

Rivers youths occupy LG hqtrs as chairmen's tenure expires 14

Tension in Prisons over rising food inflation 9

●N750 now inadequate to feed one inmate per day

EDO GUBER: I'll re-enact Oshiomhole's infrastructural revolution — OKPEBHOLO 16

Vanguard

...towards a better life for the people

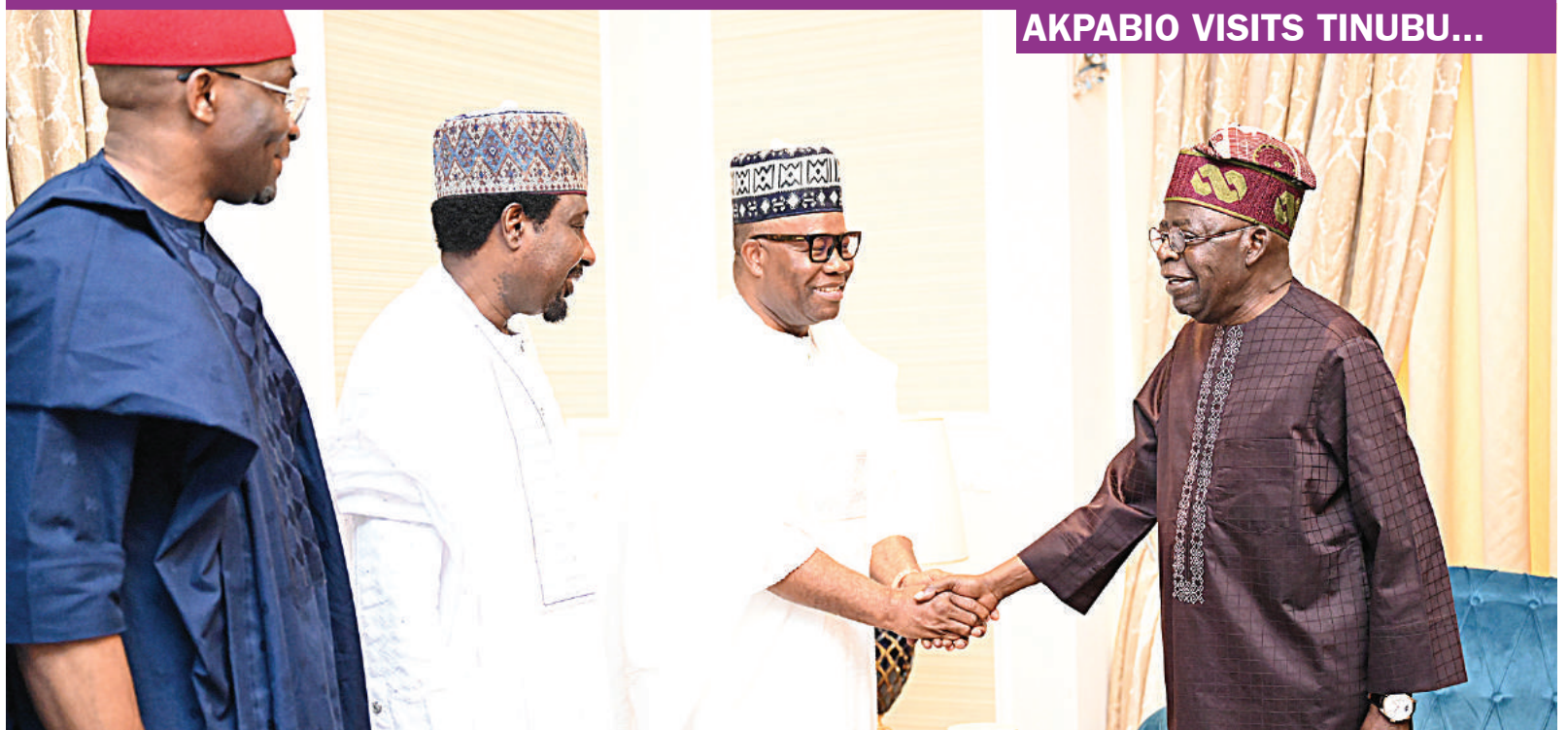
VOL. 41: NO. 10,330

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024

N250

KIDNAP: Families of Lebanese nationals rebuff police intervention 6

LG AUTONOMY: We'll await Supreme Court's decision, says Senate 8



AKPABIO VISITS TINUBU...

President Bola Tinubu (right) here receives, from left, Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Okezie Kalu, Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin and Senate President Godswill Akpabio, in Lagos during the Eid-el-Kabir celebration.

Nigerians struggle as high drug prices fuel health crisis

●Out-of-pocket payments on the increase ●Patient care threatened ●Rising costs force resort to herbal remedies, traditional healers ●Worry over unpredictable effectiveness of traditional medicine

OBASANJO VISITS FIRST LADY...



Former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu when the former president paid her a visit on the Eid-el-Kabir celebration, yesterday.

Over 2,700 pilgrims suffer heatstroke, exhaustion as weather hits 48 degrees Celsius 8

31 SPORTS

FINIDI: NFF axe dangles over Osimhen

●Opens disciplinary proceedings against him



SEE PAGE 5

Mr & Mrs

I HAD TO LEAVE OFFICE EARLY. I FARTED OVER SIX TIMES AND THE STENCH THAT FOLLOWED WAS UNBEARABLE. MOST OF MY COLLEAGUES HAD TO ABANDON THEIR OFFICES. WHAT DID YOU FEEL ME WITH?



NOT FROM MY FOOD. IF YOU'RE IN DOUBT, FART AGAIN AND LET'S PERCEIVE THE ODOUR!

dadadekota@yahoo.com 08052201913

COLUMNISTS

DAKUKU 16

TENIOLA 18

Niger Delta Voice 12

A PUBLICATION OF VANGUARD NEWSPAPER

C M Y K



Happy Eid-el-Kabir celebration

The Board, Management and Staff of
Dangote Industries Limited
wish our Muslim brothers and sisters
happy **Eid-el-Kabir** celebrations.

May Allah bring you joy, happiness, peace, and
prosperity on this blessed occasion.

Barka Da Sallah!



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Governor, Delta State

**OLOROGUN
KINGSLEY ESISO, PhD**
Delta State PDP Chairman

**OLOROGUN
JARO EGBO KSC**
PDP Chairmanship Candidate,
Ughelli North

The PDP leadership and Ughelli North campaign council heartily welcome HIS EXCELLENCY, RT. HON. SHERIFF FRANCIS OROHWEDOR OBOREWORI, State Chairman of our great party, Olorogun Kingsley Esiso, PhD, other leaders and stakeholders to Ughelli for the Local Government campaign and presentation of flag to the party Chairmanship candidate, Olorogun Jaro Egbo KSC for the July 13th, 2024 Local Government council election.

Date: Tuesday, June 18th, 2024 | Time: 11am

Venue: Oharisi Primary School, Ughelli

We wish you safe journey to Ughelli and back to Asaba.

Rt. Hon. Ovie Festus Agas - Chairman
Hon. Barr. Samuel Mariere - Co-Chairman
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Hon. George Oyefia - Chairman Constituency (I)
Chief Emmanuel Omadevuaye - Chairman Constituency (II)
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Uteme Bateren - Chairman Security Committee
Chief Gladys Ovie Agba - Chairman Welfare Committee
Hon. Oke Umurhohwo - Chairman Media Committee

News

Nigerians struggle as high drug prices fuel health crisis

● Out-of-pocket payments on the increase ● Patient care threatened ● Rising costs force resort to herbal remedies, traditional healers ● Worry over unpredictable effectiveness of traditional medicine

By Sola Ogundipe, Health Editor

LAGOS — For patients in Nigeria, the outrageous cost of life-saving drugs is a daily burden. Several people are now forced to take a risk with their health by extending or missing doses, settling for less potent substitutes, resorting to self-medication or traditional healers, or stopped medication entirely.

For those battling chronic ailments such as diabetes, high blood pressure or cancer, the affordability crisis has pushed essential medications and treatment out of reach for many Nigerians, and strained the public healthcare system.

Experts are worried that a significant number of

patients who are not taking their medications as prescribed, stand to develop complications and incur even more expensive interventions later.

Some patients, who spoke with Vanguard bemoaned the negative effects that rising drug costs are having on their well-being, financial situation, and survival.

Ngozi Uchenna, a petty trader, was concerned about her 10-year-old daughter's persistent cough. At the neighbourhood health centre in Ikeja, Lagos, she was visibly worried at the high cost of the prescribed cough mixture. "I cannot afford the drugs, so I'm taking my child back home," she stated.

James Akor, who had been coping with sporadic coughs and chest pains,

said he resorted to taking herbal mixtures because the hospital treatment bills were outrageous.

"One of the drugs the doctor said I should buy costs N120,000 and I will need to buy it two or three times every month. Another drug is about N55,000. Where will I get the money? I don't have it," he lamented.

I can't afford N1.2m for one drug

Dayo A. who was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2023, has not purchased any of the drugs prescribed for him.

He lamented: "The cancer was detected mid-stage, I am only on palliative treatment. One of the drugs prescribed for me was Lupron Depot. The doctor said I should take it

once every six months, but it cost N1,200,000.

"I am self-employed and not on health insurance, so I could not afford it. I was placed on another drug, Zoladex, but one vial costs about N750,000, which was also unaffordable for me."

For Olu F., a father of three, who noted that paying his hospital bills is a nightmare, said: "I'm a civil servant with a heart problem. Actually, I'm on a basic health insurance plan, but it does not cover the full cost of treatment for my condition, so I'm paying out of pocket.

"I'm usually sacrificing one for the other. It is either I buy my drugs and not pay for one other need or I skip my medication. Either way, it's not in my favour."

Kate B. who is diabetic also has a sad story; and many older adults like her are particularly impacted by the rising costs of diabetes drugs, rationing their medication just to make it last.

Hers is a plight of being forced to choose between buying medicine and putting food on the table.

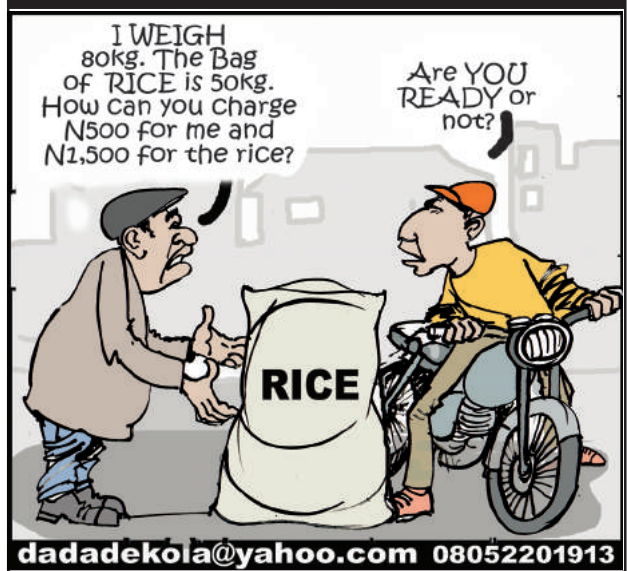
A market survey by Vanguard in Lagos revealed that the prices of common medications such as painkillers, antibiotics, anti-hypertensives and anti-diabetics have been increasing steadily since the beginning of the year.

Hardest hit are prescription drugs, the cost of some of which runs into millions of naira in some instances.

Causes of high cost of drugs

At the pharmacies, it was gathered that in addition to

POCKET CARTOON



dadadekola@yahoo.com 08052201913

the naira devaluation, price adjustments by drug manufacturers, government regulations, taxes, availability and demand for specific medications are factors driving price increases.

Towards the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, SDG3, and Universal Health Coverage, UHC, the Federal Government assented to the 2014 National Health Bill aimed at providing increased access to basic health care for the vulnerable population.

But even this has failed because many Nigerians still pay out of pocket for medical expenses, pushing more families into experiencing burgeoning health expenditures.

With hospital care gradually becoming financially out of reach, Nigerians are turning to cheaper but largely untested options such as home remedies, herbal medicines, among others.

But experts are worried by this development. The consensus was that out of pocket expenditures will prevail until the gaps in financing essential health care services, particularly preventive health services, is addressed.

Worry over

traditional, herbal medicine

A general practitioner at a General Hospital in Lagos, Dr Femi Akintunde, cautioned that though traditional medicine practices and herbal treatments are prevalent and offer familiarity and cultural relevance, their effectiveness can vary significantly.

"When treatment costs become too high, people are forced to seek affordable and untested alternatives. Although traditional medicine practices and herbal treatments are widely used in Nigeria, their effectiveness can be unpredictable," Akintunde warned.

Further he said: "While going to the pharmacy is okay for consultations for minor ailments and over-the-counter medications, relying on them for serious conditions can be risky due to limitations in diagnosis.

"Though public clinics offer affordable care, they may face resource limitations and longer wait times. The bottom line is that the inability to access proper diagnosis and treatment from qualified professionals can worsen health outcomes."

Roadblocks to good

Continues on Page 26



From left, Oladele Sotubo, Chief Executive, Stanbic IBTC Capital; Dr. Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, GMD/CEO, Fidelity Bank PLC and Mustafa Chike-Obi, Chairman, Fidelity Bank PLC, at the signing ceremony of Fidelity Bank PLC's N127.1 billion Rights Issue and Public Offer, with Stanbic IBTC Capital acting as Lead Issuing House on the transaction.

People Talk

BY ESTHER ONYEBGULA

On proposed 6-year single tenure for president, governors and rotation



Many advocates of federalism and restructuring have come up with similar proposals as models to restructure Nigeria and ensure equitable power sharing and inclusivity. At the 2004 National Constitutional Conference, late Gen. Musa Yar'Adua, late Ekwueme and other pro reform politicians promoted some of these ideas but the North opposed power sharing along the 6 geopolitical zones. It also proposed a 6-year one term for president and governors. I commend those who came up afresh with the proposals, and I hope the NASS will debate it with open mind.

—Okechukwu Nwagunma, Human rights activist



These proposals are not new. They are merely acting the script of certain powerful people. I should say these lawmakers are working for their selfish interest. There shouldn't be any problem about our four years of two terms for president and governors. Six years single tenure will give room for such elected politicians to bandy about laziness, corruption and non-performance. Rotational system at any level will never bring out the best of politicians for the country.

—Folorunsho Olu Atta, Journalist



I have heard many legal practitioners say it's undemocratic, they might be right, as a citizen, my concern is that these changes might not necessarily bring about good governance, what we need now is constitutional reviews that will bring about good governance.

—Abiodun Yakub, Brand/Communications strategist



This will eliminate the re-election cycle, reduce cost and political tension associated with repeated campaigns. By limiting executives to a single term, the proponents believe it could foster greater focus on governance and long-term planning without the distraction of seeking re-election. This measure could also help mitigate the incumbency advantage that often skews electoral processes. Also, the proposed rotational presidency and governorship will promote national unity and inclusivity, creating a more balanced political landscape.

—Mike Osemeke, Media entrepreneur



For the first time, I agree with these politicians. The two vice presidents idea is great considering the fact they are ministers and not bench warmers. The rotation also is good for healing the division the APC government has created. I also admire the electoral reform aspect the lawmakers agreed on through their spokesman, Ugochinyere. Stating that no results should be announced if figures don't tally with BVAS just to mention a few. I'm impressed.

—Anthony Abakporo, Entrepreneur



It shows that those we voted to represent us are representing themselves. How many of them have proposed a bill to look into the high cost of food, or insecurity or proposed a bill to strengthen our electoral system after collecting SUVs that the price will sponsor half of their constituents to university? I believe Nigerians are comfortable with the four-term system and we need a system where our vote counts. This shows that we should not expect the right electoral system. So, anyone who is selected can do whatever he or she wants in six years and go home to enjoy their loot.

—Stanley Ihedigbo, Lecturer

KIDNAP: Families of Lebanese nationals rebuff police intervention

By Emma Nnadozie

FAMILIES, community and close associates of the four Lebanese nationals kidnapped Friday by suspected militants in the riverine areas of Lagos State, have reportedly rebuffed police intervention, saying they are in a better position to achieve results without endangering the lives of the victims.

This came as controversy trailed their kidnap by armed men suspected to be militants from the riverine areas of the state.

While reports said the Managing Director of Fouani Company, a representative of LG and Hisense products was one of the victims; another source said it was one of his top managers and others that were kidnapped.

They were said to have been abducted while travelling by boat from Apapa to Victoria Island when they ran into ambush near Falomo Bridge.

Late yesterday, it was learned that the unknown gunmen were demanding for a whopping \$1.5 million as ransom while negotiations were said to be on between the families of the victims and their abductors.

A source close to the friends of the victims hinted that they may be released any moment from now especially "by nightfall going by the progress and understanding so far recorded with the kidnapers."

However, Vanguard gathered that police detectives in the state are not leaving any stone unturned in rescuing the victims safely and had since set all machineries in motion towards achieving results.

According to sources, police detectives have commenced intensive combing of all waterways in the state including known islands that the kidnapers might have taken the victims to, noting "efforts are also in top gear to monitor activities of criminal elements in all coastal areas in the state."

Vanguard was informed that the Commissioner of Police, Adegoke Fayode had already given stern directives to men of the Special Squad to move into action and rescue the victims without delay.

Police sources said the team of detectives are also spreading their dragnets across all neighboring states especially those close to water ways with a view to rounding up perpetrators of the act.

The source said the measure was prompted by revelations from a notorious kidnapper recently arrested in one of the neighboring states after they abducted an oil magnet at Lamgba area of Lagos.

The kidnapper presently detained at the Command headquarters, Ikeja, submitted himself to the police after his tracks were uncovered and all his relations including his pregnant wife that were frustrating his arrest were apprehended.

When contacted over developments regarding the kidnap of the Lebanese, the state Police spokesman, Benjamin Hyndeyin simply said: "We are on top of the situation. Though, I may not give you all the details but I assure you that success will soon be recorded."

....Delta Police arrest GO, others, recover military uniform

By Akpokona Omafuaire

UGHELLI—OPERATIVES of Delta State Police have arrested one Bishop, a General Overseer, GO, and founder of a new generation Church, his wife and others over alleged attempt to kidnap a fellow Bishop in Agbarho, Ughelli North Local Government Area of the state.

Police operatives also reportedly recovered military fatigue from residents of the Bishop while executing a search warrant.

The GO, simply identified as Bishop

Mohbad's toxicology result: Family demands review, transparency

●Calls on IGP to personally intervene, bring killers to book

By Evelyn Usman

LAGOS—THE battle for justice for late Nigerian musician, Ilerioluwa Aloba, popularly known as Mohbad, may not be over, as his family has rejected pathologist's declaration of the toxicology test results inconclusive and demanded for a review.

The family equally insisted that a re-examination should be conducted with the utmost transparency and strict adherence to the highest standards of forensic science.

Besides, late Mohbad's family also accused the Police of shoddy investigation into his death and called on the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Egbetokun, to personally intervene in the investigation and bring those who have hands in his death to book.

The family in a virtual briefing, yesterday anchored by its lawyers: Wahab Shittu and Taiwo Odumosu, among others, said, "We, the legal representatives of the Aloba family, express our profound dissatisfaction and disappointment with the recent announcement regarding the toxicology test results of the late Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba, which have been declared 'inconclusive' by the pathologist."

"This outcome is entirely unacceptable to us and the Aloba family and raises serious concerns about the integrity and thoroughness of the investigation by the Police and the medical team into the untimely death of their beloved son, brother, and friend. The Aloba family and, indeed, the whole world demand to know where the toxicology test was carried out as this has impugned the integrity."

"The legal team wonders how the letterhead and the address of the National Medical Services Laboratories in Pennsylvania, USA, appeared on the toxicology test report if the test was not truly carried out in the USA."

"The legal team is puzzled more, given the discrepancies in the further response given by the NMS laboratories ascribing the test to another sister laboratory. The conflict of interest bothers on professional integrity. The public is interested in knowing the relationship between the Lagos State DNA and Forensic Laboratory, NMS in the USA and ITSI Biosciences who allegedly completed the toxicology test on behalf of the Lagos State government."

"The family's hope that the toxicology test reportedly conducted in the United States, would shed light on the circumstances surrounding his tragic passing, had been dashed."

They further stated that the declaration of the test as 'inconclusive' failed to provide the clarity needed and undermined the public as well as late Mohbad family's faith in the investigative process.

In light of these developments, they hinted that the Aloba family was "compelled to denounce the 'inconclusive' toxicology test results and demand that re-examination should be conducted with the utmost transparency and adherence to the highest standards of forensic science".

Other demands by the family as



●Late Mohbad

highlighted by the lawyers were: "a thorough review of the procedures and protocols followed during the initial toxicology testing, that should include an assessment of the chain of custody, handling, and analysis of the samples to ensure that no procedural lapses or contamination occurred."

"We urge the involvement of independent international forensic experts to oversee and validate the re-examination process. Their participation will help restore confidence in the findings and ensure that all possible avenues are explored."

"The Aloba family demands full disclosure of all findings and reports related to the toxicology tests. Transparency is crucial to understanding the cause of death and dispelling any doubts or suspicions."

"Time is of the essence in this matter. We call upon the relevant authorities to expedite the re-examination process and ensure that the family receives definitive answers without undue delay."

"The Nigeria Police has not done

enough in this case. The investigation so far conducted does not show the thoroughness and professionalism expected in a murder case of this nature. We call on the Inspector General of Police to personally intervene in this investigation and bring the perpetrators to book."

"The Aloba family remains steadfast in its pursuit of truth and justice for Ilerioluwa. They deserve clear, definitive answers regarding the cause of his death, and it is the responsibility of the investigative bodies to provide them with such clarity. The current 'inconclusive' results only serve to prolong their agony and uncertainty, which is both unfair and unjust."

"Considering the Coroner Inquest, we appeal to the presiding Magistrate to ensure that an independent toxicology report is submitted to the Coroner's Court before submitting the final report to the authorities."

Recall that late Mohbad died on September 12, 2023, in Lagos, at the age of 27.

Suspected herdsmen storm Taraba community, kill 6 villagers

●Inflict injuries on several others

By Femi Bolaji

JALINGO—SUSPECTED herdsmen have invaded a Taraba community, killing no fewer than six and inflicted various degrees of injuries on several other villagers.

According to sources, the invasion which occurred in Mararaban Azagwa and Alele villages of Maihula in the Bali Local Government Area, LGA, of the state, took place on Sunday.

One of the traumatized residents of

the area, Isah Abdul, informed that trouble started when a man who was drunk and might have taken hard drugs at Maihula market was found dead on his way home, saying "It is an unfortunate development. The relatives of the deceased, who later recovered his corpse, accused the Tiv villagers where the man died of been responsible for the death of their brother."

"There was nothing actually to point to the fact that the man was killed. He might have probably died from

500-level student commits suicide in Ondo after church vigil

By Dayo Johnson

AKURE—A final year student of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, AAUA, Ondo state, Ayandare Modupe, has reportedly committed suicide after attending a church vigil.

Sources said the deceased walked into an uncompleted building close to the church where she attended a vigil at a white garment church and committed suicide.

She reportedly left a suicide note in her bag after hanging herself.

A statement by the Public Relations Officer of the institution's student union, Olaogbebikan Noble, said "We express in strong terms our dissatisfaction and agony with respect to the death of one of our student, Ayandare Modupe; a 500 level student of the Department of Agronomy (Agronomy Departmental President)."

"According to report the deceased was said to have committed suicide at the early hours of today (yesterday) around 4am after they finished vigil in her church. The incident happened beside the church around Sportless Villa."

"The law enforcement agency has been informed already and all hands are on desk in getting to the root of the situation. Be rest assured that justice will be served and the law enforcement agency will do thorough investigation."

"Should you have any information to supply regarding the incident that happened, kindly reach out to the students' union."

Similarly, the deceased department in which she was the President, in a statement by Faith Oluwatimilehin, among others, said "It is with a heavy heart that I write to inform you of a tragic event that has deeply affected our community. We have lost one of our own, Modesty who served as the President of the Department of Agronomy."

"Her passing, by suicide at Onireason Street's permanent site, is a profound loss to us all. During this difficult time, we urge everyone to come together in support of one another. The mental well-being of our members is of utmost importance, and we encourage anyone who may be struggling to seek help."

"Our faculty offers counseling services, and we are here to support you in any way we can."

Contacted, the spokesperson for the state police command, Funmi Odunlami, confirmed that the deceased left a suicide note in her bag before committing suicide at an uncompleted building.

complications arising from the alcohol and the drugs he took. But his relatives, who suspected that he was killed by the Tiv villagers, mobilised and started attacking and killing people."

Briefing on the development, Chairman, Taraba State Tiv Traditional Council, Zaki David Gbaa, said "six persons were killed and four others are in critical conditions in the hospital. Those killed include; Aondohemba Salemkaan, Tersuugh Dondo, Terkuma Mbatim, Kumaga Ujam Asaaga Nev and Tersoo Memga."

He condemned the attack and lauded the security agencies for their quick intervention to calm the situation, expressing confidence that the attackers would be arrested by security agencies and prosecuted especially that all of them live in the community and could easily be identified.

State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Gambo Kwache, who confirmed the attack said only two corpses were recovered by the police and added that no arrest had been made, but security operatives were combing the area in search of the attackers.

N150,000 from you which should be transferred into our account today Monday 10th June."

While looking for money to balance the payment they sent another text to him with the caption, "Hey, you feel say we no go fit do u anything. No worry na back we go take enter u."

"If u no bal up d 100k, we go come for ur life. Do u know how many people we have with us, send the 100k if not, u done match line as your prayer of Holy ghost fire on our head for ur church after we done settle matter finish."

account provided in the text message. "The delay in sending the balance of N50,000 resulted to multiple kidnapping and assassination text messages from the suspect."

The text messages read, "Hello Bishop, this is me Dust to Dust, the members of black axe cult (Eye) Ugolo Zone."

"Be informed that we were asked to assassinate you, kidnap and kill you right in your church at Agbarho. But we decided to change our mind based on one condition."

"We are demanding a ransom of

VIEW FROM ABROAD

Nigeria confronts its worst economic crisis in a generation

BY RUTH MACLEAN & ISMAIL AUWAL

PEOPLE in Africa's most populous nation are suffering as the price of food, fuel and medicine has skyrocketed out of reach for many.

Nigeria is facing its worst economic crisis in decades, with skyrocketing inflation, a national currency in free-fall and millions of people struggling to buy food. Only two years ago Africa's biggest economy, Nigeria is projected to drop to fourth place this year.

The pain is widespread. Unions strike to protest salaries of around \$20 a month. People die in stampedes, desperate for free sacks of rice. Hospitals are overrun with women wracked by spasms from calcium deficiencies.

The crisis is largely believed to be rooted in two major changes implemented by a president elected 15 months ago: the partial removal of fuel subsidies and the floating of the currency, which together have caused major price rises.

A nation of entrepreneurs, Nigeria's more than 200 million citizens are skilled at managing in tough circumstances, without the services states usually provide. They generate their own electricity and source their own water. They take up arms and defend their communities when the armed forces cannot. They negotiate with kidnappers when family members are abducted.

But right now, their resourcefulness is being stretched to the limit.

No Money for Milk

On a recent morning in a corner of the biggest emergency room in northern Nigeria, three women were convulsing in painful spasms, unable to speak. Each year, the E.R. at Murtala Muhammed Specialist Hospital in Kano, Nigeria's second-largest city, received one or two cases of *hypocalcemia* caused by malnutrition, said Salisu Garba, a kindly health worker who hurried from bed to bed, ward to ward.

Now, with many unable to afford food, the hospital sees multiple cases everyday.

Mr. Garba was sizing up the women's husbands. Which source of nutrition he recommended depended on what he thought they could afford. Baobab leaves or tiger nuts for the poor; boiled-up bones for the slightly better off. He laughed at the suggestion that anyone could afford milk.

More than 87 million people in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, live below the poverty line — the world's second-largest poor population after India, a country seven times its size. And punishing inflation means poverty rates are expected to rise still further this year and next, according to the World Bank.

Last week, unions shut down hospitals, courts, schools, airports and even the country's Parliament, striking in an attempt to force the government to increase the monthly salary of \$20 it pays its lowest workers.

But over 92 percent of working-age Nigerians are in the informal



Saudi Arabia.

Instead, many Nigerians are going bankrupt — or working multiple jobs to stay afloat.

Mr. Garba, the hospital worker, used to be solidly middle class, even though 17 family members, including 12 children, depended on him.

After shifts at the hospital, where he is setting up the first statewide ambulance service in addition to working in the emergency room, for which he is paid \$150 a month, he heads to the Red Cross. There he occasionally receives a \$3.30 volunteer stipend for helping tackle a severe diphtheria outbreak.

At night, he works at the pharmacy that he and a colleague set up. But few people have money for medicine anymore. He sells about \$7 worth of medication per day.

Last year, Mr. Garba sold his car when the gas subsidies were removed, and now takes a *tuk-tuk* to work. Unable to power the generator, he reads medicine labels at the pharmacy by the light of a small solar lantern. He can only afford to buy rice and cassava in small quantities.

Life under the previous government was very expensive, he said, but nothing like today.

"It's very, very bad," he said.

It's gotten so dire that there have been several deadly stampedes for free or discounted rice distributed by the government — including one in March at a university in the central state of Nasarawa where seven students were killed.

Mr. Tinubu promised to create a million jobs and quadruple the size of the economy within a decade, but has not said how. The International Monetary Fund said last month the state has started subsidizing fuel and electricity again — though the government has not acknowledged this.

"There's still very little clarity — if any — on where the economy is headed, what the priorities are," said Zainab Usman, a political economist and director of the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The Tapping Craze

A spate of new crypto-mining games that promise to generate income the more the user plays has people across Nigeria spending all day tapping on their smartphone screens, desperate to earn a few dollars.

People tap as they pray, in mosques and churches. Children tap under desks at school. Mourners tap at funerals.

There's no guarantee any of them will ever benefit from the hours they put in mindlessly tapping.

Then again, they can't count on the national currency, the naira.

The government has twice devalued the naira in the past year, trying to enable it to float more freely and attract foreign investment. The upshot: It's lost nearly 70 percent of its value against the dollar.

Nigeria cannot produce enough food for its growing population; food imports rise 11 percent annually. The currency devaluation caused those imports — already expensive because of high tariffs — to explode in price.

Nigerians can become paupers almost overnight. So they're searching for anything that might hold its value — or ideally, get them rich.

"People are looking for me everywhere," said Rabiu Biyora, the undisputed king of tapping in Kano, opening one of his five foldable phones to add to his 2.7 billion taps on the TapSwap app. "Not to attack me, but to collect something from me."

A relaxed, businesslike 39-year-old followed everywhere by young tech-savvy acolytes, Mr. Biyora would only say that he made "over \$10,000" from the previous tapping craze.

He profits from everyone else's taps, so he encourages them in posts on social media, and by providing free internet to anyone willing to sit outside his house. Nigerians don't need much encouragement — despite the risks and volatility, Nigeria has the second highest cryptocurrency adoption rate in the world.

So every evening, struggling young men gather by Mr. Biyora's home and tap.

Pleas for Help

In much of Nigeria, it's normal to share with your neighbors and give alms to the poor.

Every day, people come to the gate of Kano's Freedom Radio station to drop off sheets of paper containing heartfelt appeals for help paying medical bills or school fees, or to recover from some disaster.

A radio presenter chooses three to read out daily, and often a sympathetic listener calls in to pay the supplicant's bill.

But lately the appeals have multiplied, and offers of help have dried up.

Good Samaritans used to come to the E.R. and pay strangers' bills for them, Mr. Garba said. That rarely happens now either.

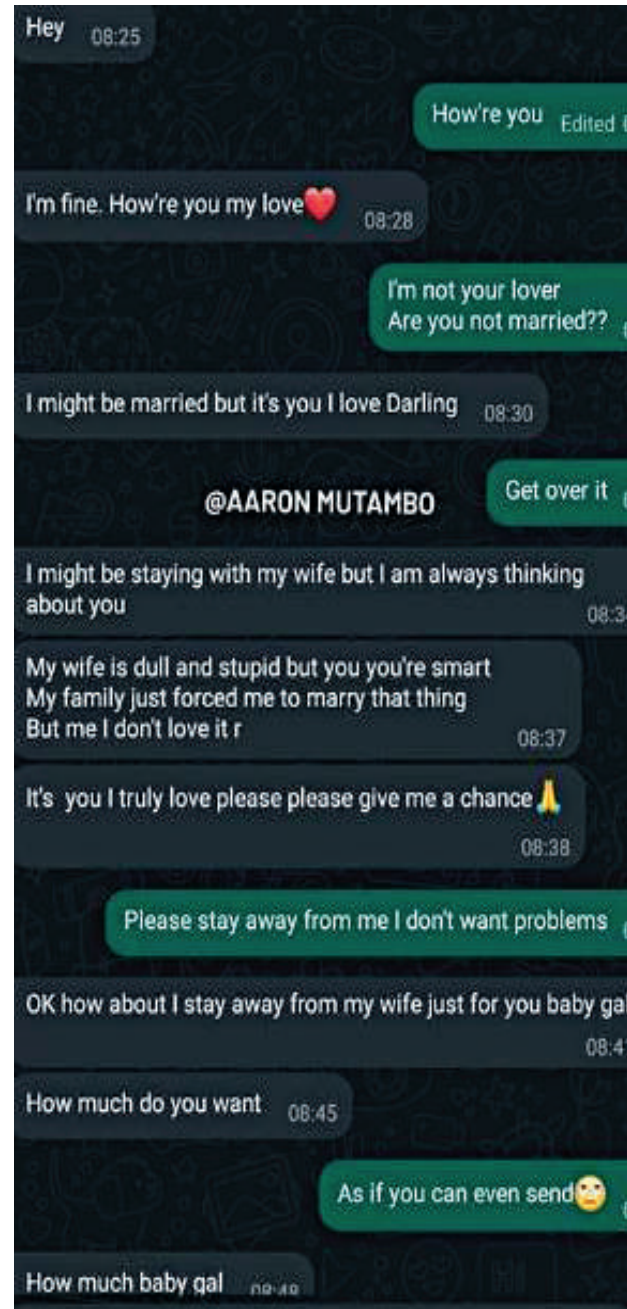
Still, Mr. Garba said, the number of patients coming to his hospital has almost halved in recent months.

Many of the sick never even make it. They can't afford the 20-cent bus ride.

•This article, which the Presidency reacted to, was first published in the New York Times on June 11, 2024.



Social Media Conversation



Money speaks her 'language'!



...And she'll take over your home!

More than 87 million people in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, live below the poverty line—the world's second-largest poor population after India, a country seven times its size

sector, where there are no wages, and no unions to fight for them. For the Afolabi family in Ibadan, in southwestern Nigeria, the descent into poverty started in January with the loss of an electric *tuk-tuk* taxi.

Forced to sell the taxi to pay his wife's hospital bills after the difficult birth of their second child, Babatundé Afolabi turned to occasional construction work. It paid badly, but the family managed. "We had no thoughts about starvation," he said.

But then, he said, cassava — the cheapest staple in many parts of Nigeria — tripled in price.

All they can afford now, he said, is a few biscuits, a little bread, and for their six-year-old, 20 peanuts a day.

A Country Built on Gas

Nigeria is a country heavily dependent on imported petroleum products, despite being a major oil producer. After years of underinvestment and mismanagement, its state refineries produce hardly any gasoline.

For decades, the national soundtrack has been the hum of small generators, fired up during daily power outages. Petroleum products move goods and people around the country.

Until recently, the government subsidized that petroleum, to the tune of billions of dollars a year.

Many Nigerians said the subsidy was the only useful contribution from a neglectful and predatory government. Successive presidents have pledged to remove the subsidy, which drains a hefty chunk of government revenue — and later backtracked fearing mass unrest.

Bola Tinubu, who was elected Nigeria's president last year, initially followed through.

"It was a necessary action for my country not to go bankrupt," Mr. Tinubu said in April, at a meeting of the World Economic Forum in



From left: Samba Seye, Managing Director, TotalEnergies, Marketing Nigeria Plc; Jean-Philippe Torres, Chairman; Mark Mannok, Company Secretary/Legal Adviser and Olubunmi Popoola-Mordi, Executive Director, Human Resources and Corporate Services, during the company's 46th Annual General Meeting in Lagos. Photo: Akeem Salau

2024 Hajj: Over 2,700 pilgrims suffer heatstroke, exhaustion as weather hits 48 degrees Celsius

By Haroon-Ishola
Balogun, Saudi Arabia

ABOUT 3,000 pilgrims were yesterday affected by heat strokes and exhaustion during their journeys to and from the Jamarat for the stoning rite, resulting in the death of unspecified number of affected pilgrims.

Pilgrims from Nigeria and

• Unspecified number of deaths recorded • Saudi Arabia reschedules stoning rite to evening • Blames victims for non-adherence to directives

Africa as a whole were least affected.

It was gathered that Saudi hospitals within the area were busy attending to patients, while further emergency calls to health officials were overwhelming as some calls could not get im-

mediate responses.

Head of Emergency Unit, through the Saudi Ministry of Health, Al-Shalhoub, said the 911 center in the Makkah region received a total of 78,872 calls on Sunday.

The sun yesterday had

reached all time high of 47-48 degree Celcius, with a prediction that it would rise further in the days ahead.

Most pilgrims whose tents are located at the end of Mina, would have to walk 2.8 kilometres, an average of 90-105 minutes to Jamarat.

A pilgrim, who witnessed some of the incidents on the way to Jamarat from Mina, said: "I saw many of them falling asleep, a result of the heat, when I was walking to Jamarat. Mostly affected were the elderly and young non-Arabs, Europeans and Indians. Some died while some were rushed to the hospital.

"In fact, the police and the ambulance services were overwhelmed with the number of cases related to heat-

waves.

"Many were seen lying down with people offering first aid assistance mostly within a distance of 500 metres."

"Confirming the incident, Saudi Ministry of Health also on Sunday, put the number affected by heat strokes and exhaustion at 2,764 pilgrims, blaming the development on non-adherence to instructions of drinking water and using the umbrella.

"The number of cases of heat exhaustion and sunstroke reached 2,764 cases during this day alone as a result of some pilgrims not adhering to the instructions.

"We recommend campaign organizers to guide and educate pilgrims to adhere to the guidelines and protect them from exposure

to any heat stress.

"Physical stress will lead to heat stress, and rest and spacing between performing rituals is important." Saudi Ministry of Health said.

Saudi bans going out at peak time: 11am-4pm

Meanwhile, the country's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has banned going out from 11am to 4pm for the ritual of throwing pebbles.

This was contained in a memo issued to all heads of Hajj participating missions in Makkah yesterday.

The directive, titled "Urgent Notice to All Hajj Office Heads," read: "By the directives of His Excellency, the Deputy Minister of Hajj and Umrah, and to ensure the well-being of pilgrims amid high temperatures and to prevent heat stress, the following measures have been implemented: "Pilgrims are prohibited from proceeding to the Jamarat Bridge for the ritual of throwing stones from 11 am to 4 pm.

"Security personnel will be stationed at camps to enforce this restriction and prevent any pilgrim from departing before 4 pm.

"The Office of Hajj Affairs and service providers are tasked with ensuring compliance, and they will bear responsibility for any violations thereof."

Measures towards reducing the effect

Saudi Arabia's measures towards mitigating the heat strokes include extensive cooling systems, both manual and automated water sprinklers strategically mounted along Jamarat-Mina road.

Some pilgrims also use rechargeable and battery-powered neck and handheld fans in their determination to offset the challenging conditions brought by the heat.

There are also portable fans procured by individual pilgrim for personal cooling in crowded areas.

LG autonomy: We'll await Supreme Court's decision, says Senate

By John Alechenu

ABUJA: The Senate has said it would await the decision of the Supreme Court on the contentious issue of local government autonomy before fashioning out the way forward by taking a fresh look at existing laws.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Yemi Adaramodu, said this in an interview in Abuja yesterday.

He explained that the upper chamber of the National Assembly was currently constrained and was not in a position to present an opinion until the Supreme Court made a pronouncement.

Adaramodu, however, noted that there was a time in the nation's history when local governments were largely autonomous but noted that a time came when those at the helm of affairs saw things differently. He noted that some people had raised concerns about the revenue allocation formula via-a-vis the issue of equity among other issues.

The Senate spokesman said: "We might not be able to say much about it (LG au-

thonomy) but then, we are talking about distributing funds to local governments.

"There are indices that inform the distribution of funds to local governments. Equality, land mass, social indices. So, when we talk about one of seven of the schools in Akure, that's social indices. That is where they indicate how many hospitals.

"How many dispensaries? How many primary schools? How many junior secondary schools? Then population. So they distribute based on that. So, definitely there's a local government that has only one primary school, and there's an-

other one that has 37 primary schools that are not going to get the same thing because of that formula. So just for education.

"But for local government autonomy, we'll not discuss further until the Supreme Court rules accordingly. When the Supreme Court rules, then the National Assembly will know where to take it from, whatever the ruling is."

CROSS River State governor, Senator Bassey Otu, has challenged his party, the All Progressives Congress, APC, to grab more states in

the South South, so the region could align with the federal government.

The governor threw the challenge during the APC South-South zonal executives meeting held at the Metropolitan Hotel, Calabar, weekend.

"It is important to muster more and more states to the ruling APC so that our zone would be politically warm within the APC family.

"It is about endearing the people to the powerful pedigree of the actualization of our hope through passionate empathy for changing livelihood and leveraging the environment for a better today and greater tomorrow," Otu said.

The governor, who is also the coordinator of the APC in the South-South geopolitical zone, affirmed that Edo State could not escape the onslaught, with the winning strategy encapsulated in the 'Renewed Hope' agenda of the Tinubu-led administration.

"If we did it in Imo State gubernatorial polls, we can replicate same in Edo State," the governor affirmed.

He called on the ruling APC to consider the South-South for critical appointments as, according to him, only this

Eid el Kabir: Obasanjo visits Oluremi Tinubu

FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday visited the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, on the occasion of the Sallah celebration.

The spokesperson for the First Lady, Busola Kukoyi, who disclosed this in a post alongside a photo of both leaders via her X handle, said the former president came on the visit to felicitate with the wife of the President in Lagos.

She wrote: "Former Presi-

dent of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and the First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, after receiving the former President who came felicitating on the Sallah celebration on Monday, June 17."

Obasanjo had on May 27, attacked the Tinubu administration over the poor implementation of the removal of the fuel subsidy as well as the floating of the naira, which have created more challenges for individual and corporate Nigerians in the last one year.

The former President had said though the policies were necessary, they were wrongly implemented.

Obasanjo had in a statement by his Special Assistant on Media, Kehinde Akinyemi, also condemned Nigeria's approach to the coup in the Republic of Niger, which created tension between both countries.

South Africa: Tinubu to attend inauguration of re-elected President Ramaphosa

By Johnbosco Agbakwuru

ABUJA-PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu will today depart Lagos for Pretoria, South Africa, to attend the inauguration of President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The inauguration of President Ramaphosa follows his re-election as President for a second term.

A statement issued by the presidential spokesman, Chief Ajuri Ngelale, stated that President Tinubu would return to Nigeria after the ceremony.

takeover of the entire zone.

LEISURE

SAYINGS OF OUR ELDERS

Let not what you cannot do tear you from what you can do

TAKE HEART — ELLA RANDLE

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.—Will Durant

Build positive habits. Replace negative habits with positive ones, such as regular exercise, healthy eating, and sufficient sleep.—Ella Randle

FG denies renaming Murtala Mohammed Way Abuja after Soyinka

By Johnbosco Agbakwuru

ABUJA—THE Federal Government has debunked the report that the Murtala Mohammed Way, Abuja, has been renamed after the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, saying such name change has never been contemplated by the administration.

It explained that during the inauguration of a new road in the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Abuja, codenamed Arterial Road N20 (from Katampe to Jahi), the FCT Minister, Barrister Nyesom Wike, proposed to the President that the road be named after Prof. Wole Soyinka, and the President agreed.

In a statement issued by Rabiu Ibrahim, Special Assistant (Media) to the Minister of Information and National Orientation, the government urged Nigerians to disregard any misinformation regarding the renaming of the Murtala Mohammed Expressway, describing the report as entirely false that existed in the imagination of its purveyors. The statement read: "We have noted the rumours being circulated that the Murtala Mohammed Expressway in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, has been renamed as Wole Soyinka Way. The renaming of the Murtala Mohammed Expressway Way has never been contemplated by this administration."

"For the record, on June 4, 2024, President Bola Tinubu inaugurated a new road in the FCT, codenamed Arterial Road N20 (from Katampe to Jahi), which links the existing outer northern expressway (also known as Murtala Mohammed Expressway) to the Northern Parkway (also called Ahmadu Bello Way).

"During the inauguration of the N20 (which is a new road), FCT Minister, Barrister Nyesom Wike, proposed to the President that the road be named after Prof. Wole Soyinka, and the President agreed.

"Therefore, it is the Arterial Road N20 that is named after Prof. Soyinka. The Murtala Mohammed Expressway remains unchanged and continues to bear the name of our esteemed former Head of State, General Murtala Ramat Mohammed."

JAMB to host policy meeting on admission soon

By Joseph Erunke

ABUJA—The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, JAMB, said yesterday it has concluded arrangements to host the 2024 policy meeting on admissions into tertiary institutions.

The board, which disclosed this in its weekly news bulletin, said the meeting would be chaired by the Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, with other critical stakeholders in the education sector in attendance.

JAMB stated: "These critical stakeholders include heads of regulatory agencies, such as the National University Commission, NUC, National Board for Technical Education, NBTE, National Council for Colleges of Education, NCCE, heads of tertiary institutions in the country, and the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, among others."

JAMB explained that, "The



From left: Minister of Education, Chad, Mr Mamadou Gana Boukar; Minister of Education, Ghana, Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum; World Bank Vice President for Human Development, Mamta Murthi; Minister of Education, Brazil, Mr Camilo Santana, and Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, after a panel session at the Accelerating Progress Towards SDG 4: Stocktake of Transformative Actions in Education convened by the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee, held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, yesterday.

Tension in Prisons over rising food inflation

By Omeiza Ajayi

ABUJA: The increasing cost of food stuffs and gas has led to grumblings among some inmates in the nation's various prisons.

Relatives of some inmates who confided in *Vanguard*, noted that the rising cost of foodstuffs has impacted negatively on their wards behind bars.

They are, therefore, asking state governments to liberalize bail conditions for petty crimes in a way that offenders could easily meet their bail conditions and attend trial from home.

Nigeria currently has 256 prisons with 81,647 inmate population as of May 31, 2024.

This is made up of 5,853 for federal offences, comprising 3,774 pre-trial detainees and 2,079 convicts, while those for state offences are 75,794, comprising 51,934 awaiting trial and 23,860 as convicts.

Recall that in 2021, the federal government had after a sustained public outrage, reluctantly increased the feeding allowance per inmate from N450 to N750 daily.

It was gathered that when taxes, cost of gas and profits for the food vendors are taken from this N750, the actual amount used for feeding an

•N750 now inadequate to feed one inmate per day

inmate in a day could be less than N500.

"The slow response to adjustment of allowance for feeding inmates is actually worrisome. It is perhaps trite to say that the price of most commodities in Nigeria, especially food, has gone beyond the reach of the average Nigerians.

"As if this is not enough, one gets petrified that with this economic reality, the management of the Nigerian Correctional Service is still expected to feed inmates with N750.00 per day, including vendors profit and tax.

"If the government would spend N700 on a little child of less than 10 years just for one meal as part of its school feeding programme, a child who probably ate breakfast before going to school and who would still eat dinner, you

can imagine the implications of feeding a full grown adult who is incarcerated with N750 for a three square meal daily," said a top security personnel who did not want his name mentioned in the report.

Expressing fears of possible protests by some of the inmates, he said the situation could force some personnel to compromise security, especially with regard to "trafficking".

He added: "The spirit behind legal internment of individuals, whether as suspects or convicted offenders, is to promote societal peace. This is in the understanding that some persons do not have the capacity to interact with others within civil boundaries, thus requiring the law to keep them out of circulation.

"It could also be to avoid tampering with the justice

process while cases are on trial or, to serve as deterrent for convicts as well as would-be-offenders. Sometimes, incarceration also protects offenders from a vengeful society, among others.

"However, contemporary practices in the management of persons denied of their liberty requires that such persons are kept humanely safe and basic needs for survival provided by the captors.

"A growing concern about the Nigerian Prisons Service is the 'inadvertent forgetfulness' of the Nigerian government to make the most basic provisions for the upkeep of its prisoners in accordance with prevailing economic ecosystem.

"My deep worry is a possible compromise of operational standards which may precipitate security breaches with

far-reaching security and socioeconomic consequences. We are all witnesses to the unprecedented unrest and upsurge in crimes in contiguous communities each time there is a security breach and inmates escape from a custodial centre.

"The stone a man sees flying in the air should not blind him. If we must save nine, we need to stitch in time. The federal government must avoid this looming crisis by intervening as speedily as possible".

A 62-year-old retired civil servant, Sunday Jegede, who said his son was being remanded in one of the prisons in the south, faulted state governments for their lack of interest in Prisons.

"There is no doubt, state governments have shown no decorum in the use of incarceration for all manner of crimes in their jurisdictions and literally abandoning the inmates after remand, thus exacerbating the over-population phenomenon and the accompanying menace.

"This, more than anything else, justifies the decision by the federal government to transfer the burden of state offenders, which is over 85 per cent of the inmate population to states.

"But given that state governments do not have the capacity to provide for these persons, why can't they embark on massive decongestion of prisons, as against the tokenistic release of five to eight persons by visiting chief judges?"

"Why can't they liberalize bail conditions to enable inmates attend court sessions from their homes, at least, for minor crimes? Why can't they even expedite trial processes so that the convicted population can be taken to farms to work and augment their upkeep?"

"We must realize that societal progress is a function of the level of safety the citizens enjoy. While chasing the criminals at large, those in custody should be kept in conditions that make them amenable to reformation and rehabilitation to promote enduring peace," he stated.

Obi to FG: Focus on poverty alleviation not new presidential jet

By: John Alechenu

ABUJA: The presidential candidate of Labour Party, LP, in the 2023 election, Peter Obi, has chided the federal government

for seeking to acquire new aircraft to the Presidential fleet, despite the nation's economic problems.

Obi, who condemned the planned purchase as insensitive and unacceptable, said it was unfortunate that the executive was thinking of luxury amid the suffering of Nigerians.

The LP standard bearer said this in a series of tweets on his X handle yesterday.

He said: "At a time when our country is on the front page of global newspapers for facing its worst econom-

ic crisis, marked by high inflation, a falling currency, and widespread poverty, the government is contemplating buying new presidential jets.

"This demonstrates extreme insensitivity to citizens' struggles. With rising insecurity, poverty, hunger, and homelessness, this decision highlights the disconnect that is apparent between the government and the people.

"It is unacceptable as the situation in the country today more than ever demands a more compassionate use of resources, prioritizing citizens' welfare.

"It's on record that our presidential jets have an average age of 12 years, purchased when most Nigerians could afford necessities. Now, as our country faces significant challenges, including a high debt profile, our citizens are in even greater need.

"Instead of adding to our luxuries, we should be focused on alleviating their suffering and finding solutions to their problems. For long, our bad leadership has made our priorities, as leaders, to be at variance to the needs of society, which is why we are headed now south, as a nation.

Over-ambition, others fuelling coups in Africa —UNDP

By Victoria Ojeme

JAJI—United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, has identified over-ambition among young military officers and the erosion of core societal values as major catalysts for the spate of coup d'état witnessed across Africa.

This assessment was delivered by Matthew Alao, UNDP Team Lead for Governance, Peace and Security, at the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre in Jaji, Kaduna State.

Alao said the military could not be divorced from the societal fabric it operates, adding

that there was need to address the root causes of coups, such as over-ambition among young officers, eroding core values, religious beliefs and lack of education.

He warned that this leadership deficit was taking a toll on the country and should be addressed at all levels, from the family unit to the community.

"We have lost it. Now it's all about 'I and my family.' And this is leading us nowhere. This is why this course is very critical at this moment," Alao said.

He revealed that the leadership course, a brainchild of the former Commandant of the Peacekeeping Centre, Major



EXHIBITION—From left Kola Adeleke, Executive Director, Commercial Banking, Ecobank Nigeria; Bimbola Wright, Director, Ecobank Nigeria; Emmanuel Ikazoboh, Former Chairman, Ecobank Transnational Inc.; Carol Oyedeji, Deputy Managing Director; Dr. Adesegun Akin-Olugbade, Chairman, Luwaji Advisory & Former General Counsel, AFC & ADB; Titi Olujobi, Director, Ecobank Nigeria; and Kenneth Okere, Company Secretary, Ecobank Nigeria at the Ecobank Adire Exhibition in Lagos over the weekend.

By Dayo Johnson & Chioma Obinna

Cholera strain in Lagos highly contagious — Health commissioner

•As Ondo govt activates surveillance for immediate response

LAGOS—THE Lagos State government, yesterday, explained that the strain of cholera in Lagos is highly aggressive and contagious.

Recall that Lagos has recorded 17 confirmed cases of cholera and 15 fatalities so far.

It also said laboratory investigation has confirmed the strain to be cholera subtype O-1, adding that the subtype is associated with more severe diseases.

The Commissioner for Health, Professor Akin

Abayomi, in a post on X, said the identified strain is "highly aggressive and contagious, with potential for widespread dissemination."

Abayomi said through community-based case finding and contact tracing, the government observed that the number of cases "has peaked and is now significantly declining."

He said: "The geographical distribution of suspected cases by Local Government Area showed that Lagos Island is the epicentre of the outbreak with 106 cases, followed by Kosofe with 49; Eti-Osa with 38; Lagos Mainland with 30; Ojo with 17; Ikorodu with 16; Shomolu with 11; Surulere with nine; Apapa with eight; Mushin with eight; Ifako Ijaiye

with eight; Alimosho with four; Ajeromi-Ifelodun with four; Oshodi-Isolo with three; Ikeja with three; Ibeju Lekki with two; Badagry with two; and Amuwo-Odofin with one.

"We are receiving support from the NCDC and International partners, including the WHO Nigeria and UNICEF Nigeria.

"Local Non-Governmental

organizations are actively involved in raising awareness and conducting community-based surveillance efforts."

Ondo govt activates surveillance for immediate response

Meanwhile, the Ondo State government said it has activated its surveillance for immediate response to any case of cholera in the state.

The Health Commissioner, Dr Banji Ajaka, noted that there were two cases in the Okitipupa council area early in the year, adding that it was curtailed by the Rapid Response team of the state.

Ajaka said: "The surveillance team was also strengthened by the COPREP programme with community informants/contact tracers trained and placed on stipends for eight months; they however would be deployed for active case search in preparation for cholera outbreak."

Population census too sensitive to be rushed — Federal commissioner

By Shina Abubakar

OSOGBO—THE Federal Commissioner representing Osun State at the National Population Commission, NPC, Dr Amidu Tadese, yesterday, revealed that the population census in Nigeria is too sensitive to be rushed.

The Federal Government had scheduled the Population and Housing census from

May 3-6, 2023, before it was postponed after the general elections last year.

Speaking with journalists in Osogbo at the weekend, Dr Tadese said the exercise would have failed the integrity test considering the agitation that usually accompanies such exercise.

His words: "The last administration of President Muhammadu Buhari attempted to conduct a census

in 2023, we don't need to be told that the timing of last year's census was designed ab initio not to hold because the government was supposed to depart on May 29.

"The election just took place and people were still contending with several issues around it. Meanwhile, the census itself comes with a lot of complaints. We witnessed the 2006 census, where some states of the federation

disagreed with the figure and went ahead to conduct an independent census of their citizens.

"If another census was allowed to take place, the result would not have been accepted by the majority of the citizens. So, the then-president took the right decision by suspending it to allow the coming administration to settle down and address the issue."

Kola Abiola couldn't sustain father's legacy — MKO's son, Abdul

ABDUL, one of the sons of late Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola (MKO Abiola), has said that his elder brother, Kola, cannot rule Nigeria.

Abdul stated this in an interview on a podcast show, *Mic On*, on Sunday.

Abdul said Kola failed in his duty to manage Abiola's empire.

Recall that Kola contested for the presidency on the platform of the Peoples Redemption Party, PRP, in 2023.

However, Abdul lamented Kola's inability to sustain Abiola's political legacy and unite the family.

Abdul said: "MKO Abiola's legacy would have been properly sustained if Kola was in a better position. And he could have been a voice of better democratic value, but he chose not to."

"During the time my father was still in jail, he was busy (with other things). It's sad, but

I'm a little pleased that my father didn't come out to see what his first son has become.

"I'm unhappy with him (Kola Abiola), and even

Trade Fair: We're committed to supporting SMEs—Lagos govt

By Olasunkanmi Akoni

LAGOS—OVER N300 million was realised in a day during a special three-day Lagos Tourism and Naija Brand Chick Trade Fair organised by the Lagos State government.

This came as the state government reiterated its commitment to support Small and Medium Entrepreneurs, SMEs, to grow businesses.

Speaking at the final day of the fair in Ikeja, the Special Adviser to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Arts, Tourism and Culture, Mr Idris Aregbe, said the trade fair has changed the lives of the vendors and impacted their businesses positively.

Speaking to journalists, Aregbe

Nigerians are unhappy. You can see how many people voted for him when he campaigned for the presidency.

said: "Lagos will continue to lead when it comes to art, entertainment, commerce and industry."

"It has been a great journey. It is indeed a fantastic project and initiative because people are happy. We have been able to create a partnership

between Lagos Tourism and the trade fair."

"We have been able to use entertainment to push our brand. We have been able to use the event to educate the people on the streets of Lagos, and we have seen that Lagos

Ondo guber: We'll reward NNPP with massive votes—Akure leaders

By Dayo Johnson

AKURE—NOTABLE leaders in Akure including the former Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association, NBA, Akure chapter, Abayomi Ojo; Elder Gabriel Owoyemi, Prince Sunday Temitope Akintide-Gbangba, and Asiwaju

Oluwole Ademoyegun, from Akure South, Akure North, and Ifedore Local Government Areas of the state, yesterday, threw their weight behind the governorship candidate of the New Nigeria People's Party, NNPP, Mr Olugbenga Edema for picking an indigene of the community, Dr Rotimi Adeyemi as his running mate.

The leaders said it was only

the NNPP candidate that considered an Akure indigene as the deputy governorship candidate for the November 16 governorship election.

Akure has the largest voting population in the state.

Speaking on the choice of Owoyemi as the party's deputy governorship candidate, the former Akure NBA chairman, Mr Abayomi

Lawyer faults LASBCA's proposed demolition despite court order

LAGOS—A Lagos-based lawyer, Kenneth Odidika, has accused the Lagos State Building Control Agency, LASBCA, and the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development of a plot to dispossess him of his property in the Lekki area of the state.

Odidika alleged that LASBCA has been struggling to find reasons to dispossess him and his neighbours of their properties and each time they countered their claims LASBCA would look for another reason to harass them.

The legal practitioner said: "Early in December 2022, LASBCA informed us that a certain company, Minkus Nigeria Limited (the Petitioner), is claiming that we were squatters on their land. They subsequently served us with a Contravention Notice, and we successfully showed we were authentic residents. Then they said we didn't have Development Permits. We produced our Permits, including C-of-O and Governor's Consent which they duly acknowledged. Thereafter the Petitioner went to court to challenge our title. We responded with proof of ownership, forcing them to withdraw the case from court."

"We thought we were going to have some respite, but then again LASBCA came with the issue of building outside approved design, and fortunately for us, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State announced a 90-day amnesty window effective May 2, 2024, for people to make good such shortcomings."

"We immediately applied for assessment and processing, but LASBCA refused to attend to us saying that there is a directive that they should not accept drawings and documents from the Maiyegun and Ologolo (families) for processing as the land was in dispute."

"This is the problem in Nigeria: people are not showing capacity in their own little sphere of work but want a higher position."

"We have vendors from the UK and different parts of Nigeria. And they all appreciated the Lagos State Governor for giving them the opportunity."

Ojo, said that the voting population of Akure-speaking areas is such that could not be toyed with, adding that it will deliver massive votes to Dr Adeyemi at the election.

Also speaking, Prince Temitope Akintide-Gbangba said: "The NNPP has chosen a worthy, tested, trusted, and reliable personality in the person of Dr Rotimi Adeyemi."

Another priest kidnapped in Anambra

By Nwabueze Okonkwo

ONITSHA—BARELY a month after a Catholic priest, Rev. Basil Gbuzuo, was abducted by gunmen suspected to be ransom kidnapers, another Catholic priest, Rev. Christian Ike, has been kidnapped by gunmen.

Rev. Gbuzuo was abducted on May 15, this year in Onitsha, the commercial city of Anambra State, while Rev. Fr. Ike was kidnapped last Sunday, June 16 at Amagu Junction, Ndiokpalaekene near Ajalli in Orumba North Local Government Area of the state.

While Fr. Gbuzuo was released some weeks later after some undisclosed amount of money was paid to the abductors as ransom, Fr. Ike's abductors are yet to contact his relations or his parishioners.

Although the reason for his abduction has not yet been ascertained, eyewitnesses in the area, said the priest was returning from St. Michael's Catholic Church where he and two others attended an early morning Mass when the vehicle he was moving in, was double-crossed by the kidnapers.

According to the source, "On getting to Amagu Junction, their vehicle was double-crossed by armed men operating in three vehicles, but the two others who were inside the same vehicle with Fr. Ike barely managed to escape the scene, while the criminals took away the priest and some personal belongings of the escaped occupants in the vehicle." Confirming the incident, the Anambra State police spokesman, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, told newsmen on the phone that the command had heard about the incident and had deployed its intelligence and operational assets for his possible rescue unhurt.

Imo gov hands over 11 armoured personnel carriers to Police

By Chinonso Alozie

OWERRI—GOVERNOR Hope Uzodimma of Imo state, weekend, handed over 11 refurbished Armoured Personnel Carriers, APCs, to the Police Command in the state.

The governor spoke in a statement to newsmen in Owerri, through his Chief Press Secretary, CPS, Oguike Nwachukwu.

Also, he said 32 operational vehicles were procured to boost the fight against crimes and criminality in the state.

According to the statement, "Governor Hope Uzodimma has boosted the operational readiness confidence of the police in Imo State, procuring an additional 32 operations vehicles and refurbishing 11 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) for the Command.

"At a brief handover of the vehicles to the police on Sunday, Governor Uzodimma said the essence was to enable the operatives to 'continue in their efforts towards the fight against crime and criminality and security of lives and property in the state.'"

"The Governor said that making security equipment and facilities functional is vital in the operations of the police.

He said the Government in her wisdom assembled all abandoned police vehicles in the Command that were littered all over the state and got them refurbished for further use by the Police.



TALENT MANAGEMENT—From left: Yemi Faseun, Chief Talent Partner, YF Talent Partners; Olubukola Lanipekun-Lawal, Head, Human Resources, FSDH Merchant Bank Ltd.; Rob Taiwo, MD, pcl.; Tracy Afolabi-Johnson, Senior Consultant, People Transformation Unit, pcl.; Seni Adetu, Chairman, Algorithm Media Ltd.; Olawanle Moronkeji, Partner, People Transformation, Pcl, during the Talent Management 2.0, held at The Wheat Baker Hotel, Ikoyi, Lagos.

We're not opposed to genuine Yoruba-Igbo dialogue — IPOB

By Chimaobi Nwaiwu

NEW I—THE Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, yesterday, said that it is not opposed to any genuine dialogue between Ndigbo and people from other zones but is vehemently against and will oppose any dialogue that is intended to lure Ndigbo to continue investing in any hostile environment.

The pro-Biafra group also told Ndigbo to beware of their investments in Lagos State, saying that the state is no longer conducive for them to locate their important businesses.

IPOB in a statement by its Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful also urged them to be careful with agreeing with faceless groups calling them for dialogue concerning their business operations, saying there is no need for further investment in places where their investments are not protected.

IPOB's statement read: "The attention of the global family and movement of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, ably led by our great leader, Mazi Nnamdi Okwuchukwu Kanu, has been drawn to the deceptive letter from a group of faceless people and stakeholders calling on Igbo communities in Lagos for a dialogue.

"Ndigbo must not fall into any deception to continue investments where their investments are not protected. As much as IPOB does not oppose any genuine dialogue, IPOB will object to any dialogue that is intended to lure them to continue investing in a hostile environment. "Ndigbo have done all they can to belong to Nigeria, but Nigeria keeps rejecting Ndigbo with exclusivity and ethnic bigotry policies. Ndigbo have lost millions of investments and lives in the Northern and Western regions of Nigeria.

"In the North, Ndigbo are always the victims of any religious and political riots during which Northerners destroy, loot, and burn down businesses and properties belonging to them. Recently in Lagos, Biafran businesses and properties have been targeted by criminals working in the name of Lagos State. We will no longer encourage our people to continue investing outside Igboland.

"Lagos State is not Igboland. Lagos State Government has demolished properties and investments owned by the Igbo. Many Igbo-dominated

markets in Lagos have either been demolished or burnt down and taken over by the state government. Based on the aforementioned, any Igbo person investing outside Igboland needs a DNA test.

"IPOB calls on all Biafrans to stop investing outside Igboland. All investments should be channelled to Biafran Land. Our people who invested in Biafra Land are doing well and are helping to create jobs for our youth. Biafrans have been an engine of growth in any society they find themselves.

Otti receives rescued 3 Abia school kids of same parentsTasks parents on roles

By Steve Oko

ABDUCTED Abia three school children of same parents, but rescued in Anambra and Delta States, respectively, have been presented to Governor Alex Otti.

This is as the governor has tasked parents with their parental responsibilities, challenging them to rise to their roles.

Otti reminded parents that no excuse could justify their failure to live up to their primary responsibility of ensuring the security of their children.

Gideon, aged 8; Divine, 6; and Israel, 4; all from Ikwuano, were abducted while returning home from school on May 10, 2024.

They were returning from school and reportedly had a stop-over in their grandmother's house who engaged a motorcyclist to take them home.

Soludo hails Muslims for contributing to peaceful devt in Anambra

•Otti felicitates with Muslims

AWKA—GOVERNOR Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State, yesterday, commended the Muslim Community in the state for their valuable contributions to the peaceful development in the state.

Soludo gave the commendation in his Sallah message in Awka, to felicitate with Muslim faithful on the celebration of the 2024 Eid-el Kabir.

He said the Muslim community also contributed to enriching the diversity of the state's collective

....Says it's opposed to Igbo continued investment in Lagos

"In all parts of the world where Ndigbo reside, they directly or indirectly contribute to the development of that area. It is in our DNA to build and develop other states alongside our states, and we cannot stop because it is our covenant with God Almighty (Chukwu Okike Abiama) to bring light wherever we go but we must refrain from building in environments hostile to us.

"We have done enough of investing in the hostile regions of Nigeria where our investments are not secure. Let us take our

investments to Igboland where our investments will be safe and protected.

"We want to ask where was this group calling for dialogue when the Lagos House of Assembly promulgated a bigotry law that targeted the Igbo businesses and properties in Lagos? How many Igbo were compensated after their businesses and properties were demolished?"

"Ndigbo should go back home and invest and forget hostile environments. Irrespective of the state-sponsored insecurity and

Fulanistooches called governors used to deter investments in the southeast, Alaigbo is still more conducive and secure for investment compared to the enemy territories outside Igboland.

"Ndigbo should know that Nigerians dislike the audacity and ambitious spirit of an Igbo person. Instead of learning and adapting to the doggedness of Ndigbo, many Nigerians envy us. The blessings of Chukwu Okike Abiama are the reason that Ndigbo are being targeted and visited with unwarranted envy and jealousy."

But instead of taking them home, the motorcyclist decided to bolt away with the hapless kids.

Following an intense manhunt, two kids were rescued later after about three weeks in Anambra State.

The last of the kids was finally rescued last week in Delta State.

Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Abia State, Moureen Chinaka, had in a statement, said that four suspects were already

taken into custody in connection with the abduction.

Receiving the kids alongside their parents and other community leaders at his residence in Umuehim, Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area over the weekend, Governor Otti thanked God and all those who worked hard to ensure their release.

He expressed joy that the children had finally been reunited with their parents and used the opportunity to

admonish parents to be more careful about the safety and security of their children.

"I would like to also admonish parents to be more careful because this was avoidable. First of all, you should not hand over your children to people you do not know, be they Keke or Okada riders.

"There is nothing you're doing that is more important than looking after your children. That is my word to parents, grandparents, and everybody who has something to do with one Abia child or another."

Kingship tussle: Many escape death as thugs damage houses, cars

NO fewer than ten vehicles were damaged in the early hours of Saturday, at Nkomoro Community, in Ezza North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, during a coronation.

This followed heavy hostilities that broke out over the kingship. Many people escaped being killed

but houses, motorcycles, and other valuable properties were also burnt beyond recognition.

Among those attacked were Journalists invited to cover the coronation.

The attacked newsmen include Uchenna Inya, the Ebonyi State Correspondent of The Sun

Newspaper, Chinelo Okoro of Radio Nigeria Unity FM, Abakaliki, and others.

They were hit with stones and other dangerous weapons while coming out from the coronation venue.

Policemen, soldiers, a Magistrate attached to the state judiciary, Amaechi Nwakpa, and many persons also escaped being killed.

The people of Nkomoro community have been at war over the selection of a traditional ruler in the area.

However, the hired thugs invaded the election and coronation of a new traditional ruler of the community and disrupted the exercise.

Some members of the community had objected to the letter from the state Ministry of Local Government and chieftaincy matters, which ordered the coronation of a former Resident Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Chief Jacob Nwakpa.

The letter was read by Chika Igboke, the Coordinator of the Imoha Development Centre.

Otti felicitates with Muslims

Also, Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has felicitated with Muslims in the state and across the country on the occasion of this year's Eid el Kabir celebration.

Otti in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Kazie Uko, said "Eid el Kabir celebration is a festival to commemorate the act of sacrifice and selfless service in obedience to the will of Allah, by a man, as exhibited by Prophet Ibrahim, who, without questioning, was willing to sacrifice his son as commanded by Allah."

social fabric. "Felicitate with the Muslim faithful in Anambra and across Nigeria on the happy occasion of Eid-el Kabir which holds profound significance in the Islamic faith as it commemorates the enduring faith, obedience, and devotion to Almighty Allah.

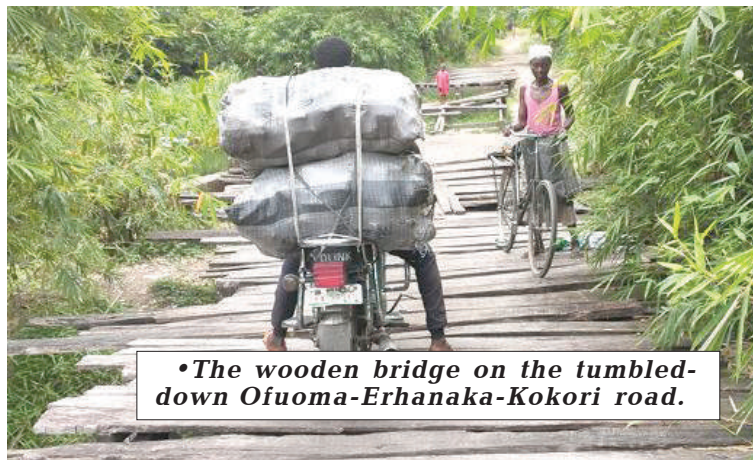
"As our Muslim brothers and sisters observe this sacred event through acts of charity and communal prayers, it is a time for us to reflect on these universal values that bind humanity together," he

Niger Delta Voice

A PUBLICATION OF VANGUARD NEWSPAPER

Delta communities cry out over ramshackle Ofuoma-Erhanaka-Kokori road

- Contractor abandoned road —Ofuoma President-General
- We are suffering, road with a wooden bridge in a terrible mess —Residents
- Politicians lied about the road all these years; Gov Oborewori should help us
- I'll inquire about the location, condition of the road —Aniagwu, Commissioner for Works, Rural Roads



•The wooden bridge on the tumbled-down Ofuoma-Erhanaka-Kokori road.



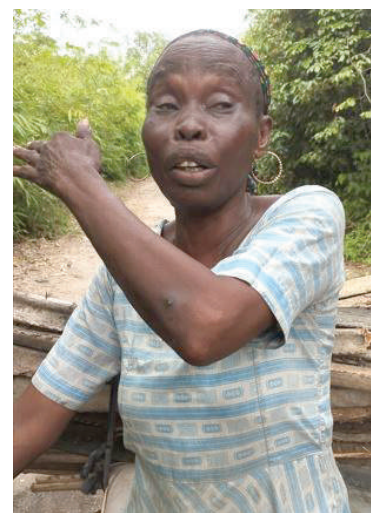
•Stephen Oghenevwoke

•Precious Igho

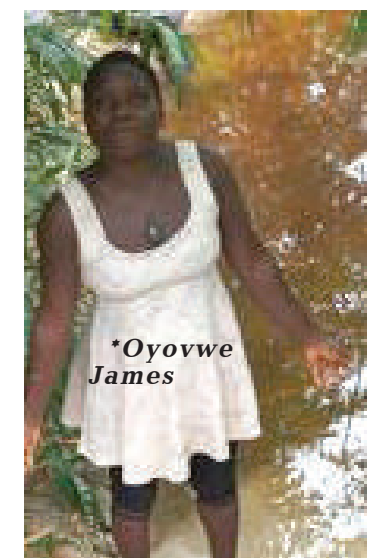
•Florence Erekahwevwe



•The wooden bridge on the tumbled-down Ofuoma-Erhanaka-Kokori Road



•Mrs. Margaret Ayimogu



•Oyovwe James

DELTA... THE BIG HEART OF THE NATION

By Akpokona Omafuaire

KOKORI—RESIDENTS of Kokori, Erhanaka, and Ofuoma communities in Ethiope East and Ughelli North Local Government Areas, Delta State, have lamented the agony they undergo daily journeying on the rickety and abandoned Ofuoma-Erhanaka-Kokori Road with a bridge constructed with planks.

They called on the governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, to reconstruct the road, saying that a former governor, Chief James Ibori, awarded a contract to a contractor to rebuild the road, but the outworker deserted the job after collecting money.

We are suffering —Igho, indigene

Twenty-five-year-old Kokori indigene, Precious Igho, carrying cassava stem for planting and her baby on a motorcycle, told *NDV*: "The road has been like this since I was born. I grew up to meet it like this. The politicians will come whenever they have something to do, change the planks on the bridge, then, claim that they had fixed the road.

"If they want to do this road, they should be serious about it. We are still passing it now but when it rains heavily, people suffer so much and cannot go to farm again. The government should address this road problem because those passing through it suffer so much."

No motorable road in

Kokori —Mrs. James, inhabitant

An irate Kokori inhabitant, Mrs. Oyovwe James, bemoaned: "The whole road is destroyed. There is nothing you tell the leaders about it that they listen to. We pray that the government of the day be good and answer our prayers, if not, we know our government is bad.

"Whenever you mention the road, the politicians will use deceptive methods and tell those leading that the road has been fixed. We have been suffering bad roads in the whole of Kokori town. Go round and you will see how terrible the roads are.

"There is no single good road in the town, the whole place is bushy and we suffer to get to our farms. We have cried out but no one seems to be listening.

"The government awarded the contract for the road before but they did not do anything about it. If you pass the road down to Kokori, you will see the level of deprivation and wonder if we are part of the state. We cry every day about this road, we want development in Kokori.

Kokori is an ancient town and ought not to be as it is today. We are not happy with the current state of the community, and its backwardness, it is a pain to us. We call on the government to reconstruct the road and end our suffering.

Shattered condition —Oghenevwoke, dweller

A Kokori dweller, Mr. Stephen Oghenevwoke, stated: "The condition of the road is very bad. I do not know what is delaying the reconstruction of this road. But if the government can look inward and get this road done, it will help us. Everyone will tell you that the

prayer of the Kokori people is for the road to be done. If this is the only project done for the Kokori people, they will be grateful. The government should come to our aid and construct this road. Honestly, the road is in a bad state.

"Sometimes, because of the nature of the road, people go through the Awirhe community of Agbarha to get to their farms. This is a short road linking Ofuoma, instead of spending 10 minutes, you spend hours because of the bad road."

Road in a complete mess —Erekahwevwe, farmer

A Kokori farmer, Mama Florence Erekahwevwe, asserted: "The road is a complete mess as it is and even worse during the rainy season. We cannot pass through to our farms during the rainy days. We have managed for a long time, but it is worse now.

"We complain daily but no one hears us. The poor state of the road is making us frustrated because we will not be able to pass in the next month. During the rainy season, the bridge area is flooded and no one can pass, causing the people hardship.

"When we cry and tell them that the contract was awarded in the past, they do not listen to us. If you get to the Kokori end of the road, you will see abandoned vehicles and equipment of the contractor which they left behind. These were supposed to be used in the construction some years ago.

"They abandoned it and went to Asaba to say they had executed the contract. Thank God you (*NDV*) are here today, and have seen for yourself. We cannot pass the road to our farms

during the rainy season and face severe hunger. This is the only route through which we go to the farm. We are farmers and do not have other jobs to sustain ourselves.

"This is the shortest route for us to get to Ughelli, we plead that the government reconstructs the road. The time it will take you to get to Ughelli from Kokori, you spend it going through other communities.

"Do you know that to get our farm produce from Erhanaka to Warri, people go through Ughelli and Ofuoma because of this bad bridge, instead of passing Kokori that is shorter? The road is important to us, we need help to boost our food production."

Why we are apprehensive —Ayimogu, an elderly woman

An aged woman, Mrs. Florence Ayimogu, carrying a cassava load on her bicycle, said: "This is the route to Ofuoma and our farms, it also connects Odovie community. Since the collapse of this bridge, we have become apprehensive about how we can cope. We are afraid because this is the only road through which we earn our living.

"We have prayed and cried for this road to be fixed. During the rainy season, we cannot pass this dilapidated bridge. The water level in the bridge area is impassable. We have been suffering, we will be eternally grateful if it can be fixed."

Contractor abandoned road —Etabuko, Ofuoma president-general

The president-general of the Ofuoma community, Godfrey Etabuko, told *NDV*:

"That road was awarded to the Workson Construction Company during the Ibori administration and abandoned after they collected money. The road has been lying fallow ever since then.

"That road is important to our economic viability and development. If constructed, it will make it easier for farmers to get their produce out to the market easily. The road has also become a kidnappers' den, if you pass there, it is at your own risk.

"We plead to the governor to rebuild the road, we need it so much. The road is beside the School of Health Technology, a government property.

"Fixing that road means so much development for the school also. This road is a necessity to us, we need it."

I will find out the road condition

—Aniagwu, Commissioner for Works, Rural Devt.

Delta State Commissioner for Works, and Rural Development, Charles Aniagwu, said when contacted, he would inquire on the location and condition of the road.

Be wary of Rivers crises, N-Delta youths tell Tinubu

By Emma Amaize

PORT HARCOURT— YOUTHS of the Niger-Delta have cautioned President Bola Tinubu to be candid in his management of the precarious political crises in Rivers State to avoid a rebound to other oil states,

RIVER... THE TREASURE BASE OF THE NATION

and severely harm the country's democracy.

The youths under the auspices of the 21st Century Youths of Niger-Delta and

Agitators with Conscience (21st CYNDAC) in conjunction with other critical stakeholders, in a statement, said: "We are miffed by the current political imbroglio taking place in Rivers State."

The statement by the coordinator, Izon Ebi, read in part: "We urge Mr. President, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu to be forthright in the handling of the defense of the Constitution, which he swore to protect when it concerns the situation in Rivers State."

Threat to democracy

"It should be noted that Rivers State, being the treasure base of the nation, does not need instability as it would boomerang to other states in the region.

"On no account should Mr. President take the suffering and silence of the youths and people of the Niger-Delta for granted.

"Any underhand actions by rogue political actors are bound to erode the gains in other sectors like the developmental strides by the Niger-Delta Development Commission, NDDC, the sabotage of pipeline and illegal bunkering that the Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited has relatively contained.

"We do not envisage the Niger-Deltans taking their fate in their hands as it will lead to anarchy. Mr. President should remember that his success as governor of Lagos State made him the president today.

"If civility is not maintained in the conduct of political actors, this bazaar of looting, killings, and suffering called democracy will end. The political class should not take the masses for fools. Let the governor of Rivers State, Sim Fubara, lead as others did, or we should all prepare to end democracy in Nigeria.

Political actors stirring trouble

"The current crisis and skirmishes by political actors are pushing the state to the precipice and anarchy, and as such, something critical needs to be done to nip the situation in the bud before it gets out of hand.

"The elections are over and time for governance and democratic derivable are here. A situation where some people tactically and deliberately distract the government does not augur well for the good people of the state.

"During the last democratic dispensation in the state, despite the tumultuous disposition of the then governor Barr Nyesom Wike, the state witnessed a semblance of stability as few showmanship projects were executed mainly in Obio Akpor Local Government, and the fringes of Port Harcourt Local Government.

"In retrospect, it was during the last administration that violence took a drastic turn as murder and gruesome beheadings surfaced as crimes before unknown in Rivers State."

"Therefore, the deliberate plans by politicians and conjunction with rogue state actors should be unanimously condemned by critical stakeholders and citizens, if peace and progress are to be enjoyed.



•Cross section of Akwa Ibom, Abia Host communities stakeholders at a town hall meeting in Uyo

3% OPEX: New dawn in N-Delta as settlers remit N80bn to 70 HCDTs

- HOSTCOM president, NUPRC sensitise communities on utilisation
- Wrangling among oil communities scary—Etim Uno, A-Ibom commissioner
- BoT members now see themselves as LG chairs; Participants raise questions

COMMUNITY NEWS

AKWA IBOM... LAND OF PROMISE

By Chioma Onuegbu

UYO—NATIONAL President of the Host Communities of Nigeria Producing Oil and Gas, HOSTCOM, Dr. Benjamin Tamaranebi has revealed that the settlers (oil companies) have funded 70 Host Community Development Trusts (HCDTs) accounts with N80 billion from the annual three per cent Operational Expenditure (3% OPEX), as stipulated in the Petroleum Industry Act, PIA 2021.

Dr. Tamaranebi, who said the money was for the communities to embark on projects that would stand the test of time, disclosed this at a town hall meeting to sensitize impacted communities of Akwa Ibom and Abia states in Uyo, capital of Akwa Ibom.

Leaders of HOSTCOM, the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission, NUPRC, HOSTCOM Projects Management and Advisory Consult Limited, and stakeholders from various communities attended the sensitization workshop.

New Beginning

Speaking at the event, the HOSTCOM national president said that the settlers have funded 70 HCDTs accounts with over N80 billion, and urged the communities to use the funds for schools, roads, solar panels, and other specified projects.

He appealed to the stakeholders, especially the members of the Board of Trustees, BOTs, to judiciously execute the plan of their respective Trusts, in line with the provisions of the PIA 2021.

His words: "We went to the National Assembly that we want to manage our resources ourselves. And now that the annual three percent OPEX funds have started coming, we must manage the resources wisely. These funds will not be coming forever. The integrity test is before you, so live up to expectations. Do not misuse the funds so that more will come."

"As stakeholders, go back home and think of sustainable projects to develop your communities. You must embark on sustainable projects, and put up structures that can stand the test of time like clinics, schools, roads, and solar panels to effectively utilize the funds.

Our govts failed us

"We were in this struggle for years, the host communities producing oil and gas were deprived of their God-given wealth. The government did little for us, they created 13 percent derivation for host communities' development, but the governors hijacked the funds. They did not make good use of the 13 per cent derivation.

"They did not impact the affected oil and gas communities. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo had directed that the funds should impact communities producing oil and gas which were devastated and deprived. But whoever becomes the governor of any state decides how the derivation funds will be used.

NDDC went the same way

"Sometimes, this money is not seen as oil-bearing communities' funds, but as their statutory allocation. It was based on this that we decided that we could not sit tight, we started pressuring. Then, the Federal Government said fine, let us see what we can do. They came up with Niger-Delta Development Commission, NDDC.

"We thought that through the NDDC, our communities would develop, but the story was not different from the 13 per cent derivation. So, the communities now said no we need 'self-funding'. But instead of giving us self-funding, they said okay, the youths were making noise, let us see how we can pacify the youths. And they came up with the Presidential Amnesty Programme."

We must not fail ourselves

Stressing that the participants, including traditional leaders, should understand why they must not fail in implementing the three per cent OPEX to host communities, he said: "For communities that have formed their HCDTs, the funds have been paid to the Trust for 2021 and 2022. That is what we have advocated; that we must develop our communities ourselves. That is the message we have come to give to all of you today.

"The BoT members should work closely with your respective communities. The complaints reaching us from many states is that BoT members now want to be like local government chairmen. Please let the

C-River residents, PHED at loggerheads over power outage

CROSS RIVER... THE PEOPLE'S PARADISE

By Ike Uchekukwu

NYANGASSNG— RESIDENTS of Nyangassng Community, a densely populated semi-urban area in Calabar, Cross River State, and the Calabar Zonal Office of the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company, PHED, are at each other's throats over the cutting off of power to the community.

NDV learned that over 500 households in the area were plunged into darkness since the last week of April when PHED officials disconnected the damaged transformer supplying voltage to the area, instead of effecting necessary repairs.

Rubbing salt on injury

—Eyo, community leader

A community leader, Chief Baron Eyo, who spoke on the plight of the residents, said: "We started experiencing abnormal voltage around March. Sometimes, it will go up to 280kva, then drop as low as

80kva in one swoop. Findings revealed that the neural phase from the transformer was burnt and needed to be fixed.

"We called the zonal manager of the PHED, Mr. Gabriel Modupe, and notified him of the issue. He promised to address it immediately. Each time we called to remind him, he said the maintenance team was coming.

"We mobilised ourselves to provide logistics support to the mainland team to fast-track the repairs, but we waited in vain. They never showed up.

"Disconnecting us when we are marking the anniversary of our loved ones, who died in an electrocution tragedy caused by the carelessness, negligence, and professional incompetence of PHED is tantamount to rubbing salt on a wound," he added.

Electricity firm did nothing for months

—Asuquo, a youth activist

Speaking, a youth activist in the area, Etim Asuquo, asserted: "We informed PHED about the fault at the transformer but surprisingly, nothing was done for months, rather, they came and removed

all the fuses from the substation, throwing the whole area into darkness under the pretext that we are not a serious-minded community."

Traders, housewives scream

Traders and housewives, who spoke to NDV, lamented that the blackout has compounded the already excruciating economic realities, arising from the exorbitant cost of petrol needed to power generators for the conservation of food, perishable goods, and freezing drinks in their shops.

PHED official lets the cat out of the bag

An anonymous PHED staff said: "Our major problem is that for many years, our headquarters in Port Harcourt has deployed nonprofessionals, mostly bankers as zonal managers. These persons lack basic elementary knowledge of electricity. Once you report faults, they hardly act, their priority is revenue generation."

Crime escalates

Checks by NDV further showed that crime, especially breaking and entry, and car battery theft have skyrocketed in the area. Many residents, including Vanguard reporters who live in the area, had lost their car batteries to thieves, who took advantage of the power outage.

More than a few Manchester United fans were allegedly electrocuted when a high-tension cable snapped and landed on the roof of a viewing center during a Europa match, after a heavy explosion from the said transformer.

Police statement indicated seven died while others suffered severe electrical burns. Members of the community contested the death toll, insisting that over 20 died.

Modupe, PHED zonal manager claims ignorance

When contacted, the zonal manager, PHED, Gabriel Modupe, claimed ignorance of the issue, referring our reporter to the technical manager, Tom Udofia, who failed to pick up several calls nor respond to the message sent to his phone.

Activist slams govts for rejecting N60k minimum wage

By Emma Amaize,
Regional Editor, South-South

ASABA: A human rights advocate and lawyer Chief Malcolm Omirhobo, has said that the N60,000 minimum wage that governors, under the auspices of the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), refused to pay workers was not up to the lunch money of a governor.

Omihobo, who disapproved of the NGF's stance, stated yesterday, "I beg to differ with the governors under the aegis of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) for rejecting the proposed N60,000 minimum wage for Nigerian workers as too high, not sustainable and realistic."

"What are we talking about? The paltry sum of N60,000 in monthly wage for a worker, which they rejected, is not up to the lunch money of a state governor."

"If only NGF can be honest with itself, some state governments can afford to pay N100,000.00 minimum wage to their workers, not to mention the proposed N60,000 minimum wage, which is not up to the lunch money of governors."

"If every state taps and explores its human and natural resources, no state is poor. However, many state governments are not visionary and do not think outside the box or venture outside their comfort zone."

"Again, our governors are transactional and transformational in their approach to governance, which gives room to maladministration, misappropriation, and massive looting of public funds."

Rivers crisis: Southern leaders back Wike, say FCT minister not distracted

By Omeiza Ajayi

ABUJA: A group of Southern leaders under the aegis of Citizens Network for Peace and Development of Nigeria CNPDN has thrown its weight behind the Federal Capital Territory FCT Minister, Ezenwo Nyesom Wike amid the ongoing political crisis in his home state, Rivers.

The leaders, who rose after a meeting in Abuja on Monday said Wike remained undistracted in his position as FCT Minister, saying he has given free hands to his successor in Rivers, Gov. Siminalayi Fubara to run the state without any interference.

They also kicked against pockets of sponsored opposition against the "commendable work of the minister in Abuja", saying those who milked the territory dry in the past would rather want the sta-

Economic challenges: NBA-SBL explore ways for lawyers, businesses to thrive

By Henry Ojelu

WORRIED about the economic challenges in the country, the Nigerian Bar Association Section on Business Law (NBA-SBL) has pledged to develop strategies and tactics to make lawyers and businesses survive and thrive.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of its 18th annual international business law conference and 20th anniversary of the organisation, Chair of the Conference Planning



From left: President, Chartered Institute of Directors Nigeria, Alhaji Tijjani Borodo with the Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, OFR, SAN during a courtesy call to the Ministry by the Governing Council of the Institute in Abuja

Rivers youths occupy LG hqtrs as chairmen's tenure expires

By Davies Iheannachor
& Daniel Abia

THERE was tension yesterday in Rivers state as hundreds of youths laid siege to some local government headquarters in Rivers state ahead of the expiration of the tenure of council chairmen in the state.

The tension was ignited by the decision of the LG chairmen in the state under the aegis of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria to remain in office citing the Local Government Amendment Law No 2 of the 2024 by the Martin Amaewhule led 27 House of Assembly members extending their tenure by six months.

The State ALGON Chairman, Allwell Ihunda, who is also the Chairman of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, had insisted that the law by the House of Assembly empowers them to remain in office.

• Ask Tinubu to ignore ex-gov's detractors
tus quo to remain, to the detriment of the people.

According to them, the appointment of Wike by President Bola Tinubu is one of the best decisions of the current administration, maintaining that the FCT Minister has achieved in nine months, what some former Ministers couldn't do in eight years.

National Coordinator of the Southern movement, Chief Raphael Okorie, also begged Nigerians to remain patient with Tinubu, as he tries to fix the economy, restore security and provide the needed relief to everyone in the country.

"It is easy for you to assess a man who has precedent. Wike served as Governor for eight years. For those of us who grew up in Rivers state, now you have to use your GPS to move around because of the level of infrastructure development. If you don't use GPS,

Committee, Ose Okpeku lamented that the significant economic challenge has caused significant difficulties in the business space and invariably also affecting lawyers

"We need to come through this challenge. We need to survive this challenge and when we do so, we will thrive. We need to help business lawyers, businesses in general, and the Nigerian economy in the whole to survive this very difficult period, he stated.

Speaking about the confer-

ence scheduled to take place from June 26 to 28, 2024, in Abuja, with the theme: "Survive and thrive" Okpeku said: "We are excited for this year's conference as it is set to provide invaluable insights, and strategies for legal professionals, young and old, to navigate today's evolving economic landscape."

He added that the conference will deal on both the macro and the micro issues noting that it will also seek to address the current challenges, equip participants with the

chairman does not return to the council.

Singing in their local dialects, the youths chorused that the council chairman has failed, saying, "He is a failure. You must go".

At Asari-Toru Local Government Area, hundreds of youths stormed the council headquarters in Degema and occupied the facility.

Many of the youths were seen in different groups in front of the secretariat and the entire stretch of the road leading to the entrance, even as some could be heard saying, 'Asawana' a popular slang among the Ijaws which signifies solidarity, even as others arrive the scene in droves.

The youths said they will remain until today when work resumes and dared the council chairmen to come to the secretariat.

In Port Harcourt City Local Government Area and Obio/Akpor LGA, there was a huge security presence to prevent any security breaches.

Over six police patrol vans in front of the shut entrance of the secretariat on Monday morning. The patrol vans were manned by fierce-looking security operatives but movements of people were not restricted.

Go home, your tenure has ended, Asari tells

Leaders chart new course for Owan indigenes

IT was commendation galore yesterday as the leadership of both Owan East and West Local Government Areas met to chart a new course for the Owan People.

The meeting which held at the Country home of one time Deputy Governor of Edo

State, Rev Peter Obadan, attracted top leaders from the two Local Government Areas.

Convener of the meeting, Rev Obadan explained that the meeting was conveyed to enable both local governments work together as a united body.

The group also made commitment to ensure that the dilapidated physical structure of the school was rehabilitated and applauded the president General of the Urhipele 80's Pioneers, Mr. Ottor Anthony for his exemplary leadership.

The body also tasked parents to guard their children against cultism practices, yahoo venture, robbery, kidnapping, and other social decadence presently ravaging our society.

Notable members of the alumni present at the meeting include the association's Board of Trustees Chairman, Ambassador Nwameme Joel, General Secretary, Mr. Martins Alekhojie, and National Treasurer, Mr. Raymond Okoh.

He recalled with pains and nostalgia how the once united Owan was torn apart for selfish political reasons by people entrusted with leadership positions in times past.

He reminded the house that the effect of that disunity has been the bane in the wheel of progress in Owan.

"We're here today to fashion out ways to work as one, forge common front as one big brother that we are."

"Both Owan East & West have always been one and worked together until selfish politicians tore us apart. So the purpose of today's meeting is to start working together again for a better and more prosperous future," Rev Obadan said.

Responding, the apex Leader of Owan East, Alhaji Abdulganiyu Lawani, popularly known as Abu Millionaire, thanked Obadan for calling the meeting and promised to work together to ensure that both local government areas achieve the desired goal.

"I am happy to be here with my people today because I feel this meeting is long overdue and the outcome of this all important gathering will make the Owan People stronger and stronger."

Meanwhile, Muhajid Asari Dokubo, has advised former chairmen of the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State to accept the end of their three years' tenure in good faith, and resist creating crisis.

Speaking while flanked by stakeholders of the Muslim community in Rivers State as part of activities to mark the 2024 Eid-el-Kabir celebrations, in Port Harcourt yesterday day, Asari Dokubo, said tenure elongation is an aberration to the Constitution of Nigeria.

LGA chairmen

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VISIT—From left: Abdulkarim Chukkol, Director, Investigations; Mike Nzekwe, Chief of Staff; Mohammad Hammajoda, Secretary to Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC; Ola Olukoyede, Executive Chairman, EFCC; Christopher Wray, FBI Director; Charles Smith, FBI Legal Attache, and others, during FBI's visit to EFCC headquarters, Abuja.

LG polls: Party primaries in Kwara holds on June 24

By Demola Akinyemi

ILORIN — KWARA Independent Electoral Commission, KWSIEC, has announced that political party primaries for the state's local government elections will be held from June 24 to 30.

The Chairman of the electoral body, Muhammed Okanla who stated this in a statement said the conduct of elections for the offices of chairmen and councillors across the 16 local government areas of the state would take place on September 21.

He said that based on the elections timetable, a meeting or interface with the leadership of all the registered political parties would be held on June 21.

He added that political parties were expected to obtain and return nomination forms KWSIEC 01 and KWSIEC 02 for the chairmanship and councillorship elections from July 1 to July 5.

The chairman also said that the verification of candidates' credentials would be held from July 8 to July 19.

He said that the display of names of candidates nominated by political parties would be posted on the KWSIEC notice board from July 22 to July 26.

He also said that the training of ad-hoc staff for the elections in all the three Senatorial Districts would be held between July 27 and July 31.

Okanla said that the political parties have up to August 5 to withdraw a candidate if need be, while August 6 would be the last day for the publication of the list of nominated candidates.

According to him, political parties' campaigns will commence on August 19 and end at midnight of on September 19, 2024.

"Elections for chairmanship and councillorship positions will be conducted on September 21, while Certificate of Returns will be issued on September 23," he said.

Makurdi residents fume over power outages, crazy bills

By Peter Duru

MAKURDI — RESIDENTS of Makurdi, the Benue State capital, have raised the alarm over the outrageous monthly electricity bills they receive from the Jos Electricity Distribution Company, JED, despite the poor power supply from the firm.

The residents also lamented the alleged unimpressive services they get from the company including several days of power outage without explanation from officials of the company.

They appealed to the Federal Government to call the company to order as it had allegedly capitalised on the increment on Band A tariff to effect blanket increment in charges on all electricity consumers even without commensurate power supply.

Some of the residents including artisans, traders and civil servants who voiced their concern on the issue in Makurdi could not hide their pains lamenting that they were paying outrageous electricity charges for services not rendered.

According to a barbing salon owner along George Akume Way,

New GRA, who identified himself as Odima, he was charged over N22, 000 in the month of May when he did not enjoy up to 50 hours of electricity supply in the month.

He said, "the bill I got for May was over N22, 000 even when we did not enjoy up to 50 hours of electricity supply in the month. It is unacceptable. It is as if nobody is regulating and monitoring what JED is doing. We are completely at their mercy. We are paying for darkness not electricity."

Also, a civil servant who lives in the High Level axis of the town, Mr. Jethro Abo, who apart from lamenting the epileptic power supply in the area, said, "even when we have faults on the lines and you call them to come and rectify the problem it takes them days to respond. But at the end of the month you get a bill as high as N30, 000 for a tenant of two bedroom apartment."

"One begins to wonder how they arrived at that and how they expect us to pay for that kind of

crazy bill. Is it that the company has capitalised on the increment on Band A Tariff to effect blanket increment on all electricity charges? That is why Labour is insisting that the increment should be reversed. We are being made to pay for electricity that we did not consume.

"In fact it is becoming obvious that the privatisation of the power sector was done in error. Power supply and maintenance services were obviously better under NEPA. We are now paying very high bills without commensurate electricity supply. We appeal to the President Bola Tinubu-led Federal Government

to reverse the privatisation of the power sector as it has completely failed to achieve the purpose for the sale."

Reacting, the Regional Manager of JED in Makurdi, Ojochide Agbata, posited that the review of electricity tariff was not peculiar to Makurdi "and it is only for the Feeders on Band A who had their electricity tariff reviewed upward. Moreover Distribution Companies do not have the authority to review tariffs. Consumption is also a factor in determining bills. When you consume high you pay high and when you consume less you pay less, that is the truth."

Step up security, others, Kwankwaso tells Gov Yusuf

By Bashir Bello

KANO—THE New Nigeria People's Party, NNPP, presidential candidate in the 2023 general elections and former governor of Kano State, Senator Rabi'u Kwankwaso, has called on Governor Abba Yusuf of Kano State to step up security, developmental projects, among others, in the state.

Senator Kwankwaso who spoke during a Sallah homage visit, lauded Governor Yusuf for his outstanding performance during the first year of stewardship in Kano State.

In a statement by the Governor Yusuf's Spokesperson, Sanusi Bature, commended Yusuf's dedication to advancing education and women empowerment initiatives aimed at enhancing the lives of Kano State residents, aligning with the values of the Kwankwasiyiyya philosophy.

He expressed delight at the Governor's commitment to empowering women with substantial support, noting its significance for rural entrepreneurs.

Drawing from his experience as a former governor, Senator Kwankwaso emphasized the importance of effective monitoring to ensure equitable distribution of empowerment grants.

Senator Kwankwaso called for enhanced efforts in security,

empowerment of the less privileged, and advancement of developmental projects, underscoring his commitment as a stakeholder to provide valuable guidance and support to the government.

Responding, Governor Yusuf thanked Senator Kwankwaso for his mentorship and reiterated his administration's dedication to upholding the principles of the Kwankwasiyiyya movement for continued progress and development in Kano state.

NAF kills 100 terrorists as Police rescue kidnap victims in Katsina

By Ogalah Ibrahim

OPERATION Hadarin 'Daji' of the Nigerian Air Force, NAF, has killed over 100 bandits during a night operation in Kuka Shidda Camp, Faskari LGA, Katsina State.

The operation targeted a criminal group affiliated with notorious terrorists' kingpin Yusuf Yellow and his close associate Rabe Imani.

Over 45 motorcycles were also destroyed during the airstrikes.

Spokesperson to Governor Dikko Radda of Katsina State, Ibrahim Mohammed, in a statement, informed that this was the third successful air raid in the Faskari-Kankara axis in recent times disrupting bandit activities in the area.

According to the statement, security forces thwarted a separate kidnapping attempt in the early hours of Sunday in Kwata Area, Jibia LGA, Katsina State.

A police source noted that following a distress call received

around 4:15 am, "a SUPOL led an Armoured Personnel Carrier, APC, patrol team to the scene. They arrived to find armed bandits holding three women captive. Acting swiftly, the team blocked the kidnappers' escape route, leading to a confrontation. A gunfight

ensued, pressuring the criminals to flee.

"Thankfully, all three kidnap victims - Ummulkhari Abubakar (23), Shafa'atu Abubakar (35), and Maryam Lawal (15) - were rescued unharmed. The team also ensured the safety of a six-month-old baby boy named

Ismail Usman, who was among the abducted."

According to the source, the security forces exercised commendable restraint during the operation, expending only 14 rounds of ammunition and 20 smoke canisters.

The statement stressed that

the swift response not only saved lives but also sent a strong message to criminal elements that such acts will not be tolerated. It also acknowledged that the successful operations demonstrate security forces unwavering commitment to protecting Katsina State's citizens from criminal activities.

Troops rescue 34 women, children, as 3 ISWAP terrorists surrender

By Kingsley Omonobi

TROOPS of Multinational Joint Task Force, MNJTF, in a series of operations targeting terrorist activities at Wulgo,

have rescued 34 women and children from the clutches of Boko Haram terrorists.

Troops killed one terrorist during clearance operations conducted in the Mazuri, Itsari, Mudu, and Maleri villages on fringes of southern Lake Chad in Nigeria on 15 June 2024.

Spokesman of MNJTF, Lt. Col Abdullahi Abubakar, who made this known yesterday, said "the hostages were successfully rescued under Operation Lake Sanity 2."

"Similarly, on 17 June 2024, 3 fighters from the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) based in the

Jabilaram camp, a secluded islet on Lake Chad, surrendered to the vigilant troops of Task Force Wulgo.

"The fighters, identified as Babakura Abubakar (20 years old), Abacha Kyari (28 years old), and Mohammad Adam (29 years old), are currently undergoing interrogation for further action."

Amel Int'l assures consumers of high quality beverages

A food and beverage manufacturing company in Nigeria and makers of the Amel Susan products, Amel International Services Limited, has assured consumers of high

standard products in the food and beverages sector.

Amel International Services Limited which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary is the makers of Icing Sugar, Corn

Flour, Baking Soda, Bakery Cocoa, Pure Cocoa Drink, and Custard Powder (Milk, Vanilla, and Banana flavours).

The 10th-anniversary dinner was held to mark the incredible

achievement of a decade of excellence in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods products, FMCC, industry, appreciate long standing stakeholders since the inception of the trans-generational company.



LEADERSHIP

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Sense and nonsense of Nigeria's economic crisis

NIGERIA is probably in the worst economic crisis of a generation, screamed *The New York Times* on June 11, 2024. Two other influential global publications, *Foreign Affairs* and *The Economist*, had earlier said the same thing under different headlines. Although Nigeria's economy is not yet in a recession, all other economic indicators have gone south, and the curve is not bending in the short run.

Statistics on inflation (above 33%), youth unemployment (above 50%), poverty levels (over 133 million multidimensionally poor), the value of the Naira (over 200% decline against dollar in the past year), education (18.3 million out of school children), healthcare (inadequate health facilities and professionals), insecurity (144th position in the 2023 safest countries in the world ranking), and homelessness (24.4 million people without a home) are frightening. More than ever, Nigeria needs crisis leaders to turn things around.

Great leaders have always come up to guide their countries out of the worst crises throughout history. The American people looked up to Barack Obama in 2008 to lead the nation through its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. He conducted many consultations and made critical but well-considered decisions to lay a new economic foundation. We are in an "economic war" and cannot use the tools applicable in normal times.

Leadership during normal times is different from leading in the storm which is the subject of my forthcoming book. The expertise and skill set required for both cases are different. The dynamism and multiplicity of socio-economic and political factors converging to create the Nigerian volatile ecosystem are such that effective crisis leadership is needed at all governance strata.

Although required in normal times, these crisis leadership competencies are most relevant during a crisis. They include sensemaking, effective decision-making, team coordination, facilitating learning, emotional intelligence, and effective communication. It is the masterful use of these competencies that makes great crisis leaders.

The commentariat has attributed our present economic crisis to a cycle of thoughtless policies, squandering as governance, negative or low investment in innovation, uncoordinated economic thinking and placing of politics above commonsense economic frugality. It is also true that our poor understanding of the interplay of global events and their impact on local economic factors also contributed. The consequence is the country's inability to respond to vulnerabilities, shocks and opportunities.

Nigerian leaders need to make sense of these complex circumstances. The situation requires a more focused perspective on historical and immediate causes and possible solutions to the current crisis. Sensemaking is critical to effective crisis leadership, especially in complex and diverse environments like Nigeria. Sensemaking involves gathering information and putting it in context, exploring different perspectives to develop a coherent narrative, and interpreting and understanding complex, ambiguous, and rapidly changing situations to guide decision-making and action. During this economic crisis, sensemaking allows leaders to comprehend its scope, identify its root causes, anticipate its impacts, and develop appropriate responses. This piece will focus on and explore sensemaking as the first step in crisis leadership.

Our leaders must develop a contextual understanding and historical context of our economic crisis. Nigeria is characterised by significant cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity. Effective crisis leadership requires lead-

ers to understand these complexities, how they influence the crisis, and the potential responses. Economic crises in Nigeria often have roots in historical issues such as colonial legacies, policy missteps, structural inequalities and global turbulence. Leaders must consider these historical contexts to grasp the crisis's nuances fully. They must identify and interpret economic, social, and political signals.

Furthermore, the way our leaders frame this economic crisis matters. We often tend to reduce complex issues to one or two narratives. This is what my Kellogg Professor, Loran Nordgren calls "narrow framing". Based on the robust content analysis we carried out, we identified the dominant frame of this economic crisis by the government as 'inherited and requires tough actions that will cause some pain to the citizens in the short run, but the pain is necessary for achieving better economic prosperity in the medium to long term'. The danger of this framing is that it sounds more like an excuse than a creative strategy to upturn our economic woes. This frame lulls our leaders to the proverbial sleep of inertia – inaction when there is fire on the mountain.

Our leaders must develop a contextual understanding and historical context of our economic crisis; Nigeria is characterised by significant cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity; effective crisis leadership requires leaders to understand these complexities

How this economic crisis is communicated to the public and stakeholders influences their perceptions and reactions. Effective crisis leadership involves framing and communicating the situation in an understandable and actionable way for diverse audiences. Little wonder Nigerians are at a loss regarding our political class' perceived poor choices. The government needs to rethink its crisis communication strategy.

Since economic crises are by their very nature dynamic and unpredictable, leaders must update their understanding of the issues, mod-

ify their response strategy and adapt their strategies accordingly. Involving various stakeholders, including experts, community leaders, and affected populations, enriches the process, and ensures more comprehensive insights. This comprehensive insight allows crisis leaders to make informed decisions that cater to the greater good. Things like the government being more prudent, quitting luxury spending, reducing taxes to encourage savings and investment, fixing insecurity to encourage inflow of investment and borrowing less from external sources, are easily intelligible choices.

To illustrate the importance of deep insight in Nigerian leadership during the economic crisis, let us examine three recent crises. The first is the economic recession of 2016. The 2016 recession was triggered by a significant drop in oil prices and compounded by policy challenges and security issues. Our leaders needed to interpret the interconnected causes, including global oil dynamics, domestic economic policies, and security concerns in the Niger Delta. The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, ERGP was developed as a response, focusing on diversification and stabilisation. While the ERGP provided a strategic framework, the process highlighted the need for consistent policy implementation and addressing underlying structural issues. This still needs to be done, and our leaders have yet to learn any lessons they could apply in subsequent crises.

The second is the current economic crisis that has been exacerbated due to the implementation of fuel subsidy removal policy. Every Nigerian knows the need to remove fuel subsidies, but it takes work. Periodic attempts to remove fuel subsidies faced public resistance due to their impact on living costs and inflation. Our leaders needed to balance fiscal sustainability with socio-economic impacts. Understanding public sentiment and economic realities was crucial in framing and communicating subsidy reforms. Subsidy removals were often met with protests, highlighting the need for transparent communication, phased implementation, and accompanying social protection measures.

However, the hurried end of the subsidy without mapping the multiple scenario implications and making adequate provisions to cushion the impact threw our economy into a whirlwind of desperation, and the repercussions have been devastating, as indicated in the above economic statistics. Developing multiple scenarios based on different interpretations of the crisis helps prepare for various potential outcomes.

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Edo guber: I'll re-enact Oshiomhole's infrastructural revolution —Okpebholo

....Says Obaseki failed to build Oshiomhole's legacies

By Ike Uchechukwu

GOVERNORSHIP Candidate of the All Progressives Congress, APC, in Edo, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has said that he would run an inclusive government and re-enact former governor Adams Oshiomhole's infrastructural revolution, if elected in the September 21 election.

Okpebholo made this known on the side lines of the medical mission flagged off by the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, in Akamkpa, Cross River, yesterday.

The Senator representing Edo Central in the 10th Assembly and a member of the

Senate Committee on NDDC, also said that he would adopt a bottom-up approach in running the affairs of the state.

His words: "Unlike what is currently obtainable in the governance of the state, our administration will be practically driven, a governance that the people can relate with, a true people's government in the real sense."

The APC candidate who bemoaned the lack of infrastructural development across the 18 local government areas of Edo, promised to re-enact Adams Oshiomhole infrastructural revolution.

He said that an emergency would be declared on roads, schools and health infrastructure in the state. "We are set

for that, if you look at the state, there is nothing you can say that the present governor has done for us. We will be taking a holistic approach to correct the decayed roads, schools and health infrastructure that have been left unattended to by the Godwin Obaseki-led Peoples Democratic Party, PDP. "If the Obaseki-led administration had built upon what the government of Adams Oshiomhole did, Edo would have been competing with states like Lagos in terms of development.

"Our mission is to hit the ground running from day one and make Edo a better place, a place we can actually call our own, a place that everybody will be happy to see," Okpebholo said.

PDP carpets Shaibu for describing Ighodalo as an outsider

By Ozioruva Aliu

EDO State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, has berated former deputy governor of the state, Philip Shaibu, for describing its governorship candidate, Dr. Asue Ighodalo, as an outsider in the coming election, which he said should be won by a home-boy.

Shaibu had on Sunday also openly declared that he would be supporting the candidate of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Senator Monday Okpebholo in the election. The Deputy Director General of the Asue/Ogie Campaign Management Council, Rev Olu Martins, said they as students union activists with the National Association of Nigerian Students, NANS, were surprised with the political argument of Shaibu, as they were trained to argue on issues.

Martins said that the argument

of Shaibu's "home boy" slogan does not hold water "because that a candidate didn't grow up in Edo, doesn't make him a stranger in his own state. "I thought Shaibu will tell us that the candidate he wants to support is smart, has the capacity, intelligence, and knack for ex-

cellence which are the hallmarks of a great leader. "The honourable thing he should have done is to resign from the PDP like others and support the APC candidate. His argument is that of weak people," he said.

CLASSIFIED

DEATH NOTIFICATION

This is to notify the general public that MR. SUNDAY OKORO died on September 15, 2022 after a brief illness at the age of 53. He was buried on October 22, 2022 in his home town, Emu Obodoetti, Delta State. Until his demise, he was a staff of JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC. He is survived by his wife and children.

SPACE FOR SALE

MODESTUS SEEDS OF MERCY FOUNDATION.

The above named has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for the registration under Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020.

MEMBERS:
1. UKWUOMACHIMEZIE MODESTUS - CHAIRMAN
2. OBIYOM CYNTHIA CHIDIMMA - SECRETARY
3. OBIYOM UCHECHUKWU DAMIAN - TRUSTEE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:
1. TO ESTABLISH THE LESS PRIVILEGED.
2. TO FEED THE POOR PEOPLE ON THE STREETS.
3. TO REHABILITATE AND DEFEND ABANDONED CHILDREN ON THE STREETS
4. TO CARE FOR THE POOR, WIDOWS AND DEFEND VULNERABLE WOMEN THAT ARE PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY ABUSED.
5. TO CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT THE HARM OF UNCONTROLLED BLOOD PRESSURE FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN POOR VILLAGES, FREE MEDICAL OUTREACH MOSTLY FOR PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS ESPECIALLY AGED POOR, DIABETIC PATIENTS.

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

SUBEB chairman launches initiative, mobilises for Ighodalo, Ogie

By Ozioruva Aliu

BENIN CITY— EXECUTIVE Chairman of Edo State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB, Mrs. Ozavize Salami, has started an initiative for the election of Dr. Asue Ighodalo and Mr. Osarodion Ogie of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, as governor and deputy governor, with the mobilisation of voters in her Akoko-Edo Local Government Area, ahead of the governorship election.

At an event she organized to launch the "Edo is Better with AiO2" initiative she intimated the people and party faithful on the numerous and laudable

programmes of the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration.

She said the BETTER in the initiative stands for Boosting Educational Transformation Through Empowerment and Resources.

Salami also stormed Akoko-Edo with lots of palliatives to put smiles on the faces of indigenes across Wards 1 and 2 of the LGA government and other areas in the locality.

She said the "Edo is BETTER with AiO2" is a state-wide political campaign launched to mobilize voters to ensure total victory of Ighodalo, Ogie and the PDP.

"Edo State has set the pace

as far as governance and basic education is concerned in Nigeria with many States already emulating the standard being set by Edo State," she remarked.

While enumerating the gains recorded by Edo State SUBEB under her leadership, Mrs. Salami added that "primary school teachers in Edo State now use modern methods of teaching through provisions of innovative learning materials for pupils."

She commended Governor Obaseki for prompt payment of workers' salaries and for being the first Governor in Nigeria to pay civil servants the previous N40,000 and current

N70,000 minimum wage.

On his part, the chairman, Nigerian Union of Teachers, NUT, Chairman in the area Mr. Bernard Ajobiewe, declared that teachers in Akoko-Edo were well pleased with the way the state government has handled the welfare of teachers in the state.

"We shall continue to support Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration to break new grounds," he said.

She was supported by the Deputy Governor, Omobayo Godwins Marvellous and the Executive Chairman of Akoko-Edo LGA, Tajudeen Alade among others.

How modernising payments can secure the future

By **ELVIS EROMOSELE**

PAYMENT is the fulcrum of human interaction. And like everything else, it is constantly changing. The move from barter to commodity money was followed by currency and we are today in the realm of digital payments.

It is clear that to go forward efforts must now be geared towards modernizing the payment infrastructure across the African continent. This is imperative to promote innovation, drive economic growth, and help the continent gain a competitive edge.

Today, Africa stands at the cusp of a digital revolution, and the need to enhance the inclusivity and integrity of digital payments cannot be overstated. This transformation is not just about integrating new technologies but about simplifying processes, increasing trust, and ensuring the availability and reliability of payment systems.

Africa may well be at a critical juncture in the journey of digital transformation, an inflection point. To underscore the significance of this assertion, two forums in June arrived at the same conclusion.

The first was the Digital PayExpo 2024 by Intermarc Consulting with the theme: 'Redefining Payment'. It was followed by Interswitch, ACI Worldwide Customer Engagement event tagged: 'Modernizing Digital Payment Infrastructure for Innovation, Growth and Commercial Advantage.'

Both sessions essentially concluded that the rapid proliferation of digital technologies has opened new avenues for financial inclusion, allowing more people to participate in the global economy. However, this potential can only be realised if digital payment in-

frastructures are modernised to meet the demands of today's fast-paced, interconnected world.

The place to start is building trust through availability. Trust is the cornerstone of any financial system. For digital payments to gain widespread acceptance, they must be reliable and available at all times. Experts argued that the trust quotient in digital payments is directly proportional to their availability. When users can depend on payment systems to function without fail, their confidence in digital transactions increases. This is a fact.

Of course, modernizing payment infrastructure also involves implementing robust systems that ensure high availability. This means reducing downtime, minimizing transaction failures, and providing seamless user experiences. Financial institutions must, as a matter of urgency, invest in technologies such as cloud computing, blockchain, and artificial intelligence to create resilient and scalable payment systems.

The second thing would be to simplify the user experience. At the heart of digital transformation is the goal of simplification. Complex and cumbersome payment processes deter users and hinder the adoption of digital financial services. To drive growth, it is essential to simplify these processes, making them intuitive and user-friendly.

Innovations such as contactless payments, mobile wallets, and real-time transaction processing are examples of how simplification can enhance user experience. By reducing the friction in payment processes, businesses can attract more users and facilitate smoother transactions.

Another way to boost the adoption of digital payments is by ensuring trans-

action integrity. Those who should know insist that one of the major challenges in digital payments is maintaining transaction integrity. Issues such as fraud, data breaches, and identity theft can undermine user trust and disrupt the financial ecosystem. As digital transactions increase, so does the need for robust security measures.

The way forward, of course, involves implementing advanced encryption technologies, multi-factor authentication, and blockchain can help ensure the integrity of digital transactions. These technologies provide a secure

The experts are in agreement: modernising digital payment infrastructure is a critical step towards fostering innovation, driving growth, and gaining commercial advantage; the future of payments is digital, and the time to act is now!

framework that protects user data and prevents unauthorized access, thereby bolstering trust in digital payment systems.

Furthermore, everyone, from regulatory agencies to players, must consid-

er digital transformation as the path to unprecedented growth. In truth, digital transformation is more than just a trend; it is a pathway to unprecedented growth. By modernising payment infrastructure, businesses can unlock new opportunities for expansion and innovation. Digital payments enable faster, more efficient transactions, reducing operational costs and increasing profitability.

Moreover, digital payment systems facilitate global commerce by breaking down geographical barriers. Businesses can reach new markets and customer segments, driving revenue growth and enhancing their competitive advantage. The adoption of digital payments also promotes financial inclusion, bringing underserved populations into the formal economy and driving socio-economic development.

The experts are in agreement: modernising digital payment infrastructure is a critical step towards fostering innovation, driving growth, and gaining commercial advantage. So, as Africa navigates the inflection point of digitalisation, it is essential to focus on building trust through availability, simplifying user experiences, and ensuring transaction integrity.

Evidently, by embracing digital transformation, businesses can not only enhance their operational efficiency but also contribute to a more inclusive and secure financial ecosystem. The future of payments is digital, and the time to act is now!

•Eromosele, a corporate communication professional and public affairs analyst, wrote via: elviseroms@gmail.com

By **ARIZE NWOBU**

Cardoso and policy evolution

AS noted by Gerald Epstein, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, central banks in developing countries have powers to promote economic growth by adopting the policy of "Controlled Expansion" of bank credits to undertake direct financing of development projects. He further noted that central banks frame their monetary and credit policy in such a way that larger and desired quantities of bank credit go to primary sectors such as agriculture, small industries, export trade, corporations, etc.

Development financing played a significant role in accelerating industrial development in India. India has been methodical in driving economic development. After 1991, the country phased out Development Financing Institutions, DFIs, and established new institutions, including the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, NIIF, to focus on funding infrastructure.

Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Olayemi Cardoso, has been decisive in his policy options and tried to roll back and streamline the functions and operating

frontiers of CBN to minimise wastages and increase efficiency.

Cardoso, swiftly abrogated development financing and intervention funds for agriculture and other sectors which were established by his predecessor. Some of the intervention funds of CBN include, the Anchor Borrower's Programme, ABP; Commercial Agriculture Credit Scheme, CACS; Accelerated Agriculture Development Scheme, AADS; Maize Aggregation Scheme; Paddy Aggregation Scheme and Private Sector-led Accelerated Agricultural Development Scheme, and others.

CBN had noted that the intervention schemes were established to improve local food production, reduce food import bill and conserve foreign reserve. Due to the absence of vibrant capital and money markets in developing countries, central banks in developing countries are expected to fill the funding gap by performing both the traditional and non-traditional functions and using development financing as a tool to accelerate economic growth and adapt and for the reduction of poverty and income inequality.

Cardoso stopped develop-

ment financing because of the magnitude of the outstanding debts from the interventions schemes, especially the Anchor Borrower's Programme, ABP, which was established in 2015. The IMF reported that 76 per cent of loans under ABP were unpaid, only 24 per cent were paid.

Reportedly a total of 4.67 million farmers in various crops were involved in the

CBN is working hard to find lasting solutions to the problems of the economy; Cardoso and his team have reset policy tool kits towards ensuring stability in the short to medium term; efforts should also aim at increasing the supply side of the economy

programme and about N1.12 trillion was disbursed to 563 anchors. The sum of N670.4 billion was repaid

leaving an outstanding of N450.90 billion. The development is not encouraging and which is a good reason for the discontinuation of development financing by Cardoso so that CBN could focus on its core mandates. But it is noteworthy that the Anchor Borrowers Programme reawakened the interest of many to return to farming.

Cardoso and his team also launched a wild fight against inflation with the quantum hike in the Monetary Policy Rate, MPR, by 400 basis points, from 18.75 per cent to 22.75 per cent and further to 24.74 per cent, and presently to 26.25 per cent.

The CBN Governor acknowledged the necessity for a trade-off between spurring economic growth and implementing the inflation targeting policy. All over the world, central banks are obsessed with inflation and they deploy significant amount of resources to fight inflation to ensure price stability.

Inflation creates many negative impact in the economy. As CBN noted, inflation devalues currency, discourages long term plantings and reduces savings and capital accumulation. It

also reduces investment, creates shifts in the distribution of real income and consequent misallocation of resources, and uncertainty and distortions in the economy.

Present inflation is cost-push, there is a general increase in the cost of production, and also because of expansionary fiscal policy. It is widely believed that the previous government increased money supply by Ways and Means and foreign debts, at a rate greater than the growth rate of the GDP. Other causes of inflation include disruptions in the supply of food products and increase in pump rate of fuel.

CBN is working hard to find lasting solutions to the problems of the economy. Cardoso and his team have reset policy tool kits towards ensuring stability in the short to medium term.

Efforts should also aim at increasing the supply side of the economy. It has been noted by experts that it is the supply side production potential that gives an economy the energy to grow without suffering from acceleration in cost and price inflation.

•Nwobu, a chartered stockbroker and policy analyst, wrote via arizenwobu@yahoo.com

The only item of public interest in President Bola Tinubu's Democracy Day 2024 speech was the steady move towards enacting a new national minimum wage law. The rest was mere run-of-the-mill.

It contained very little of the challenges that our democracy faces and efforts to tackle them. The most outstanding of these is the controversy the last general elections provoked. It dashed what remained of the hope of the average Nigerians in their ability to choose their leaders and get justice in the Judiciary.

A new INEC Chairman is due for appointment next year. We will still be stuck in the dilemma whereby a player in a football match will still have the power to appoint the referee. So long as a

Holes in Tinubu's Democracy Day speech

president continues to appoint the INEC Chairman, National Commissioners and State Resident Electoral Commissioners, RECs, we can never have free and fair elections. Ruling party stalwarts will continue to be appointed into the INEC.

We urgently need comprehensive reforms of INEC, the Judiciary and our electoral laws. In his speech, President Tinubu correctly identified himself as one of the soldiers for

democracy some 25 years ago. The question is: has he continued in that light since he became a full-fledged politician? Has he lived up to the ideals which he demanded as an activist?

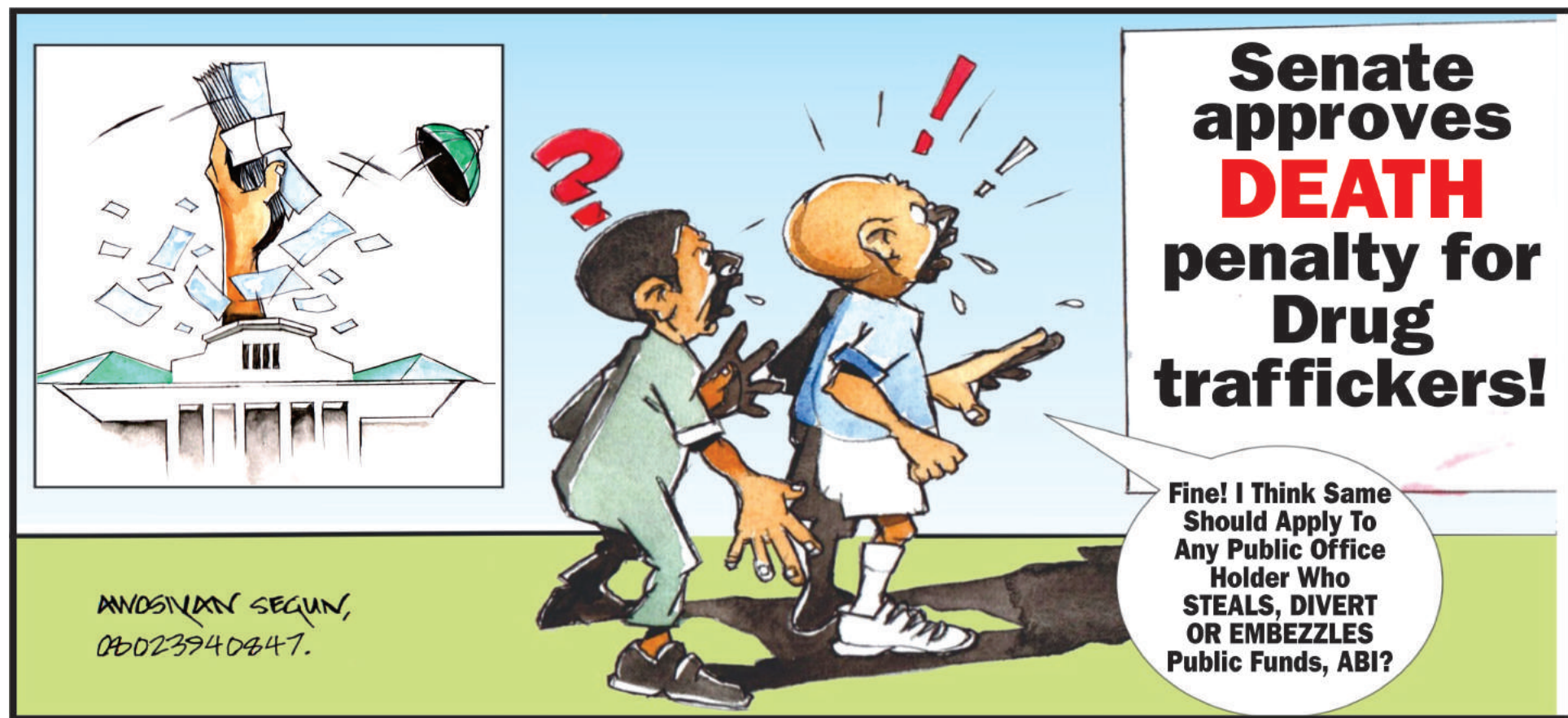
Never in the 25 years of our renascent democracy have we witnessed the quantum of impunities such as abductions and brutalisation of journalists and other citizens as in Tinubu's first year in office. Journalists are now abducted and detained for alleged offences that could easily have

been treated under extant laws.

This was the kind of power show that the infamous Frank Omenka of the Directorate of Military Intelligence, DMI, visited on journalists and citizens under General Sani Abacha. It is highly disappointing that we should go through such ugly experiences under the watch of a respected pro-democracy activist. The military and police have become too visible in the dehumanisation of the citizenry for comfort. This must stop.

Also, democracy is nothing if it has no dividends for the people. Apart from greater civil liberties, life should be more abundant. Yet, we have never had it so bad as in the past year.

President Tinubu must walk his talk.



OPINION

Send Opinions & Letters to: opinions1234@yahoo.com

From last week, continues the narrative on the National Economic Intelligence Committee, NEIC, its powers, functions and how it was able to discharge these, including its recommendations on monetary policy during the Gen Abacha regime



The impact of the exit of NEIC (5)

ALTHOUGH General Sani Abacha abused the system by enriching himself fantastically, it was Professor Aluko's committee that pegged the official rate of N22 to \$1.

The committee also recommended the following: There will be no bidding or allocation of foreign Exchange at the CBN, every company, individual or organisation shall source foreign exchange requirements in the autonomous market; CBN shall hold the official foreign exchange, and from time to time, intervene in the autonomous market; all government parastatals, government companies, agencies and government majority owned companies and organisations, exploration and production oil companies, and

oil service companies, recipients of foreign loans and grants must continue to maintain these foreign exchange ... domiciliary accounts with CBN which shall purchase such funds as and when necessary at the prevailing autonomous rates; operation of the domiciliary accounts shall be authorised and export proceeds and other repatriation in-flows shall be held in domiciliary accounts which shall be held and maintained with any authorised bank in Nigeria.

The beneficiaries of domiciliary accounts shall have unfettered use of funds contained therein; interbank

autonomous market shall operate freely; and for the

The committee also recommended the following: There will be no bidding or allocation of foreign Exchange at the CBN, every company, individual or organization shall source foreign exchange requirements in the autonomous market, CBN shall hold the official foreign exchange, and from time to time, intervene in the autonomous market

avoidance of doubt, no oil

processing company shall be permitted to operate a foreign exchange market in Nigeria. The main actors in IFEM shall be the bank and bureau de change, with CBN intervening from time to time; and bureau de change shall be allowed to buy notes and coins and travellers cheques freely but shall sell only notes and coins up to a maximum of US\$2500 per transaction. Buying and sale of notes and buying of travellers cheque by bureau de change shall be at autonomous market rate subject to a margin of two per cent.

For better or worse, the committee also recommended the promulgation of Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks No. 18 of 1994, Advance Free Fraud and other Fraud Related Offences Decree 1995 (otherwise known as "419 decree") and the Money Laundering Decree of 1995.

Persons charged under the decree are to face the Miscellaneous Offences Tribunal.

To be concluded

Business



By Elizabeth Adegbesan

At the backdrop of the escalating cost of living crises, the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, has released the long awaited 'Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Report by Expenditure and Income Approach', the first since second half of 2023, H2'23, showing negative shift in household consumption expenditure.

The report covering third quarter and fourth quarter 2023, indicated that Nigerian households reduced their consumption expenditure Year-on-Year (YoY) to -13.7 percent during the period from -12.47 percent in Q4'22.

The period covered by the report is approximately six months into the fuel subsidy removal and exchange rate floatation regime, the two policies that drove price instability in the economy.

The decline in household consumption expenditure reflects the sustained upward pressure in the prices of goods and services during the period which lingers till now, also indicating that the consumption expenditure index is expected to have gone down further by now.

The NBS report stated: "Household final consumption, in real terms, grew by -10.12 percent and -13.68 percent in Q3 and Q4 of 2023 respectively, on a YoY basis.

"Moreover, these growth rates were lower compared to the growth rates of the corresponding quarters of 2022 which stood at -5.83 percent and -12.47 percent.

"The observed trend in recent times indicates that real household consumption expenditure declined since Q2 of 2022 but improved in Q2'23 when the growth rate was 7.08 percent.

"However, household consumption expenditure declined in the subsequent quarters of Q3 and Q4 of 2023, accounting for negative growth rates of -10.12 percent and -13.68 percent.

"The growth rates of Q3'23 and Q4'23 indicate lower rates relative to the corresponding quarters of Q3'22 and Q4'22.

"On a quarter-on-quarter basis, real household consumption expenditure decreased by 5.13 percent in Q3



Engagement: From left, Santhosh Rao, Senior Vice-President, Middle East, Africa, and Southern Asia, ACI Worldwide; Mitchell Elegbe, GMD/CEO, Interswitch Group; and Jonah Adams, MD, digital infrastructure and managed services, Interswitch, at the Interswitch and ACI Stakeholder Engagement event in Lagos.

Cost of Living: Households reduce consumption expenditure

of 2023 and declined by 1.4 percent in Q4'23.

"Household consumption accounted for 56.8 percent of real GDP at market prices in Q3'23, and 50.4 percent in Q4'23." According to NBS, the GDP at market prices grew YoY in real terms by 2.54

percent in Q3'23 and 3.46 percent in Q4'23.

"This shows a sustained positive trajectory of the growth of the economy.

"This indicates a rise of 0.3 percentage points from the figure recorded in Q3'22 which was 2.25 percent and

0.05 percent points fall compared to Q4'22 growth at 3.52 percent.

"However, on an annual basis, GDP grew by 2.74 percent in 2023, a decline of 0.36 percentage points from the growth reported in 2022 (3.1 percent)."

Nigeria's oil output rises marginally to 1.46mbpd

- Contrary to 1.7mbpd given by Ministry, NNPCCL
- NUPRC puts more blocks on offer

By Obas Esiedesa

Nigeria's total oil output increased marginally by 1.45% in May 2024 to 1.46 million barrels per day (mbpd) up from 1.44 mbpd barrels per day in April.

However, this marginal gain fell short of the country's OPEC quota of 1.5 million barrels per day and the 1.7 million barrels per day benchmark set for the 2024 national budget.

The latest production figures from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) contradict claims by Minister of State Petroleum Resources (Oil) Senator Heineken Lokpobiri and Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited CEO Mr. Mele Kyari that oil production has reached 1.7 million barrels per day.

of crude oil production and 217,076 barrels per day of condensate production, failing to meet the targeted levels.

This development highlights the challenges facing Nigeria's oil sector, despite efforts to increase production and meet global demand.

The data from NUPRC showed that oil production in the first five months of the year has so far failed to improve. Production in January was 1.64mbpd, February 1.54mbpd and March 1.43mbpd.

On a year on year basis, total production in May also rose slightly by 2.6 percent compared to 1.43 million barrels per day recorded over a similar period in 2023.

NUPRC puts more blocks on offer

As part of efforts to grow the nation's reserves and improve oil production, the NUPRC has disclosed that it would put additional oil fields on offer in the ongoing oil field licencing bid round.

The Commission Chief Executive, Engr Gbenga Komolafe who disclosed this

while unveiling the Nigerian 2024 licencing round in Lagos said the government is committed to conducting the licencing round in a fair, competitive and transparent manner.

According to him, "the Commission, in partnership with its multi-client partners, has acquired more geological data resulting in the identification of more prospective blocks. The newly identified blocks will be added to the pool of blocks originally scheduled for the bid exercise, and their details will be made available on the bid round portal.

"In addition to these blocks, the seven deep offshore blocks from the 2022 Mini-Bid Round Exercise which cover an area of approximately 6,700 km2 in water depths of 1,150m to 3,100m shall also be included along with this Licencing round".

Engr. Komolafe explained that the "blocks on offer have extensive 2D and 3D seismic data coverage, including multi-beam and analog data. Additionally, a 3D reprocessed Pre-stack Time Migration of remarkable quality is also available to prospective bid-

Letshego MFB Nigeria launches save & win promo to reward loyal customers

By Peter Egwuatu

Letshego Microfinance Bank (MFB) Nigeria has announced the launch of its "Save & Win Promo," an initiative designed to reward customers for their loyalty and savings.

According to a statement from Letshego MFB, the promo runs from June 1, 2024 to December 21, 2024. This promotion will see 10 customers win cash gifts of N100,000 monthly, grand prizes of N5 million, N2.5 million, and N1 million in the final draw in December.

"The Save & Win Promo is part of Letshego's commitment to encouraging financial discipline and rewarding its customers. Draws will be held in the last week of each month on a pre-announced date with winners selected randomly from qualifying participants.

To qualify for the promo, a customer who already has a Letshego MFB account, should maintain a minimum deposit of N50,000 - N200,000; obtain a Letshego physical debit card and complete five transactions,

such as buying power, airtime, data, transferring outwards, etc. New customers can open an account at any Letshego branch or download and register on the Letshego Digital Mall. Winners will be notified via SMS through their registered mobile numbers and will also be contacted by their respective branches. The list of winners will be published on Letshego's official website and social media pages monthly" the statement added.

Nkosana Ndlovu, Managing Director of Letshego MFB Nigeria said: " Letshego MFB Nigeria is dedicated to fostering a culture of saving among our customers while rewarding them for their loyalty. We believe the Save & Win Promo will encourage savings culture and enhance customer engagement and satisfaction."

Richard Tyotule, Head of Sales & Distribution at Letshego MFB Nigeria, added: "This promo is a testament to our commitment to our customers' financial well-being. By saving with Letshego, our customers secure their financial future and stand a chance to be rewarded with exciting prizes. We are thrilled to launch this initiative and look forward to celebrating our customers' loyalty."

Axa Mansard sees opportunity, challenge in workforce generational shift

By Rosemary Iwunze

Axa Mansard insurance has said that the ongoing generational shift, where Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z are coexisting within organisations, presents opportunities and challenges for increased attention and investment in employee retention.

This was disclosed by the General Counsel and Human Resource Director, AXA Mansard, Omowunmi Adewusi, at the 2024 Human Resource Professionals Workshop organised by the Career Office of Pan-Atlantic University on the theme, "Employee Retention Strategies: Building a Resilient Workforce with Technology and Trends."

She said that traditional work models, characterised by fixed hours, on-site presence, and manual labour, no longer resonate with the modern workforce. She explained that technological advancements had fuelled the demand for remote work capabilities, digital tools, and collaboration platforms.

"So, the real challenge for HR practice today is how to bridge the gap between the divide and foster a resilient workforce that can thrive in today's dynamic business and economic environment," she said.

Adewusi stated: "Technology is no longer a nice-to-have. Digital tools, remote work capabilities, and collaboration platforms are essential for attracting and retaining top talents. Similarly, leveraging data analytics to forecast potential employee turnover and pinpoint those at risk of leaving can be invaluable. Taking proactive measures to address their concerns can significantly impact retention."

The availability of advanced seismic datasets and analytical tools via our dedicated portals exemplifies our commitment to excellence and technological advancement.

"The Licencing Round is indeed expected to be a huge success for Nigeria and is a big step towards growing the nation's oil and gas reserves through aggressive exploration and development efforts, boosting production, expanding opportunities for gas utilisation and end to end development across the value chain, strengthening energy security and economy, providing occasion to gainfully engage the pool of competent companies in the oil & gas sector with multiplier effect in employment opportunities, enabling transfer of technology, value optimisation from our petroleum assets and attracting investments.

"In addition, the Licencing Round presents us with the opportunity to reinforce Nigeria's commitment to openness and transparency in line with the principles of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)", he added.

Rental businesses worry over impact of rising shipping cost

By Providence Ayanfeoluwa

THE Rental Professionals Society of Nigeria, RPSN, has raised concern over the impact of rising cost of shipping on event rentals business in Nigeria. Speaking at the just concluded RPSN Expo/Conference 1.0 themed: Rent, Relax and Repeat", President of RPSN, Mrs. Taiwo Oderinlo, said that the shipping industry is one area that government should concentrate.

She added that the cost of shipping, like that of living, has risen so high that it is affecting all businesses, especially rentals.

Oderinlo pleaded with the government to introduce policies that would help in checking sharp rises in cost of doing business in the

industry, adding that there is a need for government to do more in the area of exchange rate.

The society took advantage of the conference to build members capacity so as to enhance their ability to discover innovative solutions to challenges faced by businesses globally.

To this end, an insurance firm was brought to speak to members of the society on the need to insure their businesses as well as the banking experts who provided them with knowledge on financial products that are readily available to help them scale their business in the marketplace.

However, the maiden edition of the RPSN exhibition brought manufacturers from China and other parts of Africa to showcase their products, share their business experiences and plan for the future.

Oderinlo stated: "The conference was designed to give members the opportunity to know what is happening in the market, provide a platform for the advancement, support, and empowerment of rental service providers, business growth, networking and mentorship and economic support for our members."

AGRIC COMMODITIES

Coffee	221.99	-2.85
Cocoa	9485.36	-517
Sugar	18.61	-0.34

The output for May consisted of 1.25 million barrels per day

ENERGY & OIL

Brent Crude	81.74	-2.12
Light Crude	74.92	-0.05

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	1447.465	1448.965
POUNDS	1841.1755	1841.8115
EURO	1566.5914	1567.1325
FRANC	1613.6734	1614.2308
YEN	9.223	9.2262
CFA	2.4325	2.4425
WAUA	1961.5851	1962.2627
RIYAL	385.9289	386.0622
DANISH	209.9297	210.0022
SDR	1918.9044	1919.5672

CBN Exchange rate as at 17/06/2024

ADVERTORIAL

**IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT
IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ABUJA**

SUIT NO: FHC/ABJ/CS/1681/2023

BETWEEN:

- 1. **RT. HON. MARTIN CHIKE AMAEWHULE**
(THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER, RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY)
- 2. **RT. HON. DUMLE MAOL**
(THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY)
- 3. **HON. MAJOR JACK**
- 4. **HON. LINDA SOMIARI-STEWART**
- 5. **HON. FRANKLIN UCHENNA NWABOCHI**
- 6. **HON. CHRISTOPHER KAGBANG OFIKS**
- 7. **HON. AZERU OPARA**
- 8. **HON. OLABO GEORGE**
- 9. **HON. TONYE SMART ADOKI**
- 10. **HON. GRANVILLE TEKENARI WELLINGTON**
- 11. **HON. NGBAR BERNARD**
- 12. **HON. JOHN DOMINIC IDERIMA**
- 13. **HON. QUEEN UWUMA TONY WILLIAMS**
- 14. **HON. LOOLO ISAIAH OPUENDE**
- 15. **HON. ABBEY PETER**
- 16. **HON. IGWE-OBAY AFORJI**
- 17. **HON. JUSTINA EMEJI**
- 18. **HON. IGNATIUS ONWUKA**
- 19. **HON. CHIMEZIE NWANKWO**
- 20. **HON. LEMCHI PRINCE NYECHE**
- 21. **HON. BARILE NWAKOH**
- 22. **HON. EMILIA LUCKY AMADI**
- 23. **HON. NKEMJIKA EZEKWE**

**PLAINTIFFS/
APPLICANTS**

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FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA

6/6/24
Anyemena
SR

- 24. **HON. DAVIDS ARNOLD OKOBIRIARI**
- 25. **HON. NWANKWO SYLVANUS**
- 26. **HON. GERALD OFORJI**
- 27. **HON. WAMI SOLOMON**

AND

- 1. **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC)**
- 2. **PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)**
- 3. **RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**
- 4. **CLERK OF RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**
- 5. **INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE**
- 6. **DEPARTMENT OF STATE SERVICES (DSS)**

**DEFENDANTS/
RESPONDENTS**

MOTION ON NOTICE

BROUGHT PURSUANT TO ORDER 26 RULES 1- 5 & ORDER 28 RULE 1(1) &(2) OF THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT (CIVIL PROCEDURE) RULES 2019 AND UNDER THE INHERENT JURISDICTION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT AS PRESERVED BY SECTION 6(6) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA 1999 AS AMENDED

TAKE NOTICE that this Honourable Court shall be moved on _____ the _____ day of _____ 2023 at the hour of 9'0 clock in the forenoon or so soon thereafter as the Plaintiffs/Applicants or Counsel on their behalf may be heard praying this Honourable Court for the following reliefs:

- 1. **AN ORDER OF INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION** restraining the 1st and 3rd Defendants/Respondents, either by themselves, their officials, officers, servants, agents, servants, staff or privies (anyhow so called), from declaring vacant or taking any steps whatsoever to declare vacant the seats of the Plaintiffs/Applicants at the Rivers State House of Assembly; from withdrawing the Plaintiff/Applicants' respective

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ABUJA

6/6/24

OPEN LETTER TO ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU, GCFR, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES

Your Excellency,

A CASE FOR ANIOCHA/OSHIMILI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SOUTH EAST DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

We bring you warm greetings and hearty felicitations on the Celebration of your first Anniversary as the number one citizen of our country, following the successful completion of your eventful one year in office, as the Executive President of Nigeria and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria Armed Forces. Congratulations Your Excellency.

Mr. President Sir, it is with profound humility and a deep and sincere sense of patriotism that we write to you today, June 13, 2024, to formally request the inclusion of Aniocha/Oshimil Federal Constituency in your considerations, as you give assent to the South East Development Commission (SEDC) Bill, which is already on your table for Presidential Approval.

Recall Sir, that on Thursday, 22nd February, 2024, the Nigerian Senate passed the Bill seeking the establishment of the South East Development Commission (SEDC). In the same vein, the Federal House of Representatives had also, on December 21, 2023, at its Committee of the Whole, chaired by the Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu, who is also the sponsor of the bill, unanimously passed it for a third reading and sent it to the Senate for concurrence.

Permit me to quote, with your kind permission Sir, the words of Senate President, Obong Godswill Akpabio, on the day the bill was passed after its third reading in the hallowed Chambers of the Senate: "A bill for an Act to establish the South East Development Commission charged with the responsibility of, among other things, receiving and managing funds from allocation of the Federation Account for the construction and rehabilitation of roads, houses and other infrastructural damages suffered by the region as a result of the civil war as well as tackle the ecological problems and any other related environmental or developmental challenges faced by the south-eastern part of Nigeria and for related matters 2024

"The Commission when established, will be charged with the responsibility of receiving and managing funds from allocation of the Federation Account for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of roads, houses and other damages suffered by the region as a result of the effect of the civil war in addition to ecological problems and other related environmental or developmental challenges in the Southeast states, which include: Abia, Imo, Enugu, Anambra and Ebonyi."

Your Excellency, we wish to reiterate with emphasis, some of the stipulated terms of reference and engagement of the SEDC, which states that: "This commission, when established, shall, among other functions, conceive, plan and implement, in accordance with the set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the South East states.

"The areas of intervention will include transportation including roads, health, education, employment, agriculture, industrialization, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications.

Other functions will include, "tackling ecological and environmental problems that arise from the extraction and mining of solid mineral, exploration of oil mineral in the Southeast states and advise the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution; liaise with the various solid mineral extraction and mining companies and oil and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution prevention and control; and execute such other works and perform such other functions which in the opinion of the Commission are required for the sustainable development of the South East States and its peoples."

Mr. President Sir, flowing from the above, the desire and advocacy to formally seek the inclusion of Aniocha/Federal Constituency, which is in Delta State, as a veritable geographic and demographic space to be seriously considered and accommodated within the operational purview of the South East Development Commission, SEDC, becomes even more germane and central in the collective interest of our national unity and well-being, for the under-listed incontrovertible reasons:

1. The geographic territory of Aniocha/Oshimil Federal Constituency, which has now morphed into the Delta State Capital territory, was the without doubt, the tragic hub of one of the most horrendous, harrowing and blood curdling collateral incidents of the civil war; the Asaba Massacre, which occurred on October 5, 1970, by Nigerian government troops who entered the Delta State community of Asaba, having driven back Biafran troops from the area and summarily executed Asaba Indigenes who had come out, gaily dressed to welcome them with songs and dance.
2. This singular, most horrible, genocidal incident, akin to the narrative of the second world war holocaust carried out by Nazi Germany against European Jews, witnessed the cold blooded, mass execution of between 500 and 700 townspeople who were mowed down by the Nigerian military, most lined up and shot in the town square of Ogeosowa village. The Survivors buried the dead in pits on the site where they died.
3. It will therefore be to the eternal credit to you Mr. President that, in addition to the official apology, rendered by former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon to Asaba people, the very first step towards giving effect to the policy of Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3R) enunciated by General Yakubu Gowon himself,

53 years ago, would be given practical expression during your era as President of Nigeria. Our people are yet to recover from the losses and the pains from the civil war.

4. Our Constituency, which provided a safe haven for many South Easterners pouring into our territory, to begin to rebuild their lives after the devastating civil war, has in the last decade also become a second home and secure abode for most indigenes and other persons, who have fled from the alarming insecurity ravaging the troubled South East states. This has certainly put so much pressure on our facilities.

5. It is on record that our people of Aniocha/Oshimili Federal Constituency have been fully integrated and recognized as members of Ohaneze, the apex socio-cultural umbrella body of the South East, (Igbos). One of our leaders, late Ambassador Chief Ralph Uwechue was founding Secretary General and later President General of the body, presently a lot of our sons and daughters are members of the Executive of the Ohaneze Worldwide.

6. We want to state categorically Your Excellency, that there is no way a development agenda for the South East will be considered comprehensively inclusive without our Constituency. Today, the Aniocha/Oshimili Federal Constituency presently serves as the single federal constituency with the highest number of South Easterners, not included/located in the geographical nomenclature of the South East region.

7. This has greatly limited the benefits from the Federal government to only a geographical location called South East and we believe that it is largely unfair especially given that most South easterners in Asaba and its environs have huge population that even threaten to dominate the indigenous population.

8. More so, even some sections of the Aniocha/Oshimili Federal Constituency have historical, cultural and linguistic similarities, ties and affinities with many areas of the South East like Ogbaru and Nteje, which are largely associated with Oko, Okwe, Asaba, Ibusa and other towns in Delta State.

9. Mr. President, we wish to most respectfully refer you to the establishment and operations of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC and its forerunner, the Oil, Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), which not only served the interests of the core South South States, but also extended its scope of influence into the South East and South West regions, as a result of the common peculiarities shared by the states across regions. There is/are no reason(s) therefore, why benefits from such a laudable initiative like the South East Development Commission SEDC, should only be limited to the five states of South east, instead of being extended to the other areas which were also heavily impacted and are still suffering from the effects of the Civil war, 53 years later.

10. It is worthy of note that in these precarious and uncertain times when every even the merest which of perceived marginalization can trigger ethnic agitation and unprovoked uprising, a law which ostensibly provides benefits for the victims of the civil war, without a holistic consideration and inclusion of all those who were greatly affected by the war, may lead to uncertain agitations where original settlers may be compelled to begin to impose special taxes, levies and other draconian existential conditions on the people of the South East which may result in highly preventable conflicts.

Mr. President, with your kind permission, We wish to, with every sense of unalloyed loyalty and sincere humility, admit that it may be out of place, particularly at this time, to suggest a change of the title of the bill to recognize the inclusivity of neighbouring communities that also carry the huge burden of increased population without provision of increased population from aftermath of the civil war, especially now that the document is already on top of your table for presidential assent.

However Your Excellency, We make bold to proffer Sir that such consideration, which you can graciously effect with an Executive Order or indeed any of the other instruments of authority at the disposal of the Office of the President can effectively articulate and give presidential effect to the inclusivity of the Aniocha/Oshimili Federal Constituency as a component beneficiary of the South East Development Commission SEDC.

Thank You Sir.
Yours Sincerely....

1. OBI CHIEF NWANKE OBUAH
2. HRM CHARLES ANYAN III OF THE OBI OF IDUMUJE-UNOK
3. ISAAC OKOH
4. Ganga Akponwa
5. Chubs Edegbue
6. Emede N. Popo

Cc
Senate President: Senator Godswill Akpabio
Speaker: Hon. Tajudeen Abbas
Deputy Speaker: Hon Benjamin Kalu
Member: Rt. Hon Ngozi Okolie, Representing Aniocha/Oshimili Federal Constituency.

145

Certificates of Return and from conducting fresh elections to fill in the seats of the Plaintiffs/Applicants at the Rivers State House of Assembly, pending the hearing and determination of the Motion on Notice.

2. **AN ORDER OF INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION** restraining the 1st Defendant/Respondent from conducting fresh elections to fill the seats of the Plaintiffs/Applicants in the Rivers State House of Assembly, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.
3. **AN ORDER OF INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION** restraining the Defendants/Respondents, jointly and or severally, by themselves or their servants, agents, officials, officers, staff, delegates of other persons deriving authority from them (anyhow so called), from interfering with or impeding in any way or attempting to interfere with or impede in any way the performance of the Plaintiffs' official and legislative functions as the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members, respectively, of the Rivers State House of Assembly, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.
4. **AN ORDER OF INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION** restraining the Defendants/ Respondents, jointly and or severally, by themselves or their servants, agents, officials, officers, staff, delegates or other persons deriving authority from them (anyhow so called), from interfering with or impeding in any way or attempting to interfere with or impede in any way the full enjoyment of the official rights and privileges of the Plaintiffs/Applicants as the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members, respectively, of the Rivers State House of Assembly, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.
5. **AN ORDER OF INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION** restraining the 5th and 6th Defendants, by themselves, officers, subordinates, servants or agents from denying or refusing to provide security for the Plaintiffs or howsoever withdrawing their security details or personnel or failing to


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6/6/24


147

prevent the Applicants from performing their constitutional legislative functions and duties, in the guise of carrying out the directives of the 1st and 3rd Defendants concerning the matters sought to be restrained.

8. This Honourable Court has jurisdiction to make the orders sought, in order to maintain the status quo and preserve the res, which will be destroyed if this Application is refused.
9. It is more in the interest of justice to grant this Application than to refuse it.
10. The Applicants will be greatly prejudiced if this Application is refused, while the Defendants will not be prejudiced if it is granted.

DATED THIS 13TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2023


✓ **Sir Stephen Zakari Adehi, SAN, FCI Arb (UK)**
Peter Onuh Esq.,
Pritchard Osariemen Esq.,
Wale Babalola Esq.,
M.U. Namtar Esq.,
Linda Abari Esq.,
Martins Ekpah Esq.,
Idaye X.O. Imbu Esq.
Counsel to the Plaintiffs,
Steve Adehi, SAN & Co.
House 1, Dutsima Close, Off Kano Street,
Area 1, FCT Abuja.
08023040518,
saclaws@yahoo.com
steveadehi@nigerianbar.com



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S/O - 100.00
O/F - 200.00
9 Ext - 180.00
W/A - 100.00
Security - 400.00
= 1180.00

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13 DEC 2023
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Sign:.....
2509 5483 9572

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146

provide adequate security for the Plaintiffs/Applicants for the purpose of enabling the said Plaintiffs/Applicants to continue with the performance of their constitutional legislative and oversight functions as the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members, respectively, of the Rivers State House of Assembly; and or from taking any adverse security measures or step (whatever shape such steps may be) capable preventing or obstructing the Plaintiffs/Applicants from performing their functions and duties as the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members, respectively, of the Rivers State House of Assembly, pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that the Grounds for this Application include the following:

1. That the Plaintiffs/Applicants were duly elected as members of the 3rd Defendant/Respondent on the platform of the 2nd Defendant/Respondent in the May, 2023 General Elections for a period of four years.
2. On 5th December, 2023, the 1st and 2nd Applicants were elected the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, of the 3rd Defendant.
3. Following the crisis that has engulfed the 2nd Defendant, breaking it into factions, the Applicants defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC).
4. As a result of the said defection, the 2nd Defendant is mounting pressure on the 1st Defendant to declare the Applicants' seats in the 3rd Defendant vacant, withdraw their Certificates of Return and conduct fresh elections to fill those seats.
5. Unless restrained, the 1st Defendant will accede to the request of the 2nd Defendant and also bow to the pressure mounted on it in that regard by other persons and organisations, as disclosed in the Supporting Affidavit hereto.
6. The 3rd Defendant also, if not restrained, will declare the Applicants' seats vacant, notwithstanding that the defection of the Applicants to the APC has constitutional backing.
7. If no restraining orders are not issued against the 1st and 3rd Defendants, the 5th and 6th Defendants will most definitely take steps to

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6/6/24

148

ADDRESSES FOR SERVICE

FOR SERVICE ON:

1. THE 1st DEFENDANT
No. 436 Zambezi Crescent,
Maitama District,
Abuja.
2. THE 2nd DEFENDANT
Wadata House,
Micheal Okpara Way,
Wuse Zone 5,
Abuja.
3. THE 3RD & 4TH DEFENDANTS
Rivers State House of Assembly Complex.
Port Harcourt,
Rivers State.
4. 5th DEFENDANT
LiOUS Edet House,
Central Business District,
Abuja.
5. 6th DEFENDANT
Aso Drive,
Three Arm Zone,
Abuja,
FCT.

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PDP UGHELLI SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN COUNCIL

WELCOME



**HIS EXCELLENCY
RT. HON. SHERIFF FRANCIS
OROWEDOR OBOREWORI**
Governor, Delta State

**OLOROGUN
KINGSLEY ESISO, PhD**
Delta State PDP Chairman

Leadership, Chairmanship Campaign Council and entire members of the PDP in Ughelli South joyfully welcome His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Francis Orowedor Oborewori, the State Chairman of our great party, Olorogun Kingsley Esiso, other leaders and stakeholders to Otu-Jeremi for the Local Government campaign and presentation of flag to the party Chairmanship candidate, Hon. Dr. Lucky I. Avweromre for the July 13 council election.



Hon. Dr. Lucky I. Avweromre
PDP Chairmanship Candidate, Ughelli South

Date: Tuesday June 18th, 2024

Time: 2PM

Venue: Jeremi Modern Primary School, Otu-Jeremi

Travel safe as you come and return back to Asaba.

Olorogun John Oguma - *Ughelli South Leader*
Senator Emmanuel Aguariawwodo
Dr. Peter Adogbeji Mrakpor SAN
Mr. Ekemejero Ohwovoriole SAN
Comrade Reuben Izeze
Hon Festus Utuama
Mr. Simon Mudi

Chief Michael Oshetigho
Party Chairman

Olorogun Taleb Tebite
Director General

**THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT
IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ABUJA**

SUIT NO: FHC/ABJ/CS/REG/151

BETWEEN:

1. **RT. HON. MARTIN CHIKE AMAEWHULE**
(THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER, RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY)
2. **RT. HON. DUMLE MAOL**
(THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY)
3. **HON. MAJOR JACK**
4. **HON. LINDA SOMIARI-STEWART**
5. **HON. FRANKLIN UCHENNA NWABOCHI**
6. **HON. CHRISTOPHER KAGBANG OFIKS**
7. **HON. AZERU OPARA**
8. **HON. OLABO GEORGE**
9. **HON. TONYE SMART ADOKI**
10. **HON. GRANVILLE TEKENARI WELLINGTON**
11. **HON. NGBAR BERNARD**
12. **HON. JOHN DOMINIC IDERIMA**
13. **HON. QUEEN UWUMA TONY WILLIAMS**
14. **HON. LOOLO ISAIHAH OPUENDE**
15. **HON. ABBEY PETER**
16. **HON. IGWE-OBAY AFORJI**
17. **HON. JUSTINA EMEJI**
18. **HON. IGNATIUS ONWUKA**
19. **HON. CHIMEZIE NWANKWO**
20. **HON. LEMCHI PRINCE NYECHE**
21. **HON. BARILE NWAKOH**
22. **HON. EMILIA LUCKY AMADI**
23. **HON. NKEMJIKA EZEKWE**

**PLAINTIFFS/
APPLICANTS**

149

19/06/23

20/07/23

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ABUJA
13 JUN 2024

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6/6/24

7

3. That the 2nd Plaintiff represents Gokana constituency in the Rivers State House of Assembly, having been duly elected by his constituents in the May 2023 General Elections, on the platform of the 2nd Defendant. He is also the Deputy Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, having been duly elected in that position on the 5th day of June 2023.
4. That the 3rd-27th Plaintiffs/Applicants are also members of the Rivers State House of Assembly who were duly elected to represent their respective State Constituencies in the Rivers State House of Assembly on the platform of the 2nd Defendant.
5. That the 1st Defendant is the Electoral body established by the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and conferred with powers to organise, undertake, and supervise elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of each State of the Federation. The 1st Defendant's head office is at Plot 436 Zambezi Crescent, Maitama District, Abuja.
6. The 2nd Defendant is a registered Political Party with head office at Wadata House, Michael Okpara Way, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja.
7. That the 3rd Defendant is the Legislative House on whom the legislative powers of Rivers State are vested by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The 3rd Defendant is vested with powers to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of Rivers State or any part thereof as provided by the 1999 Constitution (as amended).
8. That On the other hand, the 4th Defendant is the administrative or secretarial strength of the 3rd Defendant, while the 5th and 6th

151

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ABUJA
6/6/24

9

24. **HON. DAVIDS ARNOLD OKOBIRIARI**
25. **HON. NWANKWO SYLVANUS**
26. **HON. GERALD OFORJI**
27. **HON. WAMI SOLOMON**

AND

1. **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC)**
2. **PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)**
3. **RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**
4. **CLERK OF RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**
5. **INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE**
6. **DEPARTMENT OF STATE SERVICES (DSS)**

**DEFENDANTS/
RESPONDENTS**

150

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION FOR
INTERLOCUTORY INJUNCTION**

I, RT. HONOURABLE MARTIN CHIKE AMAEWHULE, residing at the Rivers State House of Assembly Speakers Quarters, Forces Avenue, Port Harcourt, Politician and the Current Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Christian, adult, male, Nigerian Citizen make oath and say as follows:

1. That I am the 1st Plaintiff/Applicant on record and I was duly elected as a member representing Obio/Akpor State Constituency in the Rivers State House of Assembly in May 2023 on the platform of the 2nd Defendant and was, on 5th June, 2023, duly elected the Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, a position I hold till date.
2. That I have the consent of the other Applicants to depose to this Affidavit.

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6/6/24

8

9. That The Plaintiffs contested their respective elections on the platform of the 2nd Defendant and had remained members of the latter until 11/12/2023 when they (Plaintiffs) left 2nd Defendant and joined the All Progressives Congress (APC) as a result of a serious division in the 2nd Defendant.
10. That The 2nd Defendant has recently been bedeviled with serious crisis which has caused a sharp and deep division in its leadership.

Particulars of the division in the 2nd Defendant

- (a) There exist currently in the 2nd Defendant two (2) factions or groups struggling to take over and control the political party, leading to a serious struggle to control the office of National Secretary of the 2nd Defendant. The office of the National Secretary of the 2nd Defendant is the epicentre or administrative hub of the 2nd Defendant.
- (b) As a result of (a) above, various actions have been filed in various Courts in Nigeria by factions (through their members/cohorts) touching and concerning the office of National Secretary of the 2nd Defendant and these suits, include the following:
- (c) Suit No. E/882/2023: ANIAGU EMMANUEL V. PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) & OTHERS pending before the Enugu State High Court. A certified copy of an order granting substituted service is hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "A."**
- (d) Suit No. FCT/HC/M/015/23: DOUGLAS NWACHUKWU V. PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) & OTHERS pending before the High

152

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6/6/24

10

153

Court of the Federal Capital Territory. A certified copy of Interlocutory Injunctions issued therein is hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "B."**

- (e) Suit No. HUK/42/2023: OKORONKWO CHILE CHRISTOPHER V. PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY & OTHERS pending before the Abia State High Court. A certified copy of an Interim Injunction issued therein is hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "C."**
 - (f) Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/1580/2023: HON. GEOFFREY IHENTUGE & ANOTHER V. PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) & OTHERS pending before the Federal High Court. A certified copy of interim ex parte orders issued therein is hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "D."**
 - (g) Suit No. FHC/L/CS/235/2023: SENATOR SAMUEL NNAEMEKA ANYANWU V. PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP). A certified copy of the Originating Summons filed in the Suit is hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "E."**
11. That The tussle for the position of National Secretary of the 2nd Defendant has not only generated plethora of cases in Court but has also generated many conflicting injunctive orders made in the above-mentioned Suits, which have further aggravated the division in the 2nd Defendant. The said Orders made in the above suits are hereby pleaded, while copies thereof are hereto attached.
 12. That The division in the 2nd Defendant has been worsened by the merger talks and meetings which one of the factions of the political party embarked upon recently with some political parties including the Social Democratic Party. This faction believes that the control of the

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ABUJA
6/6/24

11

155

- (a) A New Telegraph Online publication of 12/12/2023, wherein the National Democratic Congress (NDC) was reported as issuing a 14-day ultimatum to the 1st Defendant to declare the seats of the Plaintiffs vacant. Hereto attached, to prove this is a copy of the said publication is hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "G."**
 - (b) A Vanguard Online Newspaper publication of 11/12/2023, wherein the Labour Party (LP) in Rivers State was reported as also calling for the seats of the Plaintiffs to be declared vacant. Hereto attached, to prove this is **Vanguard Newspaper** online publication of 11/12/2023, hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "H."**
17. That A similar situation arose in Edo State wherein the same 2nd Defendant asked the 1st Defendant to declare the seats of 14 Members of the Edo State House of Assembly vacant, and the court resolved the matter by maintaining the status quo. Now shown to me and attached hereto, is copy of New Telegraph Newspaper publication of 5/10/2020, a certified copy of the enrolled order of court, a Daily Post report, an online publication, *Online Source, Report*, as **Exhibit "I" and "L"**
 18. That Unless restrained, the 1st and or the 3rd Defendant will not only declare the seats of the Plaintiffs vacant, but the 1st Defendant will withdraw their Certificates of Return and prevent them from carrying out their constitutional duties and functions.
 19. That The 5th and 6th Defendants are always available for use to bar the Plaintiffs from performing their constitutional duties; and evidence in

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ABUJA
6/6/24

13

154

office of National Secretary of the 2nd Defendant (the National Secretary being a signatory to all correspondence with the 1st Defendant) would give it an upper hand in the merger arrangement.

13. That Many members of the 2nd Defendant nationwide, including the Plaintiffs, are opposed to the current merger proposals but the proponents are determined to take control of the main structures of the political party and proceed with their plans; and there is no control whatsoever, to arrest the divisions that are growing fast within the 2nd Defendant.
14. That Faced with the state of uncertainty and confusion in the 2nd Defendant caused by the division in the political party, the Plaintiffs were constrained to defect and joined the All Progressives Congress (APC) on 5th December, 2023 as stated above.
15. That Angered by the action of the Plaintiffs, the 2nd Defendant has been threatening fire and brimstone against the Plaintiffs. The 2nd Defendant has followed this up by holding a press conference addressed by the National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, where the 2nd Defendant prayed the 1st Defendant to withdraw the Certificates of Return issued to the Plaintiffs and organise and hold fresh elections to fill the seats of the Plaintiffs. Hereto attached, to prove this is **Punch Newspaper** online publication of 12/12/2023, hereto attached and marked **Exhibit "F."**
16. That Apart from the 2nd Defendant, persons and political parties not concerned with the defection of the Plaintiffs to the APC have also been mounting pressure on the 1st Defendant to declare the seats of the Plaintiffs vacant. Here pleaded with copies attached are:

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ABUJA
6/6/24

12

156

proof of this is the presence of heavily armed members and officers of the 5th and 6th Respondents at the premises of the Rivers State House of Assembly since the crisis started early December, 2023.

20. That The other Plaintiffs and I entertain real and genuine fears that we will be prevented by men and officers of the 5th and 6th Defendants from performing our functions once the 1st and 3rd Defendants declare our seats vacant.
21. That I state that we the Plaintiffs have constitutional right to defect to any political party of our choice in the face of the sharp divisions that exist in the national leadership of the 2nd Defendant.
22. That Unless restrained by this Honourable Court, the Defendants will take steps that will tamper with the constitutional legislative duties of the Plaintiffs.
23. That there is a serious urgency in granting the interlocutory injunction sought, as the Defendants/Respondents are hurrying in their moves to tamper with subject matter of this suit which is already before the court with the aim of depriving the benefits of performing their constitutional duties before the determination of the substantive application filed in this suit.
24. That I undertake to pay damages and I am also willing to enter into an additional undertaking as to damages, as the Court may determine if this application is granted but the substantive suit fails.
25. That no amount of damages or compensation will be sufficient to assuage the Plaintiffs and the people in the 27 constituencies of Rivers State affected, if the subject matter of this suit is tampered with.

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14



Nigerians struggle as high drug prices fuel health crisis

Continues from Page 5

healthcare

Another consultant medical practitioner, Dr. Bola Akinlolu, identified three major roadblocks to receiving good healthcare in Nigeria today: exorbitant costs for medications and treatment, long distances to reach medical facilities, and sometimes dismissive attitudes from healthcare providers.

Akinlolu emphasised that high cost remained the most critical hurdle, saying without health insurance or the ability to pay out-of-pocket, necessary treatment or medication might be out of reach.

"Of these, the issue of high cost is the most significant, because even if the patient succeeds in getting to the healthcare facility, and there are health workers to attend to them, there is little that can be done if such patient is not covered by health insurance, and cannot pay the treatment bill out of pocket or cannot afford to buy the required drugs," he remarked.

Titilola Lawal, a registered nurse and midwife at a Lagos government hospital, blames skyrocketing medication prices as a key reason patients struggle to stick with their treatment plans.

While acknowledging that side effects could also make treatment compliance difficult, Lawal argued that cost was the biggest hurdle.

"Several factors can affect medication adherence but nowadays, high cost is number one. Medications in general are expensive, but some prescriptions, especially 'orphan drugs' for chronic illnesses like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, can cost millions of naira," she said.

Lawal explained that even with health insurance, the cost of these drugs could be overwhelming, leading patients to skip doses or ration their medication.

She added that some patients might even start treatment but abandon it halfway when the costs become unbearable.

She expressed particular concern for patients on multiple medication, saying managing such regimens could be challenging, and that high costs could increase the risk of accidentally skipped doses or medication errors.

Tolu Adetola, a pharmacist also regretted the development, warning that delay is dangerous.

"When people delay seeking medical attention, their condition can worsen and become more difficult to treat. This can lead to complications, increased healthcare costs, and even death.

"Worse still, if people with

infectious diseases don't seek medical attention, they can unknowingly spread the illness to others. This can be a particular risk for vulnerable populations.

"The rising costs of medical treatments and drug prices, exacerbated by the weakening value of the naira against foreign currencies, are negatively impacting families.

"Many households struggle to manage their healthcare expenses, which in turn affect their allocation of funds for necessities such as food and transportation.

"The general lack of reliable health insurance coverage by significant number of Nigerians further complicates the situation. Even where insurance is available, insurance companies are grappling with higher costs due to expensive medications," Adetola said.

Catastrophic health expenditure

Launched in 2005, Nigeria's National Health Insurance Scheme, NHIS, aimed to make healthcare affordable and accessible.

However, many Nigerians still face out-of-pocket medical expenses, risking financial hardship due to high costs. "What most Nigerians are facing today as a result of the economic downturn is catastrophic health expenditure.

"This is the health care payment beyond a certain fraction, that incurs negative economic consequences, ranging from sacrifice of basic goods and services, depletion of savings by individuals and families, to loss of income, and productivity, as well as disruption of welfare and living standards.

"Narrowing economic status gap across households, and increasing the depth of insurance are crucial mechanisms to reduce the probability of incurring catastrophic health expenditures in Nigeria," he said.

X3M Ideas Nigeria & Zambia shortlisted at Cannes for Act Responsible Awards

By Efe Onodjia

NIGERIA'S leading agency, X3M Ideas and its subsidiary in southern Africa, X3M Ideas Zambia have both been shortlisted for the prestigious Act Responsible Awards at the prestigious Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity for 2024. The agency currently operates in seven countries, including; Nigeria, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Congo Brazzaville, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

The ACT Responsible Hall at Cannes serves as a dynamic hub for championing sustainability within the creative advertising industry, globally.

During the festival, it offers a comprehensive programme that celebrates and promotes



From left, D.C. Terminal MM1A Lagos, Chief Akinwumi Olufemi representing Commander C.N. Usman Wadar, NDLEA; Chief of Staff, HQ 9 Brigade, Lt. Col. Bashiru Bello, representing Commander 9 Brigade, Nigerian Army; Managing Director/CEO, Mol Tech Accessories, Sanmi Oladunni; Director, Sports Facilities, Adedeji Aladegbemi; Co-Convenor/Chief Guest Speaker, Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, CP Adegoke Fayoad; and Convenor/Chief Host, Chairman, Lagos SWAN, Olatutu Oladunni, during the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) 2024 edition of Sports Diplomacy, Security, Food and Health, summit on Preparation ahead of 2024 Olympic game, held in Lagos. Photo: Kehinde Shonola.

APC has failed in fulfilling campaign promises

—SALIHU LUKMAN

By Juliet Umeh

Lagos — Former National Vice Chairman (North-East) of All Progressives Congress, APC, Salihu Lukman, said yesterday the party has done badly in meeting its campaign promises.

Lukman, who stated this in an interview with *Arise TV*, said APC's performance on key campaign promises, such as security, economic stability, and anti-corruption, had been woeful.

The former APC chieftain said he hoped that the new leadership would depart from the practices of the previous administration of President Buhari.

He said: "I admit that in terms of meeting up with our campaign promises, we have done badly, no doubt about it.

"What are those campaign promises? Issues of security, the economy, fighting corruption. We have done badly and people are free to reach the conclusion whether or not APC is worse than PDP.

"But as of 2023, before the

election, I had the hope that because our leaders were not in denial of the challenges facing us, they would be humble enough to admit that we have not done what we needed to do between 2015 and 2023.

"That's why I was practically very confident that he would not really do business as usual the way President Buhari did.

"Unfortunately, here we are. He's doing business as usual. And as it is, we are going to end up in a worse situation.

"So to that extent, you might be right in criticising some of us who were in APC and who supported President Tinubu."

Faults subsidy policy

The former national vice chairman of the APC noted that one of the most contentious decisions made by President Tinubu was the immediate declaration of the end of the petroleum subsidy with its lack of planning and preparation.

Lukman noted that the abrupt decision had led to a

significant deterioration in the country's living conditions.

He said: "One of the biggest mistakes that President Tinubu made was making that declaration on his inauguration day, declaring petroleum subsidy is gone without even sitting down to put up a plan and today, no plan to respond to that challenge.

"That is why the living condition in the country is crashing and the government is just grandstanding.

"All of us in the party have become onlookers. We are not able to even access President Tinubu and influence decisions in terms of what needs to be done.

"From the way things are going, my prediction, which is why I had to act the way I acted — is that by the end of this year, if we don't take time, the campaign for 2027 will start and people will be forced to just queue behind any leader.

"Out of anger, out of frustration, with the reality before us, we'll end up even electing a worse successor to President Tinubu and all the

challenges of the country will even get worse."

On Lagos-Calabar coastal highway

Lukman also criticised the government's major spending on infrastructure projects such as the Lagos-Calabar coastal highway, while neglecting urgent needs in education and health.

While noting that the allocation for education was insufficient to address such a critical issue, Lukman said: "APC was founded on the vision of being a social democratic party. A social democratic party prioritises the well-being and condition of living of the citizens.

"So, issues of education, issues of health, issues of social welfare should have been the priority and that should be reflected in public investment driven by government.

"Unfortunately, what are the first steps President Tinubu took? Apart from the fact that on account of corruption, social investment has been suspended, which is why the question of responding to hardship is so weak, also look at the major decisions of President Tinubu.

We must focus on charting roadmap for Nigeria's devt — OBASEKI

EDO State governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has emphasized the need for Nigerians to move beyond trading blames and picking faults, urging unity in efforts to save the nation from the pervasive economic challenges and place it on the path of prosperity and

progress.

Obaseki, who spoke to journalists in Benin City yesterday, said the country was at a crossroads, restating the need for a serious conversation between citizens and leaders of the country to chart a path for the future of Nigeria.

The governor said the country was in dire need of

bold, fearless, and courageous leaders to confront and navigate the difficulties currently facing the nation, taking deliberate steps to put the country on the path of growth and development.

He said: "This is a time that we need fearless leaders that will say things as they are. This is so that we can look for a way out.

"The solution to our

national problems can't be restricted to certain ideas as Nigeria is a large country with problems and this is the time for everybody and leaders from the entire spectrum to have a serious conversation about the future of Nigeria.

"This is not the time for trade blaming, fault picking can't be now as we all should come out and put our hands on deck to steer the ship of Nigeria out of troubled waters back to safe water."

While noting that his government had been proactive, making plans when the telltale signs began to show that the nation's economy was going in the wrong direction, Obaseki said the state government had over the past seven and half years embarked on reforms and programmes to place the state on a steady growth trajectory.

"I thank God that we have been vindicated today, as our sincerity has helped us prevail over every situation.

"We see prospects for a better economy because of the institutional reforms we have introduced to better manage the state.

"We have always prevailed because the majority of Edo people understand, appreciate, and endorse what our government has done. This has been the reason for the courage with which we have tackled any problem we faced along the way," Obaseki said.

and recognition locally, across the African continent, and on the global stage for its poignant storytelling and impactful messaging.

Building on its legacy of its jinx-breaking works, X3M Ideas Nigeria has also been shortlisted for its campaign 'Don't Burn Their Future' for the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC). This powerful campaign shines a spotlight on the pressing issues of air pollution through smoking, with a particular focus on its impact on children. The campaign follows in the footsteps of the agency's iconic 'Soot Life Expectancy' campaign, which made history by securing West Africa's first Cannes Lions trophy.

Furthermore, X3M Ideas Nigeria's 'Child Adopters' campaign for the Heritage Homes Orphanage has also

earned a place on the prestigious shortlist. Developed to commemorate World Adoption Day, this thought-provoking campaign aims to promote child adoption, dispel myths surrounding the process, and encourage a more open-minded and compassionate societal approach to this crucial issue.

Representing the Zambian market, the trailblazing agency X3M Ideas Zambia has also secured a spot on the coveted shortlist for its work celebrating Nelson Mandela International Day. This achievement, according to industry analysts, shows the agency's exceptional creative prowess and marks a milestone for the Zambian advertising industry, contributing to Africa's strong representation at the globally renowned Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity.

Olumide Osaigbovo Akpata

📍 73, Boundary Road, G.R.A. Benin City, Edo State
 📞: +234 803 304 7094, ✉: olumide@olumideakpata.com
 🌐 www.olumideakpata.com

STATEMENT ON THE UNNECESSARY CONTROVERSY OVER THE CLARIFICATION MADE BY THE OBA OF BENIN

On Saturday, June 15, 2024, the Labour Party held its flag-off ceremony for the Edo State gubernatorial elections, an event that sent shockwaves through the established political order in our great State. While this occasion was a resounding success, the crowning moment for me was the profound honour of being warmly received by His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, the Oba of Benin, alongside our leader, Mr. Peter Obi, and other members of our entourage. The Oba graciously offered us royal blessings and well-wishes, a moment that filled me with immense pride and gratitude beyond measure.

During my address to His Royal Majesty, I inadvertently referred to myself as a "son of the palace," which could be misconstrued as claiming to be born a Benin Prince, which I am not and have never claimed to be. However, in his usual candour, my royal father, the Oba of Benin, swiftly and graciously intervened, correcting me with the more appropriate term "an indigenous illustrious son of the soil." His Royal Majesty then proceeded to recount my antecedents and achievements and the numerous occasions when he had personally made interventions on my behalf as a "true son of Benin."

As a humble and loyal subject of the Oba, who has nothing but utmost reverence for the revered throne of His Royal Majesty, I promptly accepted the Oba's correction and rephrased my statement accordingly. I am not too proud or arrogant to acknowledge my mistakes or to accept guidance when offered, especially from the revered throne of the Oba of Benin, a throne that commands the utmost respect and deference from all true sons and daughters of the Benin Kingdom.

It is a well-known fact that I am not among those who delude themselves into believing that they are above the authority of the Oba of Benin, a mindset that has plagued some misguided individuals — we know who these individuals are — who seem to have forgotten the sacred traditions that bind us together as a people.

It is therefore with profound dismay that I must address the recent attempts by certain irreverent individuals to distort the words of His Royal Majesty and create unnecessary controversy through their warped and self-serving interpretations. Furthermore, I am compelled to issue this statement due to the utterly unacceptable reactions of some individuals who claim to be acting in my defence. I categorically condemn any conduct or language that could be deemed insulting or

disrespectful towards the Oba of Benin, the embodiment of our rich cultural heritage. As I have repeatedly and emphatically stated, anyone who fights the Oba of Benin is also fighting me, and I will never be party to any scheme or ploy that brings disrepute to the sacred throne of the Benin Kingdom.

It is imperative that this deliberate misrepresentation of the harmless and educational exchange between the Oba and myself ceases immediately. All parties should refrain from twisting the Oba's words to fit their own narrow and self-serving narratives, as this only serves to undermine the reverence and respect due to the throne, a disrespect that strikes at the very heart of our cultural identity.

As we embark on this consequential journey of the 2024 Edo State Elections, I reaffirm my unwavering commitment to upholding the values and traditions of the Benin Kingdom and the traditional institutions across the state at large, a commitment that extends beyond mere words to a deep-seated reverence ingrained in my very being.

The Labour Party and I stand resolute in our determination to bring about positive change while preserving the rich cultural heritage that defines our great state, a heritage that must never be tarnished by the actions of those who have lost their way.

To the good people of Edo State, I call upon you to join me in collectively rejecting any attempts to sow discord or disrespect towards our revered monarch. Let us unite in our reverence for the throne and work together to build a prosperous future for Edo State, guided by the wisdom and blessings of His Royal Majesty, the Oba of Benin. Let us be the embodiment of the values that have sustained our great kingdom for centuries, values that must be upheld and passed on to future generations, untainted by the misguided actions of those who are inexorably fixated on their dastardly agenda to wit: the insidious denigration of our revered monarch and the throne of his ancestors, upon which he seats.

Oba ghato o kpere! Ise!!!



OLUMIDE OSAIGBOVO AKPATA

Candidate of the Labour Party, Edo 2024 Election
June 17, 2024

15

26. That the balance of convenience is in favour of granting this application and I know that the Defendants will not be prejudiced in any manner whatsoever by the grant of this application.
27. That it is in the interest of justice to grant this application and preserve the subject matter of this suit pending the hearing and determination of the substantive suit.
28. That anywhere in this Statement on Oath that electronic evidence or documents are said to be generated from the computer or online and printed, I used my HP Computer, and printed same using my HP Printer when:
 - (a) The documents were produced and printed by the said computer gadgets during a period over which the gadgets were used regularly to store or process information for the purposes of my political activities regularly carried over that period;
 - (b) Over that period, there was regularly supplied to the computer gadgets in the ordinary course of those activities information of the kind contained in the documents or of the kind from which the information so contained was derived;
 - (c) Throughout the material part of that period, the gadgets were operating properly or, if not, that in any respect in which they were not operating properly or were out of operation during that part of that period, this was not such as to affect the production of the documents or the accuracy of their contents; and
 - (d) The information contained in the documents has reproduced or is derived from information supplied to the computer in the ordinary course of those activities.
29. That I depose to this Affidavit in good faith, believing the contents to be true and correct and in accordance with the provisions of the Oaths Act.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA
6/6/24

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EXH A 159

IN THE HIGH COURT OF ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA
IN THE ENUGU JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ENUGU
BEFORE HIS LORDSHIP HON. JUSTICE C. O. AJAH Ph.D
ON WEDNESDAY THE 8TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2023.

BETWEEN: ANIAGU EMMANUEL - PLAINTIFF/APPLICANT
AND

1. PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP).
2. AMB. ILIYA UMAR DAMAGUN (NATIONAL CHAIRMAN PDP)
3. SEN. SAMUEL N. ANYANWU (NATIONAL SECRETARY, PDP) (For themselves and as representing the National Executive and Working Committees of PDP).
4. HIGH CHIEF ALI ODEFA (NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN, SOUTH EAST ZONE OF PDP)

DEFENDANTS/
RESPONDENTS
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA
REGISTRAR I
13 DEC 2023



C. O. Ajah, Ph.D
Judge

ORDER

Upon the Motion Ex-parte for Substituted Service dated the 7th day of November, 2023 and filed on the 8th day of November, 2023 by HON. NWABUEZE UGWU for the Plaintiff/Applicant, Brought pursuant to Order 7 Rule 5 of the High Court Rules of Enugu State 2020 and under the inherent jurisdiction of this Honourable Court.

It is supported with 11 paragraphs affidavit deposed to by the Applicant, ANIAGU EMMANUEL.

AND After hearing the submissions of HON. NWABUEZE UGWU with CHINASA OKEKE (MISS) for the Plaintiff/Applicant.

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FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA
6/6/24

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
ONOM P. U
SENIOR REGISTRAR
SIGN
DATE 9/11/2023

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DEPONENT

SWORN TO AT THE FEDERAL
HIGH COURT REGISTRY, ABUJA
THIS.....13TH.....DAY OF DECEMBER, 2023

FEDERAL HIGH COURT, ABUJA
REGISTRAR I
13 DEC 2023
COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS

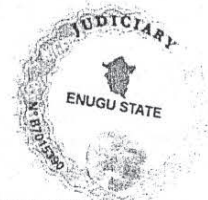
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA
13 DEC 2023
PAID
Sign:.....

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FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA
6/6/24

2509 5483 9572

THE COURT HEREBY ORDERS AS
FOLLOWS:-

1. That the application is hereby granted as prayed.
2. That LEAVE is hereby granted to the Plaintiff/Applicant to serve all Orders of this Honourable Court as well as all other processes in this suit requiring personal service on the 1st & 3rd Respondents by serving same on their various counsel.
3. That LEAVE is hereby granted to the Plaintiff/Applicant to serve all processes in this suit on the 2nd Respondent, as follows:
 - a) For the Orders and Processes requiring personal Service, by pasting same on the entrance gate of the 1st Defendant's Office at Wadata Plaza, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, until the said 2nd Respondent gets a counsel to represent him in this suit, and after he gets a Counsel, all such orders and processes should be served on his counsel;
 - b) For the processes not requiring personal service, by pasting same on the entrance gate of the 1st Defendant's Office at Wadata Plaza, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, until the said 2nd Respondent gets a counsel to represent him in this suit.
4. That LEAVE is hereby granted to the Plaintiff/Applicant to serve all Orders and Processes requiring personal service in this suit on the 4th Respondent, by serving same on his counsel.
5. That the matter stands adjourned to 27/11/2023.



CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
ONOM P. U
SENIOR REGISTRAR
SIGN
DATE 9/11/2023



C. O. Ajah, Ph.D
Judge

Issued at Enugu under the Seal of Court and Hand of the presiding Judge this 8th day of November, 2023.

X. L. CHIJOKE-AGBO
D.C.R (1)

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
FEDERAL HIGH COURT
ABUJA
6/6/24

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09/11/23

160



ABIA APC STAKEHOLDERS FORUM

Address: Wonderland Event Centre, Isicourt, Aba Road, Umuahia, Abia State
Tel: 08025822616, 08037872836

17th June, 2024

H.E Sen. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR.,
President and Commander in-Chief of the Armed Forces,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Aso Rock Villa,
Abuja.

Sir,

NOMINATION INTO THE GOVERNNING BOARDS/COUNCILS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: REQUEST TO WITHDRAW/REMOVE ABIA STATE NOMINEES WHO ARE NOT APC MEMBERS.

We write with the greatest sense of apprehension as concerned members of the Abia APC Stakeholders Forum (AASF) to inform Mr. President that the recent list published for appointments/nominations into the various governing boards/councils of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria defeats the intendment and purpose for Party loyalty and political participation.

Your Excellency, it is important to draw your most revered attention to the fact that the entire list of over 555 persons nominated into the various boards/councils of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria has only 2 nominees from Abia State who are members of the Abia State Chapter of the All-progressives Congress (APC) to wit: Chief Henry Ikoh and Barrister Chijioke Ikpo.

It is equally important to inform your good office that the other nominees are either members of Labour Party or the Peoples Democratic Party and not our party members.

Sir, it may be of interest to note that these nominees are the same people who scorned us during the 2023 electioneering campaigns and stood against our victory in the state, removing the bill boards of the President and destroying campaign materials across the entire state.

Without sounding prolix, it is our position that the publication of the names of these non-party members as board appointees from Abia State in an APC led government, simply put, is a vent of typographical errors or misprints.

While we do not want to believe that those names appeared deliberately in the list published, we however regret to apprise Mr. President of the serious apprehension the publication has caused within the circles of the party hierarchy in the State.

On the backdrop of the foregoing, we hereby appeal to your good office, Your Excellency, to check the names of the nominees from Abia as published to ascertain the party affiliation and loyalty of these individuals and make the necessary corrections.

Instructively, Mr. President, please, kindly note, sir, that the present situation if not properly addressed and resolved may stifle the growth of the All-Progressives Congress in the State while equipping the opposition to win the 2027 general election.

Your Excellency, we make bold to say that the All Progressives Congress, Abia State Chapter is blessed with Men and Women of great repute who can also be managed and grown without any interferences by leaders from other States.

Sir, without sounding disrespectful to you and other distinguished leaders of our great party, the APC, Abia State Chapter hereby rejects the nominees who are not our members and pleads that in the overall interest of the party in Abia State, these nominees should be withdrawn/removed.

It is against the law of Nature to reap where you did not sow. Most Abia APC members have over the years shown dedication to the

party despite the difficulty caused by the incessant harassment by the same opposition members nominated into the APC led Government. Sir, we believe in your ability and capacity to stand firm in times like this.

Please accept the assurances of our highest political regards, Your Excellency.

Signed by: **CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS,**

1. Hon. Chukwu Chijioke, Former Minority Leader, Abia State House of Assembly (Convener)

2. Hon. (Barr) Anderson K. Akaliro, Member representing Umuahia North State Constituency, Abia State House of Assembly

3. Hon. (Barr) Emeka Okoroafor, Former Deputy Minority Leader, Abia State House of Assembly

4. Dr. Mike Ukoha, Former Minority Whip, Abia State House of Assembly

5. Hon (Engr.) Ejike Chukwu (Umunneochi State Constituency)

6. Chief Blessing Dans Adokiye, Ukwu West

Cc:

1. The Senate President, His Excellency, Senator Godswill Akpabio
2. Speaker of the House of Representatives, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, Ph.D
3. Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu
4. Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), H.E., Senator George Akume
5. Chief of Staff to the President, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila
6. National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu
7. Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Hon. Barr. Nkiruka Onyejeocha
8. National Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), H.E., Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje
9. The National Vice Chairman South-East, APC., Dr. Ijioma Arodiogbu
10. State Chairman, Abia APC, Dr. Kingsley Ononogbu
11. 2023 Abia State APC Gubernatorial Candidate, High Chief Ikechi Emenike

CHANGE OF NAME

News

f :Vanguard News



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@vanguardnews

I, formerly known as Miss Aghado Nkechi now wish to be addressed as Mrs Eghorieta Nkechi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as ADEBAYO OLUSEGUN ADEBIYI-WISDOM, ADEBAYO OLUSEGUN ADEBIYI, ADEBAYO OLUSEGUN WISDOM. Now wish to be known and addressed as ADEBAYO ADEMOLA WISDOM. All former documents remain valid. General public, Banks, Schools, WAEC, NIMC and INEC please take note.

I, formally known as MISS. OKWEYE GIFT NWANYIBUIFU but now wish to be addressed as MRS. KENNETH EGWUATU GIFT all formal documents remain valid, general public take note.

I, formerly known, called and address as Valerie Eftobore Ika now wish to be known and address as Eftobore Valerie Ika, all former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.

I, formerly known, called and address as Sadiku Eyewumi Violet (in my bank details and old NIN) now wish to be known and address as Efejuku Eyewumi Violet. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.

My name was wrongly captured in my Bank Account as OMOYOMA IZU ISAAC, now wish to be known and addressed as OMOYOMA-IZU ISAAC OGHENESUVWE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

I, formerly known as UGWUOGBE UCHECHUKWU FIDELIA, now wish to be known and addressed as EKEOMA UCHECHUKWU FIDELIA. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public to please take note.

I, formerly known as Miss. ESAN AYOMIDE DORCAS, now wish to be known, called and addressed as Mrs. ADEOYE AYOMIDE DORCAS. All former documents remain valid. Authorities concerned and the general public should please take note.

I, FANIYI MORUFU ABEY declare that my name was wrongly inputed on my Bvn as FANIYI MORUFU ABEY that my correct name is FANIYI MORUFU ABEY. All former documents remain Valid. The general public should please take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as UDUAKOBONG UDOK IWATT Now wish to be known and addressed as UDUAKOBONG UDOK EKPO. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.

I, formerly known as Miss Umezinne Uzoamaka Ngozi, now wish to be known as Mrs. Ekpendu Uzoamaka Ngozi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as Miss Akwas Ginikachukwu Cynthia, now wish to be known as Mrs. Okechukwu Ginikachukwu Cynthia. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as Miss Ezerie Ifeoma Peace, now wish to be known as Mrs. Ogbolu Ifeoma Peace. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as Miss Coast Ufuoma Irene, now wish to be known as Mrs. Aniuoh Ufuoma Irene. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as Miss Nweze Rebecca Ifechukwu now wish to be known as Mrs. Abhumhen Rebecca Ifechukwu. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as Enamejuwe Becky Onatekewe, now wish to be known as Enamejewa Rebecca Onatekewe. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as Ikechukwu Godspower, now wish to be known as Ogwuadi Ikechukwu Godspower. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

My correct name is Ajeh Phillip Onyeka, but my name was wrongly written in my International Passport as Philip Kelvin Onyeka. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.



AWARD: From left : Mr Samuel Akinrimisi, Treasurer; Mrs Ediri Ose-Ediale, CEO; Mr Osamede Uwubanmwun, President; Dr Tola Bamigbaiye-Elatuyi, Executive Member; Adeola Emmanuel, Publicity Director; and Roseline Abaronye Executive Member, all of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria, ADVAN, at a press briefing on celebration of winning the World Federation of Advertisers, WFA, award for Industry Excellence in Lagos. Photo Akeem Salau.

Gov Fubara directs HLGAS to take charge 23 Councils

PORTHARCOURT—RIVERS State Governor, Sir Siminalayi Fubara, has directed Heads of Local Government Administration to immediately take charge of the 23 council areas of the State.

This follows the expiration of the statutory three-year tenure of the elected local government chairmen, vice chairmen and councillors on Monday, June 17, 2024.

Governor Fubara gave the directive in a statewide broadcast in Government House, Port Harcourt on Tuesday morning.

I, formerly known and addressed as MRS CHUKWU UKAMAKA VICTORIA. Now wish to be known as Mrs IDUDIE UKAMAKA VICTORIA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, FORMERLY KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS MISS AKWASI EBERECHUKWU GRACE NOW WISH TO BE KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS MRS OSUNWA GRACE EBERECHUKWU. ALL FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID GENERAL PUBLIC TAKE NOTE.

I, FORMERLY KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS NISS ADIMONYEMMA IFUNANYA HENRIETTA. NOW WISH TO BE KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS MRS AKUANA IFUNANYA HENRIETTA. ALL FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID. GENERAL PUBLIC NOTE.

I hereby state that a wrong name of Ashibuogwu Sandra was captured in my BVN and Account details, instead of my correct name as Ashibuogwu Sandra Nsopulu. All documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known as OJUMAH NONSO COLLINS as ACCOUNT/BVN. Now wish to be known as OJUMAH NONSO MICHAEL. All former documents remain valid. Concerned Authorities, Banks and General public should please take note.

I, formally know and address as LAFEYE KAHINDE now wish to be known as IFEYEFA KAHINDE HASSAN all formal documents remain valid general public take note.

I, formerly known as Peggy Mose Sunny, now wish to be known as Peggy Moses Sunny. All former documents remain valid general public please take note.

I, formerly known as Emmanuel Blessing and Emmanuel Endurance, now wish to be known as Mrs. Odigie Emmanuel Blessing, as a result of marriage, all former documents bearing the former names remain Valid, Authority Concerned and general public note.

I, formerly known as Michael Adaeze gold, now wish to be known as Michael amarachi gold. All former documents remain valid. Banks, General public please take note.

I, formerly known and called as ONWURAH VICTORIA NWAKAEGO now wish to be known and called as OKECHUKWU VICTORIA NWAKAEGO. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

I, formerly known as Uchechukwu Chinwendu Ememe, now wish to be known as Uchechukwu Chinwendu Chinonyerem. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

In the broadcast, Governor Fubara said: "My fellow Rivers people, I come before you today with immense gratitude and heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering support to me and my administration.

"I urge us all to reflect on the shared sacrifice we have all made to have a peaceful and prosperous Rivers State, and indeed, Nigeria. It is my wish that we continue to live in peace and harmony as one.

"Together, we have achieved milestones in different sectors of our economy which includes infrastructure, health, education, workers welfare, improved service delivery, agriculture and social welfare that resonates deeply within our communities. "Your dogged and committed support has been the bedrock of our progress, and for that, I extend my sincerest thanks."

The Governor added: "I also wish to acknowledge and commend the dedicated services of the outgoing elected Local Government Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and Councillors who were elected and sworn in three years ago, and whose tenure expired yesterday the 17th of June, 2024, as provided for by the Law.

"On behalf of the Government and the people of Rives State, I thank you all for your sacrifices, and commend your commitment to public service and our dear Rivers State.

"I congratulate you all for the successful completion of your tenure and wish you well in your future endeavours.

"As we move forward in making sure that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is upheld, and that law and order is maintained as we continue to strive to provide leadership and direction for our people, I hereby direct Heads of Local Government Administration (HLGAs) to continue to provide leadership in their respective Local Government Areas.

"Heads of Local Government Administration (HLGAs) are hereby directed to immediately take charge of the Councils with renewed vigor and

Group lauds Oborewori on devt

ASABA—MORE accolades have continued to trail the infrastructural development initiatives by the Delta state government and this time by the Neo Black Movement of Africa, NBM, who commended the Governor, Sheriff Francis Oborewori, for his renewed commitments to the overall development of the state.

The body's national President Olorogun Ese Kakor made the commendation while speaking to news men immediately after the commissioning of Emevor-Orogun road phase 1, in Isoko North by Governor Oborewori, as part of the activities to mark his one year in office.

While noting that the Governor had decided to complete strategic projects specifically designed to impact positively on the lives of the people in a particular area across the state in his first year in office, Olorogun Kakor described the Governor Oborewori as a true leader who genuinely have the wellbeing of Deltans at heart.

Kakor, a member of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association Of Nigeria, IPMAN, in the state,

readiness to serve and await further directives as we navigate towards even greater accomplishments together," he explained.

Governor Fubara further stressed that: "I assure you, my good people of Rivers State, that we shall continue to defend you, provide infrastructural de-

Teacher in trouble for defiling 13-year-old girl in Ogun

By James Ogunnaiki

ABEOKUTA—THE Ogun State Police Command has arrested, one Femi Onayemi, for defiling a 13-year-old girl (name withheld) in the Obada-Oko, Ewekoro Local Government Area, LGA, of the state.

It was gathered that the suspect was hired by the girl's parents to tutor her at their

Faith-based group inspires women to discover potentials

By Ozioruva Aliu

BENIN CITY—A non-governmental organisation known as I CAN BE MORE Women and Girls Initiative has admonished women to rise up to their full potentials.

The group which is a faith-based organisation noted that every woman can become a better version of herself if not deterred by challenges.

Convener of the group, Mrs. Funmi Jerry Nkwelle stated this on Saturday during the More

development, sound healthcare delivery, quality education and undiluted welfare service packages for all our people and workers.

"Once again, I thank you my dear good people of Rivers State, for your steadfast support and dedication to our shared vision of unity, progress and

home in the community in 2023.

It was further learned that the victim's parents were shocked when the suspect scaled the fence of their home to gain access to the 13-year-old's room and committed the heinous crime.

The spokesperson for the state command, Omolola Odutola, confirmed the incident, saying "The parents of the minor approached our division at Obada Oko on June 12, 2024,

prosperity."

The Governor noted that, "Together, we will continue to build a brighter and better future for all," and wished all Rivers people, especially the Muslim faithful a happy Salah Holiday.

to report the incident. The suspect was employed in 2023 to help the minor with her studies at home.

"However, on June 9, 2024, the suspect was caught committing the crime after he had jumped over the fence of the house. Our men swung into action immediately after the matter was reported.

"The suspect was also believed to be attending the same church that the minor attends every

According to her, "this information will enable them know how they can discover their potentials early enough to embark on their journey of becoming a 'more' woman."

"And irrespective of their past and present experiences or age, every female can still rise up to discover, unlock her hidden potentials, and achieve better outcomes."

Speakers at the conference which includes Dr. Shogo Oyeniyi and Ifeoma Chucks-Adizue charged women to make use of the most opportunity and remain steadfast in pursuit of their dreams.

LG polls: Latimore hosts Ethiope East council media team ... commends party elders, leaders

KOKORI—CHAIRMAN of Media and Publicity Directorate, Ethiope East

Campaign Council of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, Dr Latimore Oghenesivbe, has commended the efforts of members of the team, and urged them to keep the tempo of intense publicity from now till election day in July.

Oghenesivbe made the appeal last Sunday, when he hosted the team at his private residence in Kokori, Agbon Kingdom, in Ethiope East LGA, saying that the party's chairmanship candidate, Augustine Ogedegbe has no rival in the local government in terms of capacity to do the job, integrity, popularity and experience.

Oghenesivbe, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Delta State Orientation and Communications Bureau, DSOBC, emphasized the need for members of the media and publicity Directorate to showcase the achievements of the state party leader and governor, Sheriff Oborewori, pointing out that there is direct connection between the governor and the LGA Chairmanship candidate, Augustine Ogedegbe, who recently adopted the MORE Agenda of the governor as his agenda for the socioeconomic and infrastructure development of the local government.

He also commended the Chairman of the campaign council in the LGA, Felix Erhimedafe, for leading a result oriented campaign team determined to ensure landslide victory for PDP and her candidates in the forthcoming local government council elections in the LGA.

His words: "You have all done well in multifaceted ways to ensure far reaching and impactful publicity for our party, the chairmanship candidate Augustine Ogedegbe and the Councilorship candidates in all Dsic wards.

"We need to keep the tempo in the media space from now till election day in the month of July. You have all demonstrated capacity and competence in the the media space, especially across social media platforms. Keep it up.

"Our Chairmanship candidate, Ogedegbe is the only shining light in the LGA as far as electioneering campaigns and winning strategies is concerned. He shall win deservedly because it is crystal clear that he has no rival in the LGA.

"Opposition parties are not ready, obviously not prepared for the council elections in Ethiope East LGA, and across the state, but we in PDP especially the media and publicity team must continue to penetrate deeper in our assigned responsibilities.



National Trials in Benin: Expectedly, Amusan wins 100m hurdle

Tobi Amusan was in a class of her own on Day 2 of the ongoing Nigerian Olympic Trials in Benin, Edo State, exerting her dominance to storm to her fourth consecutive 100m hurdles National title.

The African Leader dusted the field as she sailed through to 12.78s across the barriers ahead of Adaobi Tabugo who proved a worthy contender and clocked a time of 13.33s for 2nd. Faith Osamuyi settled for 3rd.

It is good to note that Amusan formerly held the World Lead (WL) of 12.40s, which was achieved at the Jamaican Grand Prix in May.

The World Record (WR) holder will be a part of the Nigerian contingent set to compete at the African Championships later this week, where she is the undisputed favourite in the event.



•Tobi

National Trials: I'm hungry for more, says Ofili

After winning her first ever National title in the women's 100m at the ongoing Olympic Games Trials in Benin, Edo State, Delta born Favour Ofili, has said she is hungry for more titles.

In a star-studded 100m final, Ofili secured the title ahead of African Games silver medalist, Olayinka Olajide and Commonwealth Youth Games silver medal winner, Justina Eyakpobeyan.

Ofili achieved a new Personal Best and Olympic Games qualification after running 11.06secs with Olajide winning silver in 11.37secs and Eyakpobeyan third with a time of 11.47secs.

In an interview Ofili urged Nigerians to continue to pray for her adding that she will go all out at the Olympics to make the nation proud.

"I feel great and I am still hungry for more. The secret is being patient. I didn't leave 400, my coach observed and did what a coach ought to do. That's why I am still there," she said.

"I will go there (Olympics) and

do what I am supposed to do more importantly, stay healthy. You all should pray for me to be healthy because if I am healthy, you know what I can do."

The president of the Athletic Federation of Nigeria, Tonobok Okowa, and other board members present were over the moon, congratulating the athletics icon for a good show which reminds many of Blessing Okagbare's era.

In the men's version, Kanyinsola Ajayi also emerged as first time Nigeria 100m title winner after speeding past Alaba Akintola and former champion, Usheoritse Itsekiri, with a time of 10.14secs albeit not securing the Olympic Games ticket with the standard standing at 10.00secs.

Akintola and Itsekiri finished the race in 10.16secs and 10.22secs respectively.

Rangers to get trophy, N150m prize money in Jos

The new champions of the NPFL Enugu Rangers will be presented with the league trophy, medals and prize money of N150m Sunday in Jos, where they will play their final game of the season against Gombe United.

They will represent Nigeria in the CAF Champions League along with the runners-up of the NPFL.

Rangers recorded an unsailable 67 points with a +22 goals difference from 37 matches to win their eighth league championship. They thus pulled five points

tential record-breaking acquisition for clubs like Arsenal or Manchester United.

However, the financial burden of such a transfer may be too steep, especially for Chelsea, who need to



•Osimhen

AJ overtakes Fury in WBC rankings

Nigerian-born British heavy weight boxer, Anthony Joshua, has overtaken Tyson Fury in the latest WBC heavyweight rankings.

Anthony Joshua has now moved to number one in the WBC heavy-

weight rankings, while Tyson Fury has dropped from the first spot to the second spot.

The current undisputed heavyweight title holder, Oleksandr Usyk, is ranked the winner of the rankings.

Fury dropped one spot after losing his WBC heavyweight title to Usyk in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in May 2024.

While Fury suffered a massive defeat to the Ukrainian boxer, Anthony Joshua recorded successive victories against Francis Ngannou and Otto Wallin.

These two victories have qualified Joshua to contest for the vacant IBF title against Daniel Dubois in September.

Agit Kabayel who recently beat Frank Sanchez during one of the under-cards on the Fury vs Usyk bill in May, takes the third spot in the WBC rankings.

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3rd Cycling Lagos: Organisers hold Tour of Lagos ahead of grand finale

By Jacob Ajom

It was a parade of cyclists and corporate sponsors/partners as the city of Lagos witnessed the Cycling Lagos Mini Tour on Sat-



•Brys

2026 World Cup qualifying Group D with eight points from four matches, a point ahead of Libya.

EPL to release 2024-25 fixtures today

The 2024-25 Premier League fixtures are expected to be released today, the BBC has confirmed.

Players and fans of newly promoted side Ipswich Town are waiting to learn who their first Premier League opponents for 22 years will be as they return to the top flight after back-to-back promotions.

Championship winners Leicester and play-off victors Southampton are both back after a one-year absence.

Meanwhile record breakers Manchester City will attempt to further stretch their record by winning the title for the fifth consecutive season.

urday in readiness for the highly anticipated 3rd Cycling Lagos event scheduled for Saturday June 29, 2024.

The Tour took off from Teslim Balogun Stadium to major Streets on the Island and back to the stadium via the Third Mainland Bridge

Speaking in an interview after the Tour, the convener of Cycling Lagos and the Managing Director of BrandEscort Communications, Bamidele Adeleye described the Tour of Lagos as a rehearsal that was organized to demonstrate the readiness of the partners, organisers and cyclists for the grand finale of the Cycling event holding on June 29. The partners and sponsors include Samsung, Stanbic IBTC Bank, Nutrifly, Cway among others

"The Tour of Lagos is our simple way of informing Lagosians about our readiness to stage the August event; a dress rehearsal to the grand finale that promises to be one of the biggest cycling competitions in Africa," he said.

Speaking on the event in Lagos, Digital Marketing Manager, Samsung Electronics, West Africa, Michael Nwughala expressed the brand's excitement in sponsoring the cycling event to showcase its Galaxy Fit3 watch, a fitness tracker designed to offer a range of health and activity tracking features in a sleek, wearable device.

Schranz's strike downs wasteful Belgium •As VAR denies Lukaku twice

Ivan Schranz's early strike helped a resilient Slovakia pull off the biggest upset of UEFA Euro 2024 to date, defeating Belgium 1-0 in Frankfurt with VAR denying Romelu Lukaku two goals.

There were chances aplenty in the opening minutes, with Lukaku wanting one for Domenico Tedesco's side as he was denied by Martin Dúbravka. Moments later, the deadlock was broken at the other end when the Falcons pounced on an error from Jérémy Doku, who passed dangerously across his own box, and although Juraj Kucka's effort was straight at the goalkeeper, Schranz was on hand to tuck home the rebound.

Going behind did not seem to bother the Red Devils, who continued in their attempts to dictate the tempo and could have levelled when Dúbravka gifted possession to Leandro Trossard, only for the forward's 25-yard shot to sail over the empty goal. Amadou Onana then had a header saved and Lukaku should have equalised when stabbing wide after being sent through one-on-one, with those efforts coming either side of Lukáš Haraslin forcing a fantastic stop out of Koen Casteels at the other end with a perfectly struck volley that was palmed around the post.



•Ofili



•Rangers

Belgian coach rejects Eagles despite Cameroon troubles



FOOTBALL TODAY'S MATCHES

Euro 2024

Turkey	v	Georgia	5pm
Portugal	v	Czech Rep	8pm

RESULTS

Euro 2024

Romania	3	Ukraine	0
Belgium	0	Slovakia	1
Austria	0	France	1

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) will in the coming days charge the first choice striker of Super Eagles, Victor Osimhen for improper conduct over his verbal attack on the former coach of the senior national team of Nigeria, Finidi George.

Finidi who was the coach of the team until Friday when he tendered his resignation letter following the announcement by the NFF that they will be appointing an expatriate coach, was called out by the Napoli forward who was angry over reports that the coach questioned his commitment to the team.

Osimhen went all out on the coach on the reason why he missed the team's world cup qualifiers games against south Africa and Benin Republic, which they drew 1-1 and lost 1-2 respectively to drop to 5th in their group, four points behind leader Rwanda.

"Already the president of the NFF, Ibrahim Musa Gusau has spoken with Osimhen over his outburst and Finidi also reached

Finidi: NFF axe dangles on Osimhen

Opens disciplinary proceeding against him

out to him. The report he reacted to is fake and misleading, sadly he didn't confirm before reacting", a board member of the NFF told OwngoalNigeria.com.

"Osimhen is a role model and the only way we can help the incoming coach stamp his authority is by using him to set example. He crossed the line

with his outburst even when Finidi called him to explain he still didn't deem it fit to retract his statements. We won't condone that and after the Salah break, we will sit on the issue. I can tell you he won't be in the team until he says sorry for his actions", he concluded.



Schranz's strike downs wasteful Belgium

*As VAR denies Lukaku twice



Rangers to get trophy, N150m prize money in Jos

National Trials in Benin:

Expectedly, Amusan wins 100m hurdles



SUDOKU

TODAY'S PUZZLE

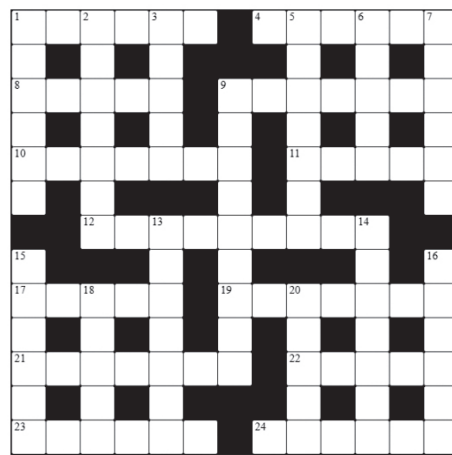
			8				9
		7	2				4
		6	7	3		8	1
4	7				6		5
			5		2		
	5		3				8 6
8		9		7	1	4	
	6				8	1	
1			2				

FRIDAY'S ANSWER

5	8	4	9	6	3	1	2	7
9	3	7	4	2	1	6	5	8
6	2	1	7	8	5	9	3	4
8	5	2	6	7	4	3	9	1
1	4	6	5	3	9	7	8	2
3	7	9	8	1	2	4	6	5
7	1	8	2	9	6	5	4	3
2	9	5	3	4	7	8	1	6
4	6	3	1	5	8	2	7	9

QUICK CROSSWORD

TODAY'S CROSSWORD



FRIDAY'S SOLUTION



ACROSS

- Dive(6)
- Closer(6)
- Prohibited(5)
- Abandon hope(7)
- Frenzied(7)
- Confess(5)
- Naval vessel(9)
- Group of singers(5)
- Light-fingered people(7)
- Clique(2-5)
- Free of obstructions(5)
- Sunder (anag)(6)
- Dismal(6)

DOWN

- Postpone(3,3)
- Scold(7)
- Spectre(5)
- Rapture, bliss(7)
- Kingdom(5)
- Something uncommon(6)
- Adorned(9)
- Dickensian miser(7)
- Mediterranean holiday area(7)
- Combat(6)
- Fish-eating bird of prey(6)
- Academy award(5)
- Become liable for(5)

How to Play Sudoku

Place a number (1-9) in each blank cell. (No line can have two of the same number).

Each row (nine lines from left to right), column, (also nine lines from top to bottom) and 3 X 3 block within a bold block (nine blocks) contains number from 1 through 9. This means that no number can appear twice in any block, column or row.

No mathematics is involved – no adding, subtraction, division or multiplication, just plain logic and your imagination.

OKADIGBO

TWO WEEKS TO LIVE' 032

