and protect the nurseries, their plantations in order to achieve the lofty objective of the present administration - grow quality certified oil palm and process same in the state for the shared prosperity of Cross Riverians." Onyiuke said.

It would be recalled that recent estimates indicated that local production of palm oil only accounted for 78% of local consumption while Nigeria consumed two million MT in 2021, leaving a deficit of 0.6 million MT.



NACCIMA President urges US investors to leverage Nigeria's large population

The National President of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Dele Kelvin Oye, Esq., has urged businesses and investors in the United States to leverage Nigeria's large, youthful population and its human capital advantage to exploit the opportunities of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). In a related development on his visit to Minister of Defence he urged for increased security to boost investor's confidence in the country and improve the nation's business and investment climate. Oye led a delegation of industry stakeholders to visit the Defence Minister, who is

a NACCIMA Past National President, at the Ministry's Headquarters in Abuja. On the delegation were Alhaji Jani Ibrahim MNI, NACCIMA 1st Deputy President, and Arc. Abiodun Adetula and Alh. Suleiman Adebayo Audu, who are Council Members

of NACCIMA. Oye, who was a panelist at the USAfrica Business Expo in New York, United States, said Nigeria's population and its human capital advantage is what sets it apart within the African market, noting that the investors can unlock the

unprecedented economic potential that the AfCFTA offers for the economic benefits of both countries. The NACCIMA boss said the current administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was undertaking holistic reforms and policies

across various sectors to transform Nigeria as the most conducive country for foreign investments, reiterating the need for increased bilateral trade relations between Nigeria and the United States to facilitate growth and prosperity in both economies.

9mobile receives award from AAAN

By Kehinde Ibrahim, Lagos

9MOBILE has received a special recognition and supporter of advertising award at the 50th-anniversary ceremony of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) in Abuja. This award demonstrates 9mobile's strong belief in the power of advertising to bring out the brand's essence and build a

truly Nigerian company.

Receiving the award, the Director of Marketing Communication at 9mobile, Saidat Lawal-Mohammed, appreciated the organizers for the recognition and stated that it would challenge the company to do even better in championing the cause of creativity in the country.

"We commend AAAN for their achievements in the last 50 years to

the development of creative practices in advertising and every other form of engagement between brands and consumers. The discussions at this event focused on what needs to be done moving forward, not just for Nigeria but for all of Africa, and we are confident that in another 50 years, we will be talking about it being accomplished. Lawal-Mohammed added."

The theme for the anniversary was "50 Years Young, Ready For More." President of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, Steve Babaeko, stated that "9mobile has remained committed in its support of the advertising practice in Nigeria, and we are most optimistic as an association that we can continue to count on the brand as a source of growth and inspiration."

Business

Nigeria's forex market needs restructuring – Tinubu's aide

Agency Report

The Special Adviser to the President on Economic Affairs, Dr Tope Fasua, has called for a structural reform of Nigeria's foreign exchange market. Fasua made the call at a roundtable organised by the National Policy Advocacy Centre (NPAC) of the Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) in Abuja. The theme of the event was "Unification of Foreign Exchange and the Effect of Fuel Subsidy Removal on the Business Community. I believe we should reform the Bureau De Change (BDC) sector and make it stronger. You cannot manage over 5,000 BDCs selling money on the streets. If we can do the structural reforms in the BDCs sector and the banks and supervise them well, the CBN with our reserves can incentivise that sector, allowing people to get money much quicker. And you have to define the illegal market and by then we will be able to find stability," he said.

Fasua said that Nigeria spends over \$45 billion annually importing refined petroleum products, milk, chemicals and fish, among others. He said "I hear things like scarcity of forex. What is scarcity of forex, as if the world owes us any forex. The world does not owe us any forex. The forex you get is depending on the trade that you do. If you look at Nigeria's import and export profile, over 20 items that we import in Nigeria are in the billions of dollar range. Our biggest import, fuel and diesel take about \$25 billion to \$30 billion every year. We have things like cars, which is about four billion every year; sugar, fish, milk one billion each; wheat four billion; chemicals, three billion dollars; pharmaceuticals two billion dollars." Fasua listed crude oil and fertiliser as two things that Nigeria exports in the billion dollar range. "The first is petroleum and gas, you will see a figure like \$57 billion, but out of that only 30 per cent is ours, according to Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI).

"The international oil companies that have the technology that do production own most of that money," he said. The Director, Policy Advocacy Centre, ACCI, Mr Chidiebere Onwumere, said that foreign exchange unification held promises of increased transparency, improved access to forex and reduced market distortions. He, however, said that it raises questions about exchange rate

stability, inflationary pressures and the cost of imports. "We must carefully consider how these factors will affect the competitiveness of our industries and the purchasing power of our citizens. Fuel subsidy removal, on the other hand, is expected to free up fiscal resources, reduce government spending, and potentially lead to increased investment in critical sectors. Yet, it also raises concerns about the immediate impact on transportation costs, inflation, and the welfare of our citizens, especially those in vulnerable communities," he said. Mr Oscar Onyema, Managing Director, Nigerian Exchange Group (NEG) PLC, said collaborative dialogue was essential in formulating policies that balance short-term challenges with long-term benefits. Highlighting the effects of both policies on the economy, Onyema said that immediate transition could disrupt businesses and the economy in several ways. Represented by Mrs Cordelia Ihedioha, Onyema said that businesses that were heavily reliant on imports may face short-term disruptions due to the sudden shift in exchange rates.

According to him, this could result in increased costs for imported raw materials, leading to potential price adjustments for end consumers. "To mitigate these disruptions, businesses may need to explore alternative sourcing strategies and adjust their pricing models," Onyema said. Mr Dele Alimi, Director General, Institute of Directors of Nigeria appealed to the Federal Government to take total control of the mineral sector. He said "the mineral sector over the years has been poorly handled by previous governments as host communities have been left impoverished by illegal mining activities." Alimi described the subsidy removal and unification of the foreign exchange as bold steps by the Federal Government, saying that it was a necessity for economic revival. He urged more emphasis should be placed on efficiency of governance than cost of governance. Dr Chijiok Ekechukwu, Vice President of ACCI, urged the Federal Government to fix the refineries and advocated alternative sources of energy for cars to cushion the effect of the petrol subsidy removal. According to him, 60 per cent of cars in the United States run on electricity, adding, "that is where we should be headed for" (NAN)



CBN governor, Cardoso

CBN Gov, Cardoso to discontinue Emeffele's policies

By Onu Okorie

The newly appointed governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso, has explained reasons he will abandon some of the policies implemented by his predecessor, Godwin Emeffele.

Cardoso during his screening and confirmation as the CBN governor yesterday in the national assembly said he will focus solely on monetary policy to strengthen the naira.

He also disclosed that since money supply is behind the rising inflation in the country, he would have no option then to abandon some of the policies.

The deputy governors screened and confirmed are: Emem Usoro, Abdullahi Dattijo, Bala Bello and Philip Ikeazor.

While answering questions from the lawmakers, Cardoso said the apex bank is faced with numerous challenges which the team had identified and would address them.

"We have identified issues of corporate governance, diminished institutional autonomy, discontinuity of orthodox policies and foreign currency issues.

"Addressing inflation and price stability is the function of the CBN. We will address the issue of foreign exchange unification. If there is a need for interest rate alignment, we will do it for economic growth."

To manage the economic policy, Cardoso said size matters, adding that the CBN team had identified macroeconomic indices and will facilitate new ways to attain \$1 trillion GDP in eight years.

On inflation, Cardoso said each will be tackled based on their causes.

"If the inflation is on food, we should ramp up production of food. If inflation is on energy, we know the challenges of energy. If you are importing, automatically you are importing inflation," Cardoso said.

On the issue of money supply, Cardoso said the way money has gone up in Nigeria, "that, itself, is behind inflation. It is the problem. It is a big problem, but going forward, we will do everything possible to ensure that deficit financing does not bring problems to us."

He went on: "These are the assurances I can give you coming from outside because we will maintain a good working relationship to block the excesses we had in the past.

"I believe that the CBN under us will have no choice but to embrace a culture of compliance," Cardoso said, adding that they will abide by the CBN Act.

"We will not wait for oversight before we interact with the lawmakers. We will have zero tolerance to abuse of processes. We recognize the fact that

we need to work closely with these chambers at the National Assembly to ensure compliance."

According to him, deficit financing and undue money glut are responsible for 50 per cent of the inflation.

He told the Senate that there is a need to stabilise the naira to settle Nigeria's outstanding debts, stating that the country is only spending money in printing currency rather than bringing in revenues.

According to him, the immediate thing to look out for is to address operational issues, which are the unsettled obligations of the CBN wealth of N4 billion or N7 billion.

He opined that Nigeria will not make progress if it is not able to handle that side of foreign exchange rate.

Cardoso said the issue of foreign exchange rate is worrisome, adding that Nigeria must have a stable exchange rate.

Also speaking, a deputy governor, Philip Ikeazor, said the present CBN is going to strengthen governance and focus on monetary policies and not fiscal policies.

He said the country must decide to support the physical majors of the CBN and ensure that exportation thrive.

"We will think outside the box, tackle inflation and the free flow of naira," he said.

Umahi slams Nigeria's procurement process

By Onu Okorie

Minister of Works Engr David Nweze Umahi has characterized the procurement procedures in Nigeria as a significant obstacle to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's noble goals.

The Minister made this known in Abuja during a meeting with contractors from the six geopolitical zones at the ministry's headquarters at the weekend.

The former governor claims that no federal road now in existence can endure more than seven years.

"I shed tears for the kind of pains our people are going through," the

former Ebonyi State Governor said.

Some roadways, according to Umahi, are littered with "boreholes" in addition to potholes.

He expressed shock at the way Nigerians were being defrauded by the materials used by contractors to build the nation's roadways.

He said, "There is no project being constructed right now in Nigeria that is going to last for seven years. The question is are we going to be maintaining or reconstructing our roads every 10 years?"

"That is what we have been doing. I travelled from Abuja to Benin City through Lokoja, all

the stretches of the road are on contract, and ongoing, this is through the policy of the last administration but how much of the roads are motorable?"

"I travelled through the roads myself and I shed tears for the kind of pain our people are going through.

"I spent 14 hours on the road having started my journey at 10 am and got to Benin City at 2 pm the next day and I was very happy I experienced the pains.

"Unless Mr. President does something about our procurement, his lofty intention to help this country may not be achieved.

Documents will be sent to the Bureau of Public Procurement for a no-objection certificate and it will stay for six months.

"How will the contractors do the additional job you directed them to do without backup authorisation?"

He insisted that it will only take the intervention of God and President Bola Tinubu to stop him from changing his mind on use of concrete for road construction in Nigeria, Minister of Works Dave Umahi, has vowed.

He insisted that the assertions that cement prices would soar to N9,000 per bag if the government began building concrete roads,

were untrue.

He asserted that people spreading such rumors are doing so as part of a significant effort by the building sector cabals to discredit him.

The former Ebonyi State Governor said this during a meeting with contractors from the six geopolitical zones at the ministry's headquarters on Tuesday, in Abuja.

"This is my line of instructions and I will do whatever the president instructs me to do. He is the only one and God that can cancel my instructions; so don't waste your time reporting me to anyone apart from these two." He stated.

Classified



Otti reaffirms commitment to enhance healthcare delivery in Abia

Gov. Alex Otti of Abia has reaffirmed his commitment to enhance the people's health through conscious and deliberate improvement of access to quality and affordable healthcare in the state.

Otti made the remark on Wednesday in Umuahia, when he formally reopened the renovated and rehabilitated Abia State General Hospital, Amachara, near Umuahia.

He expressed the readiness of his administration to fully restore the state-owned primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare institutions in the state to function optimally.

The governor said that his commitment was informed by the need to ensure that the citizenry had access to quality healthcare in their various communities in a way that nobody would have to travel outside Abia for medical concerns.

He said that the government was focused on reducing the burden of diseases in the state "through the provision of resources for the implementation of appropriate strategies and multi-disciplinary intervention to improve population health".

Otti described the rehabilitation of the hospital as a strategic move by the government to restore the confidence of the people in public health institutions.

He said, "the achievement of improved healthcare delivery in Abia is significant to the overall development agenda of this administration, which is primarily aimed at improving the welfare of the people."

According to him, a healthy population remains the prime asset of

any government. He promised that "under my watch, the health of the citizens will come first and be considered a higher priority".

Otti said that the government had instituted a mechanism that would ensure that an effective maintenance culture got enthroned in the health sector, especially in the management of health facilities.

He also said that plans were underway to set up a holistic mechanism for sanitising drug distribution in the state. "We are rolling out strategic initiatives to control fake and substandard drugs and guarantee that drugs come into the state from a reliable source, known for standard and effective products," Otti said.

He said that the government would prioritise the welfare of health personnel by ensuring that their salaries and legitimate entitlements would be paid as and when due, and called for improved customer-relationship between health workers and patients.

He said that the government and the leadership of health unions had engaged in discussions on how to come up with better incentives for hardworking health workers.

"We believe it will not only reduce the 'Japa Syndrome', but attract healthcare professionals, who are currently abroad," he said.

Otti urged various communities in the state to take ownership of any government facilities in their locality to prevent vandalism.

He warned that anyone

caught vandalising government property would be made to feel the full weight of the law.

In an address, the Commissioner for Health, Dr Ngozi Okoronkwo, said that the rehabilitation of the hospital was an indication that the reforms in the health sector would produce a better healthcare system in Abia.

"The first time I visited this hospital, I was in tears because of how dilapidated the hospital was and the doctors were on strike.

"I began to imagine all that patients that visit the hospital have to go through to access healthcare services.

"Today the story has changed as the present administration has rehabilitated the hospital and equipped it with state-of-the-art equipment for the provision of quality healthcare services.

"We are just getting started with our plans for

the health sector and as we roll out our plans, before the end of the first year of this administration you will see a truly transformed health sector," Okoronkwo further said.

Earlier, the Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Francis Agu, commended the government for the massive reforms that had so far been executed in the health sector.

Agu said that the reforms had yielded a significant improvement in the delivery of healthcare services in the state.

He said, "The people of Abia deserve to receive prompt and efficient healthcare services and I make affirmation of the commitment to the realisation of this goal."

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the government also reopened the renovated Abia State Specialist Hospital and Diagnostic Center and Eye Clinic, Umuahia. (NAN)

HALIMA

I formerly known as ISAH ALIMA ALIYU now wish to be known and address as ISAH HALIMA ALIYU. All former documents remain valid. All concern authorities and the general public to take note

EDAFEKERE

I formerly known as INYANG EMA EFFIONG, INYANG EMA HENRY and LAURETTA EDAFEKERE INYANG now wish to be known and address as INYANG EMA HENRY. All former documents remain valid. All concern authorities and the general public to take note

NWIBO

I, formerly known as OLA CHRISTIANA, now wish to be known and addressed as CHRISTIANA NNAMDI NWIBO. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public to please take note

ALIYU

I formerly known as NANA HAUWA ISAH ALIYU now wish to be known and address as ISAH HAUWA ALIYU. All former documents remain valid. All concern authorities and the general public to take note

MARYAM

I formerly known as ISAH ALIYU MARYAM now wish to be known and address as ISAH MARYAM ALIYU. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public to take note.

FURO

That this is to confirm that on some of my document my name was written as FURO ADEL while others bears ADEL BAPAKAYE FURO. That the both names refer to me and I now wish to be known, called and addressed as ADEL BAPAKAYE FURO. All documents bearing my names remains valid general public should take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

FOUNTAIN OF DOMINION PRAYER CHAPEL

The general public is hereby notified that the above named has applied for Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission under part "F" of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020

- THE TRUSTEES ARE:
 1) MADU CHUKWUEBUKA - CHAIRMAN
 2) ESTHER OGECHI MADU
 3) DORIS JUMBO - SECRETARY
 4) BAADOM ANTHONY NEKABARI
 5) PATIENT FRIDAY
 6) FRIDAY ETIKO
 7) GIFT JUMBO
 8) BLESSING HAPPINESS JOHN
 9) CHIDIMMA ABRAHAM ALAPUTA

- AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:
 1. To preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. To win souls for the kingdom of God.

Any objection to the above Registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, plot 420 Tigris Crescent off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja Within 28days of this publication.

SIGNED: CHAIRMAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

FOCUS AFEMAI FAMILY EMPOWERMENT ORGANISATION

The General Public is hereby notified that the above named has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part "C" of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020.

- TRUSTEES:
 1. OZONO IRENE OMOMO
 2. Okpetu Julie Ayemoh
 3. Ubaike Stephen Azobudi
 4. AREMUECBA Christopher
 5. IBRAHIM SAMUEL - Chairman
 6. AKUETIEMFHE YUNUSA
 7. BELLO HALIMAT OMONEGHO - secretary
 8. Ogoalo Sylvester Aleakwe

Aims and objectives
 To drive support for the needy and promote development to rural areas in afemai community lacking basic amenities by collaboratively identifying areas of needs from various community members across afemai through voluntary and charitable efforts using the Focus TV AFEMAI media platform

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, P.M.B. 198, Garki, Abuja within Twenty-Eight (28) days from the date of this publication.

SIGNED: SECRETARY

MISSING PERSON NOTICE!!!

The public is hereby put on notice, via this publication, that one VICTOR GBOLUBO is missing!

His last known address was APAPA town in Lagos State of Nigeria.

If you found him please call his (or, Victor, if you see this notice please call your) relative on this mobile phone number: 07038765445, or visit any police post nearest to you to help you reach your family!

Thanks.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of the LOSS OF ORIGINAL RIGHT OF OCCUPANCY (R OF O), IN RESPECT OF PLOT NO 2751 WITH FILE NO. MISC 55531, JAHI DISTRICT, ABUJA, MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 7,034.63SQM BEARING INTERGLOBAL SERVICE LIMITED. All efforts made to trace the said missing document proved abortive. If found, please contact the nearest Police Station or the Department of Land Administration, Federal Capital Territory Administration, (FCTA), Abuja. Concerned authorities and general public should take note.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

I, DR. OTTOH DANIEL OCHOCHÉ, hereby inform the general public of the LOSS OF ORIGINAL RIGHT OF OCCUPANCY (R OF O) IN RESPECT OF PLOT NO. 105 WITH FILE NO. IM 10143 MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 1,321.38SQM, CADASTRAL ZONE B13, GADUWA DISTRICT, ABUJA, BEARING GRANVILLE A. INYA-AGHA. All efforts made to trace the said missing document proved abortive. If found, please contact the nearest Police Station or the Department of Land Administration, Federal Capital Territory Administration, (FCTA), Abuja. Concerned authorities and general public should take note.

HPW A/Court delivered 7, 295 judgments, 3,665 rulings in motions in one year

By Kenneth Atavti

The President of Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongben-Mensem, had on Monday disclosed that the court delivered a total of 7,295 judgments and rulings on 3,665 motions in the 2022/2023 legal year alone

Justice Dongben-Mensem made the disclosure at the commencement of the 2023/2024 new legal year held at the Headquarters of the Court.

She recalled that a total of 98 panels were constituted to hear election petitions across the country to handle a total of 1,209 petitions that were filed against the 2023 general elections.

Among the petitions, she said five were filed at the Presidential Election Petition Court and have been concluded while some of the 147 filed at the Senatorial election tribunal have been delivered and 417 petitions from the House of Representatives election are also being attended to.

She also said at total of 557 petitions associated with the State houses of Assembly, and 83 Gubernatorial Elections petitions are being disposed off adding that 28 States participated in the Governorship elections while petitions were filed in 24 states.

According to the President of the Court of Appeal, the Abuja division is currently overwhelmed by voluminous documents and suffers from lack of adequate storage facilities and office space.

The President therefore appealed to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory FCT to provide a large piece of land for the expansion of the Abuja Division.

Meanwhile, a former Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice,



Justice Monica Dongben-Mensem

Kanu Agabi (SAN) said on Monday that Nigeria's continued survival greatly depends on the transparency of judicial officers in the discharge of their judicial functions.

Agabi, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria has therefore pleaded with Judges and Justices not to lose confidence and principles in themselves no matter the challenges.

The former AGF, who spoke on behalf of the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (BOSAN) on the occasion of the 2023/2024 legal year of the Court of Appeal noted with great concern the contributions of judicial officers in the past years which he said, have kept the country intact and from chaos and anarchy.

Agabi noted that in spite

of the contributions and sacrifices of judicial officers to the survival of the country, they are still been unwarrantedly attacked and criticised.

He warned that the country would be doomed unless the unjust attacks against judicial officers are stopped.

"It is only here that judicial officers work harder than slaves and yet, they are not appreciated. But the consolation is that the Judges in Nigeria are a good match to the devils they are contending with.

"Whether we like it or not, we have to be proud of our Justices. They are brilliant and bold and some of them are appointed as Justices in other countries.

"A mistake by one Justice should be not be generalised to warrant

general condemnation from any quarter. They surpass Judges from other countries. They deserve commendation for resisting the evils.

"Majority of judicial officers are still standing in the face of challenges and unless we are careful with the way we attack Judges, we will lose our minds and conscience", he said.

He said, those who criticise judicial officers are at liberty to do so, but they have to be cautious in the way they go about it adding that while criticising the judiciary, they must not abuse it.

The former Minister of Justice spoke against granting of outlandish bail conditions to suspected criminals.

He noted that the law presumes them innocent

until guilt is established adding that, granting of outlandish bail that will keep them in custody is unconstitutional

According to him, "We need not to slam bail conditions that are unattainable as the principles which govern bail conditions are the same as fine governed by the constitution".

He challenged the current AGF, Prince Lateef Fagbemi SAN to use his office to improve the welfare and work conditions of judicial officers in the country.

In his speech, the AGF and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN) said that President Bola Tinubu's administration will address the issue of shortage of Justices at the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

Law & Society

ECOWAS Court Fixes Dec 7 For Decision On Four Guineans' For Supplementary Judgment

By Kenneth Atavti

The ECOWAS Court has fixed December 7, 2023 to give its decision on an application brought by four Guineans for rectification of omission in the Court's judgment ECW/CCJ/JUD/06/19 delivered on February 26, 2019.

Justice Edward Amoako Asante, judge rapporteur, scheduled the case for judgment after the hearing of September 25, 2023 during which Mr Drame Alpha Yaya, lawyer to the four Guineans who brought their government before the Court for right violations, made his submission.

However, the Guinean government that had earlier filed its defence, was not represented at the sitting.

Mr Drame Alpha Yaya filed an application ECW/CCJ/APP/19/19/OMIS on April 30, 2019 asking the Court to rectify certain omissions in its judgment particularly, the Court's silence on



the consequences of the inaction of the government administrative office to register their political party which led to their inability to participate in local elections held on February 4, 2018.

Mr Drame relied on Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in his argument that the rights to participate in public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, to vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections

guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors, and equal access to public service in their country were violated with serious consequences.

In addition, Mr Drame asked the Court to note that the four Guineans involved in the case had filed separate initiating applications before the Court, prior to the consolidation of all four cases by a Court Order ECW/CCJ/RUL/02/18 which also granted their request for expedited

hearing, adding that the judgment of the Court did not specify if the award for reparation was individually or collective among the four Applicants.

He said that the ambiguity in the award of reparation has contributed to the delay in the enforcement of the judgment.

In the judgment delivered on February 26, 2019, the Court held the Guinean government liable for violating the four Guineans' right to freedom to form a political party, freedom of association and their right to equal treatment and ordered the government to take necessary measures to ensure their rights were respected.

The Court also awarded total sum of 100 million CFA francs as damages for the violations and the prejudice suffered and dismissed the claims of the Guinean government.

The government represented by Mr, Joachim Gbilimou,

had filed a counter application asking the Court to dismiss the case on the grounds that it was filed outside the 30-day period for application for supplementary judgment as stated in the Rules of the Court, and order the Applicants to pay jointly and severally 100,000,000 CFA francs for the ill-founded application.

Other judges on the panel were Justices Gberibe Ouattara and Sengu M. Koroma.

In a similar case with suit number ECW/CCJ/APP/19/19/INT, involving the same parties, the four Guineans are asking the Court for an interpretation of its judgment ECW/CCJ/JUD/06/19 delivered on February 26, 2019.

The Court adjourned the case to November 23, 2023 for its Decision on the application.

On the panel were Justices Edward Amoako Asante (Presiding), Gberibe Ouattara (Member) and Sengu M. Koroma (Member).

Kwara Govt Reiterates Support for EFCC's Fight against Illegal Mining

By Kenneth Atavti

The Kwara State government has again reiterated its support for the efforts of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, in checking illegal mining activities in the state.

The State Commissioner for Solid Minerals Development, Honourable Abdulquiwiy Olododo gave this assurance when he led the management staff of the Ministry on a courtesy visit to the Commander, Ilorin Zonal Command of the EFCC, Michael Nzekwe, at the Commission's Office, GRA, Ilorin.

He disclosed that, "the government of Mallam Abdulrasaq Abdulrahman, is determined to declare a state of emergency in the mining sector with a view towards ensuring that money realised from the sector are used for the development of the state."

Hon Olododo, while passing a vote of confidence on the Commission for its courage and doggedness in fighting illegal mining activities in the state said that, "the governor is firmly in support of what EFCC is doing particularly its efforts in checking unauthorized mining activities and other economic crimes in the State."

According to him, "the government is not unaware of the challenges you are facing in carrying out this arduous task", stressing that "the government of Mallam Abdulrahman

Abdulrasaq is determined to complement your efforts as it is focused on how to properly harness the potentials in the mining sector to attract local and foreign investors."

In his remarks, Nzekwe commended Governor Abdulrasaq for appointing young and vibrant people into his cabinet, adding that Honourable Olododo would no doubt turn the sector around for good.

According to him, "Kwara is enormously endowed with mineral deposits and the resources available in the 16 Local Government Areas of the State are enough to turn it to a 'small London', if properly harnessed."

The Zonal Commander chronicled the efforts of the EFCC in checking the menace of illegal mining, which culminated in the arrest of no fewer than 80 suspects within the last ten months. While lamenting the rate at which the resources of the state are being plundered by artisanal miners, he said that "the resources, if channeled through the right sources and put into good use are enough to sustain the economy of the state and make it self-reliant."

He added that, "the fight against corruption particularly illegal mining requires the support of every individual for it to succeed" and assured that "the Commission will spare no effort in ensuring the enforcement of all extant laws against illegal miners and corrupt individuals in the state."

Court Jails Internet Fraudster

By Kenneth Atavti

Justice Maureen Adaobi Onyetenu of the Federal High Court sitting in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, has jailed an internet fraudster, Prince Mbang Uba, on a two count charge of criminal impersonation and obtaining by false pretences to the tune of Three Hundred United States Dollars (\$300).

One of the charges read: "That you, Prince Mbang Uba (aka Sophia Johnson) in 2023 in Nigeria within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court with intent to obtain property and gain advantage for yourself, fraudulently presented yourself as Sophia Johnson on social media platform (Facebook) and obtained the sum of Three Hundred United

States Dollars (\$300) only, from one Bernie Smith and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 22 (2) (b) (i) & (ii) of the Cyber Crime (Prohibition, Prevention etc) Act 2015 and punishable under Section 22 (b) (iv) of the same Act".

He pleaded "guilty" to the charges and in view of his plea, prosecuting counsel, Victor Ukagwu, reviewed the facts of the case and tendered the following before the court: convict's statements, his iPhone X and all the incriminating documents printed from his phone, which the court admitted in evidence.

Ukagwu thereafter prayed the court to convict and sentence Uba accordingly.

However, defence counsel, Innocent Eze pleaded for leniency and sued the court to temper Justice with mercy.

The court thereafter convicted and sentenced Uba to one year imprisonment with an option of fine of N500,000 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira only).

Uba's journey to the Correctional Centre began when he was arrested by operatives of the Commission on June 6, 2023 along Parliamentary Road in Calabar, Cross River State for online criminal activities. Investigations revealed that the convict specialized in impersonating foreign nationals and using social media platforms to defraud his unsuspecting victims.

Fire Service Seeks Collaboration With EFCC

By Kenneth Atavti

The Federal Fire Service has sought for enhanced collaboration and synergy with Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the Commander, Makurdi Zonal Command of the EFCC on the Zonal Controller, Federal Fire Service Zone A, Makurdi, Comptroller of Fire (CF) I.A Kurutsi, stated that there was need to strengthen the existing relationship between the EFCC and FFS, noting that both agencies have come a

long way in collaborative efforts for the good of the country.

"The relationship between our organizations has come a long way, so when I resumed office here, I felt this was an opportunity to familiarise myself with you and further strengthen the existing cordial relationship between the two agencies"

The FFS Comptroller used the opportunity to invite the Commission to be a part of the 'Fire Week Awareness' in the state which, he said, was meant to educate people on what to do in the event of a fire outbreak.

The Zonal Commander, ACE1 Friday Ebelo, in his response, thanked the Comptroller Kurutsi for the visit, stating that being safety conscious prevents a lot of mishaps and officers can only discharge their duties when they are alive and safe.

"Safety is very vital and it is the duty of everyone to keep everybody safe, we have to be able to discharge our duties" he said

Zonal Commander acknowledged that the Commission and the Federal Fire Service have enjoyed a robust relationship and pledged to do his part to keep it going.

Containing economic impact of business email compromise

Cyber crime and the adverse effects on global business and society are on the increase and experts have been expressing concerns to that effect. In this report, FRIDAY OBANDE reflects professional views on the situation.

Cyber-related attacks have become increasingly imminent, and the severity and frequency of such incidents have grown significantly resulting in severe damage to our global economy with no end. The estimated cost of cyber-attacks on the global economy in 2021 was about 6 trillion USD which is estimated to be the GDP of the world's largest economy and a new high of about 10.5 trillion USD annually by 2025 is predicted.

While the economy faces several cybersecurity threats, a more expensive, lethal, dangerous and widespread type of phishing attack has grown silently but rapidly, drawing less attention to its catastrophic impact and costing businesses billions of dollars every year.

Mr. Benedict Joseph Oluwaseun is an information security and digital forensic expert who is passionate about cyber crime and the adverse effects on the society. He noted that Business Email Compromise (BEC) also referred to as the "Nigerian 419" scam is a specific and sophisticated spear phishing attack that focuses on legitimate businesses and persons to defraud them.

Researching the email accounts of cooperate or public key employees or executives involved with financial transactions (such as wire payment transfers) in organisations are either compromised through key loggers, spoofed or phished to carry out fraudulent payments resulting in billions of dollars in losses globally.

He said a report by GreatHorn revealed that spoofed email accounts or websites were the most experienced form of a BEC attack as 71% of organisations acknowledged they had seen one over the past year. This is followed by spear phishing (69%) and malware (24%).

Rosenthal (2022) listed 14 reputable organisations that have been victims of BEC and also estimated that an average of \$5.2 million was recorded as a loss per breach. For this reason, the FBI has named BEC a "\$26 billion scam," and the threat is increasing. BEC scams in 2020 alone recorded over \$1.8 billion compared to other cybercrimes.

"Some of the companies affected by BEC and their financial losses are Facebook and Google (\$121m BEC scam), Ubiquiti (\$46.7m vendor fraud), Toyota 2019 (\$37 million BEC attack), Obinwanne Okeke (\$11 million in losses), Scouler Co. (\$17.2m acquisition scam), Government of Puerto Rico (\$2.6 million transfer), Gift card scams just to mention a few.

In 2022, business email compromise was unquestionably a successful tactic for fraudsters. According to the most recent Internet Crime Report from the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Centre (IC3), businesses lost more than \$2.7 billion as a result of these scams last year. That represents a \$300 million increase from 2021. Additionally, these losses exceeded those brought on by ransomware by almost 80 times.

BEC scams actually accounted for a staggering 27% of all financial losses associated with cybercrime in 2022, according to the FBI's IC3. Additionally, from \$120,000 in 2021 to \$124,000 in 2022, the average cost of each incident rose.

In 2022, there were fewer complaints made to the FBI's IC3 (800,944 vs. 847,376). However, the total amount lost increased from \$6.9 billion to more than \$10.2 billion. Reports of



complaints and losses due to cybercrime over the previous five years.

He also stressed that the surge in BEC attacks can be attributed to the new working culture practised during the COVID-19 pandemic, where individuals and organisations had to conduct daily business virtually.

Oluwaseun further quoted Joseph Carson, Chief Security Scientist, and Advisory CISO at Delinea, who said, "In the situation where employees are required to work remotely, it becomes more challenging to verify with a colleague whether the request is legitimate, most especially in cases when the request looks urgent, people mostly fall for such scams."

He also expressed concerns and challenges in proving BEC attacks were not human errors since criminals are highly skilled in hiding their tracks.

Sharing a similar opinion, he said, Andy Gill, Senior Security Consultant at LARES Consulting stated, "The record presented by the FBI Public Service Announcement doesn't come as a surprise. Also, claiming that the numbers may have been low since many BEC incidents may have been unreported and were swept under the rug."

The expert maintained that, "the fact that BEC attacks still maintain a high record of incidents to date implies that

it is the most active form of attack used by cybercrimes, according to 'Global Economic Impact Of Compromised Business Email And Measures To Mitigate Its Adverse Effects.'

"Global Economic Impact of Compromised Business Email and Measures to Mitigate its Adverse Effects."

His recommendation and suggestion was that: The weakest and strongest line of defence for any organisation is its employees, with the increase in BEC attacks on a global scale and the evolving techniques and attacks by cyber criminals, organisations need to train their employees to become human firewalls, so as to identify and mitigate critical indicators of an attack before it is too late.

Elaborating more, he stated that some other basic steps employees can take to safeguard against attacks were: Zero Trust – irrespective of the familiarity between the sender and yourself, always verify every request to ascertain its legitimacy.

Believe in yourself and take your time – Never be in a rush; if you notice any discrepancies in the request, then flag it. Check and recheck account information and other details for accuracy. Maintain company guidelines and procedures. If you feel you have been compromised or fallen victim, report the breach immediately (to your management, bank, and local authorities) and follow up for resolution and reversal of the fraudulent transaction.

For organisations, he advised that as the reality of a remote working environment becomes a new normal, businesses, need to implement and improve on their present security architecture, procedures, and protocols to protect the asset from spear phishing or other forms of attacks.

"Once there is a disruption in the security protocols, employees will

require guidance on verifying the credibility of financial requests or transactions. Some recommendations for protecting your employees from falling victim to BEC attacks are: Use multiple independent signatures for high-value transactions.

Enable/add Sender Policy Framework, SPF, Domain Keys Identified Mail, DKIM, Domain-based Message Authentication Reporting and Conformance, DMARC, to block spoofing messages. Allow only authorised servers to send emails, and tell it what to do with the emails that have not cleared authentication.

Implement strong account authentication (MFA) and password reset – to prevent unauthorized password resets and account logins. Only work with established vendor accounts to streamline transaction verification. Train employees to identify and prevent BEC attacks – this can be achieved by using simulations to give employees hands-on experience in identifying cyber-attacks.

Develop an air-tight payment plan that will assist employees in identifying legitimate or illegitimate requests, such as mandating call verifications for individual transactions. On monitoring, he informed that regularly, all financial accounts for irregularities should verify all emails by enabling alerts for suspicious activity.

Cybersecurity is indeed a global risk; therefore, it requires a more collaborative and coordinated approach to address threats such as BEC, ransomware, data breach, denial-of-service attack, and phishing attacks. Global Risks to cybersecurity, privacy, data protection, and online safety need more attention.

Through intensive employee training, robust verification protocols, and email authentication, organisations can reduce and equip their employees with the skills required to identify and prevent attacks such as BEC.



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Comments

Nigeria, its government and geospatial dynamism

By Abu I. Michael

AFTER all the political hubbub, though with various challenges still in the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal by some aggrieved contestants of the 2023 Presidential Election, Nigerians have every reason to celebrate the dawn of a new government, another democratic dispensation under the leadership of His Excellency, Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces alongside his deputy, His Excellency, Shettima Kashim.

Both performed tremendously as governors of Lagos and Borno States respectively; their antecedents are on records. As governor from 1999 – 2007, President Tinubu could be said to have laid the foundation for the symmetrical development of Lagos State because of his leadership competency and deep insight of geospatial dynamism. That is why the development plan of Lagos State was well structured and infrastructural distribution and expansion inimitably tackling rowdiness, insecurity and enforcing steady growth in state Internally Generated Revenue (IGR); subsequent governors of the state tow this path making Lagos State to be a pacesetter not only in the country but in the West African sub-region socioeconomically and in terms of physical infrastructure. The leadership ideal ingrained by his governorship engendered robust state of security for every sector to thrive.

Security is a major area of focus for any government. Way back as a student of Political

Science at the Yobe State University, we transmit much of these words: 'state', 'government', 'sovereignty', 'territory', 'population' and 'power' in the class hence they became some of our companionate vocabs as students. Unfortunately, having spent nearly four years of the programme which I started from pre-degree, I was unable to complete it like other sad experiences because of the pervasive insecurity occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency that heavily wrecked normalcy in Yobe State, Borno and especially some other states of the northeast as at that time. A peaceful atmosphere is not only priceless, but sacrosanct as necessary condition for societal growth and development as well as its survival as an entity. Unarguably, states lose their socioeconomic glow; precious human lives are also threatened apart from various destructions when the tranquility of a political state is infringed upon. No country in the world can practically make headway politically, socially and economically in the face of public disorder and insecurity in general. The Nigerian State has over the years been challenged to appreciate geospatial dynamism not only in terms of socioeconomic and physical development but in peace enforcement and general protection.

Just like any other countries in the world, Nigeria is defined by the features of political state such as territory, population, government and sovereignty. Even though the government is an agency of the state, it remains critical because it is the body constitutionally empowered to govern the affairs of a country. In our contemporary world, no country can survive and progress without the application of geospatial data because we exist within a geographical sphere; this is what the President Tinubu-

led government must take to heart and ensure that public institutions apply geospatial techniques in their operations in order to save cost and speedily achieve results.

Just to refresh our memories, a country is confined within a geographical area called territory and usually consists of people (population) and it is the workings of the government to uphold its sovereignty, the supremacy of that country within its territorial area. The Nigerian government and especially, the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces must have at all times prototypical of the territory he controls and all that is therein.

Recently, some officials of the Civil Society Coalition for Transparency and Good Governance had very robust interaction with the Surveyor General of the Federation (SGoF), Surv. Abuduganiyu Adeyemi Adebomehin at the Survey House, Abuja; the conversation was stimulated by a patriotic zeal to ensure that Nigeria is routed in the glorious path of equability, increased physical infrastructure, sustainable socioeconomic development and also more importantly, solid national security arrangement.

Having taken critical assessment of the functions and statutory mandates of the Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation (OSGoF), the officials of the coalition lost breath in the realization that Nigeria has such an organisation with its functions essentially prime to national security and all other sectors of the economy. They deemed it fit to take it upon them to advocate adequate budgetary allocations for OSGoF, and also warrant aggressive campaigns and sensitization in order abreast the general public on the significance of geospatial data and streamlining of

geospatial inputs in planning and implementation of projects by the Nigerian Government and its MDAs.

Another crucial issue that the coalition is intervening is for the government to urgently make funds available for the review of the Survey Coordination Act (SCA) enacted since 1962. The strength of the provisions of the act is already hampered by the contemporary realities hence there have been recorded cases of proliferation of maps and violations of the act endangering our national security, physical planning and project implementation.

The government must also ensure we fully harness and streamline geospatial inputs in our public enterprises, the apex surveying and mapping office of the country should be seen very much as part of the Defence and National Security Architecture, National Planning and Implementation.

Patriotically speaking, the Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation (OSGoF) should be properly situated to free it from bureaucratic bottlenecks for robust funding and operations that would at all times ensure urgent decisions and actions on matters of national concerns.

President Tinubu in his inaugural address on May 29 mentioned some key areas of the focus of his administration which includes security, the economy, job creation and agriculture among others. These and other challenges of our environments can only be dealt with more appropriately if the generation and application of geospatial data is entrenched in the heart of every governmental decision, planning, programming and implementation.

—Michael heads press and public relations, Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation (OSGoF)

Nigeria, its government and geospatial dynamism

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Bagudu restates commitment to partner UN Women in promoting gender equality, empowerment

By Palma Ileye

Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Sen. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, has reiterated the commitment of the Ministry to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations Women, UN-WOMEN, going by its strategic role as the coordinating organ for all Government projects, programmes and policies.

Bagudu in a press release issued yesterday by Olatunji Modupe Susan, Senior Information Officer, For: Director, Information, FMBEP, stated this while receiving in audience the UN-Women Regional Director and its team, who were on a courtesy visit to his office in Abuja.

He informed that the UN Women was the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women adding that it was globally regarded as a champion for women and girls.

According to the Minister, the organization was established in 2010 to accelerate progress on meeting the needs of Women worldwide.

HepointedoutthattheOrganization supported UN Member States and set global standards for achieving gender equality while working with Governments at National and sub-national as well as Civil Society to carry out formulated laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure the standards were effectively implemented and truly beneficiary to women and girls, worldwide.

Speaking further, Bagudu said that the UN-Women worked globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stood behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life.

He added that the UN Women also coordinated and promoted the UN System's activities in advancing gender equality, deliberation and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda.

Bagudu also pointed out that the UN women had implemented National State Action Plan, SAP, United Nations Security Council Resolution, UNSCR 1325, and Women Peace and Security, WPS, in Bauchi and Benue States, among others.

The Minister stressed that United Nations was set out for global market prospect to grow Nigeria's economy.

Earlier in his remarks, the UN Women Regional Director, West, and Central Africa, Dr. Maxine Houinato advocated that the Government should be ready to support the non-governmental sector and the planning of the budget of the Country should also be implemented promptly.

World Contraception Day: Sightsavers calls for disability inclusive sexual health and family planning

By Palma Ileye

International Development Organisation, Sightsavers has called for the inclusion of People with Disabilities to be included in sexual health and family planning services.

This call was made in a press release issued yesterday by Joy Tarbo, Sightsavers, Communication Associate in commemoration of the World Contraception Day which comes up every 26th September, annually.

According to the Sightsavers statement, West Africa has one of the lowest rates of contraception use in the world and some of the highest maternal death and morbidity rates.

It stated that evidence from Nigeria showed that women and adolescent girls with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination in accessing family planning services and contraceptives.

Noting that they also face significant barriers with regards to free and informed choice and experience a higher risk of forced and coerced sterilisation and contraception.

Sightsavers, Director of Programmes Operations in Nigeria, Dr. Joy Shu'aibu, said: "At Sightsavers we are using World Contraception Day to highlight the need for sexual and reproductive health services to be inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities."

Shu'aibu added, "Sexual and reproductive health and rights are basic human rights. They are not only an integral part of the right to health but are also necessary to enjoy the rights to life, information, and freedom from discrimination. Everyone



should have access to safe, informed healthcare services without barriers, but sadly this is still not the case."

The statement noted that, the journey to universal health coverage cannot be complete without calling attention to inclusive health care services.

Also noting that, in Nigeria, Sightsavers is leading an inclusive family planning project under the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office's, FCDO, Inclusive Futures consortium.

It explained that it was focused on improving access

to family planning for people with disabilities in Kaduna state, and other Hausa-speaking communities, by working directly with women-led representative disability organisations.

Haj. Nafisa Musa Isa, Family Planning Coordinator Kaduna State Primary Health Care Board, said: "In Kaduna we have seen first-hand the positive impact that including people with disabilities in healthcare can have. Their voices must be heard in order to make sure that no one is left behind."

Isa added, "It is important that people with disabilities are not left behind in healthcare. If we neglect them, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will be almost impossible."

"People with disabilities have the right to access information and services needed to support their choices and optimize health, right to decide the number and spacing of their children, right to consent to marriage and equality in marriage, right to be free from sexual violence and right to enjoy scientific progress and consent to experimentation."

FG to set up Mobile Court for Sexual Gender Based Violence, sets up new goals for devt of women in the country

By Palma Ileye

Federal Government through the Ministry of Women Affairs in its continued fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, SGBV, has said it will set up mobile courts for quick dispensation of justice for victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

This was disclosed by the Minister of Women Affairs, Barr Uju Kennedy-Ohanenye during an interactive session with Journalists at the Ministry's Headquarters in Abuja.

Kennedy-Ohanenye stated that "the Mobile Court will be in collaboration with the Attorney General of the Federation, the Minister of Justice, the Nigerian Governor's Forum, Security Agencies, Civil Society Organisation, CSO's to have innovative ways to enforce Violence Against Persons Prohibition, VAPP, Act, 2015 and other laws to curb the menace of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence as well

as Female Genital Mutilation, SGBV, GBV, FGM/C."

She stated that the idea of having the mobile court was to ensure quick dispensation of justice for the survival of the voiceless in line with Mr President's renewed hope agenda, saying that they will work to allow the poor to breathe and not suffocate.

The Minister said that those who were still practising Female Genital Mutilation, FGM, would also be tried in the mobile courts so as to bring to an end this old traditional practice.

In her words, "The Mobile Court will be created for Gender-Based Violence and Child molestation, the victims will report to the Ministry and the Ministry will go to the Mobile Court for Justice."

Meanwhile, the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Investment has opted to "encourage Women Groups to form Cooperatives registered with the Ministry so

that the Ministry can empower them with different production machines to boost Nigeria's economy, livelihood of Women and nation building."

"The Ministry has opted to encourage all women groups to form cooperatives and register with the Ministry so that the Ministry can empower them with different production machines to boost Nigeria's economy, livelihood of women and for nation development," she said.

She added that the Ministry has decided to make life easier for rural women by providing them with Charcoal burners and bio-gas stoves which were cost-effective as the Gas Cylinder that was being distributed to rural women was no longer sustainable by the Ministry, also the Ministry was now concerned about who refills the gas cylinder for these women when it gets finished.

The Ministry noted within 100 days, it will set up Sewing houses to produce local fabrics

which will be exported to other countries.

The Women Minister also said that the sanitary towels the Ministry usually gives to students will now be transformed into a setting up "Sanitary Pad Production Centre" as the old method can no longer be sustainable.

She also said that the Ministry's creche and other underutilised properties will get back to their feet for proper functioning within her 100 days in office.

Meanwhile, Kennedy-Ohanenye in a parley with Nigerian student leaders across the country at the Ministry's Headquarters in Abuja, concerning case of sexual harassment in the University of Calabar, called on DSS to investigate the matter. Saying, "Today we had a meeting with student leaders and we have decided that they will partner with our, ministry, Ministry of Women Affairs to fight this sexual harassment."

TOURISM

Art Devt: Experiencing the 'Unusual' Art Exhibition with John Adeleye

By Palma Ileye

Residents of Abuja, the Nigerian Federal Capital were treated to a mesmerizing 'Unusual' Art exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and varieties by Aderinkomi John Adeleye.

The Five-Day 'Unusual' exhibition which began on Wednesday 13th through Sunday 17th, September was launched by the President, Society for Nigerian Artists, SNA, Sulaiman Muhammad at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, in Abuja.

At his Solo exhibition, John Adeleye, who is the Chairman, Society of Nigerian Artists, SNA, Abuja Chapter narrated that, "My paintings are inspired by my society, the people and the happenings around me, to highlight problems and proffer solutions. Art is my medium of expression, my Arts tells stories and convey memories I proffer

solutions and heal the world through my Art.

"Like many other artist, since childhood, I have been drawing and painting all kinds of things."

He said, "I developed an interest in Art as a young child always drawing on my school books and any surface. Only God knows how many things I spoilt trying to repair them while growing up.

"There is so much in Art that cannot be taught, but you acquire them from experience and years of practice, the more you paint the more you understand Art, I have been a full time studio Artist for the past 23years.

"Today at 55years I make a living from my self expression as a multimedia Artist I use every medium at my disposal to create an awareness.

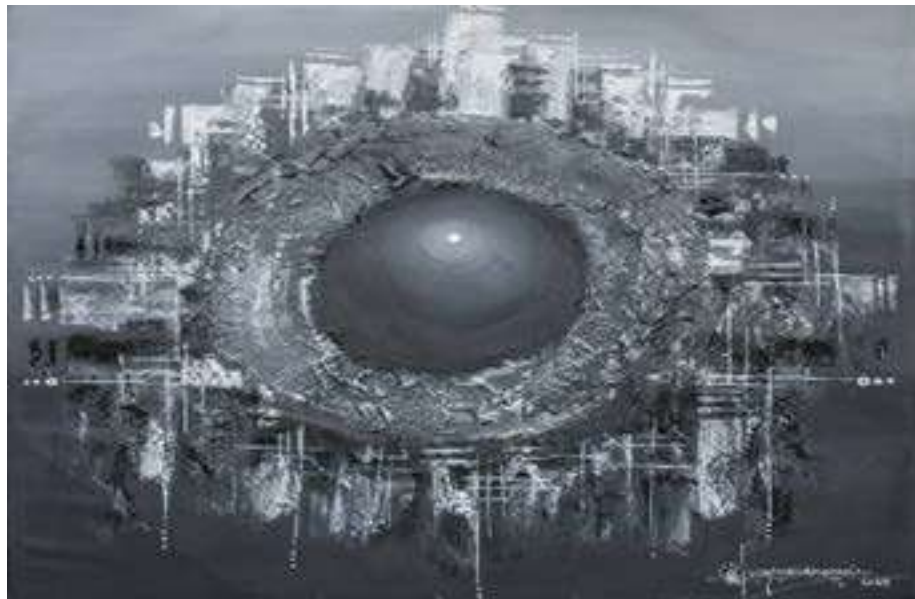
"My artwork tells stories they convey message to the audience and speak to everyone who view them. Art is my medium of expression the canvas is my microphone. I say things in colour and shapes that I couldn't say any other way."

He stated that, "I find my inspiration in God the creator of Heaven and Earth. The bible says in the book of Job 32:8 "But there is spirit in man. And the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

"I also find my inspiration from things happening around me, from Beauty, Truth, Sorrow, Anxiety, Love, Betrayal, Death and Politics. I treat my studio time as sacred, my everyday life is balanced between making art and going to church.

"The 'Unusual' is out of the ordinary it goes beyond traditional regimental painting style. The works on display are unique, collectible extraordinary Art works with High future value, Created, Designed and Developed for modern Art collectors and Art enthusiast.

Immerse yourself in my word of



thought provoking unusual Art work. Each piece of the Artworks on display complement and converse with each other creating an Harmonious outlook."

Born On September, 17th 1968,

the Artist, hails from Fiditi, Oyo State in Nigeria.

He is a 1988/1990 graduate of Art from the Polytechnic Ibadan Oyo State. Also he has a B.Sc. in Sociology, 2004 /2009 from the

University of Abuja, FCT.

John is a dynamic, experienced all round Multimedia full time studio Artist who has contributed and committed his creative capabilities towards the growth and development of Art in Nigeria.

The FCT SNA Chairman, has consistently participated in various exhibition and workshops both local and international.

His works are in collection of both private and public organization; and in all Nigerian missions Houses Abroad.

Aderinkomi John has been 2times Vice Chairman of the Society of Nigerian Artist, Abuja Chapter. He is now the current Chairman of the Society of Nigerian Artist, SNA, FCT.

Aderinkomi John Adeleye who is a quintessential multimedia Artist, also dedicated his solo exhibition to his lovely Daughter Adeola Chinyerenwa Aderinkomi, saying the words, "I love you"

The acknowledgement of 'Unusual' exhibition read,

"It has been said that great project are never the work of one man, but the collective effort of a team that shares a common destiny. I want to give a Heartfelt Thank you to the following:

Roland Goyit - who curated the exhibition.

Joshua Sale (Jagat) - who volunteered to Frame the works.

Caminus Ndukuba - for your support.

"And to all my Exco's for your encouragements and to everyone who this exhibition a success."

To Aderinkomi John, every work of Art are often a reaction to, or interpretation of all we have observed and experienced in our society. My Artworks tells stories, they convey messages to the audience and speak to everyone who view them.

The Unusual (out of the ordinary) are mixed media and paintings art work that captivates the eye and resonates deep within the soul.

They are unique, extraordinary, collective Art with High future value.

Created designed and developed for modern Art collectors and Art enthusiast.

Also speaking, Anila Adnan said that the John's work of Art, were mesmerising and surely was Unusual.

The occasion was graced with other top ranking Artists in the country, they include: Prince Prosper Akeni, Anila Adnan, SNA President, Sulaiman Muhammad, Eukaria Godwin and others.

He enjoined all, saying, "be captivated as you stand before this evocative Artwork, immerse yourself in the world of thought provoking unusual pieces and let them resonate with your own journey through life."

Butchers Association warned against buying, selling animals suspected to dead of anthrax disease

By Blessing Bature

The Butchers Association of Nigeria has been warned against buying, slaughtering, or selling animals suspected to have died of the deadly anthrax disease.

In a brief lecture in Oyo, State Animal Epidemiologist, Dr. Semiu Akibu, said the state had to be on alert because cases of anthrax had been reported in States like Niger, Plateau, Kogi, and Lagos.

He said anthrax, being a bacterial disease and airborne, could pose threats to pig, sheep, goat, cow, and other animal health, adding that symptoms of the disease include weakness, fever, difficulty breathing, and blood oozing.

The chairman of the association, Mr Olagoke, also warned at a sensitisation programme of the state government against the spread of the disease in the state.

The sensitisation was held for stakeholders in the Oke-Ogun axis of the state and attended by officials of the state ministry of agriculture, cattle breeders under the aegis of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), butchers, traders, veterinary doctors, and health officers, among others, was held at the MACBAN Secretariat, Kara Market, Iseyin.

Speaking, Olagoke said the association had warned its members not to be tempted to buy such dead animals from cattle dealers, irrespective of the cost.

He added that the association was well aware of the health implications of the spread of the anthrax disease and hence continued to sensitise its members.

In his remarks, a deputy director in charge of the Control Post and Cattle Market in the state, Dr Liadi Adeniran, said that, to date, there had been no record of the disease in the state and called on residents to join the effort to prevent the disease outbreak by reporting suspected cases of anthrax and other animal diseases in their domain.

In his contribution, Oyo State Animal Disease Surveillance Agent, Irepo, Dr. Tunde Adetola, assured cattle rearers of the readiness of the state government to make available vaccines for the prevention of anthrax both for humans and animals.

World leaders commit to new targets to end Tuberculosis

By Blessing Bature

World leaders at the United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis have approved a Political Declaration with ambitious new targets for the next five years to advance the global efforts towards ending the TB epidemic.

The targets include reaching 90% of people with TB prevention and care services, using a WHO-recommended rapid test as the first method of diagnosing TB; providing social benefit packages to all people with TB; licensing at least one new TB vaccine; and closing funding gaps for TB implementation and research by 2027.

Speaking, WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, our ancestors have suffered and died with tuberculosis, without knowing what it was, what caused it, or how to stop it, saying today, we have knowledge and tools they could only have dreamed of.

He said, the political declaration countries approved, and the targets they have set, are a commitment to use those tools, and develop new ones, to write the final chapter in the story of TB.

Taking stock of progress towards targets set in 2018 for a five-year period, WHO reported that while global efforts to combat TB have saved over 75 million lives since the year 2000, they fell short of reaching the targets, mainly due to severe disruptions to TB services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts.

According to him, only 34 million people of the intended 40 million people with TB were reached with treatment between 2018 and 2022. For TB preventive treatment, the situation was even more grim, with only 15.5 million of the 30 million people targeted to be reached with preventive treatment accessing it.

He informed that Funding for TB services in low- and middle-income countries fell from US\$ 6.4 billion in 2018 to US\$ 5.8 billion in 2022, representing a 50% financing gap in implementing the required TB programmes.



Tedros

Annual funding for TB research ranged from US\$ 0.9 billion to US\$ 1.0 billion between 2018 and 2022, which is just half of the target set in 2018.

"This has placed an even heavier burden on those affected, especially the most vulnerable. Today, TB remains one of the world's top infectious killers: annually more than 10 million people fall sick, and over 1 million lose their lives to this preventable and curable disease. Drug-resistant TB continues to be a major contributor to antimicrobial resistance with close to half a million people developing drug-resistant TB every year.

"Uniting around the TB response by world leaders, for a second time, provides an opportunity to accelerate action and strengthen health systems capable of not only addressing the TB epidemic, but also protecting the broader health and well-being of communities, strengthening pandemic

preparedness and building on lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr Tereza Kasaeva, Director of the WHO Global TB Programme. "Averting TB-related financial hardship and preventing the development of the disease in vulnerable groups will help diminish inequities within and between countries, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."

TB incidence and deaths have risen between 2020 and 2021 but coordinated efforts by countries, WHO and partners are resulting in a recovery of essential services, he said.

WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, therefore officially launched the TB vaccine accelerator council to facilitate the development, licensing and use of new TB vaccines.

The Council, supported by the WHO secretariat, will be led by a ministerial board, consisting of nine

members who will serve on a rotating basis, for a term of two years. The Council will also have subsidiary bodies to support its interaction and engagement with different sectors and stakeholders broadly, including the private sector, scientists, philanthropy, and civil society.

BCG is currently the only licensed TB vaccine. While it provides moderate efficacy in preventing severe forms of TB in infants and young children, it does not adequately protect adolescents and adults, who account for the majority (>90%) of TB transmission globally.

The Council aims to identify innovative sustainable financing, market solutions and partnerships across public, private, and philanthropic sectors. It will leverage platforms like the African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), BRICS countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa), G20, G7 and others to strengthen commitment and actions for novel TB vaccine development and access.

Last Line

"I strongly believe it is high time we began to imbibe the culture of less litigation and more of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms so that our courts can be freed of unnecessary burden and depletion of both human and material resources."

-Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Olukayode Ariwoola speaking on what he called unpleasant times in the life of Judiciary in Nigeria.

Baba Kekere, the social welfarist called Lateef Jakande

Godknows Boladei Igali

Guest Writer

Few Nigerian statesmen have in the country's history received the amount of adulation and accolades as ace journalist, Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande, who governed Lagos State, country's economic nerve centre from 1979 to 1983. Often known simply by his initials LKJ, this former Nigerian Minister of Works, unlike many other politicians whose life works are eulogised only posthumously, has become the veritable centre point of good governance and quintessence of public service. In his honour, the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) commenced the maiden Annual Lecture Series on August 7, 2023.

LKJ's family and parental roots were traced to the town of Omu-Aran in present day Kwara State of Nigeria. Omu-Aran is the home of many great Nigerians including the first Kwara State Military Governor, Colonel David Bamigboye, as well as greatly acclaimed cleric, Bishop David Oyedipo of Living Faith Church, top diplomat, Ambassador Oluwole Idowu among others. Like many sons of the town, his parents moved to Lagos at the dawn of the century prior to his birth on July 29, 1929. He started his educational pursuit in various schools in Lagos and later at Bunham Memorial Methodist School, Port-Harcourt, 1934-1943, Kings College, Lagos, 1943 and Ilesha Grammar School in 1945 where he obtained his higher certificate. LKJ began his career in the world of writing during his higher secondary studies at Ilesha Grammar School where he was editing the school's magazine titled "Quarterly Mirror". Thereafter, he continued improving himself in the newsroom in various media houses including running a publication known as "Daily Service".

In his media work, he became greatly fascinated by the larger than life profile and politics of Chief Obafemi Awolowo who founded the Action Group, a political party in 1951. By 1953, Jakande joined the "Nigerian Tribune Newspaper" which was established in 1949 by Chief Awolowo and became the visible mouth piece of the sage's political structure and ideology. Gradually, he rose to become the Editor-in-Chief of this major national newspaper in 1956. It later became a life-long career of nearly 22 years of dutiful service to his mentor, Chief Awolowo during his high and low tides in politics. What upped his journalistic image was the fact that The Tribune newspapers under LKJ's stewardship became popular for its very objective and fearless reportage. Despite the fact that for much of the time his political principal was in the opposition, he earned for the paper and for himself respect on the quality of his editorials. Till date, against the backdrop of the foundation which he laid, The Tribune is not only Nigeria's oldest private newspaper in existence but has fledged on as the leading newsprint of preference in some sections of Nigeria.

During his brief exit from the Tribune, he established a printing outfit, which came up with a new product, "The Lagos News". He also served at a time as the first President of Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and the Guild of Editors. LKJ was also credited a one of the brains behind the strengthening of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the establishment of Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ) now at Ogba in Ikeja, Lagos State.

During the build-up stage to Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1979, a process that started in 1976 and subsequent formation of political movements that graduated into political parties, Jakande, who preferred the rather diminutive sobriquet of "Baba Kekere" which literally means a "little father" in deference to his boss, "Baba" (Chief Awolowo), threw

Although the city was the nation's capital at the time, he did not wait for federal authorities, but went ahead to embark on this massive project. Sadly, since his exit from office, some 40 years ago, the metro line was largely abandoned and the city continues to groan under the burden of great transport congestions.

his net into the political waters. As expected, he teamed up with his boss, Chief Awolowo and his new political outfit, Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). In the ensuing electoral process, LKJ won the UPN Governorship ticket for Lagos State, a platform through which he won Lagos Gubernatorial election in 1979 having defeated one of the country's political juggernauts and pioneer lawyers at the time, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) among others. A more spectacular score was his defeat of one of the "sons of the soil," Prince Ladega Adeniji-Adele of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), a descendant of the leading royal houses of Lagos. This was a big fit, underscoring not just the political influence of Chief Awolowo in that part of the country but called great attention to the candour of LKJ who did not have a great amount of formal tertiary education.

Soon after his assumption in office, Alhaji Jakande moved to prove his mettle which remains unmatched in all of Nigeria's history. His government pursued several policies particularly in areas such as free and affordable education, massive public housing and urban renewal. He introduced free and compulsory education both at the primary and secondary levels, for all the teeming population of Lagos irrespective of origin. Unfazed by a storm of bile and nay-saying from political opponents who groused and jeered over what they taunted as falling standards of public education, he built new schools and reconstructed existing ones using the cheapest technology. All relevant pedagogical materials were made available for free or at very affordable prices. By the time he left office in 1983, a total number of 22,000 classrooms had been added to the school system. He also increased the number of primary and secondary schools from 605 to 812 and 105 to over 223 respectively.

With respect to tertiary education, he established Lagos State College of Education and the Lagos State University (LASU) in 1983. With a population of about 34,000 students today, LASU has grown to be amongst the main universities in Nigeria. Aside from that, LASU has become a leading centre for research and innovation and was at several times amongst the 10 best in Nigeria's over 200 universities.

In the area of Mass Housing, Jakande built about 30,000 units of houses around the Lagos State within a

span of four years. He also flagged off the construction of the Onikan Stadium, now one of the country's main recreational landmarks. In his own constituency, that is the world of mass media, Governor Jakande started both the Lagos State Radio and Lagos Television in 1980 and both media outfits are still making very remarkable impact in electronic broadcasting in Nigeria.

Another area of great impact which he created was in public transportation. He opened up the entire state, especially Lagos metropolis, to affordable transport connectivity. This included marine transport services, taking advantage of the state's riverine environment. Foreseeing the imminent population explosion in Lagos, which had maintained a steady growth rate of about 6.3% and heading into a megacity status, he started a "metro line" mass transport project. Although the city was the nation's capital at the time, he did not wait for federal authorities, but went ahead to embark on this massive project. Sadly, since his exit from office, some 40 years ago, the metro line was largely abandoned and the city continues to groan under the burden of great transport congestions.

Like most politicians of his time, from whom power was seized by the military, intermittently in Nigeria, in this case on December 31, 1983, he went back to private life for 10 years but was recalled to serve as Federal Minister of Works (1993-1995). This was under the tenure of military Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha who ruled Nigeria from 1993-1998. Similar to other "progressive" politicians of his ilk, his acceptance to serve, which came under great pressure, became a blight on his later political career, as he lost much of his radical lustre and vitality. This notwithstanding, as a master builder, he brought his Midas touch to the national capital in overseeing the iconic Gwarimpa and Lugbe Federal Housing Projects, both in Abuja. These two gigantic public housing schemes are regarded as amongst the biggest of their type in Africa.

He was not successful in his second foray into politics during the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999, perhaps due to his erstwhile close relationship with Abacha. However, he later became a senior member of All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP). As the political processes kept evolving, he helped to form and became first Chairman of the Action Party of Nigeria (APN) in 2006. The political party did not however, make much impact in the political arena despite its contributions in politics and governance in the Second Republic.

The life of this great Nigerian will be a perpetual reminder to all that "greatness lies not in ruling the people but in being the cause of greatness in their life". As the servant-leader that he was, simplicity and humility were his mantra. Hence, throughout his tenure as a Governor of Nigeria's largest and most sophisticated state, he lived in his personal house in a middle class municipality and drove down in his modest personal car. Hence even though LKJ is now counted as late and condemned to history, the impact of his life's works continue to speak for him. He has corroborated American writer, James Dean's metaphor of bridging the gap between life and death perpetually. So even in death, he still speaks with a clear voice to Nigeria and would, perhaps always do so.

At a critical time in the country's political evolution when the worth and value of true heroism remains evasive like a mirage, the life of such an outstanding character will no doubt be missed. However, the story of his life's journey and the impact of his works, which we all see around, will continue to inspire succeeding generations of Nigerians to surpass his achievements.

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Sports Watch

NPFL bars coaches without CAF licence from top-flight



Nigeria Premier Football League board has directed all coaches in the top-flight to obtain the Confederation of Africa Football, CAF, B Licence. NPFL Chief Operating Officer, Davidson Owumi, announced that the requirement is part of the league's bid to improve the quality of technical performance of the clubs.

He said the measure is coming into force to trigger the coaches to acquire training that will improve what they offer to players.

"One of the areas of the league we seek to improve in the new season is the area of technical performance of our teams through the players, and this can only be achieved by having competent managers on the bench.

"For this season, we will only allow Head Coaches with a minimum qualification of the CAF B Licence to sit on the bench. This may be reviewed upward next season.

"The idea is to encourage our coaches to improve themselves through higher certifications by participating in reputable courses."

The 2023/24 NPFL season will kick off on Saturday, September 30 nationwide.